

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC INVESTIGATION INTO THE  
PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S EXPERIENCE OF USING  
THE PSYCHOANALYTIC COUCH

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to describe and critically explore the psychoanalytic, psychotherapist's lived experience of the technique of using the couch. Through examination of the literature a question was formulated that would disclose the analyst's experience of the technique of using the couch. Four experienced psychoanalytic practitioners who could be operationally defined as 'analysts' were interviewed. Using a phenomenological method the protocols were comprehensively analyzed to produce descriptions of the general structure of the experience. These were then texturally enhanced using interleaved direct citations from the interviews. The structural and textural 'findings' so produced were then hermeneutically dialogued with contemporary psychoanalytic notions of critical discourse and intersubjectivity.

The phenomenological 'findings' of the study disclosed the meaning of the couch as context-based, paradoxical and ambiguous. The couch was found to be a symbol of the analyst as analyst and the process as authentic analysis. Furthermore, at its best, the couch was found to mediate a mode of being that is containing and intimate and in which psychological life may be evoked, tracked and interpreted. The most significant contributor to this mode of being was found to be privacy, which, in particular, helps the analyst maintain an analytic attitude. The couch was also found to be significantly implicated in the generation of an intersubjective analytic third and to support reverie.

These 'findings' were hermeneutically dialogued with literature on the couch as well as contemporary psychoanalytic theoretical notions. The dialogue fell into three foci. The

first focus entailed deconstructing the meaning of the couch as context-based and ambiguous and not essential. The second pursued critiques of the role that the couch plays in domination, of its function as a symbol/evocative object and of the way in which it shapes being-together, bodily attunement, privacy, the intersubjective analytic third and reverie. Finally the 'findings' were critically examined in terms of both Lacan's notion 'analytic discourse' and its role in revealing/concealing the analysand as subject. The study concludes with an examination of its own limitations and suggestions for further research.

*Freud was allowed to go home from the clinic some days later, and on September 27 he moved into the house that had been prepared for him at 20 Maresfield Gardens, in Hampstead. It was commodious and agreeable, made still more agreeable by a lovely garden awash in flowers and shaded by tall trees. The fall was mild, he spent much time indoors, reading and resting in a swing couch. The house was arranged around his needs and wishes, to make him feel as much at home as possible. The possessions he had had to ransom from the Nazis—his book, his antiques, his famous couch—had finally arrived and were placed so that his two downstairs rooms broadly resembled his consulting room and adjoining study at Berggasse 19 (Gay, 1988/1989, p. 635).*

*Dr Boss's office, too, was a modest room, though with a wide picture window opening out to a magnificent view of Lake Zurich, cradled in forested foothills within gaze of mighty Alps. A large desk covered with papers and piles of books sat in front of the window. Lying silently against the wall at the far end of the room was a simple, well-worn couch with a single pillow. Behind the head of the couch, tucked in the corner, was a plain leather swivel chair: obviously Dr. Boss's analytic home (Craig, 1988, p. 25).*

*The bodily position of the participants—the client reclining in an easy chair, or lying down on a couch, the seated therapist in a relaxed but attentively listening stance shows that the therapeutic space invites to a different inhabitation (Kruger, 1984, p. 233).*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Area of investigation

One searches *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Freud, 2001) in vain for reference to the word 'couch'. It is the word 'sofa' which appears in Volume Twelve of the *Standard Edition* in reference to the psychoanalytic technique of using the couch:

Before I wind up these remarks on beginning analytic treatment, I must say a word about a certain ceremonial which concerns the position in which the treatment is carried out. I hold to the plan of getting the patient to lie on a sofa while I sit behind him out of his sight (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 133).

Today the combination of the analysand recumbent with the analyst seated at head of the couch out of the analysand's sight has become recognized as a hallmark of analysis to the extent that the phrase 'on the couch' is a vernacular equivalent of analysis of any sort, not just psychoanalysis. The question naturally arises: if 'being on the couch' has become a central metaphor for analytic undertakings, how can we critically understand the living significance of the literal technique of using the couch in psychoanalysis?

The famous 'couch' itself had made its appearance sometime in 1890 – when it was given to Freud by a grateful patient, Madame Benvenisti (Appignanesi and Forrester, 1992/1993; Gay, 1988/1989) – some six years before the word 'psycho-analysis' was first used (Freud, 1896/2001). Freud's original decision to have his analysands recline on a couch, whilst he seated himself at its head, out of their line of sight, was (and is) a common medical practice (e.g. when a patient is being anaesthetized or undergoing dental treatment). Using the couch in this way began as part of Freud's hypnotic methods that preceded the evolution of psychoanalysis proper. As his practice developed into psychoanalysis he continued with the technique of using the couch, but re-construed the reasons for its use (Freud, 1913/2001; Gay, 1988/1989; Greenson, 1967/1994). Thereafter he justified its use on the grounds that he did not like being stared at by his analysands

and that its use helped isolate the *transference* and permitted its emergence as a sharply defined *resistance* (Freud, 1913/2001).

In defining psychoanalysis Freud made no immediate reference to technique in general. Although he based his definition of psychoanalysis on a theoretical notion (the theory of repression) the argument of definition was articulated in terms of phenomena that emerged when certain elements of technique were used. These elements of technique included, *inter alia*, the analysand's adherence to the 'fundamental rule' (of free association) (Freud, 1912a/2001), the analyst's abstinence, neutrality and non-gratification of the analysand (Freud, 1912b/2001) and the use of the couch with the analysand supine and the analyst sitting behind him/her out of sight (Freud, 1913/2001). The phenomena that emerged from the use of the technique were resistance and transference and Freud took them as definitive of psychoanalysis:

Any line of investigation which recognizes these two facts [the phenomena of *transference* and *resistance*] and takes them as the starting point of its work has a right to call itself psycho-analysis (Freud, 1914/2001, p. 16).

It should be noted that for Freud (1927/2001) 'investigation' and analytic treatment or cure were inextricably linked so it can be asserted that any form of treatment that recognizes the phenomena of transference and resistance as central is psychoanalytic. Combining Freud's definition of psychoanalysis in terms of transference and resistance with his observation that a specific effect of the technique of using the couch on those same two 'facts' constitutes the couch as technically highly significant. More elegantly stated the phenomena of transference and resistance emerge from the analytic couple's activity and the architecture of the analytic setting, of which the couch forms a part.

## 1.2 Need for the research

The importance of the technique of using the couch is clear from the simple fact that the technique continues to be used. Whilst its use is justified in theory the technique's meaning is very little discussed and it has not been examined phenomenologically. Between 1930 and 2000 only 25 titles in English which non-figuratively include the word

'couch' in the title were found listed in PsycINFO. Of these 10 appeared in a special edition dedicated to the couch in 1995. Of course there are several papers which concern the couch and which do not bear it in the title but these hardly swell the total! This leads one to suspect that the place of the couch in psychoanalysis may be so implicit as to have passed into the infrastructure of psychoanalysis where unexamined ideological constructs hide.

Although the use of the couch is almost a *sine qua non* of psychoanalysis, for a significant proportion of the psychoanalytic community, its use has been subject to criticism from both inside and outside the discipline of psychoanalysis and both ideologically and pragmatically. Some view the couch as an anachronism that does not facilitate, and may even obstruct, analysis (Robertiello, 1967; Schmideberg 1948). Others believe that it forms part of a dominator hierarchy which sets up the analyst as an authority figure, disempowers the analysand (Garner 1961; Lomas, 1994; Teitelbaum, 1994; Whitmont, 1969) and serves to perpetuate gender inequity and male hegemony (Meerloo, 1963).

These criticisms make the study of the unchallenged use of the couch pertinent. Although the use of the couch seems central to psychoanalytic practice there are *lacunae* in our understanding of the role that it plays in psychoanalysis. Besides a few life world descriptions and the fairly numerous incidental references to the parameters of its use (e.g., Dieckmann, 1979; Greenson, 1967/1994; Ogden, 1997) the researcher could find no systematic phenomenologically based understandings of the technique of using the couch.

From the South African perspective it should be noted that although a psychoanalytic tradition was established in South Africa from the 1930s (Molnar, 1992; Sachs, 1934) it has needed the demise of apartheid and the concomitant lifting of cultural and educational boycotts to increasingly foster psychoanalytic practice in South Africa. This is evidenced by such things as: the establishment of the journal *Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy in South Africa* in 1992, the formation of the South African

Psychoanalysis Trust in London in 1995, and the first internationally recognized South African psychoanalytic conference in 1998 (Lubbe, 1998). However, although South African psychoanalytic practitioners are experimenting with the use of the couch, through the set of volumes of *Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy in South Africa* from 1992 to 2000 no article is devoted to the use and contemporary critical understanding of the couch.

There *is* research into the role which the couch plays in analysis. There has, for example, been an examination of the states of consciousness which the couch induces (Richards, 1985), but the focus has not been on the phenomenology of the technique and the way in which this can inform critical debate. This study may be seen as a response to this state of affairs, it is an initial phenomenological assay of the phenomenology of the technique and critical dialogue of the findings of that assay with certain classical and contemporary, psychoanalytic notions.

### **1.3 Aim and method**

The primary aim of this research is to critically investigate the psychoanalytic psychotherapist's lived experience of using the psychoanalytic couch. As this investigation interrogates the lived world of these psychoanalytic practitioners, a qualitative, hermeneutic, experience-based research approach is appropriate (Kvale, 1996). In particular the investigation will attempt to provide an *integral* (Wilber, 1998) disclosure of the practitioner's lived experience of using the couch. As such it seeks to articulate the general structure of the experience, its texture and cultural value. This trajectory of knowledge generation moves beyond the phenomenological approach derived from the original method described by Giorgi (1975, 1997) and elaborated by Todres (1998, 2000, 2002). Acknowledgement of the cultural dimension beckons the investigation into criticism of the psychoanalytic discourse. (In a general way, through the course of this study, the term 'discourse' will be taken to mean that (subjective and intersubjective) fore-structure which preshapes our being-in-the-world.) Such a hermeneutic dialogue invites both constructive and critical insights thus adding to knowledge of the role that the couch plays in psychoanalytic process. A hermeneutic

phenomenological excavation of the technique of using the couch can valuably inform the critical and creative development of psychoanalytic technique.

#### **1.4 Concluding chapter summary**

The psychoanalytic couch is recognized as the hallmark of analysis to the extent that the phrase 'on the couch' is a vernacular equivalent of analysis of any sort, not just psychoanalysis. However, the use of the psychoanalytic couch itself has seemingly been taken for granted. Although justified in theory the meaning of the couch has not been examined phenomenologically. This invites investigation. It is the intention of this study to participate in such an investigation by using a critical hermeneutic phenomenological method to explore the psychoanalytic practitioner's lived experience of using the couch thus critically and creatively informing the debate and development of understanding of what constitutes psychoanalytic technique and the effects of psychoanalytic action.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE USE OF THE COUCH

Except for a 1978 book by Harold R. Stern entitled *The Couch: Its Use and Meaning in Psychotherapy* and the 1995 monographic volume of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, which was devoted to the use of the couch, the researcher could locate no comprehensive reviews, in English, concerning the analytic couch.

#### 2.1 Freud's contribution

The first reference to the couch was Freud's introduction of it as a 'ceremonial' or 'ritual' object in psychoanalysis:

I must say a word about a certain ceremonial . . . I hold to the plan of getting the patient to lie on a sofa while I sit behind him out of his sight' (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 133).

He justifies the use of the couch in analysis on the grounds that he does not wish to be stared at and that the use of the couch helps to isolate the transference and permits its emergence as a sharply defined resistance.

The first of these reasons, that Freud did not like being stared at, is often taken as indicative of his own neurotic dispositions, but a careful reading of the text suggests that Freud was describing the practical virtues of privacy, for both analyst and analysand, in relationship to analysis. One cannot do better than read Freud on this point:

But it [the use of the couch] deserves to be maintained for many reasons. The first is a personal motive, but one which others may share with me. I cannot put up with being stared at by other people for eight hours (or more). Since, while I am listening to the patient, I, too give myself over to the current of my unconscious thoughts, I do not wish my expressions of face to give the patient material for interpretations or to influence him in what he tells me. The patient usually regards being made to adopt this position as a hardship and rebels against it, especially if the instinct for looking (scopophilia) plays an important part in his neurosis. I insist on this procedure, however, for its purpose and result are to prevent the transference from mingling with the patient's associations imperceptibly, to isolate the transference and to allow it to come forward in due course sharply defined as a resistance (Freud, 1913/2001, pp. 133-134).

Furthermore the technique of using the couch highlighted a particular manifestation of the analytic relationship that divided the session into an 'official part' when the couch was used and a 'friendly part' when the couch was not in use, e.g. as the analysand moved to or from the couch. Freud believes that this process should be brought to the analysand's attention and worked with as soon as was feasible.

Apart from this specific reference to the use of the couch, Freud does make implicit reference to it in *The Interpretation of Dreams* when he states that for the analysand to focus attention on internal perceptions it is helpful to adopt a 'restful attitude' (Freud, 1900/2001, p. 101).

It is important to note that Freud did not himself wholly stick to the use of the couch nor did he expect others to do so (Roazen, 1975; Stern, 1978). He was known to conduct analysis whilst out walking (Jones, 1961/1964; Gay, 1988/1989) as well as to invite an analysand to walk through from his consulting room to his study to make an interpretation inside the metaphor (Bergmann, 1989). The apparent contradiction in this points up Freud's refusal to define psychoanalysis in terms of technique, but rather as an attitude. It also suggests Freud's privileging the originary intersubjectivity of analysis, a point underlined by Boss's recollections of his analysis with Freud (Boss cited in Interview with Craig, 1988).

## **2.2 General review of the literature on the analytic couch between 1930 and the present**

Prior to 1930 a few references to the couch appeared, by implication, in work by Ferenczi. Perhaps the earliest of these is his very brief 1914 discussion of the symbolic meaning of the couch for analysands (Ferenczi, 1914/1999). In this discussion he analyzes the giddiness experienced by analysands on rising from the couch. He interprets this phenomenon as a somatic expression of the disillusionment at shifting from the comforting world of fantasy with the analyst to harsh reality outside the room. He also

discusses difficulties which he encounters in using the couch: 'For instance my attempt to adhere to the principle that patients must be in a lying position during analysis would at times be thwarted . . .' (1929/1999, p. 281).

As already noted in the introduction, very few references to the couch are found in the English psychoanalytic literature between 1930 and the present. Several references to the couch appear in papers and books on psychoanalytic technique but, the amount of material on the couch remains sparse.

In this general review the couch will here be approached from several perspectives: as a signifier of psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis; as a facilitator of analysis and both practical and ideological criticism of its use.

### *2.2.1 The couch as signifier of psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis*

Several authors have directly or indirectly addressed the way in which the presence of a couch in a consulting room may serve as a signifier of the practitioner as psychoanalyst. As such a signifier it straddles individuality and community as well as conscious and unconscious motivations. As will be discussed further (*vide infra*) Stern (1978) considers the couch a symbol of psychoanalysis and therefore as a manifestation of somewhat unconscious factors. Several authors are in agreement that, at the very least, the couch is a symbolically meaningful element of technique, even if its claim to being the hallmark, or even *sine qua non* of psychoanalysis, is moot (Bergel, 1984; Waugaman, 1987).

Consciously, if unadmitted, its presence may serve to establish the practitioner's identity, even prestige, as a psychoanalyst (Gedo, 1995). Many analytic practitioners, at least in the beginning of their analytic practice, view the use of the couch as in fact defining them as psychoanalysts and its use therefore owes more to the analyst's self-definition, albeit within a technical framework, than to anything else (Cooper, 1985). However, the motivation of the analyst for using the couch may also be unconscious (Bergel, 1984). It is probably a mix of conscious and unconscious motivations which leads to the couch being 'the touchstone of analysis' such that 'analysts feared that if they did not use the



couch they would not be proper analysts' (Roazen, 1975, p. 123). (This in spite of Freud's assertion (1913/2001, p. 134) that he realized that some analysts did not use the couch.) This statement draws us over to the role of psychoanalytic community in configuring the role of the couch, i.e. the more interpersonal perspective on the couch as signifier.

Interpersonally, the presence of the couch also signifies the practitioner's membership of the 'culture' which is psychoanalysis (Israel, 1999: abstracted article). This function may even extend beyond psychoanalysis and the couch may serve as an emblem that differentiates psychiatrists as psychotherapists from their more traditional ilk. In this respect Luc (2000: abstracted article) found that whatever their theoretical orientation, some psychiatrists used the couch for other purposes than psychoanalysis.

Roazen's comment alerts us to the differentiation between the definition of psychoanalysis based on intrinsic factors (analysis of transference and resistance) and extrinsic factors that include the use of the couch. Some analysts fall prey to an extrinsic definition of psychoanalysis by reference to a feature of technique, such as use of the couch rather than by reference to the analytic process. Ogden (1997) argues that the use of the couch may be a more or less useful technique, but that along with other practical criteria, such as the frequency and length of sessions and the constancy of the setting, should not be the basis for calling a process psychoanalytic.

### ***2.2.2 The couch as a facilitator of analysis***

A number of authors regard the couch, in different ways, as a facilitator of analysis. As such a facilitator the couch is held to aid regression, attune the analysand to his/her body, simulate sleep (and therefore open the vistas of dreamscape), assist relaxation, reduce anxiety, foster introspection, aid free association, help the expression of feelings, and allow for the emergence of the analysand's subjectivity. It also provides *both* the analyst and the analysand with an analytically 'useful' space and supports a useful privacy for both of them. It is generally believed that use of the chair makes it almost inevitable that the processes of conversation (rather than analysis) will dominate the sessions.

Bromberg (1979) believes that use of the couch naturally aids regression, Blechner (1987) that it is thoroughly implicated in intrapsychic principles. The analytic setting anchors the analysand in time and space by making available the 'here-and-now' of desire in a body immobilized on the couch whilst acting only through the verbalization of fantasies and dreams (Gellner, 1993).

Furthermore, the use of the couch is regarded as a means of mobilizing both body attunement (Braatøy, 1954) and anxiety and so facilitates an emotional response and consolidation of insights otherwise blocked by defences (Devereux, 1955). Schneider (1991/1992, abstracted article) speculates that an analysand's use of the couch may favour formation of associations in a liminal space between waking and sleeping.

Barglow and Sadow (1971) argue that use of the couch promotes free association. To some extent the couch's facilitation of free association and the expression of feelings has been supported by empirical study. For instance, Kroth and Forrest (1969; 1970) found empirically that the supine position on a couch facilitates freedom and spontaneity of expression.

Several psychoanalysts have also argued that the relatively cue-free environment provided by the couch allows for the emergence of the analysand's subjectivity (Anthony, 1961, Barglow, *et al*, 1971).

Mitrani (1997) suggests that the classical technique provides *both* the analyst and the analysand with an analytically 'useful' space. Anderson (1995) believes that the couch helps make the analysis a special site for both analysand and analyst. The analysand's particular 'couch consciousness' and its resonance with the analyst's reverie allows the analyst to focus on the contents of his or her own associations (Ogden, 1997). For Greenson the use of the couch has a marked effect on the analyst:

Just as the setting of the analytic situation promotes fantasy formation in the patient, it does so also in the analyst. His sitting behind the couch unseen, his

abundant silence, the physical restrictions imposed on him, the emotional restraint, all tend to mobilize the analyst's imagination (Greenson, 1969, p. 401).

The use of the couch thus has practical significance for the analyst in that it can also foster the analyst's own fantasies and aid his/her focus on the fantasies.

The use of the couch supports a useful privacy and the invisibility afforded by its use is regarded as enhancing both the analyst's (Barglow, *et al*, 1989; Ogden, 1996) and the analysand's (Anthony, 1961) use of the analytic process. Freud (1913/2001) argued early on that its virtue lay in the privacy its use offered the analyst. With the analysand on the couch, the analyst acquires a private space that cannot be easily invaded by the analysand. More specifically, the privacy afforded the analyst means that he/she does not need to modify or even suppress his or her conscious and unconscious somatic responses (e.g. bodily or facial responses) which emerge from out of the analytic encounter (Barglow, Jaffe and Vaughn, 1989; Ogden, 1996; Searles, 1984/85). Regarded positively, the use of the couch allows the analyst to maintain the privacy and autonomy that is necessary for his or her centred subjectivity and capacity for autonomous thought.

### *2.2.3 Criticism of the use of the couch in analysis*

Not all analysts are of the opinion that the use of the couch facilitates analysis and, since from at least the 1940s, there have been detractors. In order to do the criticism justice, however, we need to examine the different sorts of critical positions as well as the different sorts of definitive criteria of psychoanalysis. We may regard the critical positions on the use of the couch as either *ideological* or *pragmatic*.

Ideological criticism can come from either inside psychoanalysis (which itself uses a hermeneutic of suspicion) or from the outside (such as various Marxist, feminist and post-modernist critiques [which might themselves form part of a psychoanalytic tradition]). Simply put, however, from an ideological perspective, the couch can be seen as both determining and reflecting a form of consciousness which itself legitimates the semiconscious desires (e.g. for power, status or money) of psychoanalysts.

Pragmatic criticism refers simply to debates about the practical role and usefulness of the couch. These debates themselves to some extent refer to the nature of the role that the couch plays in defining psychoanalysis. More particularly, Gill (1984) argues that there are two sorts of criteria which 'define' psychoanalysis: intrinsic and extrinsic criteria. Intrinsic criteria relate to the development of a working alliance, transference, and the analysis of resistance. The extrinsic criteria include such features as the constancy of the setting, and the number, frequency and length of sessions. Usually, the use of the couch is regarded as an extrinsic criterion and psychoanalysts generally see it as an extrinsic technical aid to creating and maintaining of the analytic process (Eigen, 1977; Cooper, 1986). Criticism of extrinsic criteria refers to practical concerns of technique and, in respect of the couch, would refer to its practical disadvantages. In this sense the use of the couch is considered in terms of practical problems with the technique and contraindications to its use.

#### *2.2.3.1 Ideological criticism of the use of the couch*

From a critical perspective it can be argued that the use of the couch is a manifestation of an ideology of which it may be a determining expression. Direct ideological criticism of the technique of using the couch is difficult to find. Both Lomas (1994) and Whitmont (1969), from an implicit position of ideological criticism, consider the couch as sponsoring a power differential. Gellner (1993) critically reformulates the process of psychoanalysis as situationally exercising the power to benignly frustrate or gratify. Gellner argues that the process of protracted periods of non-committal restraint followed by small, humble, but *expert* gratifications (such as interpretations), magnifies 'the valence and acceptability of the gratifications, hence subtly manipulating and *dominating* the analysand. The use of the couch is paradigmatic of this, for it sponsors restraint on action, but gratification of affective expression. The couch thus becomes a signifier, manifestation and determining expression of an ideology of 'benign' expert domination.

Certain perspectives on feminism are thorough-going and incisive systems of ideological criticism, especially with regard to processes of domination. Some feminist critics of psychoanalysis see analysis itself as a form of expert domination of women and it is

natural to infer that the couch plays a role in this domination. Horney (1926) early on criticized psychoanalysis as being phallogentric. De Beauvoir, introducing a more sophisticated critique of psychoanalysis, claims that: 'it is among the psychoanalysts in particular that man is defined as a human being and woman as female' (1949/1972, p. 83). By the 1960s feminist criticism of psychoanalysis had spread to the popular press with Friedan's attack on it in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963/1965). Chesler (1971), in a criticism of psychotherapy, which naturally extends to psychoanalysis, contends that there is an unequal power relationship in cross-gender psychotherapy. Sophie Freud (1988) goes so far as to state that 'psychoanalytic theory has an antifeminist theoretical bias' and by implication the paraphernalia of psychoanalysis, which includes the couch, serve to perpetuate gender inequity. Focussing more specifically on the role of the couch, Meerloo (1963) argues that a woman on a couch historically signified ancient sacrificial love that had gradually grown into a love which was self-effacing. Meerloo believes that this dynamic is carried over onto the analytic couch and so the historical woman on the couch also represents the men and women on couches today lost in a deprivation of sensual love and self-defeating attitudes. However, Prozan (1993), a feminist psychoanalyst, does not comment on the use of the couch in her book on feminist psychoanalytic psychotherapy. She does state that she adheres to the basic structure of the analytic setting, but is not explicit about whether or not that includes a couch. The situation seems to be that whereas there is feminist criticism of psychoanalysis from various perspectives, including those dealing with issues of authority, the couch *per se* does not seem to feature.

#### *2.2.3.2 Practical criticism of the use of the couch*

The couch serves as a technical aid to creating and maintaining the analytic process. Practical criticism of the use of the couch would therefore refer to practical problems with the technique and contraindications to its use. From as early as the 1940s Schmideberg (1948) argued that, in certain instances, the anxiety mobilized by the use of the couch could obstruct the psychoanalytic process. Since this time others (Dewald, 1978; Robertiello, 1967; Stern, 1948) have concurred with this view.

From the practical perspective the use of the couch may be criticized as being prone to generating a power struggle between analyst and analysand, or provoke dangerous regressions. Its use may be contraindicated with certain analysands and it may be used defensively by both analyst and analysand (Goldberger, 1995).

Nonetheless, whilst psychoanalysts accept that there may be particular practical problems with the use of the couch, they also believe that it can be flexibly used to facilitate analysis (Kelman, 1954).

Some analysts have been concerned that the setting and frame conditions of psychoanalysis, which include the use of the couch, may often engage analyst and analysand in a practical power struggle (Teitelbaum, 1994). In general, the psychoanalyst may be seen by many analysands as an authority figure. This view is fostered by factors such as the paradoxical status of psychoanalysis, the analyst's position in society, and elements of the analytic setting such as: the fee, the rules imposed concerning payment, the regularity of appointments and the use of the technique of free association. The analyst's position behind the couch is one of the elements of the setting which establishes the analyst as an authority figure (Garner, 1961). Stern, remarks as follows:

A typical view of therapy is that the patient who is engaging an analyst's services must willingly submit to him. The person to whom he submits is deemed wise, independent, superior, and judgmental, while the patient feels ignorant, helpless, inferior and contrite. Lying down is traditionally associated with surrender and submission. Since psychoanalytic patients lie down, they are obviously susceptible to the inferior role that they envision themselves playing during treatment. In direct contrast, the analyst sits up, as though perched on a comfortable throne (Stern, 1978, p. 54).

Byerly (1992) maintains that submission is built into the use of the couch. Wolf (1995) maintains that 'submission' to the analyst is a transference echo of archaic submission to the parents. At the very least the technique is seen to emphasize the passivity of the analysand and to separate the analysand from the analyst (Samuels, 1985). Greenson (1969) believes that the use of the couch serves to promote an asymmetric relationship, between analyst and analysand and that this fosters regression. However, he is at pains to clarify that the analyst should not allow this to become an experience of domination and

humiliation for the analysand. Rather, 'the analyst should show consistent concern for the rights of the patient', should explain the rationale for the use of the couch and should avoid being aloof, authoritarian, cold and rigid (Greenson, 1969, p. 214). Some analysands do complain that the couch places them under the analyst's control (Brody, 1973; Whitmont, 1969). Occasionally the analysand's power may be so dissipated by the technique that some analysands may fear that using the couch may even lead to them losing control of their own bodies (Brody, 1973).

The role the couch plays in sexualizing the relationship between analyst and analysand, may possibly, but not necessarily, be related to issues of power. Curiously, except for some indications in Stern (1978), direct references to this important issue were hard to find in the literature. Nonetheless, Greenacre (1954) maintains that a female patient lying on the couch is inherently sexually provocative.

