PSYCHOTHERAPY AS AN ACTIVITY FORM
A General Theory of Psychotherapy on the Basis of Critical Psychology
First Draft Version
Morten Nissen
University of Copenhagen

I. The Problem of the General Function of Psychotherapy

Contemporary literature on clinical psychology presents reflections on specific features of psychopathology and psychotherapy in abundance. Yet innovative theoretical reflections concerning the basic function of psychotherapy are rare. This constitutes a problem in the ongoing process of restructuring social and psychiatric institutions (in Denmark) and increasing application of multi-proffessional teams: Psychotherapy as a tool, the developement and mastering of which is a central part of the proffessional identity of the psychologist, must be understood as such and placed in its social context.

Traditional (psychodynamic, existentialist, systemic, behaviorist etc.) clinical psychology remains, allthough it contains the (highly valuable) accumulated experience of a 100 years of psychotherapeutic practice, unable to serve as a theoretical platform of a general determination of psychotherapy at a categorial level, for two main reasons:
- the determination of the function of psychotherapy is chained to a metaphysical, individualistic psychopathology in the framework of the "postulate of immediacy" (*Leontiev*), logically making psychotherapy the eternally unavoidable path to personal developement, thus erasing its specific functional characteristics;
- the complete lack of theoretical means to depict forms of social practice which include the subject of activity and reflection and its social conditions and context.

II. Psychotherapy in Critical Psychology

"Critical psychology" (e.g. *Holzkamp 1983*) has developed a general dialectic-materialist psychological paradigma enabling a theoretical understanding of the concrete personality, a re-interpretation of traditional theories, and thus a reconstruction of clinical psychology on a non-metaphysical basis. Allthough mainly a paradigmatic research programme, critical psychology soon focused on psychotherapy, responding to practical needs of "critical psychologists", and armed with a general theory of psychological conflict.

The first phase in the approach of critical psychology to psychotherapy (e.g. *Holzkamp-Osterkamp 1976, Kappeller et.al. 1977, Dreier 1980*) consists of analyses at a categorial level: General critique of traditional clinical psychology, and general, "positive" principles concerning the ideal subject, object, and aims (= the content) of psychotherapy.

The second phase of "critical, clinical psychology" represents a more direct reflection of psychological practice, facilitated by an organizational connection of science and practice ("*Theorie-Praxis-Konferenz*" and other organizations of critical psychology), by way of which critical psychology was confronted with the social and proffessional situation of the therapist/social worker. The outcome of this research is focused mainly on the positions, interests, the "reasons for action" ("Handlungsgründe") and "action-potency" ("Handlungsfähigkeit") of the therapist and the client (e.g. *Dreier 1987, 1988, Bader 1984*).

Together, critical psychology thus constitutes an important contribution to the developement of a critical, dialectic-materialist theory of psychotherapy:
- categories for the reconstruction of psychopathology;
- basic determinations of the content of psychotherapy – which also equals to a scientific foundation of proffessional ethics;
- a "social-psychological" expansion of the scientific scope of research in psychotherapy.

At this point, however, the progressive theoretical process and dialogue with practice seems to have come to a stop. Practical critical psychologists urge scientists to develope means to guide psychotherapy as a concrete process, call for "technical methods" and conceptualization of the "micro-processes" of psychotherapeutic activity; the scientists, on the other hand, refuse to give technical forms an independent status, and accuse practicians of "absolutation of immediacy". This tends to result in a dichotomic separation between a traditional organization of ongoing psychotherapeutic activity, and a critical analytic reflexion as afterthought.

In my view, this impasse is the consequence of a certain obliquity in the categorial system of critical psychology as presented in the "*Grundlegung der Psychologie*" (*Holzkamp 1983*), hithertho undetected due to the "perfection" and self-confirmative quality of a theoretical system in contrast to the unceasing self-contradictions of living practice in the institutions of bourgeois society.

1 shall postulate two categorial areas of psychology which, in a relative sense, is neglected in the conceptual system of the "Grundlegung...":

1- The determination of psychological functions in the "functional-historical" analysis is structured to serve the needs primarily of a framework for the understanding of the "ending point", the relations of the activity of the concrete human individual to its material life conditions. In the developemental analysis of function the moment of content (the "what" and the "why") must be considered primary to the moment of form (the "how"); thus, the form aspect of psychological functions tends to play the role of "vanishing moments", necessarily included at the "junctions", the qualitative leaps of developement, but easily neglected in the resulting categories. The outcome is a theoretical tool which tends to "freeze" psychological functions within their conditions and aims; as soon as we start "moving" a concrete psychological function, we need to further unfold and explicite the moment of form.

2- In the unfolding of the form aspect to analyse psychotherapy a new problem arises: The category system is a paradigma for the study of the concrete human individual, and the general methodology is structured to meet this end. Critical psychology, in its empirical methodology, is a theory of personality. However, psychotherapy is not a psychological function of the individual! Its processes are functions at least of a dyad, and they cannot be represented in an analysis structured around the "scope of possibilities" ("Möglichkeits-raum") of the individual - be it the therapist or the client. Psychotherapy must be a "supra-individual" activity system.

I wish to emphasize that this postulated obliquity of the categorial system of critical psychology does not imply the need for a general revision of the theory, since the presented categories do not negate the aspect of form, nor the existence of "supra-individual" activity systems. I am merely pointing to an "obliquity in priority", necessitating a supplementary analysis at the categorial level to reach a theory of psychotherapy.

