Setting Up the Doll House: A Developmental Perspective on Termination

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This article considers the contribution that consideration of the moment-to-moment process in psychoanalysis can make to an understanding of termination. Information on moment-to-moment interactions related to termination is developed from videotape microanalysis of termination discussions—focusing on a child analysis, but including an example from an adult analysis—as viewed through the structure of a developmental model (Tronick’s dyadic expansion of consciousness model) that is consistent with dynamic systems theory. The theory emphasizes the co-creation of meaning that occurs in an analysis, as indicated by verbal, as well as nonverbal, interactions that are apparent in the videotape. The insights from this approach can enrich the traditional psychoanalytic views on termination by emphasizing the ongoing developmental process, with termination more of an important step in this process than a specific ending.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ON CLINICAL CASES

Five-year-old Laura returns to her analysis after the summer break and asks for the dolls’ house, a toy she had rejected for most of the spring. Picking up the beds, she turns them over to observe their different colored sides. I comment, “You first have a pink bed, and then a blue…” Laura turns to the dolls’ house and places the beds inside. I continue, “And then white and blue, and then blue and white.” Laura responds, “Blue and white, blue and white, blue and pink.” I say, “And….” Laura answers, “White.” Laura leans over the toy basket and takes out a blanket. “Oh, I forgot about these blankets!” She smiles. I answer, “Oh, I remember looking for those blankets! Sometimes they are so hard to find.” Laura says, “I know! They usually are.” I answer, “I know.” Laura adds, “Usually we find them.” I say, “And the pillows, too.” Laura says, “Yeah! The pillows are really hard to find!”

What is remarkable about this reunion episode is not the verbal exchange itself. What is remarkable is that this scene has an uncanny resemblance to elements of the first session in the analysis, about a year earlier. The two of us had exchanged the same remarks—about the colors of the beds, the hard to find pillows, and the equally hard to find blankets—in the first analytic hour. Both sessions were videotaped, and I had watched the first session many times. My familiarity with the rhythms and repetitions of the first session influenced my contributions to our dialogue, and Laura, who did not have the benefit of the tapes, joined me in the co-creation of the familiar pattern.

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Because of my review of the two tapes, I could also recognize the similarity of the gestures—the movements of Laura’s hands and head in turning over the beds, the reaching into the basket—the rummaging activity, and the tones and cadences of our voices. What is the meaning I attribute to these patterns of repetitive behavior, and how do I relate these considerations to termination in analysis?

The videotape analysis shows that in the first session, Laura and I were getting to know each other by putting together bits of meaning—from our words and gestures and their rhythm and repetition, and from the process of making meanings in and of itself—such that the meanings and the meaning-making process acquired an emergent quality and new meaning for us. The meaning of this process had to do with making a connection between the two of us. And, since Laura came to analysis because of severe separation anxiety, it was clear to me that the procedure we were creating together also had to do with Laura making a connection within herself, reestablishing her coherence in the face of the terrifying threat of separation and dissolution of her self. Having created a way of connecting in the first session, we reached for it again when, almost a year later, we met for the first time after a month apart.

Two years later, when Laura was preparing to stop her analysis, she returned to the dolls’ house. She had for many months disdained “babyish” pretend play, preferring instead board games and cards. This time, she made explicit the conflict she had about moving on and leaving me. She explained that she had “so many things to do” after school, that, although she liked to come see me, she thought she no longer “had time” for our sessions. It seemed to me that the meanings and the ways of making meaning that Laura and I had created during the years of our work together—which began in the first session—had prepared us both to part. They had expanded each of our private and shared repertoires for making connections with other people, and for making connections within ourselves. We realized that she had “other things to do,” leaving no time for the analysis. I was also aware of how much of what we had done together would remain with me, and I hoped that the same might be true for her.

Around the same time I was saying goodbye to Laura, I was starting to talk about termination with an adult patient, a woman I will call Caroline. I was videotaping parts of Caroline’s analysis, too, although the camera was focused on me, and not at all on her. Caroline had also come to analysis with severe separation anxiety, fearing that her loved ones might disappear if she could not keep them in her sight. We had been working together for about six years. Caroline had grown a great deal. She had a new career that she loved, and her relationships were richer and more secure. At this time, it was clear to us that we would be stopping soon. Caroline had brought up the subject of stopping, although we had not yet settled on a specific date. In one session, Caroline was talking about her conflict between coming to her analytic hour and staying to finish an exciting task at work. The session with Laura came to my mind, and I told Caroline something of what happened and the meaning I had made of it. Together we put together a new meaning for my story in relation to Caroline’s current experience, taking us a step further in our efforts to say goodbye.