Fairbairn (1958), is wary of the rationale for using the couch and feels that its use is essentially disadvantageous in that it artificially creates a regressively traumatic situation. Brenner (1985) indicates that for Gill (1982, cited Brenner, 1982, p. 242) 'the use of the couch is usually a disadvantage in analysis'. By contrast, sometimes the analysand's sitting in a chair enables him or her to more adequately evaluate reality and thereby prevent further unhelpful regression (Silber, 1970).

Several authors argue that, for certain individuals, the use of the traditional psychoanalytic method, in particular the use of the couch, is contraindicated (Anthony, 1961; Bellak & Meyers, 1975, Freud, cited in Bernstein, 1975; Deutsch, 1980). Balint (1965) indicated that with certain deeply disturbed people methods other than the use of the couch were called for. Wexler (1971) believes that the use of the couch can be dangerous with psychotic patients.

Stern (1948) suggests that using the couch might foster an analysand's withdrawal and Glover (1955) points out that its use fosters an impersonal atmosphere that might be used defensively to ward off emotions. Similarly Greenson (1969) believes that analysts might

themselves defensively retreat to a position of safety and comfort behind the couch. He expresses the concern that in such analysts 'the position behind the couch and the blanketing of their emotional responses may become a chronic frustration, which may lead to eruptions of inconsistent behaviour or unconscious provocation of acting out in the patient' (Greenson, 1969, p. 400). So, the fixed use of the couch in the traditional way may be indicative of the neurotic needs of the analyst. Rothstein (1990) concurs with this view to some extent and stated that, in the beginning phase of analysis, it is the analyst's attitude toward the analysand (his/her behaviour and verbal associations) rather than the use of the couch that is the essential characteristic of analysis. However, such flexibility should be conducted in a self-reflective way by the analyst and the analyst who modifies the structure of using the couch should do so only after careful consideration of what the application of the technique would mean to the analysand (Allen, 1956; Biancoli, 1992).

### 2.3 Jungian ideas on the use of the couch

Jung rejects the use of the couch: 'I reject the idea of putting the patient upon a sofa and sitting behind him' (1935, p. 155). In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* he reiterates his objection to the use of the couch:

The crucial point is that I confront the patient as one human being to another. Analysis is a dialogue demanding two partners. Analyst and patient sit facing one another, eye to eye; the doctor has something to say, but so has the patient (Jung, 1963/1983, p. 153).

In general Jungians follow Jung in this regard and are antipathetic to the use of the couch. However, this is not wholly so and the two principal Jungian exponents of the use of the couch are Michael Fordham and Hans Dieckmann. Some other Jungians, such as Adler, Astor, Jacoby, Samuels and Whitmont, have contributed longer or shorter comments on its use (*see below*).

Fordham (1978) sets out to contextualize and reframe what has appeared to be Jung's unambiguous opposition to the use of the couch. Fordham tries to weaken Jung's position by pointing out several inconsistencies in his argument and behaviour. Fordham invokes the spirit of Jung's reasoning, rather than his literal words. In particular, Fordham points



out Jung's preference for an analytic process predicated on the analyst's affective involvement with the analysand as subject rather than object.

Like Jung, Fordham believes that the couch does emphasize the asymmetry of the analytic situation, but noted that analysis is *not*, in fact, a natural social interaction and that it is therefore erroneous to apply the values of such a situation to it. Fordham feels that it is not always desirable for the analysand to see the analyst, and that the analysand may benefit from the privacy that the couch affords. Fordham does not feel that the couch renders the analyst out of touch with the analysand and he even argues that the use of the couch aids the analyst's link to the analysand. In summary, Fordham (1978) highlights several specific advantages of using the couch:

- It provides for ease of relaxation and movement.
- It facilitates regression.
- It renders the unconscious more accessible.
- It renders the analytic process more like active imagination with the analyst a figure in the imaginary dialectic.
- It leads to bodily sensations and instincts becoming more evident.
- It renders it easier for the analyst to detect and follow his/her own psychological and physical processes.

Dieckmann's (1979) discussion of 'Couch versus Chair' is constructed along typically Jungian lines in that he views the subject of 'couch' in terms of a dialectic between 'couch' and 'chair'. He starts with Freud and Jung and contextualizes the origins of the debate in terms of their personal dynamics. He then proceeds to outline the advantages and disadvantages of both couch and chair, repeating the arguments of Fairbairn, Glover and Balint, as well as many of the points already made in this review:

- That the use of the couch may not succeed in promoting free association.
- That the removal of the analyst from the analysand's view may intensify persecutory fantasies.
- That with certain analysands the chair is better.
- That with the chair the analysand can read the analyst's face.
- In a face-to-face position there is more opportunity to work through projective misunderstandings.

In criticizing the use of the chair, Dieckmann notes that it can slow down the expression of aggression, act as a defence against regressive fantasies and give rise to a more superficial social type of conversation. However, Dieckmann is not really concerned with lists of advantages and disadvantages. Rather, he approaches the question of couch or chair from a critical perspective and argues that the meaning of the couch needs to be elucidated for a particular analysand.

Other Jungian analysts have contributed to the debate, but mostly from a pragmatic perspective. Astor (1995) feels that the use of the couch is essential if the analytic couple are to pursue a reductive analysis. Jacoby (1984) maintains that that the couch supports the emergence of transference and makes it easier to detect. Conversely Adler (1966) objects to the use of the couch on the grounds that it emphasizes the analysand's passivity, disposes the analysand to speak about himself in an artificial manner and separates the analysand from his or her connection with the analyst and with everyday life. Samuels (1985) concurs that the technique of using the couch may separate the analysand from the experience of analysis. Whitmont (1969) feels that the use of the couch contributes to 'objectifying' the analysand, making him/her subject to therapeutic manipulation whereas the vis á vis configuration of the chair is believed to be more conducive to the Jungian ideal of the analyst being wholly involved in a relationship with the analysand. Samuels (1985) feels that the use of the couch is contraindicated for some analysands who come infrequently.

It is notable, that, as with Freud and psychoanalytic thinkers, some Jungian analysts believe that the privacy afforded by use of the couch facilitates analysis, as analysands may become more defensive working face-to-face (Astor, 1995). Some analysts experiment with variations on this, for example Samuels (1985) uses the couch, but changes the configuration slightly by placing his chair beside the head of the couch not right behind it. Samuels seems to practically adopt Dieckmann's position in that for his analysands the use of the couch is not mandatory and each member of the analytic couple can chose to look or not look at the other.

#### 2.4 Review of Stern's book *The Couch: Its Use and Meaning in Psychotherapy*

Stern's 1978 book, *The Couch: Its Use and Meaning in Psychotherapy*, sets out to examine the use of the couch in terms of its history, cultural context, and its bearing on the theory, technique, and its relationship to the goals of psychoanalysis. The points of focus, i.e. 'use' and 'meaning', in the title of this book are very apt for the study can be conceptually divided into two main thrusts: a discussion of pragmatic issues and an understanding of the couch as a symbol (in the psychoanalytic sense). Although the pragmatic concerns do give insight into the meaning of the couch, the section on 'couch as symbol' is of more significant importance for the purposes of this research. In many respects Stern's book is a circular text which continually subordinates thought about the couch to psychoanalysis. This is very helpful in seeking the meaning of the couch, for Stern, in effect, offers an extended psychoanalytic interpretation of its meaning.

Stern deals with the symbolic meaning of the couch from both an explicit and implicit perspective. He explicitly articulates the 'meaning' of the couch in terms of cultural influences on its use, its significance in humour, and its role as a symbol of the threats posed by psychoanalysis. Stern interprets the couch as a symbol which:

[O]n an unconscious level . . . may represent the repressed sexual and aggressive feelings of the psychoanalyst towards himself and his patient. To avoid the anxiety connected with the conflicts these wishes invoke, feelings can be isolated from their sources, real meanings denied, and wishes repressed. These processes can be converted into symbolic representation such as the couch, which then stand in the place of what is denied, repressed, or isolated (Stern, 1978, p. 18).

From the pragmatic perspective, Stern examines the history of the couch, its role in regression, its relation to sleep, its place in facilitating relaxation and the expression of feelings, as well as the use of technique in using the recumbent position and the relation of the couch to the goals of treatment. However, in using a pragmatic perspective Stern, also implicates something of the couch's lived meaning for the analyst:

It may be potentially overwhelming and unhealthy for the analyst to be completely open to the stimuli directed at him by his patients; however, to be too insulated from these stimuli may make him ineffective and wooden. If the analyst has been both well-trained and well-analyzed and is an emotionally healthy

person, the regulatory mechanisms of his or her ego will hopefully allow a proper balance of incoming stimuli and responses to them. The use of the couch assists this process (Stern, 1978, p. 17).

#### *2.4.1 The couch as a symbol of psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis*

Stern understands the couch as a symbol in the classical psychoanalytic sense of the word, rather than analytic psychology's notion of symbol. In this regard, Stern argues that, in selecting the couch as representative of the psychoanalytic corpus of knowledge, method and profession, we are but following a natural law. Stern argues classically that as an unconscious process, symbolization displaces certain emotional valences from one object or image to another, hence supporting a compromise formation. He concludes that: 'We are therefore compelled to study the couch for the subject matter which it represents, that is, psychoanalysis itself' (Stern, 1978, p. 38). Practically, although not self-consciously, Stern situates his understanding of the couch as symbol within a cultural and interpersonal context whilst arguing that its significance as symbol is an intrapsychic matter. We can re-order his discussion of the couch as follows:

- The couch as signifier of the analyst's experience of himself and psychoanalysis.
- The couch as culturally configuring the identities and roles of analyst, analysand and psychoanalysis within the analytic relationship.
- The couch as culturally configuring the identities and roles of analyst, analysand and psychoanalysis within the broad cultural context.

Stern relates the couch as a cultural signifier of the analyst's lived experience of both his/her identity and the process with which he/she is involved:

For the psychoanalyst, the couch is an ever-present visual reminder and indeed symbol of his work. Other psychotherapeutic professionals share similar office equipment, but the couch alone distinguishes the analyst's unique experience (Stern, 1978, p. 13).

For Stern the couch, drawing on cultural constructions of healing processes, helps define the roles of both analyst and analysand. He cites the Jungian analyst Gerard Adler as confusing the literal position of the analyst 'looking down on' the analysand with one of subjugation.

He argues that the couch position resonates with the cultural construction of being unwell and lying down to convalesce and be attended to by the healer:

To sit face to face can be a denial of any element of sickness, while lying down in the presence of another person can be an acknowledgement of illness . . . Most patients who leave psychoanalytic treatment after lying on the couch do so with a superior sense of self worth, a feeling they did not have when they started analysis (Stern, 1978, p. 25).

According to Stern, the use of the couch serves to culturally configure the roles of the analyst and analysand in several ways. It does this by fostering transference, by preventing the analysand from 'reading' the analyst, and allowing the analyst to relax control of his face. This frees the analyst to adopt a more passive, receptive and relaxed presence (Stern, 1978, pp. 30-31). In this respect Stern cites Sharpe (1950, p. 21): 'The couch position gives greater ease and freedom to the patient and to the analyst too. The more freely the analyst can listen, the more freely analysis can proceed' (Stern, 1978, p. 32).

However, whilst the analysand cannot 'read' the analyst's face, he/she may more particularly 'read' other behavioural cues, such as the analyst's breathing or movement in the chair. Although Stern refers to such interpersonal events, he adopts a fairly conventional one-person, intrapsychic view of psychoanalysis, and argues that certain intrapsychic events and analytic processes are fostered by the supine position.

Whereas so far the couch has been discussed as culturally configuring the identities and roles of analyst, analysand and psychoanalysis within the analytic relationship, according to Stern broader cultural factors may also culturally configure the analytic process when the couch is used. These occur through:

[H]aving heard friends describing their own treatment, by viewing television programs and films, by reading popular novels, or (most commonly) by seeing cartoons about psychoanalysis which invariably shows the patient on the couch (Stern, 1978, p. 35).

Stern most clearly demonstrates his book as a circular psychoanalytic text when he deepens his proposal of the couch as a symbol by psychoanalytically interpreting its significance in humour and as a symbol of the threats posed by psychoanalysis. In both of

these foci, he subjects people's treatment of the couch to psychoanalytic interpretation. This offers us a meaning of the couch in terms of psychoanalysis. In respect of humour he illustrates how the couch is used to make several innuendos about psychoanalysis, namely that the couch is part of a process which is: cruel, domineering and degrading, interpersonally exploitative, sexually exploitative, financially exploitative and inherently risible.

Stern also elaborates how, over and above humour, psychoanalysis, as symbolized by the couch, is attacked as a political or religious dogma, as lacking scientific status, as leading to domination of the analysand, and as providing a vehicle for a pernicious process, whereby the analysand ends up worse off.

However, for the present research study, perhaps the most useful comments of Stern's come from a small section in which he elaborates on the symbolic meanings of the couch for the analyst:

The couch is also a symbol for the analyst. If he has ambivalent or negative feelings about his competence, the work he is doing, the kind of people he treats, or the isolation that the work enforces upon him, attitudes develop towards the couch which are manifestations of his doubts and resentments. Such conflicts may be expressed in his confusion as to when he should use it and his reasons for doing so.

In terms of counter-transference, the couch can be the bed of the analyst's fantasies. Like his patient, the analyst has thoughts, feelings and fantasies. These elements of the analyst's mind are important aspects of the therapeutic process. For the analyst the couch as a symbol can be a stimulus for his never entirely resolved oedipal conflicts. The couch can be a means of giving expression to the voyeuristic opportunities that psychoanalysis as a process seems to offer him. If he has aspirations of superiority, the couch can be the valley of judgement on which he fixes his gaze from his lofty peak.

If psychoanalysis gratifies the therapist's needs to be part of an exclusive, highly intellectual club, his use of the couch may be for him the badge of membership . . . the couch, in this way, serves as a means of identification for the analyst (Stern, 1978, pp. 55-56).

In summary, Stern implies that the use of the couch may be more about the analyst than the analysand. It constitutes a symbol for the analyst, which reflects a compromise

formation of this/her own sense of identity, group affiliation, self-esteem, desires, anxieties, self-judgements and defences.

#### **2.4.2 The couch: pragmatic concerns**

After having dwelt on the couch as symbol Stern turns to more pragmatic concerns. In his chapter on analytic technique using the recumbent position, Stern discusses how the use of the couch is introduced, the role and handling of resistance to using the couch, the physical structure of the analytic setting and the applicability of the couch to different people, age groups and disorders. Within the section on 'Resistance to using the Couch' in this same chapter, Stern provides a number of statements and citations of other writers that, if conflated, form a certain statement of the meaning of the use of the couch for an analyst. This can be preciséd as follows:

*Using the couch means that the analyst is afforded the comfort and privacy that permits him or her to relax and keep up energy and concentration. The use of the couch supports the analyst's ability to apply evenly suspended attention and the associated multiple tasks of: listening and attuning to the analysand, processing and thinking about that experience, formulating, mentally testing and speaking to the analysand and being aware of his/her own psychological life.*

Practically, the couch serves to physically shield the analyst from the gaze of the analysand, thus allowing him/her to deal with his/her own emotions in relative privacy. This helps the analyst differentiate and process his/her own response to the analysand and his/her narrative.

#### **2.5 Review of the monographic volume of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* dedicated to the couch**

Perhaps the leading notion of this monographic volume is outlined in its 'Prologue' by Moraitis. It is helpful to contrast this particular notion against Stern's central theme. To recapitulate, Stern writes out of the context of the highly developed ego psychology of the late 1970s. In this context, psychoanalysis foregrounds the intrapsychic dimension and backgrounds the interpersonal one. So accented, the role of psychoanalysis is to bring the dynamic unconscious into relationship with consciousness. It does this through addressing transference and resistance and, in consequence, 'the usefulness of the couch

remains clinically and conceptually indisputable' (Moraitis, 1995, p. 275). Moraitis goes on to contend that this 'may no longer be the case when the psychoanalytic process is conceptualized in the light of more contemporary psychoanalytic theories' (Moraitis, 1995, p. 275). He argues that in contemporary psychoanalysis, theoretical attention has been directed away from the recovery of intrapsychically repressed material to interpersonal reconstruction of structural deficits. Likewise, the contemporary clinical accent has shifted to 'here-and-now' interactional work, as well as a focus on early preverbal developmental events which cannot be adequately worked with using interpretation. Instead, the analyst is called upon to re-parent and educate the analysand so as to help reconstruct a new psychological structure. The various authors of this monograph, who will be reviewed one by one, all bring a critical light to bear upon the use of the couch. It is important to note that the accent as enunciated by Moraitis is the 'usefulness' rather than 'meaning' of the couch. Stern, for all his contextual fixity, does try to provide a sense of the meaning of the couch. Arguably it is the 'meaning' of the couch for analysts which drives their decision to use it, rather than issues of its 'usefulness'. In consequence, review of this monograph will need to be alert to the possibly incidental references to the 'meaning' of the couch for these authors.

The first paper in this monograph, 'Forty-Five Years of Psychoanalytic Experiences On, Behind, and Without the Couch' by Lichtenberg (1995), draws on just those aspects of the author's experience of the couch. Lichtenberg first provides a description of his specific personal experiences of analysis: first a good, then a bad, and finally a good experience on the couch. Then he takes the reader conceptually through several aspects of analysis to end with a general statement that the analyst's degree of ineptitude is the determining factor in the 'goodness' of an analytic experience. He concludes that when the experience is bad, the use of the couch makes the experience worse but, when the experience is good, the use of the couch makes the analytic exploration better. This really situates the couch as a modulator, but not determinant, of the analytic experience for the analysand. However, what is probably more germane to this study are statements which Lichtenberg makes about the meaning of the couch for the analyst. The first of these is very personal, for he reports 'pride and excitement at having [his] first couch and . . . first



analytic patient' (1995, p. 283). This suggests something of the felt personal meaningfulness of the couch for Lichtenberg. The couch's numinosity also seems expressed in his 'belief in analysis and the power of the couch to help liberate attitudes and feeling' (1995, P. 281). The numinosity of his experience suggests that the couch could be construed as a (Jungian) symbol for Lichtenberg. He also gives a very pertinent abstracted statement of the meaning of the couch for the analyst:

Therefore, if the use of the couch promotes an ideal state for the analysand, it will facilitate an ideally responsive state for the analyst. In this state, analysts are sensitive to their own needs, wishes, and desires in order to fully sense those emerging in the analysand while maintaining as a dominant motive the need of both for exploration and assertion. Second, analysts monitor closely their own monologue-dialogue which is filled with contents related to the experiences the patient is describing. In their stream of consciousness, analysts intuitively link the current experiences they are hearing about to knowledge of the patient's and their shared past. Analysts also reflect on their own responses and the meaning they ascribe to what the patient is conveying. Third, analysts must share with analysands an exquisite alertness to the situational and affective contexts in which analysis takes place, or else many transference experiences and role enactments will go unrecognized. Not being observed by the patient, lying on the couch has traditionally been regarded as reducing interactional pressures, freeing the analyst to be more reflective and more able to achieve an ideal state (Lichtenberg, 1995, p. 287).

Gedo's (1995) contribution to this monograph, 'Channels of Communication and the Analytic Setup' is not particularly explorative of the meaning of the couch for the analyst. Unlike Lichtenberg, who articulates the felt personal meaningfulness of the couch for him, Gedo firstly intimates the couch's power to confer status on the clinician who uses it, and secondly, notes that its use means the analyst is freed to respond to the analysand's material without restraint of facial expression. He makes the common 'theoretical' assertions that the couch tends to favour verbal communication, that it exerts a regressive pull and that it is infantilizing. However, the main thrust of Gedo's argument is that the use of the couch compromises the analyst's access to the analysand's gestural channel of communication, because supine the analysand is much less likely to make gestural expressions. This makes Gedo's argument fundamentally interpersonal, for he sees the couch as shaping the interpersonal gestural channel.

Jacobson's (1995) paper, 'The Analytic Couch: Facilitator or Sine Qua Non?' uses clinical material to track more pragmatically the role of the couch, but principally for the

analysand. He essentially argues that analysis is defined by processes rather than literal positions, such as lying on the couch. He does, however, gather together some aspects of the meaning of the couch for analysts. Firstly, by reference to non-analysts using the couch for reasons of prestige, he intimates its power to make the analyst feel a sense of status and identity. Secondly, he reports on how he elicited the *felt meaning* of the couch for analysts who, in spite of all reason, found the couch to define analysis:

My curiosity aroused . . . I raised with several respected and experienced analysts the question of how defining they felt the use of the couch to be as to the psychoanalytic nature of the treatment. Curiously, two of them made the identical comment: 'It would be all right for an ordinary analysis, but I certainly wouldn't want to do a *training* analysis other than on the couch.' . . . They certainly did not advocate the irrelevant or inappropriate treatment for any patient, never mind a future analyst, but at the same time could not quite call a treatment truly 'an analysis' if it had not taken place on the couch (Jacobson, 1995, p. 312).

Wolf's (1995) 'Brief Notes on Using the Couch' is just that – 'notes'. He critically touches on Freud's use of the couch, particularly regarding transference, practical manipulation of positioning the couch, self psychological considerations, the couch's prestige with analysands, its role as a possibly dangerous instrument and, finally its indications, contraindications and uses. In this, he largely recapitulates discussion around transference, regression etc. Wolf's discussion of the couch from a self psychological perspective is interesting. He argues that the use of the couch deprives the analysand of the analyst as a self-sustaining selfobject and that, in consequence, the analysand's self becomes more disorganized, fragmented and regressed. This leads to what Wolf calls the disruption-restoration sequence that he believes is the route to real and deep therapeutic change. The meaning of the couch for the analyst is not focally addressed in this paper. However, there is a thread of ideas in this regard that may prove helpful. In his introductory section on Freud, Wolf describes Freud as having an observational stance which was empathically sensitive. He argues further that using the couch frees the analyst's mind to move, either being sensitively alert to the analysand's presence or to the analyst's own psychic response to the analysand.

Frank's (1995) paper, 'The Couch, Psychoanalytic Process, and Psychic Change: A Case Study', begins with a brief enquiry into the importance of the couch to the analyst. We

might hope for a statement of the meaning of the couch for the analyst, but this does not extend beyond the simple statement that: 'It is axiomatic that not looking at each other frees each analytic partner' (Frank, 1995, p. 324). He then proceeds to a brief review of primarily speculative assertions about the role of the couch, followed by a review of the discussions of analysands' reactions to the use of the couch. His case study demonstrated his analysand's issues of scopophilia as well as many of the speculative assertions about the role of the couch for analysands. These included: feelings of speaking into emptiness, of falling asleep and regressing, of being infantile and powerless, of being submissive and compliant to a man, and of being sexually exhibited. Frank describes how these various reactions to the couch may be treated as parts of the analytic process and worked with creatively.

Waugaman's (1995) contribution, 'The Couch as Transference Object', deals with the symbolic meanings of the couch for the analysand. This paper provides experiential corroboration of many of the speculative meanings of the couch for the analysand. At the same time, it demonstrates that particular virtue of the analytic process to avoid fixed (or 'wild') meanings, and to prefer truly 'analytic' meanings derived from context and analytic dialogue. However, Waugaman does not elaborate on the couch as transference object for the analyst.

Anderson's (1995) paper, "May I Bring My Newborn Baby to My Analytic Hour?": One Analyst's Experience With This Request', is written with the aesthetics of writings from British object-relations theory. This paper makes very little reference to the couch, although naturally the presence of a newborn in the room influences the architecture of the analytic couple's positions and use of the couch. Likewise, the paper does not make direct reference to the meaning of the couch for the analyst. It does reinforce the need to creatively deviate from analytic canon and apply 'spirit' rather than 'law', thus favouring truly 'analytic' meanings derived from the context and the analytic dialogue.

Aruffo's (1995) contribution to the monograph, 'The Couch: Reflections From an Interactional View of Analysis' attempts to juxtapose considerations about interactive

and internal modes of functioning with the role of the couch. The accent falls more on the modes rather than the couch, and hardly touches on the meaning of the couch for the analyst. However, Aruffo (1995) does make a very interesting statement about the meaning of the couch for analysts early in the paper:

I believe that for most analysts, the use of the couch is simply part of technique. Just as some people love their conscience, analysts love and cherish the couch, and for similar reasons. Having patients 'on the couch' may be a source of pride and crucial to professional advancement . . . the concern of psychoanalysis with determining what is 'analytic' and what is not, has been central to analysts' sense of identity and to the discipline over many years (Aruffo, p. 370).

This statement concerns the role of the couch as signifier of psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis. Aruffo describes how, classically, analysis is regarded in terms of an internal mode of functioning: the analyst treats all of the analysand's productions as referring to intrapsychic events – not interpersonal ones. Aruffo goes on to argue that this derived from Freud's desire to place psychoanalysis on a 'scientific' footing, but that this was at the cost of splitting off the personal analysand-analyst interaction. This classical position leads to standard technique, of which the couch is a feature. Aruffo argues further that, like it or not, studied or not, 'there is a vital interactive component to every psychoanalytic treatment' (1995, p. 371) and that 'maintaining rapport with the patient requires the proper use of the interactive aspect of the analytic relationship' (1995, p. 373). He goes on to mention some of the common concerns about use of the couch: that it leads to regression, feelings of isolation and aloneness, and lower self-esteem. He proposes a dichotomy: that the use of the couch slants the analytic process in the direction of the internal mode, whilst working face-to-face slants it in the direction of the interactive mode. Aruffo then presents clinical material in which he demonstrates the application of these ideas. The paper ends rather precipitantly, but powerfully and elegantly, with the statement that: 'In one way or another, all patients struggle with the structure of analysis. It is the analysis of this struggle that leads to analytic change' (Aruffo, 1995, p. 384).

Sadow (1995) is one of the significant contributors to an understanding of the meaning of the couch for analysts in his paper 'Looking, Listening, and the Couch'. Sadow provides

clinical material to establish the contrast of two ways of being in the room: one based in absorbed 'listening', the other in reflective 'looking'. He then argues that analysis itself is composed of two modes of being, which he terms 'generative' and 'patterning'. The former is an empathic and intuitive mode of being, and is generative in the sense that a 'micromerger of the mental activities, both cognitive and affective, of patient and analyst' (Sadow, 1995, p. 390) leads to a third entity – itself neither exclusively the analysand, nor the analyst. He argues that the generative mode is central to the analytic process, and is particularly based on listening. The other mode is based more on direct observation, logical processes and organizing information into frames, familiar patterns or hypotheses. He argues that this mode – although necessary in analysis – is not as definitive, and is particularly based on looking. It follows that the use of the couch favours the generative mode, whereas working face-to-face favours the patterning mode. Thus the meaning of the experience of the couch for the analyst lies therein that it generates and makes accessible is the generation an intersubjective entity which is facilitative of analysis.

Grotstein's (1995) paper 'Reassessment of the Couch in Psychoanalysis' fittingly follows Sadow's paper. Grotstein writes this paper in a rich and allusive style, and addresses several interwoven factors. Starting from a neuropsychological perspective, he links the use of the couch to right hemispheric brain functioning, and theta waveforms to Bion's concept of reverie and the establishment of a state of mind in the analyst which is empathic, intuitive and rich in phantasy. He also discusses the closed 'dialectical' state of transference/counter-transference and how this constitutes a third interunconscious (and intraunconscious) 'entity' derived from both the analysand and the analyst. Grotstein ends his paper in the best sort of inconclusive way with a series of provocative considerations and brief clinical vignettes. For Grotstein, like Sadow, the meaning of the experience of the couch for the analyst is the generation and accessing (through reverie) of an intersubjective entity which is facilitative of analysis.

