

Interior Space Design for Psychotherapy Sessions

IRINA-ANA DROBOT

Affiliation: Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages
Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, Romania
Email: anadrobot@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to analyze the elements that can bring a state of well-being to the client in the setting of psychotherapy sessions. Every element has its own effect on the client; according to Davies (2018), for example, windows that allow the passage of sunlight could bring about a state of calm and relaxation; plants, as they are a part of nature, can also contribute to mental well-being; the way therapist and client sit is also meant to improve their relationship, and establish it on equal and friendly terms; colors should also be chosen to suggest a soothing atmosphere, and, to this purpose, greens and blues are recommended. Psychological and cultural perceptions of the psychotherapy space design will be considered, together with the recommendations of psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud. By examining past and present trends and recommendations, we could draw general conclusions about the psychotherapeutic relationship and the way it can be facilitated by space design.

Keywords: transference, color psychology, psychoanalysis, couch, emotional well-being

Introduction

The success of a psychotherapy cure does not depend only on the relationship established between psychotherapist and patient, as a result of transference, which should be, ideally and mainly, one of trust for the patients to be able to complete their treatment. The clients should be comfortable in the presence of the psychotherapist, trust them well enough so that they can talk about their issues in a relaxed way, and confess their deepest fears, wishes, and thoughts without feeling uncomfortable or judged. The psychotherapist should be neutral and allow the client to express themselves freely. In this way, the client would not be prompted to hold anything back. Resistances are, however, inevitable, especially when the clients need to admit something to themselves, regardless of how trustworthy the therapist is.

Resistance may have to do with inhibitions related to the clients' education and some issues they can find sensitive. However, to be able to say that the patients have gone through an efficient treatment, they need to overcome the resistance to become healthy from a psychoanalytic point of view (Spotnitz, 1952, p. 3).

Another element that should make the client feel at ease within the therapeutic setting is interior design, a topic on which the present paper is going to focus. While we may tend to think that the setting of the analytic session may not be so important—since we often tend not to be aware of our surroundings, and since we have adapted sessions to the online medium, as well as psychotherapy to phone discussions—there is an effect of the environment on our state of mind, and we are unconsciously influenced by our surroundings. When we are in a new place, we tend to be highly aware of it. Otherwise, we tend to get used to our everyday surroundings, to the point where we no longer pay any attention to them. We may feel anxious in an unknown place, for example, in unfamiliar streets and cities. In such cases, tourists may need guides to make them feel comfortable. Some interior settings can also make us feel more comfortable than others. Usually, rooms with too many unordered objects can disturb our concentration and make us feel tired psychologically to the point where we are no longer productive if we need to work there. Well-being is generally associated with less cluttered homes, although it is all, eventually, a matter of subjectivity (Rogers & Hart, 2021).

According to environmental psychology (Moser & Uzzell, 2023, pp. 419–445), or space psychology, we always interact emotionally and mentally with our surroundings (Ittelson, 1974). We can interact within psychoanalytic therapy, with the psychoanalyst, as a patient, but we also, inevitably, react to the surrounding interior design. Our state of mind can be influenced by the kind attitude of the psychoanalyst, who is ready to listen to whatever we say. It can also be influenced by the way their office is decorated, how furniture is placed, the presence or absence of a couch, how the psychotherapist faces us or sits behind us, whether we lie down or sit on the couch, what each position suggests to us, as well as by the colors chosen for the room and the way we interact emotionally with every element.

We could claim that “environmental psychology, related to the “influence of physical settings” on the “behavior and experience” of human beings (Proshansky, 1974, p. 541), begins with the observations of Carl Gustav Jung at the beginning of the 20th century, who drew attention to the fact that “our homes are a reflection of ourselves, our identity.” Additionally, “How we construct this space is [...] closely connected to our inner narrative and mental state of mind.” As a matter of fact, “everything from how you arrange your sofa to how much sunlight filters through your rooms can have an impact on your emotional

and physical health, whether you're aware of it or not" (Molvar, 2021). These observations can be transferred from homes to offices, especially those of psychoanalysts like Sigmund Freud, whose office was a room located in his own house.