In this article, I describe concepts of meanings and meaning-making processes derived from infant research and the microanalysis of child analytic material and consider how they can add to the understanding of termination in child and adult analysis. I suggest that (1) psychoanalytic concepts about termination—such as resolution of transference neurosis and restoration to the path of progressive development—can be enriched by understanding the implicit, moment-to-moment interactive process that occurs in termination, as well as in other parts of the analysis; (2) that this implicit local level process can be identified and explored through the technical tool of videotape analysis;
microanalysis and the theoretical tool of new developmental theories; and (3) that the key local level analytic processes present during termination are similar to those present throughout the analysis, including the first analytic hour.

Before I present the clinical material that illustrates these points, I discuss some background on the way termination has been dealt with in the psychoanalytic literature, especially in child analysis. Then, I provide information on the two key tools: (1) the dyadic expansion of consciousness model that is used as an overall theory of change; and (2) the technique of videotape microeconomic analysis used to develop the clinical material.

**TERMINATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE LITERATURE IN CHILD ANALYSIS**

As Ablon (1988) points out in his thoughtful paper on termination in child analysis, the literature on termination in child analysis mirrors the adult literature in its focus on the analyst’s criteria for termination. Yet, a feature distinguishing child analysis from adult analysis in the literature is Anna Freud’s emphasis on the goal of restoring the child to the path of progressive development (Freud, 1966, 1970). This goal is consistent with the child analyst’s developmental perspective, but some ask, “Is child analysis so different from adult analysis? Is the concept of transference neurosis inapplicable to children? Are the theories that help us evaluate progress and success in an analytic treatment so different in children from adults?”

The argument for using resolution of transference neurosis as an indicator of the time to terminate analysis—in contrast to the goal returning to the normal developmental path—is that analytic work is avoided or left unfinished when the latter goal is the guide. Focusing on the healthy development of the child as a criterion for termination, it is alleged, may allow important conflictual issues organized within the transference neurosis to remain unresolved, whereas using the resolution of the transference neurosis as the criterion suggests that, after termination, the patient would be able to make use of the analyst’s insight and the analytic activity in his or her own self reflection after analysis. It is useful to consider what the literature suggests about these potential benefits.

In her article in this issue, Heather Craig describes findings from her research about the adult patient’s reported negative experience of the analysis after termination and recommends that our theory and technique of termination be reexamined and revised in light of this research. Craig’s research on the postanalytic experience of psychoanalytic candidates is surprising in terms of the degree of dissatisfaction the survey subjects report. The survey results showing problems with the termination phase of adult analysis, although not exactly comparable, resonates with papers in the child analytic literature that claim that it is common for child analyses to either end prematurely or because of parental considerations (Weiss, 1991; Novick & Novick, 1991; Chusid, 1991).

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1 Examples of important papers on the subject in the 1970s following this trend include Abrams (1978) and Van Dam, Heinecke, and Shane (1975).

2 Contributors to the child analytic literature writing in the 1990’s challenged that difference, insisting that just as in adult analysis, the “inequa non” of a child analysis is the development and resolution of a transference neurosis (Chusid, 1991; Weiss, 1991).

3 The discussion of two child analytic cases in a workshop at a recent meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association emphasized the importance of resolution of the transference neurosis in the termination phase (Workshop for Chairmen and Faculty of Child and Adolescent Analysis Programs, June 7, 2005).

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4 Other of technique
Craigie's work is also consistent with Fabricius and Green (1995), who stress the need to allow the termination process to be "child-led," and with Ablon's (1988) emphasis on the importance of intuitive factors in the timing of termination.

Craigie's research is welcome because outcome studies of any kind are rare in psychoanalysis, and also because the results challenge traditionally held beliefs about termination. Craigie provides excellent suggestions to emphasize a relational psychoanalytic approach to improve our way of conducting the termination phase. I believe we can benefit from looking even further, beyond psychoanalytic theory, for additional new ideas about the termination process. In particular, I believe it is useful to consider how moment-to-moment, local level, interactive process and the conceptual tools to understand the local level can be helpful in understanding termination and analytic change, a perspective shared by others (see, e.g., Stern, Sander, & Nahum, 1998; Boston Change Process Study Group, 2003, 2005; Stern, 2004; Tronick, 2004).