Moraitis (1995) contributes the final paper to this monograph with 'The Couch as Protective Shield for the Analyst'. In his contribution, he discusses firstly how the use of the couch serves as a personal protective shield for the analyst against counter-

transference intrusions by the analysand with projective identification and selfobject demands. He goes on to show how it may also serve as a shield against the premature disclosure of the analyst's limitations and vulnerabilities when the analysis treads upon the boundaries of ignorance or yet unbecome analytic knowledge. Apart from meaning 'protection' the couch also means 'privacy' which is facilitative of analysis.

## **2.6 Review of Ogden's seminal paper 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique'**

In his seminal paper, 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique', Ogden (1996) refers to the meaning of the couch for both the analyst sitting behind and the supine analysand. Furthermore, he elaborates the usefulness of the couch for both members of the analytic couple. He begins with an exposition that bears the conceptual hallmark of the previously reviewed monograph. In particular, Ogden re-articulates the notions of Sadow and Grotstein to some extent. He announces his topic by setting up a resonance between analysis and music, likening one analytic mode of being to the space of silence between musical notes. This space is somewhat like Sadow's 'generative mode' and Grotstein's reference to a state of mind in the analyst that is empathic, intuitive and rich in phantasy. Grotstein links this state to Bion's 'reverie', as does Ogden. Ogden intertwines his exposition with reference to the 'intersubjective analytic third' which is 'a jointly but asymmetrically constructed and experienced set of conscious and unconscious intersubjective experiences in which analyst and analysand participate' (p. 884). The intersubjective analytic third shares something with Sadow's notion of a 'third entity' formed from the micromerger of the mental activities of analysand and analyst. It also shares something of Grotstein's notion of a 'third entity' derived from both the analysand and the analyst in the dialectical state of transference/counter-transference. Ogden suggests that access to the intersubjective analytic third comes through the state of reverie. However, from here on, Ogden elaborates thinking that goes beyond the springboard provided by the thinking of Sadow and Grotstein. Firstly, he offers a rhetorically humble allusive reconstruction of the analytic process. He does this by augmenting Freud's 1914 definition of psychoanalysis:

I would suggest the following elaboration of Freud's succinct statement. Perhaps psychoanalysis might be viewed as involving a recognition not only of transference and resistance, but also of the nature of the intersubjective field within which transference and resistance are generated (Ogden, 1996, p. 885).

This redefinition of the analytic process leads on to defining the role of the couch in analysis. As Sadow concluded that the couch favours the generative mode and Grotstein that the couch facilitated reverie, so Ogden argues that the couch is instrumental in producing, accessing, developing and using the intersubjective analytic third:

The problem of defining the nature of the role of the couch as a component of the analytic framework then becomes a problem of conceptualising the role of the use of the couch in the process of facilitating a state of mind in which the intersubjective analytic third might be generated, experienced, elaborated and utilized by analyst and analysand (Ogden, 1996, p. 885).

Ogden constructs the meaning of the experience of the couch for the analyst as providing the analytic couple with an asymmetric 'free and sheltered space' (Kalff, 1980) that sponsors the generation, experience, elaboration and utilization, through reverie, of the intersubjective analytic third, which is facilitative of analysis. In the state of reverie sponsored by the use of the couch, both the analysand and the analyst are freed to give themselves over to the drift of the unconscious. So the couch leads to overlapping states of reverie, akin to Winnicott's (1971/1974, p. 44) assertion that 'psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist'.

## 2.7 Concluding chapter summary

On review, the overall amount of literature on the couch was found to be spare. Although the couch is a central image of psychoanalysis even Freud made very little reference to it in English. (There has been some contribution to the literature on the couch in French.) From 1930 to the present, the couch has generally been discussed in terms of its role as signifying of psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis, its facilitation of analysis and the criticism of its use. Jung himself was opposed to the use of the couch, but several Jungians have espoused its use. In 1978 Stern published the first and only substantial study of the couch in a book entitled *The Couch: Its Use and Meaning in Psychotherapy*. In more recent years, this has been followed by a volume of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*

devoted to the couch from the perspective of contemporary psychoanalysis. Although contemporary this monograph is not comprehensive in intention, although it does provide some small intimations of the phenomenology of the couch. In 1996 Ogden published a seminal paper, 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique', in which the role of the couch was examined in terms of a modification of Freud's definition of psychoanalysis to include intersubjective theory.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHOD

#### 3.1 Introduction

In formulating the aim and method of this study it is helpful to note that criticism of traditional/natural scientific research methods in psychology has come from both inside and outside psychoanalysis. (Brooke, 1991a; Condrau, 1984; De Koning, 1982; Giorgi, 1970, 1997; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003; Jager, 1991; Koch, 1969; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 2003; Marecek, 2003; McGrath and Johnson 2003; Romanyshyn, 1982; Todres, 1998; Von Eckartsberg, 1979; Wilber, 1997, 1998).

Giorgi (1970) has traced the origin and development of the notion of 'human science' as opposed to 'natural science' and has cogently argued that psychology is a human science. Human science properly turns towards qualitative methods of research (Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003; Eisner, 2003; Giorgi, 1970; Marecek, 2003; McGrath and Johnson 2003; McLeod, 2001). As such it properly seeks to disclose and articulate experience from the lived world. Giorgi (1975) went on to articulate an approach and method of disclosing human phenomena using the paradigm of human science. This contributed to a particular movement of phenomenological research which, striving to be scientific, was structurally rigorous whilst remaining respectful of human phenomena. In general such 'phenomenological' methods are also implicitly 'hermeneutic', as all phenomena are inescapably interpretively fore-structured. As Heidegger puts it: 'What we first hear is never noises or complexes of sound, but the creaking wagon, the motor cycle' (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 207). Practically, hermeneutics respects the embeddedness of a phenomenon in personal experience as well as in history, tradition, values and culture (Addison, 1989; Kvale, 1996; McLeod, 2001; Packer and Addison, 1989; Ray, 1984; Titelman, 1979).

This study attempts to disclose the analyst's lived experience of the technique of using the couch in an integral way. It therefore naturally fits with a human science paradigm

and more particularly, with phenomenological research method. Typically, qualitative/phenomenological research methods, such as those discussed and described by Camic, Rhodes and Yardley (2003), De Koning (1979), Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch (2003), Giorgi (1975), Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), Kruger (1986) and Stones (1988), and used in studies by Thorpe (1989), Malcolm (1995) and Schön (2000), are considered appropriate for the disclosure of processes which arise in psychotherapy. The topic being investigated is embedded in both the everyday professional life of the researcher, and the discipline of psychoanalysis. Embracing the personal and cultural situatedness of the phenomenon, the research task conjures an approach which is descriptive of the phenomenon but not only descriptive, for it seeks to elucidate and interpret the *meaning* of the phenomenon, i.e. which is also hermeneutic (Titelman, 1979). Of course the notion of 'meaning' is itself multivalent. Titelman's argument does entail the Heideggerian notion that we necessarily approach all phenomena with a pre-understanding. It is therefore pertinent to provide a reflective commentary on the researcher's own situated experience of using the couch.

Early on in my psychotherapeutic career I was encouraged to use the couch by a senior analyst. I found on doing so that the first most striking thing that I noticed was how it gave me freedom, especially the freedom to be silent. My desire to break the silence dissolved away from the start of the session. The usual tension of waiting was replaced by increased interest in what might emerge. As I have become more experienced I have had much less tension anyway, whether using the couch or working face-to-face. However, the couch experience remains distinctive. When the couch is used I generally feel that the undertaking is more clearly analysis.

The freedom and relaxation of using the couch are the first step into a process that feels quite different from when working face-to-face. My attention is 'free floating' and, at the same time, both my attention and emotions are drawn along by the analysand's words. Frequently I hereby experience myself as if in the analysand's lived world. This provides a good platform on which I can build an empathic appreciation of the analysand's experience.

However, when using the couch I do not only experience analysis as gentle, gradual and relaxed. At times it leads to strongly emotional experiences that I experience as texturing the analytic space: it may feel rapid, or thick, or dense, or dark and solid, or light, airy and frothy, and so on. I have a bodily reaction to these textures. At these times I have the felt sense that I am inside a 'dreamscape' that belongs to both the analysand and myself. From the dreamscape I can reflect upon the analysand's words and presence as well as my own thoughts, urges, emotions, fantasies, etc. Dwelling in the dreamscape is quite a strong feeling, it may even have the qualities of an altered state of consciousness. Although a 'changed reality' it feels very real. Part of the experience of the dreamscape is at a bodily level. Along with this I have some habits, such as looking for patterns in my carpet. It is as if my eyes are on holiday so the rest of my sense come into play and are very present.

However, the density of the dreamscape is lost at times and the process then no longer feels so 'analytic'. I have come to define analysis by the presence of a sense of freedom, attunement to the analysand and the dreamscape atmosphere.

My experience of using the couch is a 'different', rich and fascinating experience. Furthermore, over the years, discussion with other practitioners who used the couch has led me to feel that they too have found their experience of the couch similar. Such discussion revealed a groundswell of desire to know and share the experience, as well as dialogue it with psychoanalytic theory. These discussions also led to considerations of ethical concerns, mostly (but not exclusively) around the potentials for domination of the analysand. In particular, discussion of the unthematized meaning of the use of the couch alerted me to how its use might shape the analytic encounter for good or ill.

The above reflective commentary does not only serve to articulate some of the researcher's personal experience and reflections on the use of the couch and hence the researcher's pre-understanding, it also provides an indication of motivations for pursuing the topic.

For the purpose of this study it is helpful to argue for some extensions to the traditional hermeneutic phenomenological methods. The Giorgi method and its variations have helped disclose the structural truth of human phenomena through a human scientific method. However, Brooke (2002, personal communication, 25 October, 2002) has indicated that, whilst providing logical consistency, Giorgi's essential structures do not easily activate the *felt sense* of a phenomenon. Reaching back earlier, but coalescing in the 1990s, has been the recognition that no experience of a phenomenon and no expression of that experience can be adequately disclosive of the phenomenon unless it includes the *texture* or *aesthetics* of the phenomenon (Todres, 1998, personal communication, 13 November, 2002). To access, express, articulate and receive the meaning of a phenomenon, the structural truth of a phenomenon needs to be complemented by an expression of aesthetic texture. Todres (2000, 2002) has eloquently argued for the addition of an aesthetic component to the statements of meaning elaborated by such as the Giorgi method.

However, the positions of both Todres and Brooke can themselves be extended further. Wilber (1996) is a significant contributor to the notion of 'integral knowledge'. By 'integral knowledge' is meant knowledge that is capable of embracing 'objective', 'subjective' and 'intersubjective' dimensions of knowing. Mapping an integral approach to knowledge generation, Wilber (1997, 1998, 2000) has traced three validity claims from Plato (the good, the beautiful and the true), through Kant (practical reason, judgement and pure reason), to Popper (cultural, subjective and objective worlds) and Habermas (intersubjective justness, subjective sincerity and objective truth). Thus an *integral* disclosure of a phenomenon would include not only a statement of general structure and textural aesthetics, but also an assessment of the intersubjective *value* of the phenomenon. The notion of intersubjective value can, strictly speaking, only be applied to complex 'phenomena', of which 'the experience of using the couch' is an exemplar. By 'intersubjective value of the phenomenon' is meant the goodness, fairness and justness of a complex (socially constructed) phenomenon for both individual and community. Very simply put: 'Does the use of the couch help or hinder the analytic process and is it ethical?' With the increasing accent on cultural context, we are invited to

return to phenomena to explicate not only their structural truth and their textural beauty, but also their justness for individuals and a community. Natural science could only ever properly ask and answer questions without reference to value, and least of all to justness (Packer, 1989; McGrath and Johnson 2003; Wilber, 1997). Even if we include the aesthetic dimension to the disclosure of a phenomenon, beauty itself does not bestow a sense of justness. If structural truth is impersonal and beauty is personal, then justness is interpersonal. Thus the intersubjective dimension beckons us to investigate the good and the bad – it invites a critical perspective. The invitation uttered by a concern for *justness* and *value* entails a second, further, hermeneutic step:

[I]nterpretive inquiry denies that facts and values can be clearly distinguished and that only the former are worthy of or amenable to scientific study (the familiar position taken by positivism) . . . [T]he goal to which interpretive inquiry is ultimately directed is not just one of mirroring reality in a descriptive account, but of changing it for the better in some way. Hermeneutic research is tied to an appreciation that a ‘better’ account is one that at the very least fosters our understanding and clarifies our action . . . [and] interpretive inquiry will uncover the various moral concerns that run through our relationships with one another, and will provide forms of explanation that make reference to cultural and practical values (Packer, 1989, p. 117).

Practically, for this study, this means that along with rendering up a general structural statement of the meaning of the couch that has been texturally enlivened (i.e. the ‘findings’), there needs to be a critical dialogue of those ‘findings’ with certain contemporary psychoanalytic notions of ‘discourse’ and intersubjectivity. This critical dialogue phase of this study draws on a methodological hermeneutics which involves the tracing of a ‘circle’ (Byrne, 2001; Edwards, 1998; Giddings and Wood, 2001) from the ‘findings’ to the psychoanalytic discourse in which they are embedded, and back again to the ‘findings’. In this way the investigation seeks to contextually present, extend and deepen understanding of the ‘findings’ as well as the framework in which the ‘findings’ arise. In simple terms, the final phase of this study is a hermeneutic approach in that it takes into consideration the cultural context, inclusive of the participant analysts and researcher as analyst-investigator. Although there is no need to create ‘new’ methods, this multiphase approach to the research topic does mean that *descriptively* the method is a ‘phenomenological hermeneutic investigation’. Put another way, whereas the Heideggerian notion is that exploration of all phenomena is necessarily ‘hermeneutic

phenomenological' (because all phenomena are approached with pre-understanding) the critical argument used here calls for an additional hermeneutic perspective, one which is also *post hoc*, hence this method is called 'phenomenological hermeneutic'.

It is important to make certain further comments on the shape of the study, given the particular nature of the topic. The topic is *highly complex* and embedded in experience, theory and training and, as such, the method needs to be varied somewhat from the phenomenological studies of more *clear-cut* unitary experiences such as anxiety (Fischer, 1974), suspicion (De Koning, 1979) and guilt (Brooke, 1983).

The very experience of using the couch can be framed as constituting implicit, day-to-day 'research' conducted by the participants. Rustin (1997) has argued that psychoanalytic research emerges from the practice-based, personal research of analytic practitioners. The material of such implicit, personal and practice-based research can be gathered *by* a researcher (an experienced practitioner), *from* experiential participants, who are themselves also experienced practitioners (Dreher, 1996). Thus, to some extent, a study such as this aims to access such 'research' and lift it out of its matrix of the private and the implicit, and developing, explicating and thematizing the material so that it can be critically reported. To some extent this conforms to Joseph de Rivera's 'conceptual encounter method' (McLeod, 2001). That method entails a dialogical encounter between the researcher and participant, and is aimed at producing a map of personal experience. In this respect the data-gathering process proposed for this study serves as a co-authored exploration of the research topic by the participants and the researcher (Kvale, 1996; Von Eckartsberg, 1979). In other words the 'data gathering' process is respectful of the 'data' that arises out of a dialogue between two 'authors' (the researcher and the participant) – such data is co-authored.

### **3.2 Operational definition of some terms**

Although the title of this study refers to 'psychoanalytic psychotherapists', from here on the terms 'analyst' and 'analysand' will be used. This is made explicit here as the

intention is not to be misleading, but rather to both avoid confusion and achieve stylistic elegance. These terms have been operationally defined, loosely drawing on the criteria of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP, 2000). The participants were South African or foreign psychoanalytic practitioners who use the couch in their practices and who approximate to the variously defined class 'analyst' by virtue of having received a training analysis (themselves using the couch), supervision and postgraduate theoretical training in analytic principles and practice. Taking this operational definition a step further, the patients or clients of these practitioners will be referred to as 'analysands', and the process in which the analytic couple is engaged will be referred to as 'analysis'. Furthermore, reference to 'psychoanalysis' will generally mean the huge topic of theory and practice that is so called, but this might vary depending on the context.

### 3.3 Data gathering

#### 3.3.1 *Research questions*

In the light of the range and intention of the research, the study was a retrospective one of the participants' contemporary experience. The primary aim of the study was to investigate and elaborate the analyst's lived experience of having an analysand use the couch. With this in mind an initial question was formulated. After establishing the initial historical context of the participant's practice of the technique, the following question was put:

*Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when your analysand uses the couch.*

In order to ensure that the participant comprehensively covered both the phenomenon of the technique as well as the areas of critical focus, several other types of questions were put. As the participants sometimes covered these spontaneously, the topics were not put, as formal questions, but used as foci. These foci included questions that addressed the following areas:

- The ambience of sessions, such as the analyst's receptivity to the analysand, experience and use of reverie, bodily effects, emotions, associations, thoughts, behaviour patterns specific to the technique, variations in the experience of time, and

the effect on the analyst's attempt to organize experience.

- Critical concerns, such as issues of power and gender inequity implicit to the technique.
- Practical concerns, such as the emergence of the analysand's psychological life, indications and contraindications for the use of the technique, and the process of moving from the chair to the couch and back again.

During the interview process, an attempt was made to deepen the understanding gained by the researcher by critically dialoging it with certain psychoanalytic notions.

### *3.3.2 Participants*

As the technique of using the couch has arisen within the psychoanalytic community, the participants were practitioners who could (as previously discussed) be operationally defined as 'analysts'. As the study lay so centrally within psychoanalytic practice, it was not considered necessary to seek practitioners from diverse orientations who might use the couch in their practice. However, although it is possible that inclusion of such other practitioners could widen perspective, this would be beyond the scope of this study.

Review of the literature has intimated that from a certain critical perspective the use of the couch supports an ideology of 'gendered' domination (Chesler, 1971; De Beauvoir, 1949/1972; Sophie Freud, 1988; Friedan, 1963/1965; Horney, 1926; Meerloo, 1963). In order to help provide a portal to 'gendered' issues in the analyst's experience of the use of the couch it was decided to use an equal number of female and male participants.

The participants were experienced practitioners with total of about eighty years experience between them. The least experienced had about ten years experience and the most more than thirty five years.

### *3.3.3 Interviews*

Each participant, who was personally known to the researcher, was contacted initially either by telephone or e-mail. In order to gain maximum cooperation, as well as to fulfil ethical obligations, the participants were informed of the research topic. They were



informed that their identity would be protected and that any personal or clinical material they might use for illustrative purposes would be disguised. They were also told that the person who transcribed the audio recording would be a trustworthy person who would observe confidentiality. The researcher also undertook to arrange for the participants to review a copy of the analysis of the data so that they could moderate the analysis if they so wished. Before the interview each participant was provided with a consent form which, addressed background information on the study, the procedures which would be used, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, and issues relating to confidentiality.

At the interview, participants had the focus of research explained to them in a standardized way. The primary question was then read to the participant, who was allowed to respond as uninterruptedly as possible. When the participant had given some indication that he/she had answered to his/her satisfaction, the researcher put *ad hoc* questions in order to clarify certain areas.

In the light of the fact that this research was conceived as co-authored by the participant and the researcher, a dialogue was allowed to evolve into which the researcher gradually introduced follow-on questions to highlight the foci already mentioned. These questions were not put early on, so as to avoid interfering with the integrity of the participant's initial response to the primary question.

The researcher tried to create accepting and non-judgmental conditions so that the participants could express themselves as authentically as possible. Following Kvale (1996), the researcher encouraged comprehensive description, reflection and clarification of the experience by the participant, until it was clear that the elucidation of meaning had been comprehensively covered.

### **3.4 Analysis procedures**

The interviews were audio recorded for later transcription. After initial transcription the protocols were stripped of identifying information and glossed without interfering with

the meaning of the material. All four of the interviews were used and transcribed as they all gave rich and articulate descriptions of the experience whilst also giving somewhat different perspectives.

### *3.4.1 Method of explication of data to derive statement of general structure*

The interview material was individually explicated using the following steps:

- Stage one: Preliminary listening to the audio recordings
- Stage two: Initial reading of the transcribed protocols
- Stage three: Spontaneous identification of natural meaning units (NMUs)
- Stage four: Reflection and transformation of NMUs into constituent statements revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
- Stage five: Generation of pooled dimensions/sub-components revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
- Stage six: Aggregation of summary statements into a final single statement of general structure of the meaning of using the couch

For practical reasons, the interviews and the details of the reduction of the data to a final statement of general structure have been collected together in an appendix volume to this dissertation. The final statement of general structure was transposed from that appendix, to the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

#### *3.4.1.1 Stage one: Preliminary listening to the audio recordings*

Before conducting an initial reading of the protocols, the researcher listened to the audio recordings in order to gain a sensitivity to the non-literary nuances and subtleties of expression that might be lost when reading the transcribed text. The researcher attempted to assume a frame of mind in which personal preconceptions and judgements were bracketed, but which was responsive to the evocative nature of the audio data.

#### *3.4.1.2 Stage two: Initial reading of the transcribed protocols*

Each transcribed description was read through as many times as were necessary to obtain a sense of the whole text. The initial reading was done in much the same way as the audio recording was listened to: in a frame of mind in which personal preconceptions and judgements were bracketed but which was responsive to the evocative nature of the text. After achieving a holistic sense of the text in this way, it was read again in a more

reflective frame of mind in order to prepare for the later stages of analysis. The transcribed texts are serially located in the appendix to this dissertation numbered for each participant and titled *Interview with # participant*.

#### 3.4.1.3 Stage three: Noting of spontaneously emerging natural meaning units

After completion of stage two of the analysis, the researcher read through the text of each protocol and divided the text up into natural meaning units (NMUs) – each of which conveyed a particular meaning with respect to the technique of using the couch. NMUs are statements made by the participant which are ‘self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect of [the participant’s] experience’ (Cloonan, 1971, p. 117 cited in Stones, 1988, p. 153). NMUs are detectable at the transitions of the meaning in a text (De Koning, 1979). (Wherever feasible, the participant’s own language is used, but it is permissible for the researcher to express the meaning of each NMU in words other than those used by the participant (Stones, 1988)). The NMUs which were derived during this stage were numbered, and appear in the left hand columns of the table labeled *Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) extracted and numbered and converted to constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant* in the appendix.

#### 3.4.1.4 Stage four: Reflection and transformation of NMUs into constituent statements revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant

The researcher reduced redundancies and clarified to himself the meaning of the NMUs by relating them to each other and to his sense of the whole text. Thereafter, the researcher imaginatively reflected on the numbered NMUs, extracting the essence of the technique of using the couch for the participant. Each numbered NMU was systematically interrogated for what it revealed about the technique for that participant. These numbered NMUs were then rephrased as statements that revealed something of the meaning of the use of the couch for that participant. The statements that derived from this stage appear in the right-hand columns of the table labeled *Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) extracted and numbered and converted to constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant* in the appendix.

#### *3.4.1.5 Stage five: Generation of pooled dimensions/sub-components revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant*

After stage four of the data analysis, the researcher further transformed the constituent statements (for each participant) into more direct and general language. These statements were then pooled with each other and with those of the other participants, and clustered into groups expressive of particular dimensions (and their sub-components) of the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch. These groups of statements were then summarized and condensed further in order to produce summary statements of the dimensions and their sub-components of the experience of using the couch. The products of this process appear in the appendix under the title: *Constituents of the meaning of the couch expressed more directly, pooled from each participant, clustered into dimensions/sub-components of dimensions and expressed in summary statements of the dimensions of the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch.*

#### *3.4.1.6 Stage six: Aggregation of summary statements and transposition*

The summary statements of the dimensions and sub-components were then aggregated into a single final statement of the general structure of the meaning of an analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch. This final statement embodies the constituents, variants and structural relations that constitute the lived significance for analysts of having an analysand use the couch. The final product of this process appears in the appendix under the title: *Aggregation of summary statements of dimensions/sub-components of the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch into a single statement of meaning.*

#### *3.4.2 Complementation of the statement of the general structure with aesthetic texturing*

As already stated, in order to access, express, articulate and receive the meaning of a phenomenon, a statement of its general structure needs to be complemented with aesthetic texture. Todres (1998, 2000, 2002) has argued that the way to achieve this is

through the inclusion of the qualities of a unique individual in the presentation of analyzed data. Following the practices of Malcolm (1995) and of Todres, the single final general statement generated by reduction of the data was textured by the inclusion of selected citations from the individual interviews. More specifically, the dimensions and sub-components of the general structure were interleaved with exemplary citations from the individual interviews in order to ground and aesthetically enrich the final statement of meaning. The portions of the general structure and citations were laced together by light commentary. The textural complementation of the general structure comprises the fourth chapter of this dissertation. (For convenience of checking, these citations have been referenced to the numbered sections of the interview in the appendix, e.g. [third participant: 46].)

### ***3.4.3 Critical assessment of the intersubjective value of the phenomenon***

Attempting to present any phenomenon in an integral way (in terms of its general structure, aesthetic texturing and intersubjective justness) calls for consideration of the phenomenon in its 'cultural' context. The intention of *this* study is to understand the analyst's experience of the couch in an integral way. Consequently, critical consideration needs to be given to the cultural context of the couch. If the couch is considered as a determining expression of discourse, then a critical view of that discourse allows for some assessment of the intersubjective value of the couch. Two 'critical' psychoanalytic discourses are useful in this regard — Lacanian/neo-Lacanian thinking, and the theory of relational psychoanalysis. The critical discussion and assessment of the intersubjective value of the use of the couch is presented in the fifth chapter.

## **3.5 Concluding chapter summary**

Starting with a critical appraisal of psychology as a human science, this chapter traces the appropriateness in a study of this nature of using a qualitative research method informed by phenomenology and hermeneutics. It was argued that in this research, as an integral study, it was beneficial to extend and vary these methods to include not only the structure of a human experience, but also the aesthetic/textural perspective and the

intersubjective/value perspective. This naturally broke the study into a 'descriptive' phase, concerned with structure and texture, and a 'hermeneutic' phase, critically concerned with values and the intersubjective nature of using the couch. The experience of using the couch is complex and embedded in a tradition and practice, and thus the study sought to lift the experience out of its matrix of the private and the implicit, to explicate and thematize the material so that it could be critically reported.

Practically, a variant of the Giorgi method was used to generate a phenomenological description of the general structure of the experience. This was then complemented and enriched with aesthetic texture by interleaving the statement of general structure with enlivening citations from the interviews. Finally, concern for intersubjective value and justness was highlighted through a critical dialogue of the structural and aesthetic 'findings' with the 'values' of critical discourse and intersubjective theory. This critical phase of the study drew on a methodological hermeneutics which contextually presented, extended and deepened understanding of the 'findings'. Purely descriptively, the method was a 'phenomenological hermeneutic investigation'.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS

Overall, this investigation attempts an *integral* disclosure of the analyst's lived experience of using the couch: to articulate the general structure of the experience, its texture and its 'cultural' value. This chapter seeks to disclose the general structure and texture of the experience. (Critical discussion of its cultural value will be postponed to the next chapter, using a hermeneutic dialogue to generate both constructive and critical insights into the role that the couch plays in the psychoanalytic process.)