To this purpose, 1 will briefly turn to the history of critical psychology in relation to activity theory, concluding to suggest a revised category of activity form to the paradigm of critical psychology.

III. The Relations of Critical Psychology to Activity Theory

Leontiev's theory of activity (1985) was primarily proposed as a general ontology and methodology of psychology. Applied on human ontogenesis, *Leontiev* identified various cultural structures of activity, centered around the concepts of individual motive and personal sense - the activity forms - which he used as "mediating categories" in the analysis of concrete human activity (play, learning, work activity etc.).

Leontiev's students (e.g. *Galperin, Davidov, Elkonin, Hacker*), concentrating on the practical implications of activity theory - the structuring of activity for democratic purposes - took the category of activity form as their starting point, giving low priority to the methodology of historical analysis and the theory of personality. The outcome, in modern activity theory, is a "technology" of activity structures independent of individual personality. Typically, motivational considerations are shoved outside the central focus of analysis, as a sort of "natural precondition". In a philosophical work of *E. V. Ilyenkov* (1977), providing a general categorial basis for modern activity theory, activity forms are determined as the subject matter of logic, the "objective laws of subjective activity".

Criticized (by *S. L. Rubinstein* among others) of the lack of "system autonomy" of the individual vis à vis cultural activity systems in his theory, *Leontiev* (1982) outlined general preconditions of personality theory on the basis of activity theory, still proposing the categories of motive, sense, and activity form as a conceptual basis.

Critical psychology, developed in Western Europe and thus confronted with the interrelations of individual and social conflict, as well as a need for a further

(or renewed) historical analysis to apply activity theory in bourgeouis society, soon arrived at a critique of *Leontiev's* personality theory categories - the transformation of social aims into individual motives as embodiment of individual consumtion needs or unexplained "higher cultural" needs. With the theory of "action potency" ("Handlungsfähigkeit") and socalled "productive needs" ("Produktive Bedürfnisse"), *H.-Osterkamp* (1976) overcame the weak point in *Leontiev's* theory, which tended to blurr the distinction of the individual-personality from the social form of his activity.

A point which, in a time of reestablishing democratic institutions in Eastern Europe, in afterthought might be considered a "stalinist" ideological feature in the theory of activity, derived from the utopian idea of a conflictless relation of the individual to society (in *Leontiev's* terms, a unity of social meaning and personal sense) in socialism.

Holzkamp, with the theory of "transcendence of immediacy" ("Unmittelbarkeits-überschreitung" - 1983, ch. 5) finally founded a general theory of personality in marxist psychology. The human individual is distinguished from the social form of his activity as a consequence of the real, historical "breaking" of the immediate relations between productive activity and individual reproduction; from this point, the individual faces (structures of) social meaning as "action possibilities", at a "gnostic distance", relates consciously and with specific, but generalizable "reasons for action" to himself and to his social "scope of possibilities". The differentiation of personality in its specifically human form is considered a positive consequence of the splitting of "meaning" and "sense", the "problematic" relations between the individual and society.

IV. The Concept of Activity Form as a Mediating Category in Critical Psychology

From this point of view of the personality, cultural activity structures appear in 3 ways:
1- as structures of meaning, i.e. potential actions;
2- as interpersonal ("inter-subjective") relations; and
3- as structures of operations, i.e. culturally developed psychological functions of the individual.

This is a logical consequence of the personality theory viewpoint of critical psychology, following the breaking of the immediate identity of the individual with the social (logical) form of his activity.

The essence of activity theory, however, lies on the other side of the "problematic relation", on the side of objective logic: Activity forms are not subsumed to the "subjective logic" of the personality. The "liberation" in critical psychology of the individual from the immediate identity with the social form of his activity must include the liberation of activities as social forms from their immediate realization by the individual, not only as structures of meaning, i.e. potential activity, but as structures of actual, living activity.

Revising the activity form category of modern activity theory into critical psychology thus means unchaining it of its conceptual dependence of *Leontiev's* motive system of the individual; it is exactly the "subject-neutral" quality of

modern activity theory, though sharply critizised in critical psychology (e.g. *Haug et.al., 1980*), which is its strong point. This does not, however, imply depriving activity of its content, suggesting immaterial, "systemic" structures, generalized abstracted from their material conditions, object and subject, as it is seen especially in *Hacker's* systemic theory of the "hierachical organization" of work activity; in dealing with activity forms, structuralist idealism is a constant temptation. The only way to understand activity forms indepedent of individual personality, and without formalistic reductionism, is to suggest a collective, supra-individual subject of activity, to determine the activity form as a cooperative structure.

In the light of these considerations, I will put forward a category of activity form as follows:-

The activity form is a supra-individual activity system, culturally developed as a practical mediator in the relations between social and individual activity. The logical status of the category is thus parallel to the "mediating categories" of "position" and "life situation" in critical psychology. Activity forms are not only actually functioning, but sometimes also consciously developed and applied as mediators - as games, judicial rules, ceremonies, methods etc.

Its basic determinant is the content - the transformation of the object or man's relation to it. Yet the activity form should not be considered a mere logical, necessary consequence of its content; rather, it is structured and applied for the purpose of the content.

