

# *XXI INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF PSYCHOANALYSIS*

## **“PSYCHOANALYTIC ENCOUNTER: CONFLICT AND CHANGE”**

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### *“If we are two, we can!” The Dynamic-Transformative Scribble as a psychoanalytic encounter*

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#### *Introduction*

What is considered transformative by psychoanalysis? The interpretation and the "moment of meeting". The first aspect concerns the verbal, declarative, explicit, symbolic aspect that allows reorganizing the intrapsychic environment. The second, involves non-verbal, implicit, procedural, pre-symbolic aspects, which represent special “moments” of authentic personal connection between patient and analyst, which change the relationship and therefore the sense of self of the patient (and of the analyst). In another words, such as interpretation is the therapeutic event that reorganizes the patient's conscious declarative knowledge, the "moment of meeting" is the event that reorganizes the implicit relational knowledge of the patient and the analyst. A "moment of meeting" can create a new intersubjective environment and a modified field of "implicit relational knowledge.

The Dynamic-Transformative Scribble (DT) wants to be a clear and simple appropriate answer to the transformative goal of psychoanalysis.

#### *The origins and current events*

The word “scribble” to the “insiders” immediately recalls the name of Winnicott. On the contrary, what I will present in this article has little to do with that known technique, mainly used in the developmental age.

The Transformative Dynamic Scribble (Scribble DT) was born from an idea of Dr. Antonio Techel, an intuition that has its roots in his psychoanalytic training in close contact with Marcelle Spira, the Swiss psychoanalyst who in the 1960s contributed to the knowledge of the Kleinian school in Italy. Within the supervisory seminars with this eclectic teacher, Antonio Techel began the knowledge of the potential of the use of scribbling, which M. Spira herself had learned from the artists of the Argentine avant-garde. These artists were

together and with the intent to access the images of the unconscious to use in their artistic works, they used this playful system, that is, to close their eyes, to scribble and then to find names for the images that emerged. Dr. Techel senses the potential richness of this “play” and formulates a personal interpretation and technique to be spent in the analytical work with the patients, as a vehicle to visualize the unconscious image of the “bodily self”, one's psycho-corporeal identity. This research and experience of the use of scribbles led him in 2015 to the publication of the book "I can't sleep... I think I will scribble - For a relational aesthetic", published by Borla, in which he exhaustively presents the τέχνη (technique and art) and at the same time makes Marcelle Spira's psychoanalytic and human presence clearly felt, a cultured presence and also expressed in the preface written by Antonino Ferro.

Currently the DT Scribble is studied by a research group of Italian psychoanalysts led by dr. Antonio Techel ([www.newscribble.it](http://www.newscribble.it)) and applied in different clinical contexts and to patients of different ages (children, adolescents and adults).

### **Τέχνη and relational aesthetics**

The technique (τέχνη) of the Scribble DT is very simple and involves a modification of the classical psychoanalytic setting. Patient and analyst are at a table, facing each other. The patient is asked to take a pencil with his/her non-dominant hand, close her/his eyes and draw lines, scribbles, on a blank sheet in a spontaneous and improvised way, without "thinking" too much. Subsequently the patient opens her/his eyes and she/he is invited to find one or more images (which are the parts of the self) in the scribble just traced and he or she has to highlight them with colors and writings; in this moment the analyst also sees them with him. Once this work is completed on the first sheet, she/he repeats everything for two more times, so at the end there are going to be three scribbled sheets with the relative images found. The last step involves the construction of a narration (the phase of integration of the parts of the self), of a story, arranging the scribble according to the time trend of the constructed story.

In a nutshell I have described the external steps of the application of the DT Scribble, but what happens internally to the patient since she/he closes her/his eyes until the final story is told? One patient gave a very clear description:

*“It is difficult to explain how the head ... how from a gesture as simple as it is to draw scribbles with your eyes closed and your hand goes ... come out such an interesting story! ... It is my fantasy that goes ... Then everything that moves inside when the story is elaborated ... are words that come out, but they are not reasoned, that is ... it is my mouth that makes things come out, my head doesn't program them. It is an instinctive thing. When I have to think about history, it's not really that I think about it, but it's ... like when you open a vase and everything comes out. It is the spark, the spark is enough for me and then, without even thinking, the story comes out. And it is tiring! But it is also tiring because I feel that there is something moving... it is something that ... that I don't know! If I had to define this thing ... in English I would say ROLLER COASTER! Because, in my opinion, the scribble has this trend. And it's nice the moment of the descent because that's where one doesn't think ... it's so fast ... telling the story it is so fast that one can't even understand what's going on. And in the end, when all this, that seems simple, is over ... I feel tired!”*

It is essential, after the story told by the patient, to enter the subjective world of the patient, with the free associations of both on the scribble, generating a co-created event that, for its realization, requires the implementation of all the sensory modalities and imaginative available to both the therapist and the patient. The so-called empathic attitude is not enough, an aesthetic attitude is needed in the relationship, considering the word "aesthetic" not in the sense of what deals with beauty and the arts, but in its primary meaning deriving from the Greek verb *αισθάνομαι* (*aisthànomai*), which means "feel through the mediation of the senses".

### *The Dynamic-Transformative Scribble as a psychoanalytic encounter*

What is a "moment of meeting"? The Boston Change Process Study Group highlights the following characteristics:

1. The "moment of meeting" is characterized by a sense of estrangement from the way in which therapy is usually conducted. It is something new that happens, which the usual frame cannot explain or understand. It is the opposite of normal administration.
  2. It cannot be supported or satisfied if the analyst reacts in a way that the patient perceives as merely technical. The analyst must respond with something that is experienced as specific to the relationship with the patient, that expresses the analyst's personal experience and that bears his brand.
  3. A "moment of meeting" cannot be realized with a transference interpretation. You need to access other aspects of the relationship.
  4. It is also a matter of looking at "what is happening here and now among us", placing the emphasis above all on the "now" because of emotional immediacy. It requires spontaneous answers and analyst and patient simultaneously become objects of each other.
- All these characteristic elements of the moment of meeting are found in the experience of the Scribble, because the DT Scribble is mainly an intersubjective experience.

Through a short video of a psychoanalysis session, I will underline the particular technique that involves patient and therapist in a co-construction of explicit meanings of the material emerged from the scribble in order to "dream what still she/he was not dreamt of by the patient and by the patient-therapist couple"; on the other hand it helps to have a "moment of meeting" in the here and now of the session.

Some patient information and video summary:

The patient is a 21 year old boy. He has a borderline personality organization. He stopped school a few years earlier, retired to his room to play video games and he has no social life. He has self-injurious behavior, a depressive state and has had an attempted suicide episode. There is a pharmacological cure and a psychoanalytic psychotherapy once a week. The patient uses the scribble as an expression of the inner destruction and despair he feels. The white space of the sheet puts him in contact with the sense of emptiness and loneliness and brings out a strong anger (tears and cuts the sheets, as if they were the extension of his body). But at the same time, in the encounter with the other (psychoanalyst) a light and a hope emerge: if we are two, we can!