This chapter will present the analyzed data, so as to express both the general structure of the experience and its aesthetic texture (Todres, 1998, 2000, 2002). The challenge is to present the data in such a way that:

- It is general/typical enough to contribute to an academic understanding of the analyst's lived experience of using the couch.
- It is more than a definition or series of statements about the meaning of using the couch for the analyst.
- It tells us something that might ring true to the reader's experience, so that the reader can relate aesthetically and personally to the dimensions of the experience.
- It would increase the reader's sense of clearly accessing the experience without making this sense closed and final (Todres, 2002).

Practically, this means that the analyzed data will be presented in two phases. First, a general statement of the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch condensed out of the analysis of the data, will be presented. Then, following a style used by Todres (2002), this statement will be represented as divided into a number of dimensions and sub-components. These dimensions/sub-components will be grounded and enriched with interleaved references and citations from the interviews of particular participants. (As indicated in the previous chapter, for convenience of checking, these citations will be referenced to the numbered sections of the interview in the appendix as follows — [third participant: 46].) The presentation of the structure of the experience and the aesthetic texture of the citations will be held together by commentary and any necessary clarification of the meaning of particular terms.

#### 4.1 Condensed statement of the analyst's experience of using the couch

Analysis of the data (see appendix) renders up the following 'general structure' (here called the 'condensed statement of the analyst's experience of using the couch'):

*The meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but context-based and ambiguous. The analytic enterprise is not dependent on the physical structure of analysis, and the couch is only a device that may facilitate analysis. The couch's contribution to analysis is ambiguous — it is sometimes facilitative of analysis and sometimes not.*

*The ambiguity of the couch means that analysts need to be mindful of its effect. In particular, issues such as power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use depend on the psychodynamics of the analyst and analysand. The couch may give the analyst actual and perceived power over the analysand through its induction of compliance in the analysand and sense of omniscience in the analyst. However, the same compliance generally facilitates analysis.*

*The couch symbolizes the analyst as analyst and the process of analysis as analysis. Its use vouchsafes the analytic process as prestigious and authentic psychoanalysis. Consequently, its use must have the sanction of a psychoanalytic community.*

*The couch can be experienced as numinous, ambiguous and facilitative of multiple registers of experience and frames of reference. Its use renders the analytic process distinctive, powerful, intense and profound.*

*The couch mediates a mode of being (or analytic space) that is containing, and increases intimacy, a sense of clarity, ambiguity and potentiality. This mode of being provides an evocative and observing space.*

*The couch helps the analyst feel more relaxed and attentive. Through this he/she is more able to track the analysand's material, reflect on it and elucidate patterns and*



*themes. The analyst's own associations, emotions and responses to the analysand are freer and more available. Time may expand, become more diffuse and pass more quickly, allowing the analyst's own thoughts to be more manoeuvrable.*

*In this mode, both the analyst and the analysand may have a more rhythmical presence. The analyst's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the analysand increases. In particular, the sensory accent shifts from vision to vocal body-rhythm. The analyst is nonetheless relieved of certain aspects of bodyliness (e.g. the effort of visual contact) and therefore is more physically relaxed and less vigilant of his/her own body language. However, it is notable that the analyst's own vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication may be dissonant.*

*The privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its mediation of a mode of being. In particular privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language and obligation to appear interested and attentive, and allows the analyst to respond in an unguarded embodied way.*

*Furthermore, privacy protects abstinence as it reduces the analyst's urge to respond to the analysand's interpersonal pressure to deviate from an analytic attitude.*

*The couch effects a transition to a state of 'reverie' which gives the analytic couple access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind. Reverie helps the analyst to automatically track the analysand, facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register, facilitates the analyst's counter-transferential responsiveness, and provides the analyst with access to his/her own associations.*

*The couch helps constellate a third analytic element located within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand, and formed out of the merging of their subjectivities. The constellation of a third analytic element is related to the*

*process of 'reverie' which the couch promotes.*

#### 4.2 Dimensions grounded and enriched with citations from the interviews

*The meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but context-based and ambiguous. The analytic enterprise is not dependent on the physical structure of analysis, and the couch is only a device that may facilitate analysis. The couch's contribution to analysis is ambiguous — it is sometimes facilitative of analysis and sometimes not.*

If we return to some of the raw data we see that this significant, if not primary, meaning was announced, from the beginning, by the first participant. Acting to some extent as his 'own phenomenologist', the first participant's immediate response to the research question was as follows:

Well I need to sort of almost deconstruct your question in a way . . . To me it isn't a generalized experience. For instance I'm thinking back to one person I was working with . . . I don't remember why, I think it was a moment of curiosity or somehow the conversation had reached not quite impasse but some kind of something and kind of my response was 'well maybe you'd like to try using the couch' as if it was another doorway or something [first participant's response just preceding 1].

The first participant shows a fine sense of the self-reflective and self-critical subtleties of the analytic process. In the above extract he foregrounds his analytic experience to both make and refute the very idea of 'a meaning'. He implicitly referred to the researcher's question as having an essential quality, i.e. that the researcher's question seemed to assume that there was a general, i.e. essential, quality to the phenomenon of using the couch. The point is that, for this participant, the meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but always context-based and ambiguous. (Naturally, any two people who 'set up the couch configuration between them would experience their interaction as different. This does not, however, point to an 'essential' meaning of 'using the couch', it points to the interrelatedness of the different existentials of: being-a-body, being-together-with-another, spatiality and temporality. Such a point invites a critical dialogue between

phenomenology and constructivism but this is beyond the scope of this study of the couch.) Overall, this means that the couch is useful insofar as it supports a mode of being-with which utters an invitation to enquiry in a state of generative uncertainty (Ivey, 1999).

*The ambiguity of the couch means that analysts need to be mindful of its effect. In particular, issues such as power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use depend on the psychodynamics of the analyst and analysand. The couch may give the analyst actual and perceived power over the analysand through its induction of compliance in the analysand and sense of omniscience in the analyst. However, the same compliance generally facilitates analysis.*

A practical outworking of the couch's facilitation of compliance is the danger that it may be used for other than pure analytic reasons. In particular, its tendency to induce compliance in analysands may be used by analysts to fulfil certain desires or assuage anxieties. The second participant remarked on how, early in his practice, he had relied on the couch to make him feel more secure:

[T]here was one point that it was clearer to me that most of the men that I saw I'd see them on the couch and . . . in a way it's partly because I felt threatened by the power of those men [second participant: 60] . . . and there were some quite powerful men that I was seeing and like older men or men that were very successful in business . . . it felt like this is my domain, that you know he's lying down, I'm the one who's all seeing, I am able to think clearly, he's the one who has to talk and so on [second participant: 61].

However, the invitation to submit may be more subtle, and the analyst may not explicitly desire it. The effect of a power differential can shape very particular ways of being-together for the analytic couple:

[S]itting right behind and out of sight invites too much of a passive dominance, I'm assuming it encourages too stylized a transference and I think that Freud's exclusive emphasis on the Oedipal bypasses the spiritual and the sibling dimensions which seem to me to also need to have possibilities [first participant: 48].

However, the citations above need to be balanced against the following insight of 'the'



third participant: 'my sense is that patients feel *you're* going to have more control if they use the couch but in fact you have less control and *they* feel freer' [third participant: 10]. The first participant highlighted the ambiguity of the couch with respect to fear, anxiety and loss of control:

I'm sure we're in a realm of opposites and in a sense if the work is about helping people to be free within their living then that fearfulness and the loss of control, is there, and I think it is, but it's fear and encouraging and supporting and enabling that I think could be done in other ways but yes, I'm sure that's so that there is quite often an anxiety. At least anxiety is part of it and also hope and desire to let go of control [first participant: 65].

None of the participants indicated that having an analysand use the couch satisfied their own sexual desires in any way. Of course, applying the hermeneutic of suspicion, it is possible to say that although the participants did not have conscious or explicit recognition of their own sexual desires, some sort of sexual dominance may be a subtext. The second participant noted that using the couch could have sexual connotations: 'obviously there's huge sexual symbolism of actually lying prone . . . in a way exposing yourself to somebody who can't see you [second participant: 14]. He had linked this to his observation that: 'people who have been sexually abused find it very very difficult and in fact intolerable and [second participant: 12] they don't like the idea of speaking into the void and they don't like not being able seeing me and knowing what I'm up to [second participant: 13]'.

*The couch symbolizes the analyst as analyst and the process of analysis as analysis. Its use vouchsafes the analytic process as prestigious and authentic psychoanalysis. Consequently, its use must have the sanction of the psychoanalytic community.*

The couch's capacity to symbolize the analyst as analyst and the process as analysis is expressed quite dramatically in the words of the second participant:

It feels like I'm doing much closer to what my idealized analysis would be . . . with people on the couch, especially if they're working hard and stuff is there and comes out [second participant: 44].

There is also an intimation that using the couch may serve as a ritual of initiation into an

identity, an authentic process and the psychoanalytic community:

[I]n some ways it's got elements of a rite of passage or a ritual or crossing. There are elements of that. Sometimes working with trainees, they almost measure themselves by you know 'have you got him or her on the couch yet?' I think it's a bit like do you do sex or do you make love? [first participant: 67].

The second participant also described the use of the couch as an initiatory portal into the practice of analysis: 'I had a sense somehow of now I was beginning to do analysis and I think that sort of stayed with me' [second participant: 5]. Whilst the use of the couch sanctions the process as authentically analytic, the couch's use is itself the subject of 'cultural' sanction. As both the third and fourth participants noted: 'I think I was sort of hesitant but I think there'd been a lot of Tavistock people who'd encouraged clinicians here to do it, to use the couch' [third participant: 5] and 'I was in a psychoanalytic community in a way that I had never been before or since . . . [there] was a lot of talk about the use of couches . . . there was a permission to explore it that I might not have gone into had I not had that opportunity' [fourth participant: 41].

*The couch can be experienced as numinous, ambiguous and facilitative of multiple registers of experience and frames of reference. Its use renders the analytic process distinctive, powerful, intense and profound.*

Whereas the previous sub-component highlights the effects of the couch as a signifier, this sub-component articulates the felt sense of the couch: a numinous expression of many registers of meaning. To illustrate this with raw data, let us turn to the first participant: 'he lay down on the couch and it was enormously powerful' [first participant: 2], 'it was a very big reaction . . . it was "oh yes, this is taking us to another level that's important and good"' [first participant: 9]. The second participant stated it quite simply: 'the couch is also a very powerful symbol' [second participant: 68].

These two sub-components present the meaning of the couch as carrying both a signifiatory function and a feeling function.

*The couch mediates a mode of being (or analytic space) that is containing, and increases intimacy, a sense of clarity, ambiguity and potentiality. This mode of being provides an evocative and observing space.*

This sub-component gives a sense of the meaning of the couch for the analytic couple as a couple. A return to the raw data allows us to gain some felt sense of the mode of being that the couch mediates. Consistent with one of the tenets of the analytic setting (Winnicott, 1965/1989) this mode of being is containing. It also facilitates observation. The fourth participant expressed this explicitly: 'I think . . . that the couch allows somebody to feel more contained. They risk more, the analysand risks more and I think . . . I am able to risk more also. Because there's an observing space' [fourth participant: 11, 12]. Furthermore, the couch 'encourages a different kind of intimacy which I think is . . . something quite particular' [first participant: 44] in which the analyst's presence is forgotten, whilst intimacy is increased: 'people also forget about your presence and . . . you're more like closer to them' [second participant: 71].

The second participant noted how using the couch gave him clarity and freedom of mind:

I remember being astounded at how different it was and how much it just cleared my mind and how I was able to think in a way that I wasn't able to think before [second participant: 2].

It's that sort of sense about it that their story will develop and unfold in the most natural way without worrying about me [second participant: 36].

In general, the couch produces a mode of being that is evocative and reflective: 'it's about the analysand having more space to evoke, produce, reflect internal experience' [fourth participant: 13]. This state of mind encourages analytic enquiry: 'I think there is a facilitating environment for analytic inquiry. It's primarily about a state of mind' [first participant: 71].

The felt sense of this is that, in general, the use of the couch helps create a safe and intimate place that is pregnant with potential meaning and in which psychological life may be evoked, followed, and respectfully observed without impingement.

The next sub-component expresses something of the *analyst's* self-experience.

*The couch helps the analyst feel more relaxed and attentive. Through this he/she is more able to track the analysand's material, reflect on it and elucidate patterns and themes. The analyst's own associations, emotions and responses to the analysand are freer and more available. Time may expand, become more diffuse and pass more quickly, allowing the analyst's own thoughts to be more maneuverable.*

If we focus on the ambience of the mode of being mediated by the couch, then relaxation and attentiveness become evident. Being this way enables the analyst to more easily track and process the analysand's material. The second participant had been powerfully struck by the effect of the couch on his own way of being from the first time he used it: 'for the first time I could actually relax and think, and allow myself to work out what processes were actually going on for the first time. I found it an enormous relief' [second participant: 3]. The relaxation extends to his body: 'I have a much greater degree of comfort in my body and much less stiffness. I think in a way I'm probably overly stiff in face to face' [second participant: 23]. The fourth participant linked such relaxation to a space for thinking: 'I think one of the first things is that I feel much more relaxed. I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive and concurrently I have a great deal more space to think about what's going on' [fourth participant: 1, 2]. More pointedly, it is the quality of this thinking space which is her central experience of the couch: 'cardinally I . . . have a thinking space. A better thinking space. That I guess would be the central experience' [fourth participant: 4]. Within this space the spectrum of the analyst's response to the analysand is typified by the first participant, who describes how 'the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on, tend to be more available' [first participant: 35].

The use of the couch helps distill 'the stuff that dreams are made of' into understanding:

So how do the interpretations come to me? They come to me in a much easier way, again I think just because I'm free to just sort of think about things and also

I've got the advantage then of seeing the patterns in a much clearer way and separating a lot of the words from the themes I suppose [first participant: 23].

When using the couch the analyst's experience of time is different: 'you can abandon yourself to this almost different kind of time that occurs in that space' [third participant: 43]. The analyst's sense of time and thinking are related:

I think the other thing on the couch is it's almost like things get slowed down. That I have a much greater maneuverability of my thoughts. It sounds a bit strange but it's almost like there's such, when I'm behind the couch, there's such a delay in what people are saying even if they're talking constantly, because they tend to repeat things and because one thing follows onto the next, it's almost like the telephone line thing where you can sneak e-mail messages and whatever internet bytes in-between, I can do that with my thoughts in a way that I can't do in a face to face way [second participant: 49].

*In this mode both the analyst and the analysand may have a more rhythmical presence. The analyst's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the analysand increases. In particular, the sensory accent shifts from vision to vocal body-rhythm. The analyst is nonetheless relieved of certain aspects of bodyliness (e.g. the effort of visual contact) and therefore is more physically relaxed and less vigilant of his/her own body language. However, it is notable that the analyst's own vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication may be dissonant.*

Being out of sight of each other shifts the analytic couple's communication to reliance on bodily and vocal forms: rhythm (such as breathing), tone and prosody. The felt sense of this sub-component is well captured by two extracts from the first and third participants' interviews respectively:

I noticed once a person would be absolutely in tune to my breathing. 'Ah, I think you're getting a bit sleepy there' which is usually a bit true, and enough to wake me up. And also I'm more aware of tone. I think the sensory apparatus becomes more the ear [first participant: 56].

Well, you can tell the mood and a lot about what the analyst possibly is going to start saying or picking up by that voice, rather than the expression. You pick up the little noises they make habitually [third participant: 13].



*The privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its mediation of a mode of being. In particular, privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language and obligation to appear interested and attentive and allows the analyst to respond in an unguarded embodied way.*

The significant connection between privacy and the mode of being mediated by the couch was clearly announced early on by the first participant:

[I]t seemed to me that what was happening was in making that physical move, for, this person and *not having the eye contact* and the familiar that it shifted him into *a whole other realm of awareness* which in our experience of each other had not happened for him before [first participant: 3].

The felt sense of relief and reverie, when the couch is used, can be linked to the analyst's increased freedom of bodily expression and decreased conscious self-monitoring/restraint. Both the second and third participants commented on this:

I think, it sounds potentially strange but it's a great relief to kind of not have the dead pan face and to be careful not to respond to things [second participant: 8].

[I]f I look like I'm wandering off because I have my own reverie, that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face to face . . . I don't experience it as being allowable face to face . . . I'm concerned if I look like I'm drifting off that people will think that I'm not listening and partly they're right, but I think that's the only way I can get to some kind of associations [second participant: 46, 47].

I think in a way that's the freedom to sort of sit there and really listen and think in a way that I think might look odd if [I were face to face] [third participant: 18].

The fourth participant made similar observations:

I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive [fourth participant: 1] . . . I think about [certain clients] they were so vigilant about me, that if I seemed to be lost or distracted or not paying attention to every bit, they got agitated and when they were on the couch . . . they were less aware of me and I think that created a reverie state [fourth participant: 5] . . . and I'm more relaxed because I'm not having to look attentive all the time . . . I can relax and think and associate to their material [fourth participant: 6].

*Furthermore, privacy protects abstinence as it reduces the analyst's urge to respond to the analysand's interpersonal pressure to deviate from an analytic attitude.*

The lived sense of freedom from interpersonal pressure to deviate from the analytic attitude is given in the following composite quotation from the second participant's interview:

I also found that it [the couch] really took away the social interaction, which for me was actually helpful [second participant: 4] . . . [whereas face to face] I'll often pick up on something rather like in a social setting [second participant: 9] . . . So it becomes much easier for me to maintain a frame on the couch, in a kind of psychoanalytic way than it would face to face. [second participant: 10] . . . I think people sitting face to face want some kind of a prompt or at least some sort of a response [second participant: 34] . . . if somebody's sitting expecting me to somehow do something as they do face to face then I feel the kind of social awkwardness I feel somehow it's not working it's not analysis. [second participant : 38, 39].

*The couch effects a transition to a state of 'reverie' which gives the analytic couple access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind. Reverie helps the analyst to automatically track the analysand, facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register, facilitates the analyst's counter-transferential responsiveness and provides the analyst with access to his/her own associations.*

'Reverie' has been alluded to several times already and it is evident that 'reverie' forms a conceptual node in the participants' responses. In that respect we already have some sense of reverie in the experience of the couch. More particularly reverie becomes a portal to certain way of being:

I think it's possibly easier to get to different states of mind [third participant: 17]. I mean just while we're talking I keep thinking of infants and mothers and that you know the sort of recapitulation of that sort of experience [third participant: 18] . . . I don't think it encourages regression in the way that we understood it in the late '60's you know where I suppose you know Ronnie Laing's work and Mary Barnes. I mean that was the flavour of the time that one would almost become something [third participant: 22]. I think allowing infantile states to emerge is something a bit different because I think they exist hand in hand so I wouldn't go along with the idea of regression being whole hearted. You know a sort of complete thing. My sense is it allows earlier states of mind to emerge. But probably not to be completely overwhelming [third participant: 23].

This rather extensive citation from the second participant's interview highlights how the couch gives permission for reverie, effects mind space, increases the space and maneuverability of his thoughts and helps his reception of his analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register:

I have my own *reverie*, that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face to face [second participant: 43]. I think the other thing on the couch is it's almost like things get slowed down. That I have a much greater maneuverability of my thoughts. It sounds a bit strange but it's almost like there's such, when I'm behind the couch, there's such a delay in what people are saying even if they're talking constantly because they tend to repeat things and because one thing follows onto the next, it's almost like the telephone line thing where you can sneak email messages and whatever internet bytes in in between, I can do that with my thoughts in a way that I can't do in a face to face way. [second participant: 47]. In a face to face way I think I'm also bombarded by the body language and my own body language and other things that are going on that fill those gaps. [second participant: 48]. But I feel like, what was the fabulous movie – the Matrix – did you see that, you know where the bullet is coming to you and then it slows down and you kind of bend backwards and it's that not in such a dramatic way but there's space to maneuver with the space and I'm actually free to think. [second participant: 49] . . . I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face. [second participant: 51]

This extended quotation from the second participant's interview articulates something of the relational matrix between analyst and analysand when the couch is used. This leads us to a particular metaphorization of that relational matrix: a third analytic element.

*The couch helps constellate a third analytic element located within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand and formed out of the merging of their subjectivities. The constellation of a third analytic element is related to the process of 'reverie' which the couch promotes.*

The second participant implicated the couch in the constitution of a third element, a 'shared possession', that is composed of the merged subjectivities of analyst and analysand:

It's almost like there's some kind of a shared possession, it's like it's put into that space and that space is uncontaminated and really between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one in a way that's it's harder to face to face

[second participant: 55]. It feels, unlike face to face, that there is the patient, yourself and the third sort of space and somewhere there's a merging of these two [second participant: 56].

From the text of previous responses we can infer that both the formation of this third element and information about it are mediated to some extent by reverie.

### 4.3 Summary conclusion

What has this study discovered about an analyst's experience of using the couch? Firstly, that the meaning of the couch is context-based and ambiguous and may sometimes facilitate analysis and sometimes not. In particular the couch has a propensity to activate issues of power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use. These issues are, however, contingent on the psychodynamics of the particular analyst and analysand.

Secondly, the couch is a symbol of the analyst as analyst and vouchsafes the process as authentic psychoanalysis. This has a felt effect on the analytic process.

Thirdly, the couch mediates a mode of being that is containing, intimate, and pregnant with potential meaning and in which psychological life may be evoked, embodied, easily tracked, and respectfully observed without impingement.

Fourthly, privacy, the most significant contribution to the couch's mediation of a mode of being, reduces the analyst's anxieties and pressures to deviate from an analytic attitude.

Fifthly, the couch supports reverie giving the analyst access to different states of mind: infantile states of mind, increased responsiveness to the analysand's presence, reception to a bodily register and increased sense of mental space and manoeuvrability of thoughts.

Finally, the couch is implicated in the provision of a third analytic element formed out of, the merging of the analyst's and analysand's subjectivities. The constellation of this third analytic element is related to the process of reverie.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter produced the general structure and aesthetic texture of the analyst's experience of the analysand, using the couch, i.e. the 'findings'. However, an integral disclosure of the experience needs to explicate something of its 'cultural' embeddedness, and interpret its intersubjective justness and value. As noted in the chapter on method, a concern for justness and value entails an additional hermeneutic step. Hermeneutic enquiry helps to reference an expression of the meaning of an experience to cultural and practical values (Packer, 1989).

Practically, this chapter seeks to deepen and critically discuss its phenomenological and intersubjective situatedness through a circling hermeneutic dialogue of the 'findings' with certain contemporary psychoanalytic and phenomenological notions. It is hoped that such a hermeneutic interrogation of the emergent 'findings' will valuably inform the critical and creative development of psychoanalytic technique.

The 'findings' may, for convenience, be clustered into three foci. The first of these announces the couch as an ambiguous and context-based portal *into* a discourse. The meaning of the couch that follows from this is captured under the rubric of 'Couching one's words'.

The second point of focus gathers together the experience of the couch *as* a discourse. This incorporates its role as a signifier, which helps construct a mode of being-with-another, as well as bodily and prosodic presence, state of body-mind, privacy, reverie and a so-called 'analytic third'. The focus of this discussion falls under the rubric of 'The couch as a wording'.

The couch as discourse both arises from and composes the ground of psychoanalysis. This ground is the matrix of ideological constructs. However, it is also the ground from

which we may refine critical and creative development of psychoanalytic technique. This leads to the final focus that blends and highlights the critical and deconstructive drift in the first two foci, and that condenses them into a critical but redemptive hermeneutics of the couch. This calls for a hermeneutic attitude that allows for the critical 'destruction' of the couch, its 'survival' and re-presentation as a usable analytic object. This section is headed: 'Deconstructing and re-constructing the couch'.

### 5.1 Couching one's words

From the outset the 'findings' of this study disclosed a drift towards ambiguity and away from essentialism. In particular, the first participant commenced his interview by 'couching his words'. He 'heard' the research request to describe his experience of analysis with the couch as carrying an implicit request to articulate its essential meaning. These first words of the first interview went as follows:

**Researcher:** Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands use the couch.

**Participant 1:** Well, I need to sort of almost deconstruct your question in a way with a kind of example. A couple of examples. But they're a bit blurred so I need to try and . . . the general thing I would say is it all depends, and the examples which aren't differentiated at the moment is that I have experience of somebody getting up from the couch, moving onto the couch, moving from the chair to the couch. To me it isn't a generalized experience. For instance I'm thinking back to one person I was working with who [information removed] over some time he came for initial consultation and a few follow-ups and then into more of a continuity where he came regularly and then one day, I don't remember why, I think it was a moment of curiosity or somehow the conversation had reached not quite impasse but some kind of something and kind of my response was 'well maybe you'd like to try using the couch' as if it was another doorway or something.

This was after a year or so's work and he lay down on the couch and it was enormously powerful. He said 'I feel as if the whole room is —' you know, and it seemed to me that what was happening was, in making that physical move for this person and not having the eye contact and the familiar that it shifted him into a whole other realm of awareness, which, in our experience of each other, had not happened for him before. But I can also think of somebody who had kind of identified that the couch was the method. It wasn't my idea. It was sophisticated culture. And I had a sense of actually there's no connection happening here. It's a

disadvantage, it's a cultural assumption which not only is functioning as a defence but almost enhancing it, and I felt some concern that I was colluding with an institutionalization of something that was not [analysis]. So I think I said 'Well maybe we just need to see each other' or something [first participant: pre 1-4].

'Hearing' the research request in this way the first participant 'couched his words' and 'spoke' to refute the very idea of an 'essential meaning' to the couch. In couching his words he opened a novel perspective on the meaning of the couch. In effect, he disclosed that, for him, the meaning of the couch was imbued with context-based and personal associations, interpretations and meanings. He gave a personal narrative his experience of the couch through which he unhinged the meaning of the couch from its literal and foundational presence, both practically and theoretically.

### 5.1.1 Deconstruction

Post-structuralist critical theory provides a hermeneutic lens through which to examine these 'findings' and a way in which we may deconstruct and reconstruct the psychoanalytic 'discourse'. In effect, through taking this perspective, the first participant deconstructed the 'couch'. He effected this deconstruction by fore-grounding his own particular analytic experiences, and so both asserted and refuted the couch as useful and meaningful. Using the metaphor of structuralist linguistics it may be said that he used the '*parole*' (everyday 'speech') of his analytic experience to both make and refute the '*langue*' (structural 'grammar') of psychoanalysis as a culture. Doing this, he followed French linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure's thinking, in that he granted precedence of *parole* over *langue* (Belsey, 1980; Hawkes, 1977; Selden, 1985). This formed a critical device that works by finding everyday occurrences that contradict the alleged essential 'meaning' of a phenomenon. In this instance what this critical device achieved, was destruction and re-construction of the structural meaning of the couch. In his own words the participant needed 'to sort of almost deconstruct your question in a way with a kind of example'. Curiously, the leading post-modern philosopher, Jacques Derrida, in articulating deconstruction, reverses Saussure's thinking — he situates *langue* prior to *parole*. However, Derrida's articulation is not applied as a simple reversal of this precedence, but is set to produce a dialectic tension between *langue* and *parole* which

remembers what Saussure's structuralism forgets or takes for granted (Belsey, 1980; Norris, 1982; Ray, 1984).

The first participant inaugurated a critical hermeneutic enquiry, which referenced the 'meaning' of the couch to the implicit and embedded notion that the couch *has* meaning. He did this by inviting the researcher to consider what the research question might 'forget'. He did not refute that the couch can have meaning but invited us to notice, or remember, something about the 'meaning' of the couch: it is a paradox — its meaning is to have no essential meaning, its meaning is to be constantly rediscovered:

*The meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but context-based and ambiguous.*

This does not mean that an examination of the meaning of the couch for the analyst should be abandoned, rather it points to how the meaning of the couch lives *between*, theory and practice. Stated differently the couch supports a mode of being-with which utters an invitation to enquiry in a state of generative uncertainty (Ivey, 1999), an invitation to work without memory, desire or understanding (Bion, 1967/1988).

