

The Body **IN** Psychoanalysis: Clinical Applications of Neuroscience and Attachment Theory.

Jacqueline A. Carleton PhD.

Both attachment theory and neuroscientific evidence are making increasingly clear the importance of the physical, somatic aspect of the psychoanalytic process. Infants are born with the sympathetic nervous system basically in place, but the relationship with early caretakers is necessary to mold the functioning of the parasympathetic and relationships between emotion, sensation, perception and cognition and behavior. Similarly, fMRI's are able to track some of the changes in both patient and therapist in the psychotherapy session. With the right tools, we are thus able to make use of the almost endless neural plasticity that characterizes us as human beings.

Body psychotherapy, like psychoanalysis, has relied mainly on clinical evidence and well-honed intuition since Freud and then Reich initiated its beginnings. Until fairly recently, body psychotherapy had developed in large part independent of most psychoanalytic theory. Only about 20 years ago did some body psychotherapists begin paying significant attention to developments in developmental psychology and object relations...and more recently the relational and interpersonal schools. The advent of applied neuropsychology (e.g. works by Shore, Siegel, Cozolino) has hastened that process as it validates (and invalidates) and refines techniques and the theories supporting them.

Nonverbal communication is ubiquitous and ever present. At the very least, it signals to the patient what material interests us and what does not. fMRI's measure the resonance between nervous systems, but most of us have a highly developed ability to both measure and use that resonance. We need only to bring it to our conscious awareness and make use of it along with our other clinical skills. This is especially true in the treatment of trauma, which is a disruption, a truncating of the functions of the nervous system.

We do not need any special arrangements or equipment to incorporate this exiled/overlooked aspect of ourselves and our patients into what we do every day. Many of the techniques developed by body psychotherapists over the last 50 years can be seamlessly incorporated into psychoanalytic practice to deepen and enlighten the process.

Dr. Carleton has straddled the two universes of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and body psychotherapy, practicing and teaching both for more than 30 years. She has trained psychotherapists in Europe, Latin America, and more recently the Middle East in addition to teaching and maintaining a private practice in Manhattan.