The subject of the activity form is collective, that is, it is a structure of cooperation. This implies that the activity form realizes not only logical structures of individual acts, but also interpersonal relations. The "family system" category of systemic theory (e.g. Milanese family therapy) is a one-sided structuralistic representation of this aspect of the activity form, interestingly complementary to the activity form concept in activity theory, which focuses exclusively on the object relation side of the activity form.

The individual may relate to the activity form as to other structures of meaning - she may understand it as a "possible structure of acts" from a "gnostic distance", may be subsumed to its logic, or may master it, chance it; one person may apply and master it to control the logic of another person's acts, etc. The (possible) function of the activity form for the individual is that it practically mediates his relations to objective reality, to other persons, and to himself. In the latter aspect, it may be appropriate to assume that conscious reflection is closely developementally connected to the existence of cultural activity forms.

The activity form may be considered and generalized as a tool, that is, independently of the "scope of possibilities" of the individual, but always connected to the social content of activity. The moment, the form aspect is abstracted from its content, we are involved in a change of activity form, the creation of new tools for new purposes (like when a saw is used as a musical instrument).

Applied methodologically, activity forms may to some, limited extend, give scientific access to psychological functions of personality, since the latter appear as specific, personal aspects of the activity form: As motives, abilities,

and so on. This is the essense of psychological testing; and further, it may be the general "rationale" of *Leontiev's* approach to personality.

The important point here, however, is not to confuse this with the understanding of personality! On the other hand, specially developed activity forms may be the only possible way to (practically) generalize individual psychological functions to the level of "inter-subjective communication", which in turn gives access to personality. This point may be crucial to the methodology of studies in childhood, - and certainly to the methodology of the analysis - and practice - of psychotherapy!

V. Psychotherapy as an Activity Form

At this point I hope I may expect it to be clear that it is only possible to see psychotherapy as an activity form, provided the latter is concieved in the above proposed manner, as a supra-individual, object-transforming activity system; the "traditional" activity form concept of *Leontiev* would never comprehend psychotherapy, with its emphasis on interpersonal relations and the relations of the individual personality to the activity form.

Turning to traditional clinical psychology, it is easy to demonstrate its inability to delimit the function of psychotherapy, the tendency to define psychotherapy forms as immediate consequences of different features of psychopathology:

Freud: unconsciousness → conscious interpretation,
      oedipus complex → transference
Perls: reification → reintegration
      projection → awareness
Glasser: desengagement → involvement
Haley: pathological family structure → restructuring
Selvini-Pallazzoli: paradox → counterparadox

          Etc.

The activity form is here presented in an ideological form, as a necessity rather than a possibility; this psychotherapy form is thus in general manipulative, a tool in the hands of the therapist, but a blind logic under which the acts of the client is subsumed. This points to the general "reifying" (Verdinglichende) paradigma of traditional psychotherapy, the reduction of the subjectivity of the client: The therapist "treats" the client.

This results from a basic problem, which a determination of the function of psychotherapy has to face, and which cannot be resolved in idealistic, metapsysical thinking: The subject of the activity form must deal with an object; if the object of psychotherapy is the very subjectivity of the client, reification seems unavoidable.

Let us turn, then, to the content of psychotherapy, in the terms of critical psychology: The working through (Bearbeitung) - i.e. analytical reconstruction - of intra- or interpersonal psychological conflict in one or more of the participants (for the theory of psychological conflict, see *Holzkamp, 1983, ch.*

7.5) to achieve an extension and generalization of action possibilities. Thus, psychotherapy might be defined as the activity form of organized reflection.

The existence of psychological conflict is the basic precondition for the relevance of specially organized reflection: Contradictory motives makes it impossible resolve the problems in an activity with another object (as is the general rule of activity forms). At the same time, psychological conflict constitutes the central issue of the object, although, since psychological conflict inflicts personality as a whole, the limitation must be relative, and the general life practice and action potency of the participant may be turned into the object.

How, then, is it possible to "objectify" the subjective without reification? How can we determine psychotherapy as a cooperative structure of a collective subject transforming an object outside themselves?

This is possible in a special, mental process of construction and transformation of models of the object. The concept of model means a process of mediation, a relationship of reference between the immediate (model) object and the mediated, true object of psychotherapy. The psychotherapeutic model represents the psychological conflict and general life practice of the participant.

Therapeutic models must be conceptual i.e. contain social meaning ("Bedeutungs-verallgemeinerung") for the process of generalization to take place; but otherwise, models can be formed and transformed at all developemental level: Intuitive ("Anshaulich") or non-intuitive, symbolic or non-symbolic, verbal or non-verbal etc. (for a theory of models, see *Davidov 1977*). This multi-level modelling is an important methodological feature of psychotherapy.

This broad, unspecific concept of therapeutic models is connected to the fact that the model relation (the relationship of reference) is established by the very existence of a special context of psychotherapy: The psychotherapeutic space. All acts and events in psychotherapeutic space has the (potential) character of psychotherapeutic models. In other words, the very delimitation of the activity form as a context is central to the function of psychotherapy. Without a delimitation of psychotherapeutic space there is no psychotherapy!

Of course, the content of psychotherapy may to some extend take place outside psychotherapeutic space, objectified otherwise - verbally, in religious rituals or whatever; the content of psychotherapy has a "natural", spontaneous place as an aspect of all human activity. It is when it is drawn out of everyday life, into a special context, that psychotherapy is born as a specific function.