Psychoanalysis is at the level of complex relational patterns and symbolic meaning communicated by language, and as such it is critical for framing the largely implicit and nonverbal moment-to-moment. For example, transference is a powerful concept and a therapeutically useful one, but how is it actually accomplished, in the moment-to-moment experience of patient and analyst? I hope to show, with clinical examples, that these local level processes—which establish and reestablish the therapeutic connection and provide means of making meaning—are important during the termination stages of analytic treatment, as well as during the initial stage and, indeed, during any period of major reunion or repair. Careful study of the moment-to-moment level of analytic process requires additional tools and conceptual models. In my work, I find conceptual models of the change process derived from infant research and consistent with dynamic systems theory—with the qualities of nonlinearity, unpredictability, variation, and the search for complexity—particularly useful. The following sections summarize one such important model and the technique of videotape microanalysis.

DYADIC EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS MODEL

Tronick's (1998) dyadic expansion of consciousness model (hereafter, dyadic expansion) is derived from infant research and is consistent with dynamic systems theory, a nonlinear theory of growth and development originating in the natural sciences. According to dyadic expansion, people are continuously making meaning of their experience, and the meanings they make and the ways they have of making meaning can be rigid and maladaptive, or flexible and adaptive. When these meanings and ways of making meaning are rigid and constraining, they cause symptoms, because they limit the individual's ability to make use of his interactions with his physical and social environment to continue to grow and develop. Dynamic systems theory holds that in order for a living system—such as a human being—to survive, it must continue to grow in complexity and coherence. However, according to the principles of dynamic systems theory, letting go of the old meaning means giving up organization, and since change is unpredictable and messy, there is no guarantee that new organization will be created, nor that it will be as good as the old. It means risking chaos.

4Other psychoanalytic writers have looked to open systems theory for general principles of psychoanalytic change and of technique (examples are Schlesinger, 2003; Galatzer-Levy, 2004).
Risking chaos, though, is what happens in normal development, and especially in psychoanalysis, which can be thought of as an intensified growth experience (Galanter-Levy, 2004). Dynamic systems theory explains the analytic process in the most general sense as the analyst’s scaffolding the patient’s movement towards greater complexity and coherence, through the making of new meaning that is more adaptive than the patient’s old meaning (Boston Change Process Study Group, 1998; Schlesinger, 2003; Tronick, 2003, 2005). In contrast with theoretical models that explain new meaning as resulting from the resolution of unconscious conflict, dyadic expansion considers new meaning as being co-created by patient and analyst, using the repertoire of meanings and meaning-making processes contributed by both—including conflict resolution and other analytic forms of making meaning—in a “bit-by-bit” interactive process.

The interactive process referred to in dyadic expansion involves the patient and analyst first making a connection that helps the patient to achieve regulation in multiple domains—such as affect, physiological arousal state, and cognition. Then the two of them must take the necessary risks in opening up the old meanings and meaning-making processes to allow—in the mutual apprehension of each other’s meanings—the creation of new meaning and ways of making meaning. This said, it is also true that “connection” that is a relationship grows out of meaning making. Perhaps it is best described in terms of mutual regulation being “the necessary but not sufficient condition for developing a relationship” (E. Z. Tronick, 2006, personal communication).

The patient and the analyst have to do two things together simultaneously—mutually regulate affect (and other states) and co-create meaning. The interplay between these two activities is inherent to the nature of arousal, affect and physiology, because all of these processes include both energy-like intensity dimensions and meaning. The regulating connection must be continually restored, as it is strained or even ruptured during the coming apart of the old meanings. In other words, the establishment of this regulating connection is not a one-time event, but a continually operating process. The closest analogous analytic term, perhaps, would be therapeutic alliance, or working alliance, which also can be strained from time to time during analysis, but in this model the strain (errors, mismatches, misattunements) are inherent and unavoidable. The connection I am talking about is part of the core process of change, because out of the reparation or regulation of mismatches something new may emerge. It is also a crucial part of what the patient takes away from a successful analysis—effective ways of making a connection with another person and within oneself. According to dyadic expansion, at termination, the patient would be expected to have enhanced meaning-making competencies that, in essential ways, correspond to what