Leaving psychological reactions to our environment aside, we could notice cultural influences over the interior design considered to be the most efficient in therapy. For example, one of the components of cultural identity manifestations, according to the grid devised by Baciu (2013, p. 45), is represented by values. For the Japanese, minimalism (Jantarangsee & Krairit, 2022, p. 55–56) could be considered the main value, which is visible in the way they leave, traditionally, empty spaces in their rooms, feeling much more comfortable, believing that having a decluttered interior can help them be more creative. Their homes, traditionally, are decluttered and with minimum furniture, unlike the houses and palaces in Western cultures. In Middle Eastern cultures, architectural elements are very elaborate and are completely opposed to the value of minimalism. Yet, such cultural specificities can, in turn, have consequences on the state of well-being of every person, regardless of the culture they belong to and the way they have been accustomed to such features of interior design.

When we step, as patients, into the office of a psychoanalyst, psychologist, and any psychotherapist, nothing in our interaction with these professionals is left to chance. The professionals have prepared everything, like for a show, with stage setting, objects, as well as attitude. They have likely thought of everything well before—the way they greet us, invite us inside their office and ask us to take a seat or lie down on the couch and place their furniture and various objects here and there to decorate the room. We could go as far as to claim that the way they prepare the analytic sessions room is part of the professionals' strategy to consolidate the positive transference relationship with their clients. We could view the analysts as friendly hosts, inviting the client into their personal space that should offer a relaxed atmosphere for the client to feel well enough to open up and confess freely within the therapeutic setting. While the discussion with the psychotherapist could look like a casual talk, it will be, at the same time, guided by the analyst in the direction that could be beneficial for the client's therapy.

Literature Review

If we visit the Sigmund Freud museums, originally his houses, in Vienna and then in London, we can get an idea of what Freud's office looked like for analytic sessions. While the London Museum contains his complete office, with the famous couch, in the Museum in Vienna, there is only a photograph of the couch. When Freud fled from Vienna with his family in 1938, as he was threatened by the Nazis, the couch was transported to his home in London.

Thus, we should visualize Freud's office in his London home as follows: the famous couch has "a Persian rug laid over it" (Nayeri, 2022), and behind it, we can see Freud's chair. At the same time, Freud was surrounded in his office by "books, antique vessels and statuettes" (Nayeri, 2022).

The couch is a central piece added by Sigmund Freud to the offices of psychotherapists who followed. His famous couch, seen as a symbolic element of his psychotherapeutic sessions, was a gift brought to him by one of his former patients, Madame Benvenisti, in 1890, who was grateful to him for having helped her (Stevens, 2015). Freud's was the first couch, and it was, in fact, "a Victorian day-bed" (Stevens, 2015) for Victorian ladies in poor health, such as Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, according to the curator of the Freud Museum in London, Ivan Ward. He adds a detail regarding how the patient reacted by offering Freud the couch as a gift: "The idea that a cured patient gave it to him was like his patient saying, 'I'm better, I don't need this anymore'" (Stevens, 2015). Freud also used to sit on a chair "behind the patient," says Stevens (2015), believing that "without making eye contact" the patient could express themselves freely. Generally, the psychoanalysts could get tired and not seem too enthusiastic about what they were hearing from the client, which could be considered bothersome by the patient. The body language or facial expressions could hinder the patients from wishing to communicate their ideas further, in this case. While the psychoanalysts should, ideally, remain neutral when listening to the patient, this is, realistically speaking, not humanly possible, as the psychoanalysts also have personal feelings and worries of their own. Therefore, this position of the analyst behind the patient could allow the latter to relax and be comfortable, not feel that they are boring or silly regarding the ideas coming to their mind. The analysts could then start asking questions when they feel that the patient should develop a certain incident, emotion, or any detail present in their speech if the analyst feels that some important detail lies there that can hinder the patients' emotional life. The couch is an element of the analytic setting that can "create an environment that was clinical yet intimate, allowing a patient to freely explore ideas that could build a picture for a psychoanalyst to work with" (Stevens, 2015).

Why did Freud use this position of standing behind the patient? According to Stevens (2015), he had an experience with a lady who tried "to seduce him" as she was "facing him" while lying down on the couch. At the same time, Freud believed it was too tiring for him "to be stared at" by his patients "for nine hours a day." Additionally, this position of the psychoanalyst, while avoiding direct eye contact with the patient, helped him "be in an almost meditative state," while maintaining neutrality, as the analyst "should not readily intervene" (Stevens, 2015).