The actualized model character of the events in psychotherapeutic space is achieved when they are somehow generalized. Generalization is the essense of the process of attribution or achieving supra-individual, social meaning to phenomena, opening for common action possibilities (the theory of generalization, "Bedeutungsverallgemeinerung", is essential in critical psychology; i cannot resume it here - see *Holzkamp, 1983, ch. 8*).

The generalization process is the essential "effective" aspect of the process of psychotherapy. In the form of psychotherapeutic modelling, generalization appears in different aspects, indicating and facilitating different approaches and/or developemental levels of psychological functioning: The inter-personal level (transforming experience into communication), the level of collective

objectification (goal-oriented production and transformation of models), and the level of inter-subjective communication (at a "gnostic distance"). The simultaneous existence and transformation of models at several levels of generalization is functionally what makes participation and developement possible on the basis of almost any level of psychological functioning. Considering the tendency of partial regression connected with psychological conflict, this is a functional feature of great importance.

Logically, psychotherapeutic models make possible a parallel representation / transformation into practice of different levels, as well as shift from one level to another. Contradictions in or between different modelling levels may confront the individual with seizable developemental tasks. Psychotherapy can make possible a change from one thematic / functional context, in which a "regressive" conflict theme is spontaneously organized at a higher level, to another (e.g. the psycho-therapeutic space itself), establishing new possible paths to generalization (cf. the concept of "re-framing"). Etc. - the logic of psychotherapeutic modelling is a rich theme of further analysis, as well in general as in specific forms.

The function of psychotherapy relies on a model relation to reality (psychological conflict, life practice), established by the delimitation of psycho-therapeutic space. It is thus activity on the level of ideal representation. A materialist understanding of psychotherapy must reflect this "supra-structure" character, its function in relation to and as a part of the life practice as a whole of the participants. We must study the relations between "therapy" and "practice", and understand that any positive outcome of psychotherapy is the result of the transformation into practice of psychotherapeutic models. Furthermore, in general, progress in the course of psychotherapy, including that on the ideal level, comes from the reciprocal interaction of psychotherapeutic modelling and transformation into practice.

From this view, a fundamental critique may be raised against the idealistic conceptions of traditional theories of psychotherapy. It is a basic, continuously reoccuring fault in theories of psychotherapy to implicitely assume a direct identity of psychotherapy and the life practice of the client.

In Gestalt Therapy and Systemic Family Therapy, for instance, the events and the acts of the client (system) in psychotherapy are considered simply a "sample" of her life practice. In classical Psychoanalysis, the "transference" phenomenon is considered an "automatic" process in the client, and "psychic reality" is considered an isolated, independent "universe".

The negligance of the basic model character of psychotherapy or of the consciousness of the client about it, is not only an expression of the general idealism of the conceptions, but also of the wish of the therapist to see the effect of psychotherapy as immediate results of his acts in psychotherapeutic space. As a consequence, the "transfer effect" of psychotherapy has been given astonishingly little scientific interest. Research has been dominated by an "immediacy-fixated" *(Dreier)* tradition, according to which the life practice of the client is immediately present in psychotherapy, like a broken leg on the operation table of the physician; correspondingly, the methodology of "transfer value" studies has been dominated by (mostly futile) attempts to statistically measure

immediate "treatment effect", in abstraction from the client's conscious criteria for and activity of practical application.

The subject of psychotherapy is, as mentioned, the collective of the participants. It is essential to separate the primary determination of the subject of psychotherapy from the secundary distinction between the functional roles of the therapist and the client, since the central process is one of generalization, implicating a basic "subject relation" (Subjektverhältnis) of the participants, and a possible change in perspective and roles - as it is indeed seen in immediate practice in some forms of (particularly group) psychotherapy.

Yet right from the start, the subject of psychotherapy includes at least the two logical, functional roles of

1- the client, the person(s) whose psychological conflicts / life practice is modelled, and

2- the therapist, the person(s) who contributes to the modelling with proffessionally and/or scientifically generalized concepts and procedures.

The necessary, logical polarity of these two functional roles means that the subject of psychotherapy is necessarily constituted as a practical, cooperative union of principally divergent viewpoints, reasons for action etc., embodied in common aims. This may be referred to as the therapeutic alliance. Constituting the subject of psychotherapy, the therapeutic alliance undergoes constant developement in the course of psychotherapy, which in turn is an important aspect of its movement, since psychological conflict involves contradictory activity goals.

VI. The Relation of the Client to Psychotherapy

Since the primary aim of psychotherapy is facilitating the developement of the client, by working through her conflicts, the relations of the client to the activity form are in focus, and within this particularly the aspect of reflection (cf. p. 5). In relating to psychotherapy, she relates to relating to herself, in just the conflictfull way, which characterizes the object of the activity. Psychotherapy objectifies, and at the same time re-actualizes, the psychological conflict in the client. This is a fundamental structural feature of the psychotherapeutic activity form, from which at least the four following consequences can be drawn:

1.) The relations of the participants to the activity form is not, as is usually the case, a mere precondition establishing the framework of activity; on the contrary, these relations belong to the essential content of the activity itself. Consequently, psychotherapeutic modelling must continuously alternate between modelling the object and modelling the activity of modelling itself; meta-communication at various levels must take place. The shifts between levels of meta-communication may in turn be modelled, - or perhaps manipulated (as described especially in the systemic tradition), etc.