5 Another useful concept derived from infant research and dynamic systems theory, is Sander’s (1983) notion of “recognition.” Sander explains that according to dynamic systems theory, the developing infant needs both the experience of “being together with” the caregiver and also the experience of “being distinct from” her. The infant needs to be helped to achieve and maintain adequate regulation by the caregiver, and also needs to be helped to develop competency in initiating his own actions. The former is developed through mutual regulation in the infant-caregiver dyad, and the latter is achieved as the caregiver recognizes the infant’s self-initiated actions and competencies. The competence of self-regulation and self-organization becomes an essential part of the infant’s sense of agency, and if that competence becomes “an enduring configuration of adaptation in the system,” the stage is set for experiencing the continuity of ‘sense-of-self-as-agent’” (Sander, 1983, p. 588). This continuity of self-as-agent could be seen as what a patient carries away after a successful analytic treatment, but it is not unique to analysis. Instead, it results from every successful growth experience. Also it is never completed, but is always in evolution.
analytic theory refers to as “self-analyzing” capacity, or what Fonagy, Gergely, and Jurist (2002) describe as “mentalization.”

THE METHOD OF VIDEOTAPE MICROANALYSIS

I have described the use of videotape in my clinical practice elsewhere (Harrison, 2003, 2005). To develop information for this article, I reviewed the videotapes of the analytic treatments of Laura and Caroline, including material during termination, as well as materials at other points in the analyses. I recalled having been struck by the similarity between Laura’s first session and the session immediately following her first summer break, and it seemed to me that the reunion experience in Laura’s session after the summer break revealed something important about the preparation for our final separation. As I studied these tapes, I thought of the tapes of Caroline’s analysis and decided to explore whether there were similar patterns in those tapes of an adult analysis. The two Laura tapes and a tape from the termination period of Caroline’s analysis provided the data for this exploration of termination. Unfortunately, I had no tape for Laura’s termination, and thus the more traditional means of recording analytic sessions—the analyst’s reconstructed memory and notes—must suffice.

MICROANALYSIS OF CHILD ANALYSIS

Microanalysis of the material from the tapes of Laura’s first analytic hour illustrates the “putting together the bits and pieces” of meaning, in a process scaffolded by implicit patterns of repetition and rhythm. In the first six-minute clip of the session, Laura moves from an exclusive engagement with her mother, who is present in the room, to play with me. Then she moves from a cautious, tentative play in which she does not allow me to take an active role, to a more animated, collaborative play. Finally, later in the session, Laura and I are able to develop rich symbolism in pretend play. This section provides information on how this change occurs, as an illustration of the type of moment-to-moment process and co-creativity that is revealed by videotape microanalysis. After showing similar material from an adult analysis, I then show how this same process is apparent in termination and how considering the constancy of this process provides insights on the nature of termination.

While Mother and Laura are involved with each other, I maintain a periodic, low-key background activity modeled after Laura’s movements in the dolls’ house. The implicit goal of this activity is to maintain a level of engagement with Laura that allows her to keep her initiative but also communicates my availability to play. The sequence starts out with Laura’s attention focused exclusively on her mother. She is comparing the size of my dolls’ house with hers. It is not only in her focus of attention, but also in the type of engagement, that Laura secures her bond with her mother. She draws close to her mother by excluding someone else.

This behavior illustrates habitual ways of Laura’s being with someone—in an idealizing or devaluing dependency, or in a competitive rivalry for an exclusive position. Thus, she clings to her idealized mother or devalues her disappointing mother, and she competes with her brother or father for her mother’s attention. These ways of being with someone are rigid and maladaptive. They are essentially pre-Oedipal in that they cannot accommodate the complexity of triadic relationship
patterns, but Laura is not incapable of triadic relationships. Rather, it is the challenge of engaging in triadic relationships as a 4-year-old girl in her particular family that is beyond her capacities. The imagined loss of her mother presents a threat that that causes her to hold tight to these simpler, less flexible patterns and keeps her from taking the risk required to change—including the risk of falling in love with her father.

Laura moves towards her mother in an expansive gesture, while her mother, who wants her to play with me, moves towards contraction. In response to her mother’s “down-regulating” remark—“Well, it has the same number of rooms, I think.”—bracketed by qualifiers and gently contradicting Laura’s assertion, Laura moves from a comment about “that big” to a comment about a “little corner.” Then when her mother says, “Mmhm” in a musical voice, Laura turns immediately to me. We can assume that Laura has heard this “Mmhm” many times before in permission-giving exchanges.

Having turned to me, Laura speaks to me for the first time. “That’s so no one can get in the room!” she says. This is an interesting, mixed communication. She proposes to indicate how to keep someone out, but she offers this information in a friendly, confidential sort of way—and she offers it to me, who a moment before was the intruder! I respond affirmatively—“Yeah, that’s a good idea,” and then offer her an alternative way of being together. “How about giving me something to do?” I am suggesting that maybe she and I can do something together without her having to give up her initiative, which at this point also means giving up her mother. This way of making meaning together with me is more flexible and new, and therefore involves taking risks.

