

Translating the Infantile: The Psychoanalyst's Receptivity to Early and Unarticulated Experiences as a Path to Emotional Freedom

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In this paper, the author explores how psychoanalysis fosters emotional freedom through the analyst's receptivity to unrepresented infantile aspects of the patient's psyche. The paper examines the transformative potential of the psychoanalytic encounter as a space where unconscious constraints are enacted, articulated, integrated, and ultimately released, enabling patients to reconnect with hidden or split-off parts of themselves.

These ideas are illustrated through the case of Ms. B, a woman constrained by an internalised split between an idealised father and a devalued mother. Through the analytic process, Ms. B's trust and vulnerability—expressed via states of regression and 'hibernation'—enabled her to reimagine her relationship with her internal mother and access previously unprocessed emotions. The analytic space facilitated her shift from avoidance and fragmentation toward authentic engagement with her inner and relational world.

Reflecting on Ms. B's case, the author emphasises the analyst's role in fostering this freedom through openness, attunement, and trust in unconscious dynamics. Drawing on the works of Bollas, Winnicott, and Bion, the author underscores that freedom in psychoanalysis, paradoxically fostered through surrender and the structure of the analytic frame, is not a fixed state but a gradual, relational process that creates a transformative space for both analyst and analysand.