Such a deconstructive-reconstructive approach can also be used to shift and understanding of the analytic enterprise away from the literal architecture of a physical space to that of the lived metaphor of 'body-mind' space. The first participant expressed strong reservations about the analytic enterprise being seen as dependent on the physical structure of the analytic setting:

[Analysis] lends itself to caricature in which it was assumed because someone's sitting on a chair and someone's lying on a couch and there are associations and communications that something organic is happening. That's my difficulty with looking at the physical structure. I don't think, and I'm very concerned not to foster a point of view in your research that suggests that this task is primarily dependent on physical structure. Because I feel strongly it isn't [first participant: 64].

Articulating his response as he was from within a Cartesian worldview he considered the analytic enterprise depending upon a 'state of mind' rather than physical setting:

I think there is a facilitating environment for analytic inquiry. It's primarily about a *state of mind* . . . , I think it isn't about the physical structure. I think it's much



more about the state of mind and trying to reduce the clutter in the physical structure . . . it's a mixture of what's useful and what gets in the way [first participant: 71].

The *overall* articulation by the participants of this issue condensed into the statement that:

*The analytic enterprise is not dependent on the physical structure of analysis and the couch is only a device which may facilitate analysis.*

That having been said, whilst the analytic enterprise is not dependent on physical structure it may be influenced and there is, in fact, a relationship between the analytic enterprise and the physical structure of the analytic setting (Winnicott, 1965/1989). Further examination of that relationship promises to deepen the objective physical structure into a lived spatiality. In this respect the second participant highlighted the very real advantages and meaningfulness of the physical architecture of the analytic setting and the couch's place in fostering a space of body-mind:

It's like people also forget about your presence and it's almost again this idea that you're more like closer to them, that *you can make interpretations which they own in a way which feels more like their own interpretations* because it's almost *like it comes from the back of their head* in a funny way, it comes to mind and it's forgotten about, which is hard for our own narcissism, but actually I'd rather have it that way and people have only really said that to me on the couch that it's like, that *they can't believe that they just will talk and that this stuff will sort itself or will settle out* even when I know I've been working really hard and kind of guiding it in a way. Nobody has ever said that to me in face to face. Face to face they have to consider you in a funny way [second participant 71-75].

Noting the italicized portions in the above extract it is evident that the physical setting of using the couch is meaningful. In itself an 'existential' or dimension of existence (Kruger, 1988), the spaciality of the couch configuration conjures other existentials: being-together-with-another (the authorship of interpretation merges), bodily-ness (the site of interpretation is embodied) and increased openness to possibilities of being (change occurs) (Condrau, 1984, 1988; Craig, 1988; Kruger, 1988). Thus, whilst the couch *is* an item of furniture, *it is not simply* an item of furniture. The couch's structuring of space has lived meaning for the analytic couple. This means that although the couch and the chair are palpable objects set in a particular way, and are seen and felt by the analyst and analysand, the setting is at the same time more than that. In terms of

existential-phenomenology the couch and chair so set are 'things' and 'things reflect our psychological experiences' (Romanyshyn, 1982, p. 38). Thus the density of the concrete human fact of sitting in a chair or lying on a couch can be explicated.

Except for intimations by Dieckmann (1979), the first participant's use of a deconstructive process to announce the meaning of the couch as context-based and ambiguous is original. Dieckmann also works in terms of a dialectic, that of the 'couch and chair' but he focuses on the choice of the couch versus the choice of the chair, and considers this a dynamic part of analysis. This is not quite the same as the first participant's deconstruction of a structural meaning of the couch in favour of its context-based meaning.

In 'couching his words' the first participant opened discussion in the very spirit of psychoanalysis as a worldview based in decentring (Ogden, 1994, 1996, 1997). Psychoanalysis dethroned the notion of a conscious subject, replacing it with the notion of subjectivity as a dialectic between consciousness and the unconscious. Similarly, in 'couching his words', the first participant replaced the notion of the couch having *a* meaning with the notion that *any* meaning it might have shifts depending on the context.

Being itself context-based and ambiguous, the couch decentres analysis *from* an 'essential'/transcendent meaning *towards* meaning that is immanent in everyday practice. Not only is meaning 'located' in everyday practice but it has implications for everyday practice. Both interpretively and practically, the couch's meaning oscillates as a dialectic:

To me now they aren't about positions but about people, so *I think those factors are relative too and I think in the context of discovering meanings*, the couch as a structure which doesn't require looking another person in the eye is facilitating . . . can be often facilitating. In terms of the quality of relationship, it can be, yes, [but] it can be the opposite, it can be unhelpful [first participant: 15, 16, 17].

Well sometimes with this particular person [who comes once a week], but it's very specific, I feel it would be a good idea if this person is drifting off and I'm drifting off, you know, and actually would be good if they just stand up. And with the same person at other times I'm thinking 'now I wouldn't be able to explore this if she were sitting up' [first participant: 40].

These insights coalesce in the analysis of the data which discloses the practical fact that:

*The couch's contribution to analysis is ambiguous — it is sometimes facilitative of analysis and sometimes not.*

Practically, the complex network of meaning (or 'discourse') that is 'the couch' oscillates between facilitating and obstructing analysis. This is consistent with Lichtenberg's (1995) conclusion that when the experience of analysis is bad, the use of the couch makes the analytic exploration worse, whereas when the experience of analysis is good, the use of the couch makes the analytic exploration better. As a practical modulator, but not determinant, of the analytic process, sometimes it is wise to use the couch, sometimes it is not, sometimes the practical intentions behind its use are analytic, sometimes they are not. These considerations invite us to expand critique of the couch in terms of technique/contraindications to its use and its implication in terms of dominating the analysand. The 'findings' of this study help indicate some of the ways in which the use of the couch is practically problematic and, more pointedly, how it is implicated in issues of power and domination.

### *5.1.2 Pragmatic critique*

The participants expressed a range of pragmatic concerns, notably the couch's connection to power, sexuality, anxiety and the contraindications to its use. Certain of these critical comments were phenomenologically grounded and achieved the status of lived experience. Others were not, becoming instead somewhat theoretical commentaries. In trying to extract and report something of the participants' lived critique of the couch there is a danger of falling into the language of empirical generalities. The pragmatic concerns expressed by the participants did, however, form part of their lived experience of using the couch. In general, the analyst is ambivalently open to the ambiguity of the couch:

*The ambiguity of the couch means that analysts need to be mindful of its effect.*

*In particular, issues such as power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use depend on the psychodynamics of the analyst and analysand.*

The couch may induce compliance in analysands: 'sitting right behind and out of sight invites too much of a passive dominance' [first participant: 48]. This concurs with the views of Samuels (1995) who feels that the couch emphasizes the passivity of the

analysand, and Byerly (1992) and Stern (1978) who have contended that submission is intrinsic to the use of the couch.

The couch may also sexualize the relationship between analyst and analysand: 'obviously there's huge sexual symbolism of actually lying prone and . . . in a way exposing yourself to somebody who you can't see' [second participant: 14]. This concurs with Greenacre's (1954) view that the couch may be inherently sexually provocative. Likewise, Stern (1978) felt that its use could stimulate the analyst's sexual feelings. He also maintained that everyday culture regards the couch as sexually exploitative. Frank (1995) concurs that the couch might be experienced as sexually exhibiting the analysand. That having been, said none of the participants indicated that having an analysand use the couch stimulated or satisfied their own sexual desires in any way.

Along with such putative erotic excitement, the couch may also generate fears/anxieties:

[Y]es, I'm sure that's so that there is quite often an anxiety. At least anxiety is part of it and also hope and desire to let go of control [first participant: 65] . . . it's not a natural form of discourse and evokes on the one hand anxieties, and on the other hand, and I also have quite a lot of evidence of this, erotic fears and excitement [first participant: 68].

These concerns all raise the possible need to assess an analysand's suitability to use the couch. As noted in the literature review, several authors have argued that the use of the couch is contraindicated for certain individuals (Anthony, 1961; Balint, 1965; Bellak & Meyers, 1975; Freud, cited in Bernstein, 1975; Deutsch, 1986; Schmideberg, 1948; Wexler, 1971). However, the first participant was critical of such assessment, feeling that it was 'parochial and political':

[Assessment is] not really meaningful, it's more to do with the counter-transference and the anxieties of practitioners and the ethos of culture and reducing risks than inherently about truth and discovery. In our earlier conversation . . . there's something about 'Can the practice develop the theory'. It's that kind of thing that seems to me that's very important to keep that alive. Very, very important. So when you said some people shouldn't use the couch, it seems to me such a parochial and political statement that it's awful. And it says more about the making of the statement than about anything inherently interesting about literal truths [first participant: 62].

The other participants, drawing on their experience, felt differently, implying that there was wisdom in some sort of assessment process:

And I've noticed from quite early on, I think people who have been sexually abused find it very, very difficult and in fact intolerable and they don't like the idea of speaking into the void and they don't like not being able to see me and knowing what I'm up to [second participant: 12, 13]. [M]y two most difficult people . . . started off face to face and migrated to the couch as a kind of an experiment but found it intolerable and moved back. And I think in retrospect with people like that I wouldn't expect them to be on the couch having had that experience they found it very, the one lady described it as being, as though she was kind of dissected, she felt like she was being prodded and probed on the couch. [She has also had some background of sexual abuse]. She felt like it was like a medical examination. That was her association with the couch. Just as I say that she also had an abortion that was very traumatic for her, it was very medicalized. [She had very traumatic experiences of the medical profession] and so I think that put me into the very powerful role of being this distant doctor [second participant: 16].

I wouldn't think that [the couch] would [always] be a helpful thing. I mean one might get too much early material. I think [the therapist] would be terrified. You know how much one would get the erotic transference going on I think could be an issue. I think also for some very disturbed people, borderline, I mean I know it's done, but I'd have to think of each case by merit [third participant: 61].

I wonder with [certain analysands] whether it was wise. I think my understanding now would be that people need to function quite well psychologically to really benefit from couch use. I suggested it to one man who has a generalized anxiety disorder, quite a severe disorder and, because he was really having difficulty talking and he just said it would increase his anxiety beyond measure [fourth participant: 33].

A way through the impasse generated by these disparate views is indicated by the first participant who early on in his interview expressed the view (based on clinical material) that the use of the couch takes on a specific meaning in terms of the analysand's psychological life [first participant: 7]. The third participant made a similar suggestion [third participant: 34]. More specifically:

I think [that issues of power etc are] much more person-specific in my experience and the other is about alliance or cooperation and the parameters of that which I think the sociocultural ethos has a bearing [on it] but it isn't the totality [first participant: 51].

Having reflected on these concerns, it needs to be said that the issue of *power*, in

particular, drew some comment from the participants. Perhaps, in Victorian Austria the shared meaning of the couch was not much negotiated between Freud and his analysands, whereas in modern culture it needs to be negotiated as an analytic object. This invites us to return to this issue and examine the couch's relation to power and domination in more detail.

### 5.1.3 Critique of domination

The role of the couch in relation to power and domination arose as early as Freud's first references to its use. His language, at least in the English of the *Standard Edition*, strongly suggests that power and domination were inherent to the analytic procedure. The following expressions highlight this: 'I insist upon this procedure' (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 134) and 'Permission [not to use the couch] is regularly refused' (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 139). A 'finding' of this current study is that:

*The couch may give the analyst actual and perceived power over the analysand through its induction of compliance in the analysand and sense of omniscience in the analyst. However, the same compliance generally facilitates analysis.*

What starts out as a valuable compliance on behalf of the analysand may become corrupted. The couch as a facilitator of compliance may endanger its ambiguity causing a collapse of the psychoanalytic enterprise into non-analytic discourse. Such a collapse could occur if, for instance, the compliance were used to satisfy an analyst's desire for security and power. The second research participant remarked on how, early in his practice, he had relied on the power that the couch gave him to make him feel more secure:

[T]here was one point that it was clearer to me that most of the men that I saw, I'd see them on the couch and . . . in a way it's partly because I felt threatened by the power of those men [second participant: 60] . . . and there were some quite powerful men that I was seeing and like older men or men that were very successful in business . . . it felt like this is my domain, that you know he's lying down, I'm the one who's all-seeing, I am able to think clearly, he's the one who has to talk and so on [second participant: 61]. And there's quite a lot of that and I suppose as I feel less threatened by men in general it doesn't become so important. I'm trying to think now if I would encourage men or more powerful people to be on the couch. It certainly gives me more of a home ground advantage in a way that face to face doesn't [second participant: 62].

The invitation to submit may be more subtle than this example, however, and the analyst may not explicitly desire it. The effect of a power differential may shape very particular ways of being-together for the analytic couple:

[S]itting right behind and out of sight invites too much of a passive dominance, I'm assuming it encourages too stylized a transference and I think that Freud's exclusive emphasis on the Oedipal bypasses the spiritual and the sibling dimensions which seem to me to also need to have possibilities [first participant: 48].

This participant implies that use of the couch closes off certain possibilities of being in the psychoanalytic enterprise and tends to configure an authority dynamic that shapes the 'transference' into a form of expert domination. Certainly some critics see psychoanalysis itself as a form of expert domination (Lomas, 1994) and it is natural to infer that the couch plays a role in this domination. This shifts discussion to meta-discourses that are critical of expert domination, and which may provide a hermeneutic 'lens' (Edwards, 1998) through which to examine and deepen the current study's 'findings' with regard to power and domination.

It is common practice, when mounting a critique of 'domination', to draw on some form of Marxist or Marxist type of meta-discourse. However, Walkerdine (1990) has persuasively argued for a critical feminist perspective. Just what sort of critical feminist perspective would be useful? Young-Eisendrath (1984) has espoused the view that devaluation and domination of the 'feminine' is a devaluation and domination of an aspect of the personality, regardless of sexual identity. Consequently, if the couch is used to 'feminize' those who use it, then it provides a pathway to devalue and dominate them. This notion fits with the view of Meerloo (1963). Meerloo has traced the history of the image of a woman on a couch as it grew into a determining signifier of the deprivation of women's own desires, as well as their absorption in self-defeating attitudes. She argues that this historic image of a *woman* on a couch represents all analysands (whether men or women) on couches, who have surrendered their own desires to another. Interestingly, the second participant, who commented the most on the couch with respects to power, referred to the power that it granted him over *men*. This supports an argument that the couch may form part of gender-based domination, but not necessarily a sexual one. This

argument may be elegantly deepened using Kristeva's (1982) notion of 'abjection'.

Theoretically, abjection, is the process by which the subject's incipient identity is initially constituted. Incipient identity forms through the developmental shift from the 'semiotic' into what, in Lacanian thinking, is called the 'symbolic' register — a network of signifiers (Bracher, 1993; Dor, 1997; Kugler, 1987; Lacan, 1977/1979; Leader and Groves, 1995). In Kristevan thinking, the semiotic and symbolic registers together constitute the process of signification (Kristeva, 1982, 1986, 1987; Oliver, 1993). The *semiotic* register hosts the substance (or force) of the bodily drives, as these first emerge into signification. It is non-referential and associated with the rhythms, tones, prosody and movement of signifying practices. To quote Kristeva directly:

The point is to go beyond the theater of linguistic representations to make room for pre- or translinguistic modalities of psychic inscription, which we call semiotic in view of the root meaning of the Greek *semion*: trace, mark, distinctive feature (1987, p. 5).

The *symbolic* register on the other hand hosts the grammar and structure of signification. Within the symbolic register the semiotic body rhythms are formed and shaped to make reference possible. For example, words, which are sounds arising from the body, have referential meaning only because of the symbolic structure of language. On the other hand, we could say that words give life *felt* meaning (non-referential meaning) because of their semiotic content. The shift from the semiotic to the symbolic occurs by the exclusion and degradation of anything that threatens the subject's individuation. As the primary source of threat is the infant's enticing dependence upon the maternal body, it is the maternal body which comes in for abjection. This is normal development, however — it is *misplaced* (or *misdirected*) abjection which causes the oppression of the 'feminine'. When the dominant discourse reduces *feminine* qualities to the *maternal* function, it follows that the 'feminine' itself is abjected. Put differently, within a patriarchal dominator discourse, the 'feminine' is abjected along with the maternal function. Such misplaced abjection is thus one way to account for the oppression and degradation of the 'feminine' within a patriarchal discourse. If the couch facilitates a return to the semiotic register, then misplaced abjection may occur and reduce the analysand to the abjected 'feminine' other. In this case, using the couch would become a process of domination,



through the degradation and devaluation of the 'feminine' carried by all people (Grosz, 1995; Jacobus, 1986; Oliver, 1993). Through misplaced abjection the ambiguity of the couch could be collapsed into a non-analytic discourse and used to gratify the analyst's desire for power.

It needs to be said that the first participant, who is an astute detector of ideological factors and forces, expressed the opinion that issues of power and gender might get overplayed, whereas other factors are consequently underplayed (e.g. the dynamic of caring and nurturing in the parent-child dyad). More directly:

[S]omething of that culture in England where those issues about feminism and power and so on are much, and I'm not sure if it's some kind of unconscious appeasement . . . I think the trouble with that kind of [feminist] dimension [is that] it becomes either/or. It seems to me another paradigm in the couch and sitting is parent-child. So it's like if that's your paradigm, then . . . so I think there's something about if you're sensitive to something, it determines the field as if that was the issue. [first participant: 47, 49, 50].

In any event, the argument needs to be balanced against the following insight of the third participant: being on or off the couch does not place anyone *de facto* 'in control' but shifts in control can themselves be negotiated via the experience of the couch.

'Couching one's words' invites us to both deconstruct and reconstruct the meaning of the couch as 'essential', making its meaning ambiguous and context-based. This deconstructive/reconstructive process has here been conducted through the hermeneutic lenses of post-structuralist critical theory, existential-phenomenology, a pragmatic critique, critical feminist theory and neo-Lacanian psychoanalysis.

'Couching one's words' dominantly points to how the couch is constructed in the world of analytic practice. On the other hand, the 'couch as a wording' points to a critical understanding of how a world is constructed by the couch. There are a host of interrelated hermeneutic lenses through which we can examine the 'couch as a wording': existential-phenomenology, Lacanian/neo-Lacanian psychoanalysis, the British Independent tradition in psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic intersubjective theory, analytical psychology and post-Kleinian psychoanalysis.

## 5.2 The couch as a wording

What I am calling ‘a wording’ is the notion that all things reflect and invite us to a way of being-in-the-world. Brooke (1991a) shows how even phenomenology, which seeks to describe and understand the ways in which ‘things are present before reflection’ (De Koning, 1982, p. 2), needs to acknowledge existential shaping as pre-reflective. Various post-Saussurean thinkers, such as Althusser, Derrida and Lacan, propose language as not merely the medium which reflects the meaning of things but principally the means whereby a ‘world’ of individuals and things are constructed. A particular domain of language use, a way of speaking/writing/feeling/thinking is a *discourse*, an intersubjective field of shared assumptions (Belsey, 1980). Although this notion of discourse has a most elaborate (albeit one-dimensional) form in post-structuralist thinking, it is echoed, with greater density, in existential-phenomenology: ‘the world which we share is called into presence by language, by the spoken and the unspoken words’ (Kruger, 1984, p. 233). In psychoanalysis Lacanian thinking most powerfully articulates this view (Bracher, 1993; Dor, 1997; Elliot, 1991; Kristeva, 1986, 1987; Kugler, 1987; Lacan 1977/1979; Leader, 1995). Any ‘thing’ — and that includes furniture (Sampson, 1988) — then forms part of a discourse and as such it is ‘a wording’ which possesses the potential to pre-reflectively shape our being-in-the-world.

As already noted, from the existential-phenomenological perspective, the couch *is* such a ‘thing’ (Romanyshyn, 1982). From the psychoanalytic perspective several writers (Cooper, 1985; Gedo, 1995; Roazen, 1975; Stern, 1979) implicate the couch as a signifier of analysts and analysis. However, Miller, Lacan’s redactor, has put it most simply: ‘The couch is certainly the emblematic object of psychoanalysis’ (1991). The statement can be ventured that the couch is what Lacan terms a ‘master signifier’ (Bracher, 1993).

The findings of the current study concur with this view — the couch signifies the analyst as analyst and the process as ‘pure’ analysis:

[I]t’s part of the context of my professional presence [first participant: 13].

It feels like I'm doing much closer to what my idealized analysis would be . . . with people on the couch especially if they're working hard and stuff is there and comes out [second participant: 44].

It also signifies the authentic process of analysis and membership of the psychoanalytic community:

[I]n some ways it's got elements of a rite of passage or a ritual or crossing. There are elements of that. Sometimes working with trainees, they almost measure themselves by, you know 'have you got him/her on the couch yet?' I think it's a bit like do you do sex or do you make love? [first participant: 67].

In the words of the analyzed data:

*The couch symbolizes the analyst as analyst and the process of analysis as analysis. Its use vouchsafes the analytic process as prestigious and authentic psychoanalysis. Consequently its use must have the sanction of the psychoanalytic community.*

The couch is thus 'a wording' — it words the analyst's identity and it words the process of analysis as analysis. The couch is more than a common signifier, however: the couch as 'a wording' is a 'thing', a densely expressive and determinative symbol, a node in discourse. Whilst expressing a meaning, the couch also shapes the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand in various possible discourses. In this latter sense the couch constitutes what British Independent School psychoanalyst, Bollas, has called an 'evocative object'.

Bollas, introducing the notion of the 'evocative object', has proposed that 'living out life involves us in the use of objects that vary in their individual capacities to evoke self experience' (1992, p. 33). He goes on to delineate interrelated but different ways in which objects can shape our sense of being a subject: sensationally, structurally, conceptually, symbolically, mnemically and projectively.

Objects may evoke through the *senses* of taste, touch, sight, sound and smell. The sensational signature of an object draws on bodily attunement to the physical nature of the object, e.g. to feel the air from a fan blowing evokes a different state of attunement to that evoked by the smell of coffee brewing. Objects may also evoke through their

*structure* — the accent shifts here to how the use and structure of the object shapes bodily-ness giving rise to particular experiences, e.g. to sit in an armchair shapes bodily-ness differently to holding a dart in preparation to throwing. Furthermore, objects are *conceptually* evocative and bring concepts to mind. Experiences involving objects can bring to mind different notions of what one is doing, e.g. listening to music is to conceive of something quite different to going river rafting. Objects are named and therefore also form part of the Lacanian *symbolic* register, forming more or less dense nodes in the network of signification which is discourse. Psychoanalytically, this quality is scribed as ‘symbolizing’. Certain objects acquire the capacity to evoke states of subjectivity through the history of which they form a part. These objects are also able to evoke prior ways of being and thus can be seen to act *mnemically*. Finally, objects may serve a *projective* function. Bollas states that some objects ‘serve as containers of the dynamically projective, helping us think the different parts of ourselves and others by using them’ (1992, p. 35). These delineated categories tend to merge and blend:

As lexical elements in the syntax of potential self experience we may use each object to conjure a specific state of self by employing it predominantly for its evocative capability in any of the above orders. Inevitably the decision as to an object’s use rests with the unconscious aims of a person (1992, p. 35-36).

The couch configuration, of the couch with the chair at its head, constitutes such an evocative object. However, whilst the couch is apparently a *selected evocative object* (it is, after all, an expectable part of the analytic setting) its particular evocation may be a *surprise*. The effect of the couch on the analyst and analysand, insofar as it is ambiguous and context-based, is never quite known. So whether it will be evocative, and what it will evoke remains something of a surprise.

Drawing on her own experience as an analysand using the couch, the third research participant described how the couch configuration structurally and sensually shapes and textures self experience:

I think there is something about lying down and feeling reasonably comfortable that is quite soothing to the spirit and I just think how nice it used to be to get back to analysis after a break, you know, when one had worked through an early embracing issue. I just had a patient come back yesterday from a trip and I think

that sinking back into something that is familiar but is still unknown that maybe the couch is a symbol but it also provides something . . . [third participant: 65].

Similarly, the first participant, drawing on his experience as an analyst implicated the couch in sensual evocation: 'I think that what happens is my visual – what's the word I'm looking for – visual activity, looking, actually tends to get suspended' [first participant: 20].

Sitting in a chair at the head of the psychoanalytic couch evokes preconscious and unconscious 'memories' of past events, such as one's own couch-based analysis, the first time one had an analysand use a couch, and the host of personal historical associations to the couch. In this sense, the technique of using the couch may act as a mnemonic evocative object. The third participant hints at the mnemonic quality of the couch configuration in her allusion to recalling 'how nice it used to be to get back to analysis after a break'.

Conceptually for the analyst to sit at the head of a couch with an analysand reclining on it is to pursue a conceptual map of performing analysis. The couch configuration entails the notion of performing analysis: 'it feels like I'm doing much closer to what my idealized analysis would be' [second participant: 44]. Similar, but not identical, to this is the symbolic meaning of the couch. This has of course already been covered above. The third research participant also intimated its role in symbolic evocation.

Finally, projectively, the configuration of the couch may call forth particular aspects of the personalities of the analytic couple which have been projected into that configuration, most particularly the asymmetrical roles of analyst and analysand. The second participant pointed out the projective role of the couch with reference to a particular analysand who had been sexually abused by her father: 'For example, she's terrified to look around to see what I'm doing and there's enormous fantasy about that again with the father that stood over her bed. She's paralyzed' [second participant: interview portion post NMU 36 and pre NMU 37]. From the perspective of the analyst, the second participant's references to how the couch seemed to give him power and omniscience would also constitute the couch as a projectively evocative object.

As 'a wording' the couch is a transformative symbol, it has a capacity to rearrange and re-transcribe the process of signification. This introduces a new symbolic ordering, one that opens possibilities of being (Leader, 2000, p. 110). The use of the couch re-words the possibilities of being-in-the-world-together:

He lay down on the couch and it was enormously powerful. He said 'I feel as if the whole room is . . . ', you know, and it seemed to me that what was happening was in making that physical move for this person and not having the eye contact and the familiar that it shifted him into a whole other realm of awareness which in our experience of each other had not happened for him before [first participant: 1-2].

It transcribes the analytic process to a different level and opens possibilities of potent immediacy:

[I]t was a very big reaction and in another way it was 'oh yes, this is taking us to another level that is important and good.' It had mixed range and also it had another kind which has very much become part of who I am I guess, it was also curiosity, it wasn't just a fixed response. It was also like 'well, here we are' [first participant: 9].

It re-words the analyst's bodily attunement:

I think that what happens is my visual – what the word I'm looking for – visual activity, looking, actually tends to get suspended. So I'm not aware of looking. Doesn't mean I'm not . . . it would not be unusual for me to close my eyes. Or if I am looking it would not be in a focused way or sometimes I would be looking at the person on the couch. So, no, I think it's more an unfocusing of visual than a focusing in a particular place. But if I did focus it would more like to be on the person to get some sense of expression or body language [first participant: 20-21].

As 'a wording' the couch utters an invitation to be initiated into the practice of analysis: 'I had a sense somehow of now I was beginning to do analysis and I think that sort of stayed with me' [second participant: 5]. It also utters a welcome into the psychoanalytic community which sanctions its use: 'I was sort of hesitant but I think there'd been a lot of Tavistock people who'd encouraged clinicians here to do it, to use the couch' [third participant: 5] and 'I was in a psychoanalytic community . . . [there] was a lot of talk about the use of couches . . . there was a permission to explore' [fourth participant: 41].