Laura’s response is another complex communication. She says, “I don’t know … yet.” But she tips her chin up at me and gives me a coy look. The multiple communications are not all in language. There are many things going on at the same time—bits and pieces of meaning in words, facial expression, body movement, gaze—and what the two of us do is co-create a gestalt from all of them, a new meaning that goes something like, “I don’t want your help right now, but let’s keep doing this together.” This is actually not one single meaning, but an ongoing flow of partial meanings that are in continual evolution, attempting to ascertain each other’s intentions and affects, so that we can join each other and correct mismatches, with the goal of keeping on doing something together.

Laura then makes another interesting remark. She says, “This room has only beds,” with an accent on this and only. I respond, “Only beds.” By naming “beds” and indicating that they belong in the dolls’ house Laura is moving us forward in preparation for pretend play. By using the word “only,” she reinstates the exclusionary theme. In my response to her, I use repetition to keep the bits and pieces in the air, so to speak, while she and I decide what to do with them. It seems at this moment that it is not so much the verbal content of Laura’s remark as the polarity of its structure that communicates her intent. We are co-creating a procedure for not having to choose. In this instance, the procedure or way of making meaning attempts to protect her against having to choose between two cherished alternatives—playing with me or staying with her mother. The new meaning-making process is more inclusive and complex, but because it is new, it is less coherent. She and I will have to regulate her carefully during this risk-taking activity.

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5Fivaz et al. have shown that infants are capable of triadic family relationship patterns. The constellation of factors influencing the development of Oedipal behavior as it is observed in 3- to 4-year-old children is more complicated. In Laura’s case, it is the clinging rigidly to the simpler relationship patterns and the inability to take the risks of trying out alternatives—especially alternatives that include strong affect, intense arousal states—that contributes to her symptomatology.
Laura elaborates this procedure in her next communication. "This room only has beds, and that room only has beds." Again, her remark doesn't make sense at face value alone. The two accents on this and that, reestablish the rhythmic polarity. She seems to be saying to me, "Yes, this is where I want to be—with you, but not having to choose between you and Mother." The procedure for managing competition by co-creating dynamic polarities of evenly weighted alternatives is now part of our repertoire. While we are using this procedure, she can allow herself the physical freedom to move around the dolls' house with greater comfort.

Laura ponders whether she should put "two pink beds" in a room. Her emphasis on the word "pink" calls my attention to the fact that the beds are painted pink and blue and white on different sides, and offer the opportunity for exploring a theme about gender. I want to join her in this without taking away her initiative, so I use the form of our new meaning-making procedure. I begin with a validation of her assertion—"That's a good idea!"—and then add, with less prosodic emphasis, "And then if you turn them over, they can be blue." She accepts my idea with alacrity, exclaiming, "Oh, I know! Two blue beds." I have been associating to blue being a boy's color, and to the fact that she has two brothers as well as a father. I want us to take a step further in the direction of gender, but only if that is OK with Laura. I am at the same time attending to her state of regulation. I again choose to stay within our procedure for managing the threat of loss, and I say, "Pink and blue and white and pink." Laura joins me, saying, "Yep, and turn this over, and..." I am using the technique of repetition with variation on a theme, in an effort to keep the two poles or possibilities available, in order to give us a chance to see them together again once more. The variation also gives us a tiny nudge in the direction of a potential new meaning because it indicates direction towards greater complexity.

Now Laura declares that she is making a "huge bedroom." The exchange in which Laura and I explored the possibilities of new alternative meanings in terms of boys and girls perhaps has vitalized her. She brings her own meanings, which includes ways of thinking about herself as a girl in relation to boys—fantasies and dynamic conflicts. "A huge bedroom!" she repeats. "A huge bedroom! Look at it!" She gives an anxious look at her mother. Her expansiveness has taken her into threatening territories of meaning, perhaps about Oedipal or even primal scene fantasies, and the threat of losing her mother. I acknowledge her remark about the big bedroom, but at a lower level of intensity, down-regulating. I want us to keep going. She self-regulates by changing venue and moving from the dolls' house to another basket of toys.