We could notice some changes as the practice of psychotherapy has been modernizing. Therefore, according to Stevens (2015), less furniture is used by “psychiatrists working in hospital.” The practice of psychoanalysis as therapy in a Freudian manner has been there until the time of the 1970s. Then, cognitive behavioral therapy was an example of a cheaper method. With these new methods, the couch no longer occupied center stage. What is more, with current psychotherapy methods, the focus is on the client and the way the client wants the session to occur. As an example, some clients may “wish to make eye contact,” while others may not, and, as a rule, “desks are no longer between client and doctor in the consulting room.”

We could also claim that each client can have their own particularities, of which they may not even be aware of themselves. For example, the Romanian Association for Psychoanalysis Promotion published, from 1998 to 2004, the psychoanalysis magazine *OMEN*, in which the members of this association mentioned cases from their clinical practice. One of them involved a young woman who had been abused, and the psychoanalyst felt, intuitively, not to ask her to lie down on the couch during therapy, which would have triggered in her a negative reaction towards the therapist, as all relationships in one’s life can have consequences on the way one views one’s relationship with one’s therapist.

The staple couch in Freud’s office is not the only one he had used, meaning the one given to him by Madame Benvenisti, according to 99percentinvisible.org (Heppermann, 2023). This well-known couch was, in fact, “a plain, beige, divan-style sofa—what some people might call a ‘swooning couch’—which Freud covered in exotic, red Persian carpets and piled up with velvet pillows” (Heppermann, 2023). The patients in Freud’s office, by lying down on the couch “on their backs,” would “look up at the ceiling,” which would force them “to look into themselves rather than, say out a window, or into the face of the analyst” (Heppermann, 2023). The central role of the couch in the analytic session led Imperial Leather Furniture Company from Queens, in New York, to sell lots of coaches “starting in the 1940s” (Heppermann, 2023). This Company had great success “in the 40s, 50s, and early 60s, which some have called the Golden Age of Psychoanalysis” (Heppermann, 2023). Changes came around “in the late 60s,” which marked the moment when “Traditional psychoanalysis fell out of favor,” since “[p]eople started to experiment with alternative therapies and the first generation of anti-depressants” (Heppermann, 2023). This led to a decline in “Analytic couch sales” (Heppermann, 2023). Meanwhile, when psychoanalytic therapy was still popular, inventions led to modifications of the couch design, such as the version patented by Irving Levy, which looked different from Freud’s couch, with its “cozy pile of cushions,” namely “These were sleek, low-to-the-ground, and free of buttons, cushions, and accessories that nervous patients could pick at” (Heppermann, 2023).

How did Freud come to the design of his analytic sessions? Schroeder (2020) writes about the way Freud designed his office in Vienna based on analogies with Egyptian tombs due to his office being an “enclosed space” (Schroeder 2020). This influence of the Egyptian tomb architecture on the interior design of Freud’s office could be summed up as follows: according to the theories of “active room” (Danze, 2005) and “active container” (Quinodoz, 1992), “Freud’s office and the ancient Egyptian tomb were active rooms—closed-off spaces that significantly contributed to the contained individual’s psychic transformation” (Schroeder, 2020). Even the antiquities in his office were related to being “only objects found in a tomb” (Freud, 1909, p. 176, in Schroeder, 2020). About half of his antique objects were from ancient Egypt, from a total of 2000. What is more, exploring someone’s memories and unconscious could be presented by analogy with exploring an ancient tomb: “In *Constructions in Analysis*, Freud related the resurfacing of intact memories in psychoanalysis to the excavation of King Tutankhamun’s intact tomb” (Schroeder, 2020). Other similarities with the ancient Egyptian kings’ tombs may consist of the following: the sofa can be seen as a symbol for the sarcophagus since “Freud’s couch and the coffin denote boxes—active containers—that held and preserved the resting body as the inner being embarked on a psychic, spiritual journey into the afterlife,” the rugs could be seen as the equivalent of mummy cloth, while the terracotta statues could be considered an equivalent of the spirit of the dead physical body (Schroeder, 2020).

To sum up, for Sigmund Freud, the physical space of the office, where the analytic sessions took place, was an “extension of the psyche” as well as a projection of it (Freud, 1938, p. 23). Thus, the office was, by analogy with the Egyptian tomb, a place of change that occurred during the sessions. The process of transformation during therapy could be regarded as an equivalent to “the mummy’s rebirth and transition into the afterlife” (Schroeder, 2020). To draw another analogy with elements of analytic therapy, the unconscious could be seen as “ignorant of time, conserving its objects like an Egyptian tomb” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 106).