The felt sense of the couch fills out the structure of its role as a signifier:

*The couch can be experienced as numinous, ambiguous and facilitative of multiple registers of experience and frames of reference. Its use renders the analytic process distinctive, powerful, intense and profound.*

The felt sense of the couch is numinous: ‘he lay down on the couch and it was enormously powerful’ [first participant: 2], ‘it was a very big reaction . . . it was “oh yes, this is taking us to another level that’s important and good”’ [first participant: 9], quite simply: ‘the couch is also a very powerful symbol’ [second participant: 68].

### *5.2.1 The couch and being-in-the-world-together*

As has already been intimated, the couch is more than a common signifier — analysis of the data leads to the understanding that the couch cultures a particular mode of being-with and scribes the analytic couple into a discourse.

*The couch mediates a mode of being . . .*

From the existential-phenomenological view all ‘modes of being’ entail modes of being-with-others (Condrau, 1984). The few references to the couch in the literature of existential-phenomenology support its role in mediating a way of being, and, more particularly, a way of being-together-with-others (Boss cited in interview with Craig, 1988; Condrau, 1988; Kruger, 1984). Kruger, (1984) puts this most elegantly:

The bodily position of the participants — the client reclining in an easy chair, or lying down on a couch, the seated therapist in a relaxed but attentively listening stance shows that the therapeutic space invites to a different inhabitation (p. 233).

This concurs with what was noticed under the previous rubric of ‘couching one’s words’ — that the couch conjures the existentials of spatiality, being-together, bodily-ness and increased openness to possibilities of being. There has, in recent years, been a confluence of existential-phenomenological thinking and psychoanalysis, particularly as regards the originary status of being-together-with-others. Contemporary psychoanalytic thinkers (arising from the British Independent tradition [Rayner, 1991] and the American relational tradition [Bromberg, 1998]) have developed the notion of psychoanalysis as the domain of ‘intersubjective theory’ (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984; Orange, Atwood and Stolorow, 1997; Stolorow and Atwood, 1992; Stolorow, Brandschaft and Atwood, 1987). Psychoanalytic intersubjective theory is both a theory of psychological development (and

pathogenesis) and an attitude to psychoanalytic practice. Intersubjective theory embodies the view that both psychological development and the analytic process are fundamentally derived from the inextricably intertwined mixture of people's subjective reactions to each other (Dunn, 1995).

Like existential-phenomenology, mainline psychoanalytic intersubjective theory unapologetically accepts human being-together as originary and irreducible (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984; Stolorow, Orange, Atwood, 1999). In particular, it seeks to relate this to how human beings — as subjects constituted in an intersubjective field — organize experience. Subjectivity is viewed as composed of a matrix or network of organizing principles. These organizing principles may be either fixed/unreflective or flexible/reflective. To the extent that these organizing principles are fixed (due to the historical intersubjective closing of possibilities of being) and unavailable to reflection, they thematize the sense of self. Thus, self-experience is thoroughly context-based, being based in specific contexts of relatedness.

The historical intersubjective closing/non-opening of possibilities of being gives rise to several forms of 'unconscious', which can be accommodated within this notion of subjectivity as an intersubjectively structured matrix or network: a pre-reflective unconscious, a dynamic unconscious and an unvalidated unconscious. The pre-reflective unconscious consists of organizing principles that operate out of awareness in an automatic way. The dynamic unconscious comprises emotional information which is defended against as threatening to interpersonal ties. The unvalidated unconscious describes emergent aspects of the subject that have never received interpersonal validation.

Psychoanalysis, as a psychotherapy, is the dialogic attempt — within a mutual but asymmetrical relationship — to both re-form and re-understand the analysand's emotional experience through the action and understanding of the analytic couple's intersubjectively configured experience. The analyst seeks to facilitate the analysand's endeavours to organize his/her emotional experience into less painful, more creative and



less rigid patterns. Psychoanalysis proceeds by the analytic couple's creation of a safe and sheltered mode of being together within which to explore and mutate the problematic unconscious zones. The intersubjective field which is psychoanalysis thus becomes a developmental 'second chance' for the analysand. Practically speaking the intersubjective perspective does not lead to specific injunctions about psychoanalytic technique. Instead it constitutes an attitude or approach to analysis.

To take this a step further, Wilber (1998) has elegantly argued that 'cultural influences' derive from the intersubjective register of being human. He thereby 'equates' the surface manifestation that is 'culture' with the shapes of being-together which are scribed as 'intersubjectivity'. As 'culture' is the manifest form of the Lacanian notion of 'discourse', I would argue further that intersubjectivity is in a sense the equivalent of discourse, it is 'wording'.

This cross resonance of the notions of 'culture', 'intersubjectivity', 'discourse' and 'wording' can be applied to the couch. Stern (1978) has discussed how the couch is worded in culture. This wording may be manifest in typical 'culture' — such as taking to bed when unwell, second hand accounts of analysis, novels, television, film and cartoon images. This 'everyday' culture thus shapes the intersubjective architecture of the analytic process when the couch is used. However, the wording may be the more subtle in that the 'culture' of psychoanalytic history, psychoanalytic theory and the presence of the couch shape the intersubjective architecture of the analytic process. The couch as a wording is shaped by culture/intersubjectivity/discourse.

The intersubjective architecture of the couch is brought to light by the contrast of its lived meaning (reflected in this study) to the findings of an experiment conducted by Hall and Closson (1964, cited by Stern, 1978, p. 172). In the experiment, experienced judges, given audio-recorded sessions, could not differentiate between those in which the analysand was lying down and those in which the analysand was not.

In the present study the participants repeatedly describe their encountering a different

experience when using the couch and when not using the couch. Most simply, this difference was expressed by the third participant, who said: 'It feels different to normal conversation' [third participant: 29].

The essential difference between the studies is the nature of the 'relationship' between the judges/participants in the studies and events in a consulting room. In the current study, the participants reported on the lived experience of participating in analysis, i.e. they were describing aspects of the lived experience of actually being-with-another using the couch. In the Hall and Closson, experiment no such lived relationship existed between the judges and the analysands. One inference that can be drawn from this, is that the lived meaning of the couch entails the intersubjective architecture and atmosphere of the analysis, whereas in the natural scientific approach no intersubjective architecture and atmosphere exists in the space between the judges and the analysands. The couch as a wording shapes being-together/intersubjectivity.

Thus the 'couch as a wording' signals the place of the couch as a densely expressive and determinative node in the analytic/psychoanalytic discourse — and, points to the fact that it is more than just linguistically meaningful.

Overall, it can be said that the use of the couch both constitutes and is constituted by discourse — it is 'a wording'.

### *5.2.2 The couch and bodily attunement*

Theorists from numerous psychotherapeutic orientations (existential-phenomenological, humanist, Jungian, psychoanalytic) have fore-grounded the primary role of the body in psychotherapeutic work and psychological life (e.g. Braatøy, 1954; Brooke, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Condrau, 1984, 1988; De Koning, 1982; Gendlin, 1978; Kruger, 1988; Reis, 1999; Rice, 1992; Romanyshyn, 1982; Todres, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002). The current study supports an understanding of the couch as an element in the analytic setting which facilitates a certain presence of the body — a bodily communication that is 'more than words can tell' (Todres, 1999). The couch removes the bodies of the analysand and

analyst from visual connection with each other, and heightens their reliance on other channels of communication. Typically, these channels comprise verbal as well as non-visual sensory forms, such as rhythm of breathing and ‘prosody, intonation, puns, verbal slips, even silences’ (Jacobus, 1986 p. 148). In the words of the first participant: ‘I noticed once a person would be absolutely in tune to my breathing’ [first participant: 55].

*In this mode both the analyst and the analysand may have a more rhythmical presence. The analyst’s awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the analysand increases. In particular, the sensory accent shifts from vision to vocal body-rhythm . . .*

Shopper (1978) has maintained that a shift of sensory accent from vision to hearing constitutes a more progressive form of object relatedness than does the use of vision. In developmental terms, using its hearing can help a toddler separate visually from its mother, because contact can be maintained by audition. Thus, we would expect the use of the couch to shift the analysand towards ‘progression’ rather than ‘regression’. Paradoxically, in contradiction to this several contributors to the literature have maintained that the supine position promotes ‘regression’ (Aruffo, 1995; Bromberg, 1979; Fairbairn, 1958; Fordham, 1978; Gedo, 1995; Greenson, 1969; Silber, 1970; Stern, 1978; Wolf, 1995). Typically, the argument goes that as infants spend their time lying down, the supine position promotes regression. Even more dramatic is the argument that prenatal audition lays the foundations of psychological life (Maiello, 1995, unnumbered 4<sup>th</sup> page of congress proceedings). Mythologically the power of listening and hearing is attested to by the enchanting nature of Orpheus’s music (Ovid, 1955/1995).

Cutting through this debate, this study supports the insight that the use of the couch subjectively facilitates access to different, developmentally earlier occurring states of body-mind, although these are not regarded as ‘regressed’ states in the traditional sense:

I think it’s possibly easier to get to different states of mind [third participant: 17]. I mean just while we’re talking I keep thinking of infants and mothers and that you know the sort of recapitulation of that sort of experience [third participant: 18] . . . I don’t think it encourages regression in the way that we understood it in the late ’60s, you know, where I suppose you know Ronnie Laing’s work and Mary Barnes. I mean that was the flavour of the time that one would almost become something [third participant: 22]. I think allowing infantile states to

emerge is something a bit different, because I think they exist hand in hand so I wouldn't go along with the idea of regression being whole-hearted. You know a sort of complete thing. My sense is it allows earlier states of mind to emerge. But probably not to be completely overwhelming [third participant: 23].

This echoes Kristeva's proposition of semiotic and symbolic registers to psychological life. Her argument coincides with the findings of Rice (1992) and her co-workers that vocal quality is a significant factor in psychotherapeutic change. From a different discourse, and for a different reason, Todres (1999) proposes the importance of the body through which structural truth is given aesthetic substance, providing 'more than words can tell'. The couch is more than a mere wording, it is also a bodying forth that gives the analytic process a powerful ambience and texture.

This also returns us, in a different way, to the Kristevan notion of 'abjection' (see page 69 above). The couch can be seen as 'reversing' the progressive direction of abjection of both the analysand and the analyst. In effect, this 'regressively' but creatively returns the analytic couple to the semiotic register, to a prosodic body register, to earlier states of body-mind. Becoming closer to the feared (maternal) body, from the perspective of an imaginary observer, the analytic couple would thus be abject. (Perhaps it is this, rather than Freud's original understanding of resistance, which encourages fear and hatred of psychoanalysis – the analytic couple are abject.) However, just as misplaced abjection collapses the analytic space into a non-analytic discourse, so this creative reverse abjection (re-approaching the semiotic from the symbolic) expands the analytic space into a particular type of discourse which helps open the analysand to possibilities of being.

The introduction of this notion invites consideration of other ways in which the technique of using the couch may support such a shaping of the world. The most notable of these is the way the couch positions the analyst and analysand through the way in which it provides privacy.

### 5.2.3 *The couch and privacy*

Freud (1913/2001) indicated early on that a most significant intersubjective factor in analysis was privacy. Freud's reference to the use of the couch, in his papers on technique, was, from the beginning, allied to the practical virtues of the privacy afforded by the couch:

I cannot put up with being stared at by other people for eight hours (or more). Since, while I am listening to the patient, I, too give myself over to the current of my unconscious thoughts, I do not wish my expressions of face to give the patient material for interpretations or to influence him in what he tells me (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 133).

Likewise Boss, from the perspective of existential-phenomenology, specifically implicates the couch in the important provision of privacy:

I say the best way for you to come to know yourself and develop what you really are is this way of being there on the couch for yourself, independent of me. There, you're not influenced by my facial expressions, my gestures and so on. But it's not an absolute law (Boss cited in interview with Craig, 1988, p. 33).

These words arise within Boss's discussion of the primary function of analysis as opening the analysand to foregone and forgotten possibilities of being. He describes the meaning of the privacy that the couch provides from the perspective of the analysand. However, intersubjectivity/*Mitsein* is fundamental to existential-phenomenology, so that *within* the analysand's perspective is implicitly carried the perspective of the analyst. In this instance, the implication is that as the analysand is freed from the facial expressions and gestures of the analyst, so too the analyst is freed to be present bodily in an authentic way.

Psychoanalysis and analytic psychology share with existential-phenomenology the view that the privacy that the couch affords means that an analyst need not modulate or suppress conscious and unconscious somatic responses to the analysand, thus not impinging on the analysand's emerging psychological life (Barglow, Jaffe and Vaughn, 1989; Fordham, 1978; McWilliams, 1999; Ogden, 1996; Searles, 1984/85). All of these analysts (including Freud) express the opinion that the couch helps shape intersubjectivity so that even the analyst's own spontaneous body language does not compromise the privileging of the analysand's desire. The importance of this is less the

literal success of the opacity of the analyst, and more the implication of privacy 'for' opening up possibilities of being.

The findings of the present study specifically concur with this view:

*The privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its mediation of a mode of being. In particular privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language . . .*

The first participant expressed this meaning of the couch directly: 'the couch as a structure which doesn't require looking another person in the eye is facilitating' [first participant: 15].

Stern (1978), in his review, focused on how the privacy of the couch permits the analyst to relax and maintain energy and concentration. He also highlighted the view that the couch supports the analyst's evenly suspended attention and the associated multiple tasks of attunement to, processing, formulating and articulating of analytic phenomena. The use of the couch allows the analyst to maintain the privacy and autonomy that is necessary for his or her centred subjectivity and capacity for autonomous thought. The above views all concur with findings of this study, for the participants all linked their experience of the couch to relaxation, freedom of bodily expression, decreased conscious restraint of bodily responsiveness and freedom of thought and feelings.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that there is a significant connection between privacy and the mode of being-in-the-world mediated by the couch. As noted in the previous chapter, the first participant noted a significant connection between privacy and the mode of being mediated by the couch. The second, third and fourth participants commented on how the felt sense of relief and reverie were linked to the analyst's increased freedom of bodily expression and decreased conscious self-monitoring/restraint.

One of the other findings of this study was that the privacy of the couch shelters the

analyst from interpersonal pressure. This helps foster an analytic attitude by protecting abstinence through reducing the urge to respond to the interpersonal pressure. In one sense this is problematic, for, by reducing that urge, it may shelter the analyst from useful, albeit uncomfortable, counter-transference pressures. That having been said, to ‘shelter’ is not to ‘shield’, i.e. the analyst is still subject to counter-transference but in a way that is more tolerable and therefore more open to observation and reflection.

Fordham (1978) (contrary to Jung’s [1935/1986] expressed view) intimates that the privacy afforded by the couch aids the analyst’s intersubjective connection with the analysand.

These considerations of privacy naturally lead to a closer examination of the intersubjective function of the couch.

#### *5.2.4 The couch, intersubjectivity and the analytic third*

Dunn has most elegantly set up the tension between classical psychoanalysis and intersubjective theory: ‘In their pure form, truth in the classical model is discovered by the clinical participants, while truth in the intersubjective model is mutually created by them’ (1995, pp. 734-735). What then is the meaning of the couch — is its meaning ‘discovered’ or ‘created’ by the analytic couple? This is like Winnicott’s old question: does the infant discover or create the breast? It was his wisdom that it is a paradox — the breast is both created and discovered. Furthermore, this paradox must stand in order that psychological life remain alive (Winnicott, 1971/1974). Likewise, I would dare to argue that a similar paradoxical answer applies to the meaning of the couch. On the one hand the meaning of the couch is co-created or co-constituted by the analytic couple and on the other hand it is discovered by them. The co-creation of the meaning of the couch has already been discussed through the way in which the couch is intersubjectively ‘worded’ in macro and micro culture. The effect of its co-creation as a meaningful object was highlighted by contrasting the ‘findings’ of the current study to those of the Hall and Closson experiment: if participants are together as an analytic couple using the couch then the use of the couch has felt meaning, if this is not so then its use does not have felt

meaning. In the second instance, using Bollas's conceptual lexicon, the couch configuration is an 'evocative object', an object which constitutes the subject. Evocative objects are both sought/created and discovered. The couch, as an evocative object, conjures up different subjects, but, most particularly, it evokes that subject which is the *intersubjective analytic third*. This invites us to more closely examine the relationship between the couch, intersubjectivity and the analytic third.

From within the intersubjective tradition, Sadow (1995) has argued that the substrate of analysis entails two principle modes of being: a 'patterning' mode and a 'generative' mode. The former is linked to the act of reflective 'looking' and the latter to the act of absorbed 'listening'. The former draws on direct observation and logical hypotheses. The latter is a more empathic and intuitive mode of being, through which the subjectivities of the analytic couple merge, producing a third analytic entity that is neither exclusively the analysand nor the analyst. As the technique of using the couch relies on listening, it favours the generative mode and the emergence of a third, intersubjective, analytic entity.

Similarly, Grotstein (1995) has argued that an empathic, intuitive and phantasy-rich mode of being constellates a third analytic 'entity', derived from the mixed unconscious of the analytic couple. Grotstein argues that the couch aids the process of generating and accessing of this third, intersubjective, entity — through reverie.

Ogden (1996) too, like Sadow and Grotstein, understands the couch as producing a mode of being which is empathic and intuitive, and which produces an 'intersubjective analytic third'. Ogden describes the analytic third as 'a jointly but asymmetrically constructed and experienced set of conscious and unconscious intersubjective experiences in which analyst and analysand participate' (Ogden, 1996, p. 884). From an existential-phenomenological perspective (Boss cited in interview with Craig, 1988) the work of analysis is the work of the analysand becoming open to foregone and forgotten (i.e. unthematized) possibilities of being. We might then say that the 'intersubjective analytic third' is a heuristic 'image' of the analytic couple's mix of thematized and unthematized being-together from out of which the analytic process proceeds. To highlight Ogden's



argument I shall enter and borrow from his poetic register, and re-write a piece of his about 'reading' as if it referred to the couch instead:

*Seated at the head of a couch, on which the analysand reclines, the analyst finds him/herself becoming a subject whom he/she has not yet met, but nonetheless recognizes. The analyst must create a voice with which to think the thoughts comprising that subject. Analysis is not simply a matter of considering, weighing, or even of trying out ideas and experiences that are presented to the analyst. Analysis involves a much more intimate encounter. The analyst must allow the analysand to occupy his/her body-mind. The conjunction of the analysand's words and the analyst's mental voice is a complex human event. A third subject is created that is not reducible to either analyst or analysand. This third subject lies at the core of the psychoanalytic endeavour (with apologies to Ogden, 1994, pp. 1-2).*

Set out more simply, it can be said that the 'analytic third' is a heuristic figuration of the notion of the psychoanalytic process as intersubjective (Ogden, 1994). The couch is a special 'object', a node in signification that helps constellate the analytic third.

Analysis of the data also discloses that:

*The couch helps constellate a third analytic element located within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand and formed out of the merging of their subjectivities . . .*

More directly aligning with Sadow, Grotstein and Ogden's thinking, the second participant clearly implicated the couch in constituting an analytic third. Using the couch, says the participant: 'there's some kind of a shared possession . . . put into that space . . . between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one . . . there is the patient, yourself and the third sort of space and somewhere there's a merging of these two [second participant: 55, 56].

Ogden most recently refined his notion of the 'intersubjective analytic third', which he first enunciated in 1994, in his 1999 paper 'The Analytic Third: An Overview'.

In that paper, Ogden describes how the analytic third may take four variant, limiting or liberating, forms:

- The analytic third may be of a subjugating sort, confining the subject to predominantly irrational thoughts, feelings and unusual bodily presence.
- The analytic third may lock the analyst and analysand into a specific, compulsively repeated perverse scenario.
- The analytic third may be powerfully freeing, opening up the possibilities of being together, of thinking/feeling, of dreaming and of bodily presence in a rich and creative way.
- The analytic third may act as an unconscious, unobtrusive (m)other in the presence of whom the analytic couple acquire a capacity to play 'alone'.

The limiting forms of the analytic third are not overcome, but as with transference, are gradually transmuted into forms of experience of self and other that can be experienced, worded and integrated into a larger sense of self.

In the current study, critical discussion of the role that the couch plays in analysis, indicates that, generally, the role of the couch is paradoxical, being both a help and a hindrance to analysis. More specifically, the study also intimates that the couch is implicated in the presence of some of the variant forms of *analytic third* mentioned by Ogden.

Working from the 'findings' of the current study, it is difficult to specifically extract examples of the first form described by Ogden. None of the research participants reported that the couch was implicated in the presence of an analytic third that confined them to predominantly irrational thoughts, feelings or bodily presences. The first participant disavowed any specific emotions or bodily sensations when using the couch:

**Researcher:** I am just wondering if there are any particular emotions or sensations that you tend to get when you're using the couch?

**First participant:** I don't see a pattern. I don't see a pattern. No, I don't. I mean I think that . . . no, I don't think so. Maybe, but nothing I'm aware of [first participant: 30].

The second variant of the analytic third, namely locking the analyst and the analysand

into a perversely repeated scenario was noted by the second participant with reference to several analysands. Probably the most notable of these was the instance, already noted, of the female analysand who felt that the use of the couch reconstituted the literally perverse scenario of imminent sexual abuse by the father who hovered beside her bed. With respect to an example of an analyst's experience of this variant, the second research participant noted how, at one time, the couch was implicated in locking him into the compulsively repeated scenario of being omniscient and powerful: 'he's lying down, I'm the one who's all-seeing' [second participant: 61].

With respect to the third variant of the analytic third as articulated by Ogden, the current study has found several instances. As already noted in the research interviews, the couch is implicated in co-constituting a third space which is powerfully freeing, and which opens up possibilities of thinking and feeling, dreaming and bodily presence.

The fourth variant, namely that of constituting the presence of an unobtrusive other, seems especially evident with regard to the couch constellating a quiet privacy, with the couch acting as an unobtrusive object within whose presence the analytic couple may 'play' alone'.

According to Ogden, the intersubjective analytic third contributes significantly to the ways in which the unconscious is disclosed in the analytic couple's being-together, emotional attunement, thoughts/fantasies and bodily-ness. The participants in this study made several statements which relate to these dimensions. The following are examples:

*Being-together:* 'I think one of the things is it sort of encourages a different kind of intimacy which I think is, I don't kind of get too mystical about it and I don't like making things sound gobbledy gookish like if you haven't had analysis you don't know what it's about, but I think there is something quite particular, hard to get bearings on, that that way of discourse supports or encourages or promotes in its creative dimension.' [first participant: 44]

*Emotional attunement:* 'And I often feel the intense frustration or I feel like I want to get in and do something. Like somebody who's wife is picking on them then that kind of will rile me on the couch in a way that its doesn't otherwise.' [second participant: 53]

*Thoughts/fantasies*: '[M]ore often in this kind of analytically inclined work, you know, the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on, they tend to be more available' [first participant: 35]; 'I would think that the free association is more flowing and more often. And my experience, I think, has been that the dreams, the remembered dreams come out in the course of the hour rather than someone arriving and saying "I've had a dream". That it's as they're talking it's "oh and I had this dream" or "this bit from this dream"' [fourth participant: 15].

*Bodily-ness*: 'But I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face' [second participant: 52].

For Ogden, the task of analysis is to create conditions in which the unconscious intersubjective analytic third can be gathered into consciousness and worded. This gathering and wording occurs through the use of indirect methods — 'subjectivity will not open to thinking' (Reis, 1999, p. 398). For the analyst, this frequently means relying on mundane thoughts, feelings, dream-stuff and bodily-ness, and, in particular, the apparently drifting and directionless state of 'reverie'. This brings the discussion to the role that the couch plays in reverie.

### 5.2.5 *The couch and reverie*

As already mentioned, Ogden believes that access to the intersubjective analytic third comes through reverie:

The analyst's use of his reverie experience, his waking dream-life, is indispensable to the analysis of the intersubjective analytic third. Since the jointly but asymmetrically constructed (and individually experienced) analytic third is dynamically unconscious, it cannot be invaded by sheer force of will. Instead, the analyst must adopt indirect associational methods in working with derivatives of what is happening unconsciously between himself and the patient . . . For the analyst, an indispensable source of experiential data concerning the leading unconscious transference-countertransference anxiety at any given moment in an analytic session is available in the form of his reverie experience. Part of what makes the analyst's reverie experience so difficult to work with is the fact that it is not 'framed', as dreams are framed, by waking states. Reverie experience seamlessly melts into other more focused psychic states. The analyst's reveries usually feel to him like an intrusion of his own current fatigue, narcissistic self-absorption, preoccupations, unresolved emotional conflicts, and so on. Despite these difficulties, I find that my reverie experience serves as an emotional compass that I rely on heavily (but cannot clearly read) in my effort to gain my bearings about what is going on unconsciously in the analytic relationship

(Ogden, 2001, no page reference).

As the use of the couch is implicated in constituting the analytic third, what then is the relationship between reverie and the couch? From the findings of the current study we also learn that:

*The constellation of a third analytic element is related to the process of 'reverie' which the use of the couch promotes.*

Furthermore, from the research participants' responses it was evident that 'reverie' forms a conceptual node in the discourse that swirls around the meaning of the couch.

*The use of couch effects a transition to a state of 'reverie' which gives the analytic couple access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind.*

The term 'reverie' was introduced to psychoanalysis by Bion (1962, 1962/1967) 'to refer to the state of mind that the infant requires of the mother . . . to take in the infant's own feelings and give them meaning' (Hinshelwood, 1991, 420). The meaning of this term has been extended to aid understanding of the analytic process by allying it to Freud's injunctions to the analyst to maintain a state of 'evenly suspended attention' (1912).

I think the ability to move into the meditative state of evenly hovering attentiveness, to receive and articulate projective identifications, to elaborate the narrative contents through inner free associations, and to follow the analysand's mood in the hour contributes to the psychoanalyst's intuitive grasp of the analysand. Certainly this is what Bion means by the analyst's reverie when he takes the patient's communications, contains them, works unconsciously to transform them into sense, and gradually passes them back to the analysand for consideration (Bollas, 1992, p. 97).

From an existential-phenomenological perspective the psychoanalytic notion of reverie might be understood as a process which utilizes the lived truth of being-together. Because being-together is a lived truth the analyst is empowered to both partake of, thematize and integrate the analysand's foregone and forgotten possibilities of being. In the process, which is reverie, possibilities emerge from the ground of being-together, are gradually thematized and integrated in the analyst's experiences (notably, but not exclusively, bodily-ness, fantasies and emotions) and finally made available to the analysand to appropriate as his/her very own psychological life.

The participants in this study noted a relationship between the use of the couch and the

process just described. As per Bollas's articulation of reverie the research participants described the use of the couch as facilitating a meditative state of evenly hovering attentiveness: 'I think one of the first things is that I feel much more relaxed . . . and concurrently I have a great deal more space to think about what's going on' [fourth participant:1, 2]. The couch also helps the analyst to 'receive' the analysand's psychological life. Using the couch, the analyst has greater access to 'the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on' [first participant: 35]. Furthermore, the analyst can more easily 'elaborate the narrative contents', sifting and metabolizing the material: 'there's an observing space' [fourth participant: 12] and 'I've got the advantage then of seeing the patterns in a much clearer way' [first participant: 23]. Generally, the couch provides the analyst with more mind space and clarity of mind: 'I was able to think in a way that I wasn't able to think before' [second participant: 2].