The dolls' house toy basket is full of even more new possibilities—more furniture and dolls, and Laura hums a little in self-regulation. Then she makes another grand gesture in the direction of looking for something, "Tons of blankets." I make a second offer to help. She laughs but does not accept my offer. "Hmmm," she says. "It's always hard to find the blankets." But her tone of voice indicates that she has a positive expectation. She finds one and continues to search. "It's also hard to find the pillows."

After having found the pillows, Laura finds a table and then searches for a second. I offer again to help. This is the third offer in a repetitive pattern of careful initiatives on my part in the direction of greater engagement. This time she accepts. We now have a new way of being together—my being her active partner in a shared intention. Our new way of being together has moved beyond our initial pattern of mutual over-control—Laura controlling the degree of our engagement and Laura's perception of me as controlling in my implicit demand that she leave her mother to play with me. Patterns of mutual over-control underscore her separation anxiety. Our dyadic system now has increased competence and flexibility. She brightens and relaxes visibly. The play moves
on, towards a richly imaginative doll play that includes a devalued girl doll, who tries on what turns out to be a boy’s jacket!

MICROANALYSIS OF ADULT ANALYSIS

Caroline also came to analysis suffering from separation anxiety. When she would get panicky, she would defend against the fear of dissolution of her sense of self by anchoring herself to the concrete details of her life, such as her home and its furnishings. In the analysis, Caroline also focused on “the little things,” such as my way of walking across the room to close the window, the sound of my voice, the rustle of my skirt as I settled myself in my chair. These little things, bits and pieces of the meaning she made of her connection to me—the aspects of the transference—were crucial background phenomena kept accessible to us by the “carrier wave” of the repetitive interactive patterns we created in our speech and other behaviors (Tronick, 2003). Caroline was the agent of the apprehension and the putting together of these little things. These bits of transference meaning made her aware of my presence and of her connection to me, in an active and constantly evolving way.

Caroline had just made a career change to a new job that she loved, and she and I both knew that her new work schedule would make it hard for her to accommodate her analytic hours. In fact, the analysis had been many years in duration and had been successful in many ways. Both she and I felt good about the work we had done together. I thought it was time to end the analysis. It seemed to me that she did too, but she could not bring herself to talk about leaving me. Here is the transcript of part of the session in which I told Caroline my story about Laura. She has just been telling me about her new job and how much it interests her, how much she enjoys the work. She is aware and somewhat amused by her idea that I would not be particularly interested in the new projects that she feels most passionate about. She says that had she been free to think only about her exciting project—and not have to take into consideration her analytic hour—she would have planned her day differently.

C: I wanted to go up to X and get some supplies. But there was a second, then, when I thought, I’ll get it later, … but then I thought, no. I didn’t have a choice. My appointment was at 11:00. I would have preferred to stay there and finish my project, … but I thought I’d rather get up and go back, … but that was not an option.

AMH: It’s really something. A little girl came in the other day, and she got out the dolls’ house she played with me so many times, but ‘specially at the beginning, and she started setting it up, and you could see she was remembering … “Where’s that chair that has only three legs?” And she’s looking through it, and then she says, … she looks up at me with such a guilty, confused expression on her face, and she looks up at me and she says, “I have four play dates this week.”—and I know where she’s going in her mind. She was thinking, “How can I get all involved with going through this doll basket with you and setting up in this complicated way, when … I have to be free to play with my friends?”

C: I can see that.

AMH: And at the very end, she had barely set it up when it was time to stop, and she kept saying, “I really want to play. I really want to play.” And she said, “It’s time already?” And I thought, “Oh, my gosh, what is going on here? How are we going to manage
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this? How are we going to manage to find her the freedom she wants and deserves and still the comfort and security of the knowing that ...” the knowing what?

C: What were you going to say?

AMH: (... the knowing that) “I’m always here?” It’s not quite that, because I’m not always here in the same way, am I?

C: No, I was thinking you were going to say, ... I was thinking you were going to say something about being able to rummage through ... to find the little dolls and things, in a concentrated way. I thought you were going to say that.

AMH: Well, that’s really interesting, because maybe that’s what one can keep.

C: The rummaging?

AMH: Yeah, the rummaging, and the knowing that one has rummaged and one can rummage with someone to find the little things.