Nothing was left to chance in the interior design of Freud’s office. Following this line of thought, we should mention that, as shown by Schroeder (2020), the rugs contained “tactile elements,” as they “stimulated the patient’s senses and psyche” due to the fact that these elements “played an active role in opening the patient’s unconscious mind.” Regarding his antiquities, these were arranged, according to Schroeder (2020), “thematically in his case-like shelves and on his tables.” What is more, Freud details his arrangement of these antique objects as follows:

shortage of space in my study has often forced me to handle a number of pottery and stone antiquities (of which I have a small collection) in the most uncomfortable positions, so that onlookers have expressed anxiety that I should knock something down and break it. That however, has never happened. (Freud, 1901, p. 55)

Everything was orderly in Freud's office, despite the small space (Schroeder, 2020). One suggestion of the way the office in Freud's home was arranged was that of a safe, comfortable environment: "the position of the furniture ... and the space between objects in the [active] room, establishes the sense of intimacy, familiarity, and safety" (Danze, 2005, p. 114). Another purpose of "furniture and object composition" in his office was for these to serve "as a means of orientation," to the point where "Perceptual lines and strategic object orientation defined Freud's and the Egyptian's architectural work," going as far as offering the following impression: "The perceptual axis lines generated by the positioning of Freud's consulting room couch and chair produced the motif of the double" (Schroeder, 2020). Freud's chair was considered the double of the patient's couch, for instance. At the same time, "If we draw a diagonal line through the central, open doorway across Freud's room, we may connect the couch to his desk" (Schroeder, 2020). Another aspect is the following: "[w]e may also connect Freud's consulting room chair to his anthropomorphic study chair" (Schroeder, 2020). The role of these doubles was to create a "sense of security, familiarity, and safety" (Schroeder, 2020).

However, the way Freud designed his office is not necessarily a template that should be taken over by absolutely all psychotherapists. This was just his approach to the setting, where he brought up a great sense of his personality and his own preoccupations. Psychoanalysis can be seen, according to Gerald (2019, p. 1), as "a private world" since "Psychoanalytic offices are spaces that generally have remained hidden from all but those who come for psychotherapeutic help." Moreover, these spaces "become home to practitioner and patient alike" (Gerald, 2019). Freud's office may have been more intimate and convincing as a home for him and his patients, as he was truly in his own home. This does not happen nowadays with some professionals. As we are, nowadays, more in the business world when it comes to psychotherapy offices, having large homes is rare. Most of us live in blocks of flats and have little space. We cannot have an office in our small flat and invite patients there as disclosing too much to the patient of the life of the therapist is not the topic of the analytic sessions. Some professionals nowadays may have inherited property from their parents or grandparents and use it as an office. Thus, the conditions in which professionals can have the opportunity to house their office should also be considered, and how their offices could and should be decorated accordingly.

Materials and Methods

Decorating the interior of a psychotherapist's office for analytic sessions should consider the historical times we live in, as well as the demands and expectations of the clients. As a general tendency nowadays, "focus has shifted from the exterior furnishing of houses to the interior due to the need for comfort, space, elegance, and personal privacy" (IvyPanda, 2022). Therefore, the need to focus on the interior design of the analytic space could be seen as requiring even more attention since people living during our times seek to find comfort more than in the past within the interior space. This could be because we have a more hectic life, with noise pollution, lots of traffic, as well as crowded streets, which can only lead to a sense of feeling tired and uncomfortable. While we are surrounded by masses of people every day on our way to and from work, we still feel isolated as our families are less and less numerous, we follow traditions less and less, and we do not genuinely communicate with people around us. Most of us move from one place to another due to increased mobility, and the result is that we find ourselves in unfamiliar places. We lose touch with our families and circles of friends. All these tendencies of the world nowadays could be due to the worldwide tendency of increased individualism (Santos et al., 2017), referring to the isolation of individuals as well as to the phenomenon of globalization, meaning the movement of individuals all over the world.