The intimations of this study support Ogden's (1997) suggestion that it is creatively helpful to allow the term 'reverie' a certain conceptual slippage. The first participant initially disavowed that the couch involved reverie of the sort that occurs between mother and infant, but the third participant implied that it did facilitate this mode of being together. This suggests that the participants could not agree on the exact nature of reverie if the term was too tightly defined. This means that the research participants would not necessarily directly refer to the state of reverie as reverie, even if it was present. This calls for more indirect detection of the presence of reverie.

Although Ogden disavows attempting a definition of reverie, he does articulate his experience of its dimensions in a definitional way. Some of these dimensions are described below as follows:

- Reverie 'takes the most mundane and personal of shapes' (1997, p. 158).
- It is 'simultaneously a personal/private event and an intersubjective one' from which the analyst speaks to the analysand (1997, p. 158).
- Use of reverie by the analyst 'requires tolerance of the experience of being adrift' and 'the state of being adrift cannot be rushed to closure' (1997, pp. 160-161).
- Reverie 'should not be dismissed as the analyst's "own stuff"' (1997, p. 161).
- 'The emotional fallout or wake of reverie is usually quite unobtrusive and inarticulate, carrying for the analyst more the quality of an elusive sense of being unsettled than a sense of having arrived at an understanding' (1997, p. 162).

That reverie 'takes the most mundane and personal of shapes' is possibly illustrated in the following example of clinical practice given by the second research participant:

But I think because of her isolation in every aspect of her life that I feel a similar sort of isolation. I then feel a kind of intense boredom and sort of the idea of knitting would appeal to me. I could happily play, in the silences play a game of chess if I could get by with doing it except that I would feel so guilt-ridden or something to distract me from going absolutely out of my mind. And I do experience it in some face-to-face people as well, that what they're saying I suppose, the disconnection, leads to sort of an intense boredom. But it's a much more, put it this way, on the couch I experience the boredom much more intensely in a bodily sense [second participant: 36-38].

His experience is not restricted to boredom:

I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face-to-face . . . I feel the patient's depression in my throat when they're depressed in a way I don't get quite so easily face-to-face. And I often feel the intense frustration or I feel like I want to get in and do something. Like somebody who's wife is picking on them then that kind of will rile me on the couch in a way that it doesn't otherwise. It's almost like there's some kind of a shared possession, it's like it's put into that space and that space is uncontaminated and really between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one in a way that it's harder to do face-to-face [second participant: 52-54].

It is also evident that these extracts demonstrate how reverie as 'simultaneously a personal/private event and an intersubjective one' is evoked by the presence and use of the couch.

It is very tempting to view the second participant's 'mundane and personal' disclosures about his use of the couch for reasons of power (refer to second participant: 61) through a critical lens, to see them as his 'own stuff'. However, if we follow Ogden and regard this experience as reverie, then an entirely different import emerges.

The couch also provokes the anxiety associated with what Ivey (1999) has termed 'generative uncertainty': 'I think I was surprised. It was a bit like if you suggest a possibility you don't quite know where it's going, so I was surprised by the extent of his response. A bit, you know, a bit anxious too' [first participant: 9]. This too implicates

reverie as it fits with Ogden's view that 'the emotional fallout or wake of reverie is usually quite unobtrusive and inarticulate, carrying for the analyst more the quality of an elusive sense of being unsettled than a sense of having arrived at an understanding'. Through this we are invited to consider the state of reverie induced by the use of the couch as intimately connected to the analytic discourse, for such reverie is generated in the process of suspending memory, desire and understanding. The suspension of memory, desire and understanding opens the way to true intuition of deep psychological life (Bion, 1970, p. 57). As Bléandou has put it, being adrift in this way '[t]he mind has greater freedom to recognize inherently psychoanalytic phenomena' (1996, p. 223). The couch helps effect a shift to a deeper level of psychological life:

I was surprised by the extent of his response. A bit, you know, a bit anxious too, I think, you know 'Is this guy alright what's going to happen?', yet it was a very big reaction and in another way it was 'Oh yes, this is taking us to another level that important and good' [first participant: 9].

The second participant explicitly connected the notion of reverie to intersubjective architecture, subjective space and the body:

I have my own *reverie* that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face-to-face [second participant: 43] . . . I feel like, what was the fabulous movie – the Matrix – did you see that, you know where the bullet is coming to you and then it slows down and you kind of bend backwards and it's that, not in such a dramatic way, but there's space to manoeuvre with the space and I'm actually free to think [second participant: 49] . . . I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face [second participant: 51].

Whilst the 'findings' of the current study implicate the use of the couch in various aspects of reverie (its generally elusive and mundane access to subjective/intersubjective events, such as various mind-body states and the analytic third) they also elegantly weld several elements of the this research together in the above statement. The use of the couch grants access to reverie, experienced as a body-mind space, which itself opens the analyst's possibilities of supple thinking and attuned being-together with the analysand.



### 5.3 Deconstructing and re-constructing the couch

The couch as part of a discourse arises from and composes the ground of psychoanalysis. Thus, hermeneutically, the couch may provide a portal through which to refine the critical and creative development of psychoanalytic technique. In particular, a hermeneutic enquiry, which references the meaning of the couch to values, can be deepened further through extending the critical dialogue of the 'findings' of the current study with certain contemporary psychoanalytic notions of intersubjectivity. This leads to the final focus that condenses the deconstructive drift of 'couching one's words' with the world construction of the 'couch as a wording' into a critical but redemptive hermeneutics of the couch. This calls for a critical, hermeneutic, 'destruction' of the couch (referenced to analytic 'values'), and its 'survival' as a useable evocative analytic object. Practically, this entails presenting an account of analytic 'values' against which to reference the meaning of the couch and following this with an assessment of the couch, as disclosed in the 'findings', in terms of those 'values'. Regarding the current study, there are two *value foci* which are particularly useful. The first of these is Lacan's notion of the 'analytic discourse', the second is Benjamin's valuing of subject-subject relations in living analysis (as opposed to subject-object relations used in psychodynamic formulation). This critical hermeneutic deepening is captured under the rubric of 'Deconstructing and re-constructing the couch'.

#### 5.3.1 *The couch and 'analytic discourse'*

A formulation of a Lacanian notion of 'value' can begin by noting, that although Lacanian thinking arises from considerations of the vicissitudes of 'desire', it is fundamentally concerned with the pre-shaping of being-in-the-world-with-others. Lacan's articulation of 'value' draws on a notion akin to 'authenticity', namely that it is of primary value for human beings to become free of the desire of others and to appropriate their own, authentic, desire. Perhaps Lacan's closest formulation of this 'value' resides in his notion of the 'analytic discourse'. The notion of the 'analytic discourse' was forged in the Parisian political/student unrest of the late 1960s. Lacan presented this notion in his 1969/1970 Seminar XVII, entitled *L'envers de la*

*psychanalyse* (at the time of writing only available in French). In this seminar he proposed four basic discourses. Bracher (1993), accenting the 'speaker' of the discourse, has translated them as 'the discourse of the university', 'the discourse of the master', 'the discourse of the hysteric' and 'the discourse of the analyst'. Elliot (1991), accenting the 'fabric' of the discourse, has translated them as the discourse of bureaucracy, the discourse of mastery, the discourse of hysteria and the analytic discourse respectively. These discourses reflect particular 'cultures' or modes of intersubjectivity, as they represent particular ways of being-in-the-world-with-others. More specifically:

According to Lacan, the relationship between analyst and analysand constitutes a particular kind of social relation in which the analysand's desire is privileged. Freud, while practicing psychoanalysis, discovered the importance of allowing himself to be positioned as the other by the analysand, who then transferred her wishes and thoughts onto him. The result is a highly artificial situation, but the work of analysis is to assist the analysand in disentangling her desire from that of the other so that she can desire on her own. Analytic discourse is different from other discourses because the analyst privileges the desire of the analysand, creating a space in which that desire can be articulated, clarified, and understood. In the discourse of analysis, the subject (or analyst) does not make the other his/her slave (as in a discourse of mastery), nor is the other reduced to a mere reflection of the analyst's image (as in the discourse of bureaucracy), nor is the other a symbol of truth or a symptom of the analyst's desire (as in the discourse of hysteria). In the ideal form of psychoanalytic practice, the social relation between subject and other is based on 'listening attention' rather than oppression, benign influence, or phantasy (Elliot, 1991, p. 13).

To reiterate: the 'value' of analysis lies in the (pre)conscious intention of the psychoanalytic enterprise to privilege the authentic desire of the analysand.

The couch forms part of the physical structure of the psychoanalytic enterprise, but, as already discussed, it plays a role in shaping the way the analyst and analysand are in the world together. In terms of 'values', the couch is part of a complex process which 'shades the odds on which discourses are more accessible and which ones are foreclosed' (Austin, 2002, personal communication 25 September, 2002). Austin poetically asks which clusters of desires 'swirl around the couch, whose desires are they, and what configuration of desire do they serve?'

'Destruction' of the couch with respect to Lacanian 'values', shows that the couch may be a nearly meaningless piece of furniture which occupies a place in psychoanalytic practice through an accident of history, but which guarantees the analyst's own identity needs, i.e. it fulfils the desires of the analyst at the cost of the analysand's desires to assume whatever body posture he/she wishes. Furthermore, as 'a wording' the couch can propagandize the analysand into identifying with a value system. In particular the couch interpellates the analysand into the discourses of bureaucracy and mastery, and so it induces compliance in analysands, which privileges the desire of the analyst. In particular, such compliance might serve to satisfy an analyst's desire for security and power, again privileging the desire of the analyst over the analysand. More subtly, at the level of bodily rhythm the couch renders the analysand a dominated and abjected 'feminine' other. The more subtle forces of the non-analytic discourse, particularly engendered domination, lurk in the shadow of the analyst's intention to be analytic. Simply put, even with good intentions, the couch may entangle the analysand in the discourses of mastery, bureaucracy and hysteria.

From the 'findings' of this study the 'survival' of the couch shows that, as 'a wording', the couch is a transformative symbol which opens possibilities of being, including the analysand's access to his/her authentic desire. The 'findings' also show that the meaning of the couch is not predetermined, but that it takes on meaning in terms of the analysand's psychological life. In particular, the couch may contextually give the analyst less control and the analysand more. More particularly, negotiation of the meaning of the couch in terms of power and genderized domination is central to analysis. Simply put, from one perspective the use of the couch *is a means* whereby an analytic discourse is effected and maintained.

In conclusion of this point, a deeper and more subtle understanding of the meaning of the couch sees it 'reconstructed' as a useable evocative analytic object, which is productively ambiguous and context-based in meaning. More specifically, being on or off the couch does not determine anyone's identity or place anyone 'in control', but provides a context in which the analysand's identity and desire can be experienced, elucidated and

negotiated.

### *5.3.2 The 'couch' as a discourse that reveals and conceals the analysand as subject*

In terms of 'values', Benjamin (1995; 1999) has argued that, whilst subject-object relations are important, it is a culminating wisdom of intersubjective theory that subject-subject relationships, both in recognition and negation, are of vital importance for analysis. Paradoxically, for one's own subjectivity to be fully experienced in the presence of another, that other must be recognized as a subject. In Kristeva's words this occurs through 'becoming as of the Other' (1986, p. 243). Thus analysis must, at least in part, occur in the context of two subjects who recognize each other as subjects.

'Destruction', 'survival' and 'reconstruction' of the couch can be framed in Benjamin's 'value' system, in terms of how the couch (as 'a wording') might reveal and conceal the analysand as a subject, presenting him/her instead as an object (1990/1995). Jung, for one, maintained that the use of the couch concealed the mutual subjectivity of the analytic couple, and that the use of the couch was antithetical to such recognition. For Jung, analysis was intersubjective and he tried to encounter the analysand as 'one human being to another' (1963/1983, p. 153). In consequence, he rejected 'the idea of putting the patient upon a sofa and sitting behind him' (1935, p. 155).

In terms of the 'findings' of the current research study, none of the participants made any explicit reference to empathy, empathic enquiry, attunement or encountering the analysand as a subject. The overall impression was that the participants' explicit experience and formulation of the experience of using the couch was of using it as a means toward intrapsychic ends even when calling on configurations of working which are inherently intersubjective. This may reflect something of the embeddedness of the couch in the history of psychoanalysis. According to Aruffo (1995), classically, the analyst treats all the analysand's productions as intrapsychic rather than interpersonal. He contends that this leads on to standard technique, of which the couch is a feature. He argues further that the use of the couch slants the analytic process in the direction of the internal mode and working face-to-face slants it in the direction of the interactive mode.

In terms of the couch's 'survival' in terms of Benjamin's 'value' system, the tone of concern and respect in the verbal delivery of the interviews as well as the implications of certain of the 'findings' of this study demonstrate that the use of the couch supports the analyst's profound concern to understand the analysand as a subject. For example, 'we kind of become one in a way that's it's harder to do face-to-face' [second participant: 54] and 'I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face' [second participant: 52]. The intimacy that the couch supports may be indicative of subject-subject recognition:

I think one of the things is it sort of encourages a different kind of intimacy which I think is, I don't kind of get too mystical about it, and I don't like making things sound gobbledy gookish, like if you haven't had analysis you don't know what it's about, but I think there is something quite particular, hard to get bearings on, that that way of discourse [the couch] supports or encourages or promotes in its creative dimension [first participant: 44].

If a phenomenological view is sought, Romanyshyn (1982, 1984, 1991) (using a cultural/historical critique) has argued that 'seeing' risks removing us from lived experience, and that, in particular, 'the eye favors distance over intimacy' (Romanyshyn, 2000). Romanyshyn is here arguing a cultural/historical critique, but nonetheless his argument necessarily finds echoes in everyday life and is thus pertinent to this study. It might be expected that through 'disabling' the eye, the couch would restore a certain sort of intimacy and its consequence of restoring the originary state of pre-reflective subject-subject recognition (Reis, 1999; Stolorow, Orange & Atwood, 1999).

Both the evidence for 'destruction' and the evidence for 'survival' presented in the above 'findings' is 'light' and the development of more innovative indicators of inter-subjective recognition would be valuable. One such tool may be the mixing of expression of experiential modes. Stern (Benjamin, 1995) has suggested that an infant registers the other as understanding when the other feeds-back to the infant the experience in an expressive mode different to the mode of the infant's experience. For example, an adult's grimace may feedback a bad taste in the infant's mouth, or the adult's verbal expression may feedback the infant's experience of surprise. Benjamin re-articulates Stern,

proposing that the transposition of the expression of psychological life from one modality into another is an intersubjective event that communicates to each member of the analytic couple the inner experience of the other as a subject. We may conclude then, that with the couch a movement from bodily rhythm to words, or from words to bodily rhythm is indicative of the analytic couple's appreciation of each other as subjects.

The first participant gave some indication that the couch may hinder his reception of the bodily modality: 'My sense is there is something about the eyes are the window of the soul and there is something that also gets missed. That what I miss is sometimes the quality of the presence of what the eyes convey [first participant: 29]. The second participant gave a similar view: 'And in some ways [the couch] is quite a disadvantage, because sometimes I'm not sure exactly where she is emotionally. For example, she might be crying about something and I don't fully realize she's crying, she'll never reach for a tissue or anything else. So there's a sort of concealment she has in the couch' [second participant: 15]. This would imply that, at least some of the time, the couch might obstruct the analyst's experience of the analysand as a subject. Does this mean that the analyst is cut off in a personal world imagining that he/she is more attuned to the analysand than he/she really is? As the first participant put it: 'What's less available is registering the visual communication and that more often in this kind of analytically inclined work, you know, the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on, they tend to be more available' [first participant: 35]. If we are to ruthlessly follow Benjamin's reasoning it would seem a fantasy of the analyst that he/she is closer to the analysand. If we follow Ogden, then we might speak of a state of reverie that accesses the intersubjective space of the analytic couple. In this, the latter scenario, the couch may be said to intersubjectively facilitate the analysand's understanding of, and freedom from, the ways in which his/her life is constrained by structures of subjectivity (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984) and intersubjectivity (Elliot, 1991).

Notwithstanding what has just been said, there is unfortunately only a weak intimation of recognition of the analysand as a subject using this indicator. Although the findings of the study reflect that the couch *facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's*

*narrative in an experiential, bodily register*, the material from the interviews was generally not detailed enough to conclusively decide on the analyst's appreciation of the analysand as a subject.

Perhaps the best that can be said, on the basis of the 'findings' of the current study, is that there is an *intimation* that the couch fosters subject-subject recognition but that this study is *not explicitly conclusive* on this. The degree to which the couch reveals and conceals the analysand as subject is unclear.

The previous sections of this chapter present the couch as a 'thing' the meaning of which is ambiguous and context-based, but as a 'thing' which supports the analytic discourse. This final discussion does not overturn that impression, but it does expose inadequacies. Although from one perspective the use of the couch effects an analytic discourse, from another perspective it may be seen to entangle the analysand in psychoanalytic culture. Psychoanalytic culture can have more to do with the discourses of bureaucracy and mastery. Furthermore, the research participants failed to explicitly articulate the intersubjective nature of the analytic enterprise. They also failed to clearly indicate the extent to which (for them, as individuals) the technique of using the couch conceals and reveals the analysand as a subject.

These uncertainties and inadequacies should not lead us to reject the use of the couch however, but should rather inaugurate a critical hermeneutics of the couch as an analytic tool. This study shows that the couch does indeed facilitate an analytic discourse, and, a discourse which is intersubjective in nature. Adopting a critical and hermeneutically interrogation of the meaning of the couch reveals both the historical embeddedness of its use as well as how its meaning is constituted by contemporary culture. This hermeneutic attitude allows the 'destruction' of the meaning of the couch and its re-assembly, through the lens of intersubjective theory, as an analytic object. Within this living hermeneutic process, the analyst and analysand can negotiate and renegotiate the meaningfulness of the couch in the analytic space. This has echoes of Winnicott's (1971/1974) articulation of the infant's destruction and rediscovery of the surviving/regenerated object. The couch

(as meaningful) is first destroyed and then rediscovered as a surviving object, and the meaning of the couch enters a different register when undergoing this cycle: it becomes something that can be 'used' because it survives. Like Winnicott's 'surviving object', the couch becomes a portal to a metaphoric way of being-in-the-world (Ogden, 1986). Being respectful of metaphor the analyst is saved from falling into literal desire. This also helps situate the analyst in the field of the Lacanian notion of the 'analytic discourse'.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the present study and suggestions for further research**

A number of limitations of the present study are evident:

- In terms of focus the study only sets out to reflect the experience of the analyst and not the analysand.
- In terms of method there are limitations with respect to participant selection and lack of differentiation of the influence of the couch from other factors in the analytic process.
- At times, even the most phenomenologically inclined participant tended to drift over into talking about theory rather than experience.
- Through the course of data analysis and the discussion of the 'findings', it became evident that certain aspects of the experience of using the couch would benefit from more in-depth investigation.
- The degree to which the use of the couch paradoxically both helps *and* hinders subject-subject relating needs to be studied in a more detailed and comprehensive way.

##### ***5.4.1 Only reflecting the analyst's experience***

Although the explicit intention of the study was to focus on the analyst's experience of using the couch, it is clear from both a practical and theoretical perspective that the meaning and use of the couch is intersubjective in nature. The participants acknowledged this by also expressing their opinions about the analysand's experience, as well as including material derived from their own experience of having been analysands on the couch. However, this study inherently articulates the analyst's subjective experience, and only indirectly reflects the intersubjective dimension. More particularly, it focuses on the intersubjective dimensions of the analyst's experience, and finds that the meaning of the couch is intersubjectively created. Notwithstanding these 'findings' the intersubjective nature of using the couch could be studied more comprehensively (and with greater



critical soundness) by involving both members of the analytic couple. As with Thorpe's (1989) study of projective identification, however, the methodological difficulties would be considerable.

#### *5.4.2 Limitations of participant selection*

Although psychoanalysis is generally seen as a monolithic movement it is in fact shot through with differences of theory and practice. Paradoxically, at the same time, the boundaries between Psychoanalysis as governed by the International Psychoanalytical Association, Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Jungian Analysis and Existential Analysis are less clear today than ever before. In the United States these 'movements' are all recognized, by the 'National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis' (NAAP) as pursuing 'psychoanalysis'. This study focused on using participants who could be generically defined as analysts using the NAAP criteria and, given the limited number of participants used, practitioners from a full selection of orientations was not sought. It is possible that inclusion of such other practitioners would be of benefit to the study. However, such a widened perspective would have been beyond the scope of this study.

#### *5.4.3 Greater differentiation of the influence of the couch from other factors*

Another limitation of this study is what might be seen as its poor of differentiation of the influence of using the couch from other factors in the analytic process. Applying the eye of natural science to the study highlights how the embeddedness of the couch in a conglomerate of analytic practice renders its contribution to the process less clear. For example, how do selection of analysands to the couch and frequency of sessions impact on the nature of the analytic experience? Certainly the second research participant believed that there was a process of selection of 'suitable' analysands which might account for what are seen as the advantages of using the couch:

[T]here's a selective bias I suppose in that those, some of those people will graduate to the couch and they will graduate usually when their immediate crisis is over and when I feel they have the potential to take it further and they have the interest in taking it further. So it's almost by definition then the people I see on the couch are somehow a bit more serious about the task of psychoanalysis and in general, although not always, tend to be often higher functioning rather than lower functioning [second participant: between 11 and 12].

'Differentiation' is, however, an interpretive device that threatens to localize 'cause' at the cost of 'context'. Perhaps the following citation from the first participant's interview helps re-situate this study as human science:

I think, you know, the general sense I have is 'Hey this is quite a useful dimension of analytic practice, but not as a thing in itself'. It's always for me in the context. If I was working four or five times a week all the time I have a sense it would probably become the norm with exceptions. And it would just gravitate to that and how much that's history, identification, culture, what people expect, I don't know. But it's a workable process. It's workable and I wouldn't see any good reason for the people on the couch now to say 'Now look, we could try sitting up'. It would be an intrusion on the work that we're engaged in. And also the people who are doing it seem to find that quite a natural sort of thing [first participant: 42-43].

In essence, the first participant is stating that his understanding of the couch is context-based and that that is good enough. Although this might be sufficient for a human science the eye of natural science, might usefully request more differentiation of the structure of embeddedness. Further studies might seek to attempt such a differentiation or elaborate the virtue of maintaining context further. One way of doing this might be for future researchers to 'push' the participants in the interviews more towards the experiences of using the couch.

#### *5.4.4 Participants' drift over into theory rather than experience*

At times, even the most phenomenologically oriented of the participants tended to drift over into expounding on psychoanalytic theory rather than speaking directly from experience. Given that the use and meaning of the couch is embedded in theory such a drift is inevitable. So, in part, this drift may be a reflection of the necessarily reciprocal relationship between analytic practice and psychoanalytic theory in a hermeneutic circle. This 'drift' may also reflect the apparent 'confusion' of description of the experience of using the couch on the one hand with the participants' 'beliefs' about using the couch on the other. Such 'confusion' may also arise as a product of the sophistication of the generally very experienced and reflective participants who in a sense showed a capability to be their own phenomenological researchers at certain points of the interviews. (This view is consistent with Rustin's (1997) that psychoanalytic research emerges from the day-to-day practice-based research of analytic practitioners. Furthermore, the notion of

'co-authoring' comes into play.) The 'drift' may also be reflective of the 'defendedness', of participants who possibly drew on theory to avoid presenting themselves or their experience in particular ways. At worst, it could reflect the circular intertwining of psychoanalytic theory and practice, which renders psychoanalysis a closed system. More comprehensive interviewing, spread over a period of time could possibly remove the more pernicious aspects of the drift over into theorizing.

#### *5.4.5 More in-depth investigation*

The study recognized that there are many dimensions to the experience of using the couch: the experience of bodily-ness; the experience of time and space; the experiences of ambience, mood and emotions, effects on analytic abstinence; contraindications to the use of the couch; issues of privacy; issues of ideology and power; the generation of reverie and the symbolic quality of the couch to mention but a few. Whilst some of these dimensions were covered comprehensively and in-depth others were not fully discussed and could benefit from further study.

#### *5.4.6 Lack of detail of subject-subject relating*

A significant area for more in-depth investigation is the role of the couch in subject-subject relating (in contrast to subject-object relating). Although the study gives the impression that the couch supports subject-subject relating, there is not strong justification for this conclusion. The couch is found to generate a state of reverie, implying that it provides access to the intersubjective space of the analytic couple. Furthermore, although the 'findings' of this study reflect the couch facilitating the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in a bodily register, the interview material is not detailed enough to provide conclusive 'evidence' of the analyst's appreciation of the analysand as a subject. Both Stern and Benjamin propose that in order for the transmitter of a 'message' to experience being recognized as a 'subject' by the receiver of the 'message', the receiver must feedback the 'message' in a communicative modality other than that of its original transmission. Finding a way to access the presence or absence of these sorts of communication, when the couch is used, would then provide a more direct indication of inter-subjective recognition. In this way the question of the

couch's influence on subject-subject relating could be investigated more comprehensively.

### 5.5 Concluding statement

This study commenced with the statement that the use of the couch, having entered the vernacular as an equivalent of analysis of any sort taking place, is largely taken for granted as part of psychoanalytic technique. Justified in theory, the technique of using the couch has invited phenomenological investigation. This study has attempted to take up that invitation, using a critical and creative 'phenomenological hermeneutic' method to explore the analyst's lived experience of using the couch.

Literature devoted to the couch is spare. Early references to the couch tended to deal with its use as signifying psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis, its role in facilitating analysis and criticism of its use. More recently, the couch has been the subject of dedicated journal volumes — in English a volume of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* explored it from the perspective of contemporary psychoanalysis. Ogden's 1996 seminal paper, 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique', extended the examination of the role of the couch to include intersubjective theory.

In terms of method, this study has attempted an integral disclosure of the analyst's lived experience of using the couch. A by now classical phenomenological method (following Giorgi) was used to generate a description of the general structure of the experience. The description thus obtained was then aesthetically and texturally complemented with interleaved direct citations from the interviews of the research participants. The integral perspective was rounded off using a critical dialogue of these structural and textural 'findings' with psychoanalytic notions of critical discourse and intersubjectivity.

The 'findings' of the study showed that the meaning of the couch is context-based, ambiguous and paradoxical, with the use of the couch sometimes facilitating analysis and sometimes not doing so. The use of the couch was shown to have a particular propensity

to activate issues of power, although this was contingent upon the intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics of and between the particular analyst and the particular analysand. The use of the couch was also found to be symbolic of the analyst as analyst, which in turn, vouchsafed the process being used as authentic psychoanalysis. Furthermore, the couch was found to mediate a mode of being that is containing, intimate and pregnant with potential meaning, and, one in which psychological life may be evoked, embodied, tracked and respectfully observed. The most significant contribution made to the way of being by use of the couch is the granting of the dimension of privacy. Privacy specifically reduces deviation from an analytic attitude. The couch was also found to be implicated in generating an intersubjective analytic third, itself related to the process of reverie. In particular, the couch was found to support reverie and grant access to different states of body-mind.

The dialogue of these the 'findings' with contemporary psychoanalytic notions was clustered under three rubrics: 'couching one's words', 'the couch as a wording' and 'deconstructing and re-constructing the couch'.

The first of these presented the notion that the meaning of the couch is context-based and ambiguous, not essential. The second rubric birthed pragmatic and ideological critiques of the role of that the couch plays in domination. The ideological critique traced the function of the couch as a symbol and evocative object. Its shaping of being-in-the-world was tracked along the dimensions of being-together, bodily attunement, privacy, the analytic third and reverie. The final rubric drew on Lacan's notion of the 'analytic discourse'. The couch was first critically examined in terms of this discourse, then its role in revealing and concealing the analysand as subject was examined.