C: Yeah, because I was thinking ... exactly. I was thinking, I was imagining ... I don’t know what your dolls’ house has in it, but I was imagining a basket filled with bits and pieces of furniture of dolls and clothes, and you know—all the things that one has in those things. And so I was actually thinking of you rummaging in it with her. I wasn’t thinking of her doing it by herself, necessarily. I don’t mean the doing of it, because you obviously don’t know what she was looking for, necessarily, but I was thinking a little bit the way I think of you with me when I’m not here. Because I know you’re not there ... and I don’t know if I’ve conveyed to you well enough the experience of it—of having you out in the world with me when I know you’re not here. And I’m not inside your mind, and I really don’t know what you think about things, and yet I think I do. And it doesn’t matter if I’m right or wrong. That’s not the issue. But I imagine that you would take pleasure in the things I’m doing and take pleasure in my taking pleasure of them ... the fun things, the little things. So I was thinking about that a little bit, with the little girl and the pieces of the dolls’ house things, as if you would know what she was looking for. And yet how could you, really?

In the videotape of the session, Caroline’s voice has an intense, rhythmic quality, with many repetitive sequences. It is familiar to me, of course. That is the way she talks to me. When she talks like this in long stretches, I am usually silent. She likes my silence, and she also likes what she calls my “rare bursts of speech.” It is a rhythm we have established together over time. It is mutually regulating. The way Caroline is talking cannot be characterized accurately by a general description such as free association. It has a freedom to it, but it is also intimately related to my silences and to the rhythms of my occasional bursts of speech. It is distinctive to the two of us. Although her speech patterns would be recognizable to other people in her life, and my patterns to other people in my life, the particular manner of speaking she uses to control my speech and the gentle way I have of interrupting, is particular to the two of us. It is the carrier wave that makes us implicitly aware of our connection while allowing our conscious attention to focus on the novelty of the language we are exchanging. By now, though, verbal meanings and images are also part of the carrier wave—shared meaning is also part of what regulates us and keeps us going together as we rummage through the thoughts and feelings—sometimes painful and disruptive—that come up in our ending the analysis. In addition to the implicit interactivity and the shared meanings, there is the co-creative process of making meaning, an activity we share that corresponds to Laura and my taking things out of the doll basket and looking at them—the rummaging.
Caroline says, “So I was thinking about ... that a little bit ... with the little girl ... and the pieces of the dolls’ house things ... as if you would know ... what she was looking for, and yet how could you, really? ... You’re not inside other people’s minds.” She is putting together in one sentence two potential meanings of my rummaging with Laura—one that I know what Laura is looking for, that I can know the contents of her mind, and one that I cannot know what is in Laura’s mind. Perhaps she is playing with the meaning of owning the contents of her own mind. How can we be and not lose each other? She speaks in the familiar pattern, with a rather uniform tone and a rhythm of staccato pauses in which the pauses do not come when you expect them in relation to the verbal meaning. There is also a marked emphasis on the first know, a somewhat lesser emphasis on the could. There is a quiet, almost breathless quality, communicating intense affect.

During her speech, my face (on the video) expresses sadness. I must be thinking of saying goodbye to her. I must be thinking about how I am going to miss her. I also understand, though, that she wants to leave me and move on. Caroline is right that I am taking pleasure in the thing she is doing and that I take pleasure in her taking pleasure in them. I felt the same about Laura’s play dates. Just as I appreciate Caroline’s enhanced self-regulatory competency, I notice the ways in which she has recently set her own agenda. I take a special satisfaction in my appreciation of an emerging distinction between her and me—for example, in my awareness that I am not particularly interested in Caroline’s new work and in the projects that fascinate her so. She speaks about that, too. Along with the sadness, there is a sense of relief associated with the awareness of a willingness to let each other go. This willingness is based on our recognition of each of our uniqueness in the context of our intimacy.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING TERMINATION**

As Laura and I sorted through the doll basket, she and I were cocreating both the meanings and meaning-making processes that Laura needed to free herself from her rigid attachment to her mother and her sense of herself as bad and defective. I think of the rhythm and repetition of our gestures and words as a *carrier wave* that brought with it the bits of meaning—the symbolic meanings of pink and blue, for example, or of blankets—so that they could hang in the air between us while we decided what to do with them. Without these carrier waves, these fragile bits might disappear, blown away by the threat of their emerging significations of the rigid meanings Laura had made of her aggression, meanings about defectiveness and loss. These meanings—cognitive, affective, and bodily meanings—were dysregulating to Laura. The way of making meaning that includes repressing them was constraining.