The very structure of our times may have to do with our need to start exploring ourselves in a therapeutic setting. This alienating world (Drămnescu, 2013), which is chaotic since there are no single, objective truths, as claimed by Modernist and Postmodernist thought, which are times when everything is questioned (Downing, 2006), could increase our need to be listened to sincerely by someone, even if that person is a professional and not a friend. We feel the need to confess and for our confession to be considered. Otherwise, as we see in contemporary novels, such as the ones by Graham Swift, the characters deliver their monologues only for the reader. Otherwise, the other characters do not listen and do not understand them. They can even be estranged from one another, with no possibility of reconciliation, as in the case of the father in *The Sweetshop Owner* with his wife and daughter, from whom he never gets the wanted affection.

The interior design of the therapist's office could be seen as a non-verbal communication means on the part of the therapist, trying to invite the clients to feel good, to feel welcome, in a warm and relaxing environment where they can feel safe enough and also listened to with the most attention. Naturally, therapy is more than simple socializing and friendly talk, yet the therapists do share some features with friends: they are empathetic and need to understand and show that they are understanding towards the emotions that the patient

expresses during therapy about a certain issue in their lives. The interior decoration of the office can be seen, to some extent, as the equivalent of the therapist's personal space of work, while the therapist also has the patients' reaction in mind and their well-being.

We could see Freud's interior decoration of his office as a starting point for further developments of therapists' offices. Therapists can choose to express their own personalities through how they decide to decorate their offices. As an example, we could look at the decisions of Ernest Jones, a British psychoanalyst (1879–1958), who took a different approach. Thus, "consulting rooms designed by Ernst Freud were free from visual clutter, abundant artwork, decorative figurines, and oriental rugs" (Welter, 2012). This "visual clarity" in Ernest Jones' consulting room was described by Pryns Hopkins, a psychoanalyst from Santa Barbara "in the mid-1920s," as "large, but unlike that of his mentor, Freud, it was nearly bare of furniture and gloomy" (Welter, 2012). Ernest Jones broke off with Freud's vision of the consulting room, as he favored "modern designs, delineating an interior that obviously aimed to impress itself as little as possible on the patient's mind" (Welter, 2012).

Ernest Jones' view of the interior design of the consulting room shows how he can differ from Freud and his ideas about how a consulting room should look. At the same time, both analysts can be understood as leaving their own personal mark on the design of the analytic sessions' office.

This practice of adapting the consulting room to the personality of the therapists and to the needs they perceive that the patients may have when they decorate the office is still going on today. The idea regarding the well-being that should be suggested to the patient when being inside the room still guides the understanding of decorating the office, as can be seen in the article by Davies (2018). Davies (2018) admits that psychotherapists can have their own approach regarding the interior decoration of the office, yet they all keep the psychological well-being of the patient in mind when they prepare the room, together with offering their patients a few details about their personalities so that the therapist could look like usual persons, and that patients can be relaxed in their presence. Yet, the personal details of the therapist's personality should undergo a rigorous process of selection as the patient should not be lost in details regarding the therapist's personal life, since the purpose of the therapy is to focus on the patient's needs. Yet, a few ideas about the therapists' lives and personalities could make them likable and, at the same time, trustworthy. Meanwhile, the therapists also suggest their availability to the patient, as the therapists could be interpreted as showing, for instance, artwork they like, as being a person that is sensitive towards art and willing to share this. However, the main feature therapists suggest is their emotional availability to have a kind attitude towards the patient.

The therapists can be interpreted as having disclosed something personal through the objects present in the room regarding their interests, and now, it is implied, that the client could feel safe enough to do the same.

One main element generally agreed upon in our contemporary times regarding the interior design of therapists' offices is related to color. We can resort to the domain of Color Psychology, which claims that we are always influenced emotionally by colors around us, even if we are not consciously aware of this (Haller, 2017; Mikellides, 2012). The therapists, when choosing a certain design for their office, will always have in mind colors that create a sensation of well-being for their clients. As an example, "light and soothing" colors are preferable, "such as shades of green or blue" (Pearson and Wilson, 2012, mentioned in Davies 2018).

In close relationship with colors is the use of lighting. This is because lighting offers colors with certain hues that may vary, which should also be considered regarding their effect on the client. If the lighting is adjustable (e.g. if the clients can use lamps and choose the amount of light, they find comfortable), they will feel that their needs are addressed, and can also express them (Davies, 2018).

Windows can also contribute to making colors more comfortable by letting, for instance, the "sunlight in" so that "space looks and feels bright, open, and warm" (Davies, 2018).