2.) The delimitation of psychotherapeutic space is an essential precondition for the subjective functionality of psychotherapy, since it makes it possible for the client to engage in working through his psychological conflicts separated from

their immediate consequences in practice, and thus potentially (though temporarily) freed from the "dynamic" blockings in his thinking. The "mediation logic" of psychotherapeutic modelling establishes practically and literally a "gnostic distance" as an action possibility for the client. To be sure, the client is only free of consequence so long as he does not transform psychotherapy into practice, which on the other hand is his reason for being there in the first place. This means that the client must alternate between a relative commitment and uncommittedness in the course of psychotherapy - a movement, which is often interpreted as expressions of the "transference" phenomenon in traditional psychotherapy.

3.) The emotional valence to the client of the psychotherapeutic models has an autonomous function in psychotherapy along with their conceptual content. Psychotherapeutic modelling thus runs in two continuously alternating phases: The production and transformation of models as generalizing, mediated reflection in one phase, and in the other the client's immediate emotional valuation of their meaning to herself. Given the general function of emotion as immediate, "complex-qualitative" valuation of personal implications of meaning (cf. H.-Osterkamp, 1975), the client's emotions in relation to the models forms an important contribution to psychotherapeutic modelling, tentatively determining their thematic and functional relevance in the ongoing process of forming a coherent hypothetical construction. The autonomous status of the "emotional contribution" is the more outspoken, the more, as a consequence of psychological conflict, the emotions and the cognitions of the client are dichotomized (cf. H.-Osterkamp, 1976). The psychotherapeutic logic of intermitting conceptual modelling and emotional valuation presents in itself an action possibility of bridging the gap between emotion and cognition, and in a broader sense opens psychotherapeutic activity, in the experience of the client, to regressive functional aspects of the action potency of the client.

4.) Regression as a necessary functional component of psychological conflict (or more precisely: "restrictive action competence", cf. Holzkamp, 1983, pp. 391 ff.) means that the client must to some extent and in some aspects relate to and act within psychotherapy in a regressive way. On the other hand, the establishing of the psychotherapeutic alliance presupposes that the client also to some extent relates to psychotherapy at a developed, inter-subjective level (modified, of course, in various forms of child psychotherapy). Consequently, the client simultaneously relates to psychotherapy at different developemental levels of psychological functioning.

In traditional psychotherapy, the regressive aspect of the client's relation to psychotherapy is universalized (in terms of "resistance", "transference" etc.) - which is understandable in an "original" conceptualization, concentrating on identifying what is outstandingly specific in psychotherapeutic communication, but unconscious of the "normal" communication of establishing the framework of the activity form itself. This results, however, in a negligance of the core function of psychotherapy, the processes of objectification and generalization. Correspondingly, the regressive aspect has been underestimated in the tradition of critical psychology, focusing on the client's conscious reflection. Together, the opposing

traditions represent a real life contradiction in psychotherapy, which can only be reflected in science and practice with the introduction of the "mediating theoretical link" of psychotherapeutic modelling, containing functional relations and transformations between different psychological levels (cf. p. 7-8).

VII. The Relations of the Therapist to Psychotherapy and to the Client

To the therapist, psychotherapy is a form of proffessional practice; a generalized tool used for specific purposes, and a practical realization and relating-to the conditions and aims of her work. Psychotherapy exists to her before and independently of the individual client; not, however, before and independently of herself, of her own proffessional identity.

This means that the therapist goes into a concrete psychotherapy in a double way: As the agent of a generalized activity form, and as an individual person practically realizing her proffessional identity.

In the first aspect, the therapist relates to the concrete phenomena of psycho-therapy at a "gnostic distance", mediated by theoretical concepts, institutional and proffessional procedures. The "distance" itself contributes to the delimitation of psychotherapeutic space, since as a result of this the client does not have to worry about emotionally overwhelming the therapist with his problems.

Functionally, the contribution of the therapist to psychotherapeutic modelling is one of conceptual generalization, the indicating and creating of possible pathways to generalization in actualization and transformation of models. This function presupposes the acquisition and application of a psychological theory, which depicts psychopathological phenomena in a developemental, generalizable understanding. It is only this, progressive, aspect of psychopathology, which can contribute to psychotherapeutic modelling; the pathologizing, individualistic aspect of psychopathology functions in the adverse direction, closing the shutters between the client and his possibilities of "generalized action potency". This inner contradiction in the theories of clinical psychology may be part of the background for the relative ineffectiveness of current psychotherapy.

The conceptualizing contribution of the therapist to psychotherapeutic modelling may, but must not, assume the direct form of "interpretation"; just as often, it is implicitly effective, by way of therapeutic setting, the selection of themes, etc.

The therapist does not necessarily master or control the logic of the psycho-therapy as a whole. Very often, the therapist is trained into psychotherapy in a kind of apprenticeship, securing the learning of an action competence, which is not conceptualized, or conceptualized in an ideological form. Partly because psychotherapy has not been sufficiently generalized as a tool, and partly because the aims and conditions of the work of the therapist are contradictory (cf. *Dreier, 1988*). This tendency not only makes psychotherapy ineffective, but also facilitates the universalization of the manipulative tendency in psychotherapy.