Yet although constraining, in this repressed form the rigid meanings were “the devil she knows”—or, in dynamic systems theory terms, an established attractor state. To take the risk of trying out a new way of making meaning other than repression would also be dysregulating, perhaps to the point of panic. But kept in bits, carried along by the regulating repetition and rhythm of our voices, the meanings—her meanings and mine—could stay within our capacity to regulate the arousal and affects provoked. Once regulated, her rigid old meanings of defectiveness and loss could open up to make their component bits of meaning available for the creative elaboration of new, more flexible meanings. It is the new meanings, and also the new ways of making meaning, that Laura would take away with her when she said goodbye to me. They would not be the same at
girl...and the pieces, and yet how could their in one sentence Laura is looking for, a Laura's mind. Perhaps. How different can a uniform tone and a term in relation to the other emphasis on affect. Thinking of saying understand, though, sure in the things she about Laura's play I notice the ways in appreciation of an art that I am not particular. She speaks about awareness of a will; of our uniqueness.

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the meanings and attachment to her and repetition of our - the symbolic meaning the air between us agile bits might dis-meanings Laura had -ings —cognitive, affiliating meaning that in-were "the devil she . To take the risk of dysregulating, perturbation and rhythm of tactility to regulate the effectiveness and lossative elaboration of of making meaning, I'd not be the same at

these two points of time—in the first session and in the last—but each would include the same essential component bits and pieces, rhythms and repetitions.

Caroline and I were also rummaging, to use her word. Like in a rummage sale, each of us was going through old things that belonged to each other, but that were also part of what we had created together, and if one of us has a need for something, it would become new to her in her acquisition of it. It was like Laura taking things out of her doll basket and looking at them, deciding if and where she wanted them in her emerging new organization of the doll's house. Each relationship had its own particular style of co-creative meaning-making and its own collection of bits and pieces chosen and not chosen. Each style of co-creative meaning-making, and each collection of bits and pieces of meaning collected in the meaning-making, is present in an initial version in the first analytic hour. Each way of making meaning and each collection of meanings is also identifiable in the last.

What do these observations tell us about termination? The processes of co-creation and meaning-making suggest that termination is not a result, like a resolution, nor like a definitive ending. Instead, it is useful to see termination as part of a process, of meanings into a new and more coherent form. Even the meaning of termination itself must be made sense of. Accordingly, after termination we expect that the process will continue. The notion that an analysis does not finish with termination is of course not a new idea. What is different is the notion that the ongoing process can be conceptualized through an understanding of the events in the moment-to-moment time frame and that this process can be seen clearly in videotape microanalysis. The issues that will be dealt with after termination, as we know, will be the same issues as those in the analysis, although somewhat changed, and new issues will emerge, to be worked on in new ways that also retain elements of the old.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has been years now since I have said goodbye to Laura. There are times when the words dining room come into my head attached to the sing-song cadences of Laura's speaking them when she was setting up the doll's house. It has given special meaning to dining rooms for me. There are many other things I remember about her, but the tone and rhythm of her speech is particularly poignant. It is not exactly a remembering, but rather a sensing of her and of her way of being with me. It is also years now since I have said goodbye to Caroline. There are times when I remember her, too. Similar to Laura, my ways of remembering Caroline include, but are also different from, the ways of recapturing ways of being with her. What do I mean by that? The bits of verbal meaning and the nonverbal meanings, such as patterns of rhythm and repetition I observe in the video-tape, are present in my mind today. However, they are present in an incipient form. I do not notice them unless I reach for something to make sense of some new experience and happen to pick something from one of those old relationships, and this is often implicit. Most often—and I think most clinicians would agree—this happens in my attempts to understand something going on in my clinical work. Sometimes, however, it occurs in my reflections on my own life and experience. Rather than intruding on my conscious agenda, these partial meanings and ways of making meaning support it, because now they are part of my current repertoire, and I use them to create new meanings of my own.
The search for new ways of looking at termination invites us to consider the moment-to-moment interactive process and nonlinear developmental theory to help us make sense of this moment-to-moment world. The way the observational data of the moment-to-moment world can be integrated into useful clinical theory is not yet clear. The technique of videotape microanalysis—which allows me to observe the elements of meaning that Laura and I, and Caroline and I, use to make a connection and to make meaning at the beginning and at the end of the treatment—offers some initial means of developing such an integration. Tronick’s dyadic expansion of consciousness model provides a conceptual foundation that allows one to organize these observations. These and other concepts and tools can be used to enrich our understanding of termination, as well as our understanding of the nature of the analytic process.

REFERENCES


The moment-to-moment sense of this moment world can be seen as microanalysis—roline and I, use to treat—offers vision of consciousness these observations. Termination, as well


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