Placement of furniture is also significant: for instance, the way furniture is used for sitting by therapist and client should be "nonconfrontational and conducive to dialogue," while the chair for the client should be found "a spot where they can see the door to add to their sense of free will and safety" (Davies, 2018). Additionally, the furniture should be appropriate and comfortable for all ages that are considered for therapy. Moreover, "round tables may facilitate more interactive communication" (Davies, 2018).

The materials chosen also matter. Thus, the use of "soft furnishings and flooring materials (like rugs or carpets) provides a soothing feel to a room and creates a sense of comfort" (Davies, 2018). Natural materials are preferred: "people prefer natural-colored wood with a grain rather than surfaces without a grain." Wood is also considered to be more comfortable than "chrome or glass" (Davies, 2018). At the same time, floors and walls made of natural wood should not represent over 45% of a room's surface in order to maintain their properties of relieving stress (DeAngelis, 2017). As we consider natural elements, we should also mention that "components of nature" such as plants placed in the rooms, "views of serene landscapes," and "access to a courtyard or nearby garden" can be beneficial to clients' well-being (Davies, 2018). Plants placed in pots,

decorating the office of a therapist, could suggest, symbolically, “a sense of growth” (Zencare, 2023), which can be spiritual through gaining insight by going through therapy. It should be noted that Sigmund Freud’s home in London did have a garden.

Following the line of trusting the analyst, clients should feel that they are not overheard when they talk about their problems (Davies, 2018).

Personalizing the therapist’s office can be compared to the statuettes Freud had in his office and the books on his bookshelves. These show the interest he had in research and ancient cultures. Some diplomas of the therapist could be used so that the clients feel they are in the presence of a trustworthy professional. At the same time, “it is best to keep personalization to a minimum, to help the client feel ‘at home’ within the space, and not like a visitor” (Davies, 2018). Objects such as Freud’s statuettes could be present in therapists’ offices under the forms of “a piece of serene artwork, a soothing tabletop fountain, a calm spot away from the therapy space, or even comforting toys” that have the role of allowing the client to take a break “from discussing some emotionally uncomfortable topics” (Davies, 2018). Additionally, artwork placed in the therapist’s office could offer the clients the feeling that they are getting to know their therapist more, as the very choice of a certain artwork could be interpreted as saying something about the therapist’s personality (Zencare, 2023).

A piece of advice that combines the color symbolism and the colors’ psychological effect on the clients, with the personalization of the therapist’s office, consists of using “pops of colors” (Zencare, 2023). These “pops of colors” have the following role: they “keep the eye moving throughout the room.” Thus, clients’ attention can be pleasantly drawn. The “pops of color” can be found under the forms of “throw pillows, or artwork that breaks with the main color theme of the room.” For instance, if some armchairs of deep blue are chosen, the clients are going to feel welcome and invited to take a seat.

Blue and yellow items, such as pillows, can, in turn, be inviting the client to sit on a couch. Abstract artwork using blue shades on a wall can also attract the client’s attention immediately. Using yellow pillows and armchairs in the waiting room can suggest a sense of well-being since these can be associated with sunlight.

Similar advice to Davies (2018) regarding lighting, use of sunlight, natural elements, “positive distractions” to offer the client a break from uncomfortable and emotionally draining issues they had confessed about, using tables’ shapes and chairs’ positions and placement to promote communication, cooperation, and equality, while keeping the clients’ state of well-being and needs first and foremost in mind, is given by DeAngelis (2017),

suggesting that, nowadays, we have reached a common agreement regarding the outlines of interior design of the analyst's office. These are just general lines, of course, and therapists can personalize their office as they wish. Some could even get more inspiration from Sigmund Freud's office by having bookshelves with old-style book designs and statuettes from antique cultures. This is the case of Romanian psychologist Andreea Florentina Sodolescu, who has photographs of her office, showing a desk, statuettes, and bookshelves like those found in Sigmund Freud's office, on her blog, where she gives information about the services she offers, including personal development, hypnotherapy, experiential psychotherapy, as well as work and organizational psychology. In her case, we could interpret this interior design as her showing her passion for Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalytical theories. She confessed her affinity with the father of psychoanalysis, as well as her admiration for him on her Facebook social media account when she posted photographs from her visit to the Sigmund Freud Museum in London.