In the second aspect, the therapist enters psychotherapy as a person with her own aims, possibilities, reasons for action etc. Though generalized in relation to

the client, her aims are in their concretion particular expressions of her relating-to the conditions and possibilities in her work. In this sense, she cannot be considered a "neutral agent" of the aims of the client, even though her work may take the social form of the sale of a service. The traditional idea of the neutrality of the therapist is an ideological misrepresentation of the generalized nature of the therapist's aims, thus pointing to an important functional feature of the position of the therapist, but at the same time serving as a "smoke screen" over the contradictions in her work conditions and aims. The therapist forms an equally important part in the establishment of the psycho-therapeutic alliance.

Moreover, functioning in psychotherapeutic, multi-level modelling, the therapist is necessarily involved in relations to the client at regressive levels. To combine the functionally generalized and the conflictfull personal approach to psychotherapy, and confronted with regressive aspects of psychotherapeutic models, the therapist needs to reflect and generalize his own activity in psychotherapy, independently of the psychotherapeutic activity itself. This reflection may in turn assume the specialized activity form of supervision.

Supervision must, in turn, be "psychotherapeutic", to the extent that the psychological conflicts and regressive functioning aspects of the therapist interact with those of the client by way of the regressive levels of psycho-therapeutic modelling; that is, supervision of psychotherapeutic practice exceeds the general scope of proffessional reflection (analysis of practice) in the direction of systematically implicating a wider field of the life practice of the therapist, This, I must add, is not the same as the traditional, psychodynamic "privatization" and pathologization of the therapist herself.

The relation between the therapist and the client is basically, as mentioned, inter-subjective, i.e. cooperative and mediated. The necessary aspect of regression, however, introduces, as a secondary, but necessary moment, a transfer of power from the client to the therapist, a relation of dependence, since the control of the activity presupposes a "gnostic" functional level, partly lost in regression. The interpersonal relations aspect of psychotherapeutic logic is thus characterized by constant interactions and shifts between dependence and inter-subjectivity, the latter forming, as it were, both the starting point, the basic determinant, and the goal to be (never fully) achieved in the movement of the psychotherapeutic alliance.

The dependence relation aspect in turn facilitates regressive level modelling of interpersonal relations of the client or in her biography, depicting the dependence of the child on the adult (cf. "transference" in psychoanalysis or the emphasis on the power of the therapist in "structural family therapy").

Ethical problems have arisen from the combination of the alleged "neutrality" and the power of the therapist. The solution to these problems lies not in a denial of the regressive aspect of the client-therapist-relation - as is the tendency in current critical psychology - but rather in a unification of the understanding of inter-subjective and dependence relation aspects within the same theory of psychotherapeutic alliance and modelling (as well as in a general democratic access to the practice of therapists).

VIIl. General Implications of the Theory of Psychotherapy as an Activity Form

The above proposed theory primarily aims to serve as a developement of critical psychology toward practical concretion. Its relevance thus relies on your wish to apply critical psychology - or in a wider sense, activity theory - in the field of psychotherapy. Critical psychology does not promise immediate "succes" in the normal sense in treatment institutions of current society; rather, it promises conflict and problems, confronting our collegues with self-contradictions and ideological mystifications in their work. On the other hand, a theory of the general function of psychotherapy may be welcomed as a response to practical needs of the psychological proffession, faced with the current restructuring of their institutions and practice. Furthermore, the authority of critical psychology in general might be helped by a theoretical tool for the functional analysis of concrete psychotherapeutic processes.

A functional analysis makes it possible to procede from the stage of mere conceptual critique to the stage of factual reinterpretation of traditional practice forms. My theory aims to criticize current psychotherapy, but perhaps even more to understand and explain in scientific categories what is actually going on.

Some of the implications of the theory may point to new forms of psychotherapeutic activity, which has not yet been developed in the framework of traditional clinical psychology; the main direction of further developement and concretion of the theory, however, should in my view be the analysis of various, currently existing psychotherapy forms - family therapy, group psychotherapy, psychodrama, etc. etc.

I will leave this to a future investigation.

Bader, K.   Individualisierungstendenzen bei Sozialarbeitern und Sozialpädagogen. Forum kritische Psychologie, 1984:14, 56-81.

Dawydow, V.V.   Arten der Verallgemeinerung im Unterricht. Volk und Wissen V.E. Verlag, Berlin DDR 1977.

Dreier, Ole   Familiäres Sein und familiäres Bewußtsein: Therapeutische Analyse einer Arbeiterfamilie. Campus, Frankfurt/M. 1980

                             Klienteninteressen in der Psychotherapie. Forum kritische Psychologie 1987:20, 66-83.

                             Denkweise über Therapie. Forum kritische Psychologie 1988: 22, 42-57.

Haug, Frigga et. al.   Kritik der Handlungsstrukturtheorie. Forum kritische Psychologie 1980:6, 18-86

Holzkamp, Klaus   Grundlegung der Psychologie. Campus, Frankfurt/M. 1983

Holzkamp-Osterkamp, Ute   Grundlagen der psychologischen Motivationsforschung I. Campus, Frankfurt/M. 1975

                             Motivationsforschung II. Campus, Frankfurt/M. 1976

Ilyenkov, E.V.   Dialectical Logic. Essays on its History and Theory. Progress Publishers, Moscow 1977

Kappeler, Manfred et. al.   Psychologische Therapie und politisches Handeln. Campus, Frankfurt/M. 1977

Leontjew, A.N.   Probleme der Entwicklung des Psychischen. Volk und Wissen V.E.Verlag, Berlin DDR 1985.

