

Beziehungsanalyse **Dialectical Relational Psychoanalysis**

Thea Bauriedl began developing the dialectical relational analysis approach in the early 1970s. It has since been presented in numerous publications. In her book entitled “Beziehungsanalyse” (Dialectical Relational Analysis) Bauriedl presents the *dialectical-emancipatory principle* of psychoanalysis in the *unconscious interaction* between analyst and patient. Bauriedl has conducted research on the psychoanalytic process in analyses in the individual, couple, family and group therapy settings for many years. Her studies focused on the observation and analysis of interactions that were conceptualized as unconscious enactments of intrapsychic scenes. The results of this research led Bauriedl to view the *analyst as part of the “therapeutic relationship system”*. The analyst, as a whole person and with his or her entire experiencing and behavior, is both *affected* by and *participates* in maintaining and changing this relational system.

Viewing the psychoanalytic concepts of *transference* and *countertransference* from this perspective lends them a new, deeper dimension. The interactions between the analyst and the patient in the different settings are not seen as mere “technical” interventions or countertransference reactions (on the part of the therapist) or as manifestations of the transference (on the part of the patient). The traditional “essentials” of psychoanalysis (the unconscious, the defences and resistance), the role of sexuality as an important aspect of human relationships, and remembering, repeating and working through (as the fundamental principles of the psychoanalytic process) are all integrated in a *scenic conceptualisation of the psychoanalytic process*.

In this view, every feeling, every relational fantasy and every behavior of the persons involved that occurs in the psychoanalytic process is seen against the backgrounds of both their personal histories (transference) and the present relational situation that has evolved out of the meeting of *these* particular persons (countertransference).

This formed the basis on which Bauriedl developed the concept of *reciprocal countertransference* between the analyst and the patient, according to which each of them reacts in a manner that is complementary to the relational scenes contributed by the other, that is, to the relational scenes that have shaped the other over the course of his or her life.

This has far-reaching consequences for the way in which the unconscious interactions between analyst and patient are seen and thus also for ideas about the conditions under which intrapsychic (structural) changes in the patient can occur. This, in turn, leads to a new perspective on psychoanalytic “treatment techniques”. The analyst does not attempt to change the patient from the outside, but works “inside himself” on changing the relational fantasies that arise in him. It is possible to give a differentiated description of the change processes that occur in the analyst.

In addition to these insights regarding the practice of psychoanalytic treatment, many years of experience in analysing unconscious interactions *in families* have led Bauriedl to further develop and undertake a partial *revision of psychoanalytic developmental theory*, which however, cannot be presented in detail here.

Dialectical relational analysis is a *general theory of relationships* which goes beyond traditional psychoanalytic approaches and describes the scenic interplay between the mental structures of individual persons and those of small and larger groups of people *in all human relationships*. Interpersonal problems and the symptoms that result from them are seen as manifestations of disturbed relationship structures. The resolution of such problems and the elimination of the symptoms is therefore associated with an *emancipatory transformation* of these intrapsychic and intersubjective relationship structures.

This general theory of relationships and the conceptualization of change processes in individuals, couples, families and groups in a „protected relational space“ are *not only applicable to psychotherapy*. They can also be employed in education and applied to processes in supervision and organizational analysis, all forms of counseling and also in sociotherapeutic activities. The approach can also be used as a basis for an analysis of societal and political situations and events that take a critical view of culture.

Some references (a selection from about 200 publications by Thea Bauriedl)

Monographs

- (1980): Beziehungsanalyse – das dialektisch-emanzipatorische Prinzip der Psychoanalyse und seine Konsequenzen für die psychoanalytische Familientherapie. Literatur der Psychoanalyse, hrsg. Von Alexander Mitscherlich. Frankfurt/Main (Suhrkamp), further editions by stw.
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Articles in edited volumes

- (1992): El psicoanálisis como una forma especial de relación. In: Cuadernos Psicoanalíticos Nr. 11, editado por el Grupo de Estudios Sigmund Freud, A.C., México, 5-11.
- (1997): Die innere Welt des Psychoanalytikers. In: Herberth, F., Maurer, J. (Hg.): Die Veränderung beginnt im Therapeuten. Anwendungen der Beziehungsanalyse in der psychoanalytischen Theorie und Praxis, Frankfurt/M. (Brandes & Apsel), 11-40.
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- (1981): Psychoanalyse als dialektisch-emanzipatorische Beziehung – Ihre Aktualität „Nach Freud“. Merkur, 35. Jg., Heft 397, 647-649.

- (1984): Geht das revolutionäre Potential der Psychoanalyse verloren? Zur politischen Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse und zum politischen Engagement der Psychoanalytiker. *Psyche* 30, 489-515.
- (1995): Die Veränderung von Beziehungsstrukturen aus psychoanalytischer Sicht. *Analytische Kinder und Jugendlichenpsychotherapie* 26. Jg., Heft 86, 147-161.
- (1996): Die Suche nach dem Antidot. Überlegungen zur „Technikfolgenabschätzung“ in der Psychotherapie. *Kontext* 27, Heft 2, 101-122.
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- (2004): Die Psychoanalyse im Wandel unserer Gesellschaft – Was bleibt? Was ändert sich? *Psychoanalytische Familientherapie* 5, Nr. 9, 33-57.
- (2007): „Analisi relazionale“ nella terapia di coppia. In: *Ricerca Psicoanalitica* XVIII, 1, 33-70.

A comprehensive description of “Dialectical Relational Analysis” in its current form (Thea Bauriedl) is in preparation.

Thea Bauriedl