It is also true that some therapists may choose to hire professional interior design decorators to create a comforting environment for their clients. In Sigmund Freud's time, everything was more personal. As opposed to this, nowadays, interior design can be seen as part of a cold, business image that can be arranged by professional firms. This can make the task of the therapist even harder, namely, to gain their clients' trust, showing the latter that their interior design is a faithful reflection of the therapists' personalities and preferences.

Yet, do all patients feel something about the therapist's consulting room's setting? Or, better put, do they always focus on it? We focus on what is significant at a certain moment, and in the case of therapy, we can focus on the dialogue with the therapist, on what we talk about, or on what we are told by the therapist. The background can become blurred, just as in the case of online platforms, and the patient's focus can be on dialogue and monologue as well as on introspection. Once our surroundings are familiar, we tend to ignore them or blur them mentally and focus on activities and reflections. The question we need to ask in the case of the therapists' office design is related to how long it takes for the patients to neutralize the setting and focus on something else, as well as to rest their minds in between discussions. Patients' reactions to the surroundings could also be subjected to analysis. Through the setting, the analysts express indirectly parts of their personality and preoccupations, while patients may interpret these subjectively and form an image of the analysts that can be far away from reality. The question would then be, whose image are they projecting on the analyst? Their own? Their parents'? Their significant other's?

Results

The relationship of the patient with the analytic setting, which includes furniture and other interior decorations, could be analyzed based on the interaction that occurs with this environment, visible in the patient's emotions. The extent to which the patient is comfortable with the setting should be considered, as the therapist can change the classical setting of Sigmund Freud's office, even giving up the couch and even allowing a face-to-face discussion with the patient, with visual contact if that makes the patient more comfortable. The way the patient feels comfortable or not within the setting, and, especially, why yes or why not, could lead to understanding what traumas or other emotions due to experiences in the past have led to the respective perception. This is a process that could be understood in parallel with the idea of negative transference in the relationship of patient and therapist that is based on the patient's past experiences with parents, family, as well as other adults and peers throughout his life. The way the patient is influenced emotionally by the consulting room setting reflects the way the patient experiences the relationship with the analyst. If the patients are comfortable in the setting, though, at least to some extent, this should be enough to express themselves freely.

The consulting room can be a reflection of the communication process that should go on between analyst and patient, as well as of the way the patient's transformation process is progressing. The various objects and placement of furniture, choice of colors, and decorations such as artwork are all chosen as if based on stage directions. For theatre shows, the scene can be prepared similarly, with meaningful elements and wall decorations. Since the setting is quite static in the scenes in theatre plays, which rely on dialogue and communication among the characters, and not so much on movement as in films, the elements and their position in the setting should be given even more attention in the consulting room.

The very elements chosen for decorating the consulting room and furnishing it become part of the communication between analyst and patient. These elements, through their emotional influence, can be seen as an extension of the process of transference.

Discussion

While the general recommendation for the consulting room nowadays is for it to have a minimalist design and not to be cluttered, as well as for it not to be small and make the patient feel trapped, we could see examples of rooms of successful analysts that contradict these pieces of advice. The most visible example is the office of the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. However, the order that he maintained compensated for the small and cluttered space, and the same could be said about the harmony of all the objects

and furniture items, together with the geometrical lines' setup. While the analogy with the Egyptian tombs could suggest a feeling of being trapped to some patients nowadays, Freud believed that the focus was on the process of looking inward and spiritual transformation.

There are universal symbols in the choice of consulting room elements. For instance, what is generally agreed upon is the comforting effect of sunlight, which is transferred to the yellow color items. The color blue, suggesting the sky, is also considered comforting—as a splash of color, or an invitational item if armchairs have this color. Green is also considered a beneficial color, and, similarly to yellow or the sunlight, green, is present in nature, which could explain why these colors are comforting in interior design.

Conclusion

What matters is for both patient and analyst to have a compatible vision, taste, and appreciation of interior design, and that they should both be comfortable when talking. Some colors, such as red, could suggest aggression or even draw attention too much to the point of exhaustion. It could also give too much energy. Yet, the patient needs to be calm and focus on their inner resources to explore some uncomfortable areas of experience as well as some memories that could bring unpleasant feelings. The setting of the room could be used to calm patients down and offer comfortable conditions for the analyst to find enough resources to help several patients during the same day. Working with other people's emotions, understanding them, and helping them deal with them is also an emotionally consuming type of work for the analyst.

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