                             Tätigkeit, Bewußtsein, Persönlichkeit. Volk und Wissen V.E.Verlag, Berlin DDR 1982.
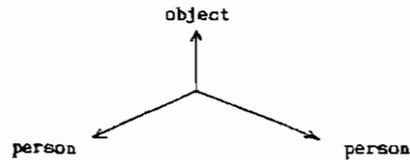
ACTIVITY FORM

CONTENT DETERMINATION:

    Man's transformation of the object or his relations to it

FORM ASPECTS:

    Logic of acts
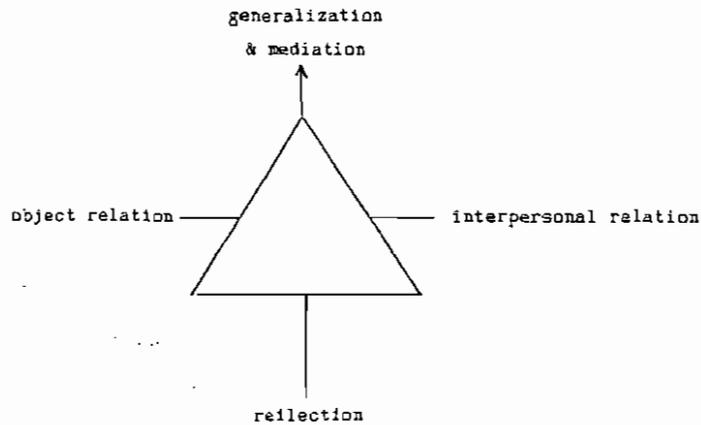
    Interpersonal relations

```
              object
                 ↑
                 |
                /  \
               /    \
          person      person
```

SUBJECT: "Supra-individual", cooperation

TOOL GENERALIZATION: Purpose & Method

PERSONALITY ↔ ACTIVITY FORM:

```
                generalization
                  & mediation
                      ↑
                     /▲\
                    / | \
                   /  |  \
    object relation    interpersonal relation
                   \  |  /
                    \ | /
                      |
                  reflection
```

PSYCHOTHERAPY

CONTENT:

    Generalization of psychological conflict, extension of action potency

FORM:

    Psychotherapeutic Space

    Multi-level modelling:

      - interpersonal

      - cooperative

      - inter-subjective

SUBJECT:

    The Psychotherapeutic Alliance

    Client / Therapist

The therapy-practice-relation

 - mediation, transfer problem

CLIENT ↔ PSYCHOTHERAPY:

Alternating phases/levels of

    Meta-communication

    Gnostic distance

    Emotional valuation

    Regression

THERAPIST ↔ PSYCHOTHERAPY:

    Conceptualization

    Supervision

CLIENT ↔ THERAPIST:

    Intersubjectivity / dependence

MODELLING

inter-subjective
cooperative
interpersonal

therapeutic space

reflection emotion

conceptualization

therapeutic alliance

Client

Therapist

practice

institution
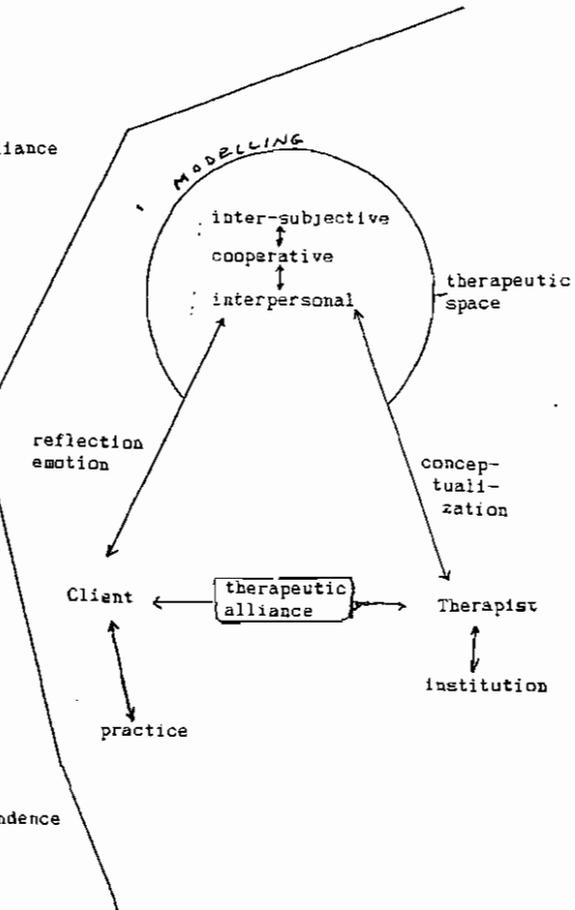
EN KRITISK PSYKOLOGISK TEORI OM PSYKOTERAPI
Disp for oplæg på kripsy sommerlejr 13/9 1990

I. HVAD SKAL VI (/I) MED EN TEORI OM PSYKOTERAPI?

1. Problemet rejses:

Samfundsmæssigt: Afgrænsning af psykoterapi som redskab
i nye tværfaglige sammenhænge;
Professionspolitisk: Bestemmelse af psykoterapi som
psykologisk professionskompetence; *– forandring <–> handrakt mellem tp & kl.*
kritisk-psykologisk: Behovet for konkretisering og
stillingtagen til terapiformer;
i mit forskningsprojekt: En metode til at udforske og
praktisere "klientens klarhed over og indflydelse på
behandlingen".

2. Teoriens status og anvendelse:

- Traditionelt: X psykopatologi, derfor Y psykoterapi –
alt andet implicit. Abstrakte egenskaber – abstrakte
teknikker.
Groft: Reduktion til kategorier: Principper, dogmer,
analyseredskaber.
- Erfaringsdannelse eller videnskab: Kritik.
- En kripsy "enkeltteori" om psykoterapi: Mulighed,
betydningsstruktur, praksisform. Anvender kategorier:
modsigelsesforholdet – psykoterapi som tilpasning/
frigørelse.
- Re-interpretation med "positiv-bestemmelse"
- Kan den bruges i etableret praksis? Afhænger af formål!

II. HVAD ER EN "PRAKSISFORM"?

1. Et udviklingspunkt i den kritiske psykologi:

- Aktualempiriske teorier om betydningsstrukturer
/kooperationsformer.
- Anden metodologisk udfoldelsesdimension end
individanalysen.

2. Funktionel afgrænsning: "en praksisform".

- Umiddelbar omsætning af samfundsmæssig kooperations
struktur i individers handlinger;
- Mål-struktur og genstands /problem afgrænsning
- Sekundær fordeling på individer.

3. Grundmodel for en praksisform

- Indholdsbestemthed (mennesker genstande
formsaspekter (logik, interaktion)
- Individ og praksisform: Mulighedsrelation, underordnet
formidling.
- Indhold/form:
- almengørelse uden formalisering. Mulighed (teori)
- praksisformens tilblivelse

4. Praksisform og tænkeform

- Tænkeformer er selv praksisformer ("distributed
cognition")
- Praksisformer indeholder tænkeformer som funktions
aspekt (praksisbegreber)
- Tænkeformer har genspejlingskarakter (teorier)

5. Virksomhedsteorien   *ikke logik.*   *Blindhed <–> for KP ift. historiesyn*

- Virksomhedsformer er fordækte praksisformer!
- Virksomhedsteorien udvider med "joint activity"
- Reinterpretation: Personlighedens problem og de psykiske
processers kulturmønstre

III. TEORIEN OM PSYKOTERAPI

1. Psykoterapiens tilblivelse og omdannelse

- Læge-patient-samtalen og integrationsproblemet:
"Tilpasnings-service" som nyt indhold i den gamle form
- Psykoterapiens egen form: Selvmodsigelsen - behandlings
kooperation og manipulation, udvikling/tilpasning
- Psykoterapiens omdannelse: Negation: Den analyse som
modsigelsesforhold

Freud: selvbedrag.

2. Indhold

Bearbejdning af psykiske konflikter; almengørelse,
udvidelse af handleevne

- Genstand: Psykiske konflikter, livspraksis (refleksion).
- Objektivering af det subjektive?

3. Form

Modellering, modelrelation
- Det terapeutiske rum - kontekstualisering
- Modelleringsniveauer:
  - interpersonelle
  - kooperative
  - inter-subjektive

4. Terapi-praksis-forholdet

- "Transfer"-problemet contra "stereotypi"-teorien.
  Middelbarhed.
- Praksis som bevægelseskraft

5. Psykoterapiens subjekt

- Det kollektive subjekt
- Positionerne terapeut/klient og den terapeutiske
  alliance
- Det konfliktfyldte subjekt: Kooperation/kamp
- Individer, grupper, familier...

6. Forholdet mellem psykoterapi og klient(er)

- Psykoterapi som formidlet selv-forholden: Tematisering
  og aktualisering
- Metakommunikationsniveauer
- Forpligtethed og gnostisk distance
- Tænkeformer og følelser
- Regressionsfænomener

> → Forholdet til terapi er
> et indirekte forhold
> til mig selv.

7. Forholdet mellem psykoterapi og terapeut(er)

- Dobbeltforholdet: Selvrealisering og funktionsudøvelse
- Funktionen: Begrebsliggørelse, almengørelse.
  Den professionelle praksis og almengørelsen
- Institutionelle mål
- Regressions-modellering og supervisionsbehov

8. Terapeut-klient forholdet.

- Modsigelsen mellem inter-subjektivitet og almengørelse
- Etik: Identifikation, neutralitet og almengørelse

IV. DISKUSSIONER

- Kan teorien bruges som "positivbestemmelse" i
  reinterpretation af trad.klin.psyk.?
- Er teorien tautologisk?
- Er det fornuftigt at afgrænse psykoterapi som særlig
  praksisform?
- Er teorien kognitivistisk?
- ??

> "model begrebet"
> måske et
> forskningsbegreb -
> eller kun
> en tilnærmelse

> Pos: ↗ case
> ideologi
> Neg: at ofre
> når det
> christiske ikke er
> virkelig
> menneskeligt
> forhold
> "emne"

> et begreb ↗ med
> mening
> ingenmum
> dette obst-
> forhold

> Bestemmelse
> af mulligheds-
> spektrum ift
> genstand, middel
> og erkendelsesniveauer
> ~ og udarbejdelse
> af de for disse
> almengørelsesmulige
> forhold.