The study concludes with an examination of its limitations, and suggestions for further research. It was noted that, although the study itself found the couch to be strongly intersubjective in nature, this study was confined to an articulation of the analyst's experience, not the analysand's or joint experience. There were also limitations in terms of selecting participants, both in total number and theoretical orientation. There was a

need for the method to elicit greater differentiation of the expression of the analyst's experience. Furthermore the participants demonstrated a drift away from a strictly experiential account into reflections on theory. Although the study did comprehensively cover many of the dimensions of the experience of the technique of using the couch, some of these dimensions would benefit from more in-depth study. A serious limitation was the difficulty in investigating the influence of the use of the couch on subject-subject relating. This last dimension of the use of the couch could benefit from creative and innovative research.

In conclusion, this study attempts, in an integral way, to disclose the analyst's lived experience of the technique of using the couch. Embracing the personal and cultural situatedness of the experience, the research task requires an integral approach that is critically descriptive of the structure, aesthetic texture and value of the meaning of the couch. Such a multiphase approach to the research topic constituted a phenomenological hermeneutic investigation of the analyst's experience of using the couch.

The 'findings' of the current study, and their interpretation, disclose the analyst's experience of using the couch as complex. The current study reveals the meaning of the couch as being paradoxical and context-based but also that its use aids the analyst in defining and establishing the actions and ambience of analysis. Furthermore, it is a numinous and fascinating evocative object, a 'thing', that shapes the analytic couple's experiences of subjectivity and intersubjectivity/being-together. In particular the couch is experienced as inviting the analyst to inhabit an uncertain 'world' in which the analytic couple gather, utter and reflect on the analysand's foregone and forgotten possibilities of being. The ways in which these possibilities are shaped and made present are captured in the two psychoanalytic notions of the 'intersubjective analytic third' and 'reverie'.

From a critical perspective, however, it is shown that the use of the couch may also invite the analyst to inhabit a world/culture/discourse in which particular possibilities of being are tendentiously concealed and revealed for non-analytic reasons. In consequence, any decision to use the couch needs to take this possibility into account.

Finally, when the limitations of the current study are considered it is evident that, whereas the couch is a useful element of analysis, its role and meaning would benefit from further study along lines suggested.

In final summary, the limitations of the study aside it can be said that, for the analyst, the lived experience of using the couch, although paradoxical and context-based, at its best, symbolically shapes and evokes an analytic space, bodily-ness, and analytic being-together in a state of reverie and in relation to the 'intersubjective analytic third'. Such inhabitation of an analytic space is characterized by a propensity to open the analytic couple to previously foregone and forgotten possibilities of being.

#### **4.3 Summary conclusion**

What has this study discovered about an analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch?

Firstly, that the meaning of the couch is context-based and ambiguous and may sometimes facilitate analysis and sometimes not. In particular the couch has a propensity to activate issues of power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use. Power issues are especially noteworthy. These issues are, however, contingent on the psychodynamics of the particular analyst and the particular analysand.

Secondly, the couch is a symbol of the analyst as analyst and vouchsafes the process as authentic psychoanalysis. This has a felt effect on the analytic process.

Thirdly, the couch mediates a mode of being that is containing, intimate, and pregnant with potential meaning and in which psychological life may be evoked, embodied, easily tracked, and respectfully observed without impingement.

Fourthly, privacy, the most significant contribution to the couch's mediation of a mode of being, specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties and pressures to deviate from an analytic attitude.

Fifthly, the couch supports reverie which gives the analyst access to different states of mind such as infantile states of mind, increased responsiveness to the analysand's presence and reception in an experiential bodily register and an increased sense of mental space and manoeuvrability of thoughts in that space.

Finally, the couch is implicated in the provision of a third analytic element formed out of the merging of the analyst's and analysand's subjectivities. The constellation of this third analytic element is related to the process of reverie.



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**APPENDIX**

### Interview with first participant

[The preliminary interview material of the first participant has been removed as it compromised confidentiality. This participant is a high profile person in the broader psychoanalytic community and is himself punctilious in matters of ethics. In summary it can be said that he completed his academic and initial clinical qualifications at a South African university. Leaving for Britain he trained at the Tavistock and later had an association with the British Association of Psychotherapists. He did three years of psychoanalytic training at the British Institute of Psychoanalysis which included the Institute's full academic programme and a training analysis using the couch. This participant has more than twenty years experience conducting psychoanalytic psychotherapy, both with and without the use of the couch. However, this participant was at pains to point out that in honour of an undertaking to the British Institute of Psychoanalysis (the researcher's operational definition aside) he 'could not style himself an analyst'.]

**Researcher:** Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands use the couch.

**Participant 1:** Well I need to sort of almost deconstruct your question in a way with a kind of example. A couple of examples. But they're a bit blurred so I need to try and... the general thing I would say is it all depends and the examples which aren't differentiated at the moment is that I have experience of somebody getting up from the couch, moving onto the couch, moving from the chair to the couch. To me it isn't a generalized experience. For instance I'm thinking back to one person I was working with who [information removed] over some time he came for initial consultation and a few follow ups and then into more of a continuity where he came regularly and then one day I don't remember why, I think it was a moment of curiosity or somehow the conversation had reached not quite impasse but some kind of something and kind of my response was 'well maybe you'd like to try using the couch' as if it was another door way or something.

This was after a year or so's work and he lay down on the couch and it was enormously powerful. He said 'I feel as if the whole room is --.' you know and it seemed to me that what was happening was in making that physical move for this person and not having the eye contact and the familiar that it shifted him into a whole other realm of awareness which in our experience of each other had not happened for him before. But I can also think of somebody who had kind of identified that the couch was the method. It wasn't my idea. It was sophisticated culture. And I had a sense of actually there's no connection happening here. It's a disadvantage, it's a cultural assumption which not only is functioning as a defense but almost enhancing it, and I felt some concern that I was colluding with an institutionalization of something that was not --. So I think I said 'well maybe we just need to see each other' or something. Also this chair is here, that chair is there. I used to sit right behind and at some point through various daedals and discourses and things I shifted so I now sit somewhere like there. So then again it's like the couch in relation to the coucher has shifted.

**Researcher:** So the way you practice now, your analysands could see you but they need to make a bit of effort.

**Participant 1:** Well, I would not be in the immediate line of vision but I can be seen. But interestingly none of my current people using the couch seem to look at me although they listen to my voice. Although I can be seen actually very interesting, I'm not looked at. Another aspect of this is I've been working with somebody [information removed] and one of her aspirations is that she will one day use the couch. But it's all so an aspiration in line with other aspects of life which means that she can't ever imagine that she will. But it's taken on that very specific -- so that's what I say about deconstruct. Because in that frame it has it's own reference frame of meaning.

**Researcher:** That's very helpful. Those first two examples in particular are very helpful to me. If we can go to the first one. It seems it became quite vital once he moved to the couch. Is it possible to describe what it felt like for you when the process became vital.

**Participant 1:** Well, again it's not a linear thing. It's not a particular transition and didn't necessarily stay that way. I think I was surprised. It was a bit like if you suggest a possibility you don't quite know where it's going, so I was surprised by the extent of his response. A bit, you know, a bit anxious too I think 'you know is this guy alright what's going to happen' yet it was a very big reaction and in another way it was 'oh yes, this is taking us to another level that important and good.' It had mixed range and also it had another kind which has very much become part of who I am I guess, it was also curiosity, it wasn't just a fixed response it was also like 'well here we are'.

**Researcher:** So you were very interested to see what was going to happen.

**Participant 1:** See where it would go. As well. That [seeing what would happen] probably was the most important or somehow what I was most consciously registering was research. As you were saying earlier. So it took on a different frame. This data had come and impinged itself and I didn't know why, but it happened that the couch happened to be a factor. Why it was a factor and how it was a factor and whether if I'd had said 'would you like a cup of tea?' it would have had the same effect. Or a differently same or other effect or whether it was a moment of transition that I could have said 'try closing your eyes' or 'watch my fingers' I don't know. But it was part of a transition but I suppose it also gave me a sense of 'oh yes, there's something about this which at this point here now seems to be meaningful or seems to have a validity.'

**Researcher:** Again there seem to be sub divisions of stuff because you say there are times when it was particularly vital and times when it was less vital. So I'll come to the less vital now. But the particularly vital times, if you were to use a word picture to describe the feel of when it was vital, is it possible?

**Participant 1:** Well I was thinking about what you said earlier about phenomenology and hermeneutics, experience and interpretation, vital! [In response to the question of whether the couch state was vital or not.] I don't actually think of it that way whether it was vital or not.

**Researcher:** What word would you use?

**Participant 1:** I'd say it's part of the context of my professional presence and although initially with adults it was a taken for granted part, it isn't now and it doesn't feel to me vital or not. I think more that sometimes what's called the couch encourages in an obviously way whatever eye contact for somebody means, is less available. And I sometimes have a sense that this looks useful for where ever this person is and other times I don't feel that and it relates to theory in a way certainly in terms of British psychoanalytic concepts that they aren't polarised but that there is a degree of separation in them between a process of finding meaning and something more evident like the British

could look at what's sort of a corrective experience something about the relationship and the process of discovery. To me now they aren't about positions but about people so I think those factors are relative too and I think in the context of discovering meanings, the couch as a structure which doesn't require looking another person in the eye is facilitating.

**Researcher:** That's helpful in some way.

**Participant 1:** Can be often facilitating. In terms of the quality of relationship, it can be, yes, it can be the opposite it can be unhelpful. Eyes, windows of the soul, crying resonating the visual dimension of mirroring. I think that in so far as we are the psychophysiological spiritual beings that the parameters are too small to be that interesting. It think there's much more going on that often holds my interest more than this kind of differentiation. Although it does come in to my awareness and practice. So 'vital', I why I wouldn't say 'vital' is because if we were just talking about my professional practice I wouldn't necessarily introduce this as a big thing. Although looked at from the outside, depending on what others attribute to it and the context of your research it's the thing you've chosen so obviously it is a big thing. There's this patient for whom it feels a vital aspiration. She thinks, I think she thinks that I think that she will then be a proper analysand. But then it's so mixed up with her own history that she never feels a proper person for the other, that she's taking it as the assumption of my culture because that's what I represent in the town and so on.

**Researcher:** I want to come back to some more of the refined bits that you raised but I want to ask you some mundane questions. When you use the couch, when you have an analysand use the couch, have you noticed any particular habits that you might have? Like looking at a pattern on the wall or the floor or a picture or your shoe?

**Participant 1:** I think that what happens is my visual, what the word I'm looking for? Visual activity, looking, actually tends to get suspended. So I'm not aware of looking. Doesn't mean I'm not. But I think I sort of would be as I'm demonstrating now, it would not be unusual for me to close my eyes. Or if I am looking it would not be in a focused way or sometimes I would be looking at the person on the couch. So

no I think it's more an unfocusing of visual than a focusing in a particular place. But if I did focus it would more like to be on the person to get some sense of expression or body language.

**Researcher:** So you're not aware of any, I'm just in of mind of Anna Freud's knitting.

So there's no repetitive thing that you're aware of doing?

**Participant 1:** Well, knitting is not visual.

**Researcher:** Yes, good point. Can you think of any other non visual repetitive patterns?

**Participant 1:** No, what I find is and in that sense I suppose in some ways I prefer people on the couch but not always because I don't need to be visually or physically, you know I can sort of – [tone of voice implies relaxed state].

**Researcher:** Relaxing

**Participant 1:** It is relaxed yes but almost shift the focus, you know that if somebody's watching me there's that interactive communication. Now sometimes I feel that's really important but the value for me that is the looking and the habits so for me it seems to be a facilitating space for my own kind of, for instance I was working with somebody, still am who has a lot of issues around, a lot of issues about conforming, he's very pressed to do things right. He knows what should be done and he can't do it. And there's a lot of intensity and he will kind of stare at me and I find that quite tiring. Is the power of that. It's quite hard for me. And he'll say 'I know what I should do' or 'You look tired' you know he doesn't say it but he conveys it and I feel that I'm containing the strain of that and it's important for him. And we've kind of moved a bit on that line and now he's used the couch a couple of times and I found that I can sort of think more, got a bit more space. But it's not that clear cut because I also find that having sustained the intensity of his looking and engaging with that that I can also find a space if he's not on the couch. So they overlap.

**Researcher:** Yes there's an overlap but there's some change that -- yes.

**Participant 1:** It's not that discreet. It's in the direction of. I think that's right.

**Researcher:** Yes, you anticipating some of my questions which is great. Are there any particular sensations or emotions that you think are characteristic of when you use the couch or is it again just a varying thing?

**Participant 1:** Well just coming back sort of slightly perseverating on what you said earlier. My sense is there is something about the eyes are the window of the soul and there is something that also gets missed. That what I miss is sometimes the quality of the presence of what the eyes convey. It maybe, you know, the soul behind it, maybe the tears are easier to see. More eyes than anything else really so. I was just perseverating on that. What was your question again?

**Researcher:** I am just wonder if there are any particular emotions or sensations that you tend to get when you're using the couch?

**Participant 1:** I don't see a pattern. I don't see a pattern. No I don't. I mean I think that -- no I don't think so. Maybe but nothing I'm aware of.

**Researcher:** Time. Does the quality of time seem to change at all. Does it get shorter or longer?

**Participant 1:** The quality of time does change but not along that variable.

**Researcher:** Okay, it's just a different sense.

**Participant 1:** I mean time will, well I have subjective experiences of time and also quite a good sense after many years of the time of a session. Sometimes not. Nearly always. But it doesn't seem linked to where somebody's positioned themselves in the room. Much more to the atmosphere and the issues that we're engaging with.

**Researcher:** And your associations and thoughts that you have, do you find that they are different that they're more available, less available?

**Participant 1:** Well I think what's more available is space for introspection. What's less available is registering the visual communication and that more often in this kind of analytically inclined work, you know, the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on, they tend to be more available. Well it's not so clear because the people I'm seeing three and four times a week, all but one, do use the couch so I don't know and also those are people that I'm more immersed in their process because I'm seeing them more often.

**Researcher:** It could be the frequency.

**Participant 1:** So I haven't got that clarity of control group so I don't know. I think I'm more open to associations and discovery but it's also the people and it hadn't occurred to me to say what it would be like if whatever. Well one of these people I worked with on the phone. He had a serious operation and wasn't able to come. It was a long distance and we had our sessions on the phone for I think it was perhaps getting on for a month and in some way, it was quite interesting, that was a bit like working on the couch. The work wasn't the same but it had a resemblance. It had a resemblance.

**Researcher:** It's a bit tricky here because the group that uses the couch are also a very particular group because they're coming frequently and you're sort of very deep into what's going on.

**Participant 1:** More into their process. I think that actually the parameter again it isn't always but speaks more something about frequency which is also complicated in another way but I suppose if ones looking at variables one is frequency and the other is couch. And one would need a sort of Venn diagram of --.

**Researcher:** Unfortunately I've got some other people who use the couch less frequently. Can you think of any people who come once a week and use the couch.

**Participant 1:** Yeah, I've had many over the years. One at the moment comes to mind immediately. What's the question?

**Researcher:** Well, I'm thinking again of the quality of your associations.

**Participant 1:** Well sometimes with this particular person [who comes once a week], but it's very specific, I feel it would be a good idea if this person is drifting off and I'm drifting off you know and actually would be good if they just stand up. And with the same person at other times I'm thinking 'now I wouldn't be able to explore this if she were sitting up.' Because she's somebody who as it were quite inhibited and I would perhaps also feel inhibited and there's a certain kind of freedom, not quite analogous to somebody reporting a dream but it's sort of not quite permission but a different frame work of freedom. I think I tend to feel that when I sometimes encourage or invite people who are coming once a week and say 'perhaps you'd like to try the couch and see' or sometimes half way through sessions so that people don't feel trapped you know. And that I think it's usually in the spirit of greater freedom of inquiry. For instance I've been working with somebody who [information removed] [are] almost too conscious [information removed]. It's like he knows that. But he's stuck. And so I kind of at some point when he seemed less anxious about you know and he felt I'd heard his story I said 'lets try the couch' and he did and half way, and this was quite recent, towards the end of the session and then he came back the next week which was last week, and said 'I was quite uncomfortable in the last part of the session so perhaps I need to try it again'. Now I haven't got a elaboration about that but in some ways that he could feel uncomfortable was not necessarily bad news, not that I wanted him to be uncomfortable but you know, this is somebody who is almost suicidal and in his life very withdrawn and that some energy was surfacing and that he felt inclined to that. So that was quite, so I think you know, the general sense I have is 'hey this is quite a useful dimension of analytic practice but not as a thing in itself.' It's always for me in the context. If I was working four or five times a week all the time I have a sense it would probably become the norm with exceptions. And it would just gravitate to that and how much that's history, identification, culture, what people expect I don't know. But it's a workable process. It's workable and I wouldn't see any good reason for the people on the couch now to say 'now look, we could try sitting up' it would be an intrusion on the work that we're engaged in. And also the people who are doing it seem to find that quite a natural sort thing. I think one of the things is it sort of encourages a different kind of intimacy which I think is, I don't kind of get too mystical about it and I don't like making things sound gobbledy gookish like if you haven't had analysis you don't know what it's about, but I think there is something quite particular, hard to get bearings on, that that way of discourse supports or encourages or promotes in it's creative dimension. I think there is another kind you know, hello client patient analysand onto the couch, which is quite different which encourages a kind of patriarchal or passive dependent and so on. And I think that's probably why I've shifted from sitting behind a person. Because I think it seems to me that's too strong a statement of control. It's very interesting because sitting at an angle, and it may be my own experience or something, I am not aware of people

taking that opportunity of looking at me but I've come to feel that people are entitled to have that possibility and I don't want them having to get up to say something.

**Researcher:** So do you think that that alteration of the traditional angling of the chair and couch and so on, is it going too far to say that you've detected a possibility for a sort of dominance dynamic that that helps alleviate?

**Participant 1:** Well I think the kind of sitting behind and out of sight has come to connote for me, but I'm not convinced that it's absolutely true, something of that culture in England where those issues about feminism and power and so on are much, and I'm not sure if it's some kind of unconscious appeasement or actually it makes it different. But you're right to identify that dimension. I think I'm kind of assuming that sitting right behind and out of sight invites too much of a passive dominance, I'm assuming it encourages too stylised a transference and I think that Freud's exclusive emphasis on the Oedipal bypasses the spiritual and the sibling dimensions which seem to me to also need to have possibilities. Something like that.

**Researcher:** Okay. Now you've gone through a part which is actually an important aspect for me in terms of trying to critically assess the use of the couch so I'm thinking about the gender things which almost engendered nature of psychoanalysis, at least which is claimed or stated to be. What people believe is it's engendered nature, it tends to have that basic gender dominance. You're saying that yes, that might be the case, and you're trying to make a way around it but you're not sure it's intrinsic to it. What do you think?

**Participant 1:** You see I think what I'm trying within all sorts of limitations is to open the space. Now for instance in my kind of initial training, opening the space meant having no objects in the room. And I came to view that as much provocative as opening.

**Researcher:** Closing it as well as opening.

**Participant 1:** It's obvious that you can have the opposite view that you're so present in your objects that the other person hasn't got any space. So that's kind of links to -- say your question again?

**Researcher:** It's nice what you've said, that's good but I was looking more at specifically you know, let me word it properly that's why you're not getting the question. Some of the feminist critics of psychoanalysis --.

**Participant 1:** I've got it. I think the trouble with that kind of [feminist] dimension it becomes either or. It seems to be another paradigm in the couch and sitting is parent-child. So it's like if that's your paradigm then -- so I think there's something about if you're sensitive to something it determines the field as if that was the issue. But is also seems to me an imposition [the feminist dimension] because as parent-child it can be attention relaxed and responsibility and permission and it's a whole range of parameters don't to me, and it's not that I'm insensitive to these power issues but I think that they can also be imposed in a way that narrows the data into one dimensions and I think there are a variety of parameters at work. And also for a



specific person I think that's much more person specific in my experience and the other is about alliance or co operation and the parameters of that which I think the sociocultural ethos has a bearing but it isn't the totality.

**Researcher:** But it's not the whole thing.

**Participant 1:** Yes, So I don't know. I don't know.

**Researcher:** Now I have to look at this a little bit because quite a bit of what I was going to ask you you've already given to me. When you were speaking earlier on about your own almost allowing your associations to arise and so on -- would you describe that as a sort of state of reverie or not?

**Participant 1:** I suppose yes, I mean when I was talking about trying to get some bearing on what processes are facilitated in me it's a problem in a way because reverie for me denotes maternal reverie like a child and I'm not a mother and I'm not with a child so if that's the analogy I have to say I don't have any experience of it because I don't know it. So my association with the word doesn't take me close to it because where I live that word was around the sense of maternal reverie and I can imagine the process but it's a bit too specific for me to engage with.

**Researcher:** Let me put it another way. This is tricky because obviously one's unconscious of the unconscious but I'm thinking of your total response. In a quiet way your total response, both your conscious and your unconscious response.

**Participant 1:** I think there is something and it's also about language and words and meaning. There is something. [information removed.] There is something about, I think we need a thesaurus around the word reverie but it's in the right territory. I mean it's in a meaningful territory. Certainly.

**Researcher:** And then a more particular question. When the analysand can't see you they can't rely on the visual cues they get from you so the vocal rhythms. I'm wondering if vocal rhythms and other rhythms of movement that you're aware of whether those become more important.

**Participant 1:** It's very interesting in the spirit of research and listening to what you said. Two responses the first was when you said the client or analysand can't see you and I thought: actually that's really interesting. It doesn't go too abstruse but actually maybe they do see me. Something about is the seen or you know. In some ways I think I'm more 'seen' when it isn't visual but coming more to the focus bit of your question I think it does enhance a sense about tone. Tone of voice. It does and I noticed once a person would be absolutely in tune to my breathing. 'Ah I think you're getting a bit sleepy there' which is usually a bit true and enough to wake me up. And also I'm more aware of tone. I think the sensory apparatus becomes more the ear because the visual is -- but it's very interesting that because in a way coming back to your sense of reverie, I was probably reaching for a space which is not about visual auditory sensations but something else. But probably when the visual stimuli are removed the auditory take on more of the conveyance system.

**[Digression]**

**Participant 1:** I think what my kind of slight struggle, resistance to the focus of our discourse is it puts an emphasis on a particular frame which is okay as long as it doesn't get too privileged. Because what I feel is it isn't about the structure of these things are a bit primitive, a bit useful, a bit clumsy but they don't seem to me inherently what it's about.

**Researcher:** The very fact that I'm focusing on this very particular thing and it gets an importance which for you experientially is not in proportion to.

**Participant 1:** It gets privileged in a way that can become a power thing. Well it can be until you get interested in what's going on. And then it maybe quite other. So yes, but I think it's something to do with my kind of identification with psychoanalytic or analytic curiosity. And research methodology that requires focusing on a variable in a kind of rigorous way and my kind of curiosity is an endeavor not to. To kind of always hopefully be a bit surprised and unclear. So there's a bit of tension and discourse.

**Researcher:** Yes, there would be. This is like really focused and it might not work especially in the light of what you just said but just coming back to if vocal body rhythm becomes more noticeable becomes more foregrounded.

**Participant 1:** Vocal especially.

**Researcher:** Do you think that there might be times when you're communicating even contrary messages by your vocal rhythm compared to what you might be saying interpretively?

**Participant 1:** Well, the instance where I think where that was strongest recently was not where this person was on the couch. So that's a bit of a dilemma. This particular instance was, this is kind of anecdotal, but it perhaps, I thought: my gosh I'm seeing too many people here I really, you know. In my counter transference of that week I was really tending to treat people as if they should be well. You know they're coming too much or something. That was retrospective of course. And then one person came back the following week, who's not on the couch, and said: I don't think you know, more or less that was your convincing you. And I said: Yeah, I think it was. So that was a case where, and I haven't given it to you verbatim but I think I was offering something interpretively but actually it was that I felt too much work, go away. The client picked it up. So I think that's always a risk. Whether it's a visual message, or a verbal message or a physical message or the way. Beyond the door of my consulting room there's another door. People come in and there's an intermediate door and I have an entry phone system so I go, the entry phone is in the passage, so I open the entry phone, then I open the intermediate door and I go back and stand by my door. And one time I didn't do that I did it slightly differently and this person immediately put a whole constellation of meaning on that. That I was angry with her and so forth. So it's complicated because it's what am I conveying as a biggest message and it's not so sometimes very clear. And what is it that this person is attributing to me and I don't think --.

**Researcher:** So that's a mix really.

**Participant 1:** Well it's always a potential mix and the task is to try and differentiate in a good enough way. But as the discourse is spoken obviously if there is a double message it often will be in the spoken. I don't know that's particularly couch related.

**Researcher:** So it could be in any sphere.

**Participant 1:** I think so and it could be in any instant. For instance what if somebody else rings the bell and how does one ring the bell and how does one deal with that and what's the message to the person who's present. People write papers about these things it's quite interesting the way they get interpreted. I don't think it's exclusive.

**Researcher:** It's a general -- ?

**Participant 1:** About discourse and meaning and practice.

**Researcher:** Do you think that there are some analysts who you can really see in some way, should not be using the couch.

**Participant 1:** I think the difficulty for me as I listen to your question is the way it's formulated. Because there is does get into what you were saying earlier about 'feminists and power' and I may at the moment feel, and I have, I wish this person would sit up and talk to me, I'm finding it difficult to stay with this, but should not imply as a level of coherent conviction that makes this a critical issue in illness and in health and I have no evidence so far over 30 years of practice that this is a prominent issue. It's not been in my experience. I've had other concerns but this has not intruded itself.

**Researcher:** Let me just explain because my sense of how this sort of research is done is co authored research. In other words its fine for me to tell you where I'm coming from with the things. There's no virtue in my being mysterious. Some of the people I've been reading have got very clear cut ideas that 'this sort of client will not be suitable for the couch.' Others, funny enough Jungians mostly, are saying: 'no it's much more of a work it out in the analytic process.'

**Participant 1:** Well, I think if you think of Jungians relationship to Melanie Klein and psychoanalysis and so on, I'm trying to from the stereotypical when I was a Kleinian point of view, the Jungians were promiscuous people who could take these things and claim they were engaging with them. But they weren't fully circumcised members of the clan. So I remember that position. Now I'm thinking something about Jung and Freud co-authors went on some kind of holiday and shared their dreams and Freud said he wasn't prepared to go any further and so it touches on the whole area of collaboration. Now for me, my work now, in my mind is potential collaboration. I am respectful but for some of my clients it certainly isn't. I have one person who's coming very frequently and we started to talk about all the 'me's' she has in her mind and I need to respect that. That they're all real for her. But my own position is much more what you're saying the Jungian which is sort of work it out in a mix. Well,

sometimes it isn't workable but I don't find value in that kind of prescriptiveness. [information removed. [Assessment is] not really meaningful, it's more to do with the counter-transference and the anxieties of practitioners and the ethos of culture and reducing risks than inherently about truth and discovery. In our earlier conversation in the car, there's something about can the practice develop the theory. It's that kind of thing that seems to me that's very important to keep that alive. Very very important. So when you said some people shouldn't use the couch, it seems to me such a parochial and political statement that it's awful. And it says more about the making of the statement than about anything inherently interesting about little truths. That's what I now feel.

**Researcher:** Okay.

**Participant 1:** And it also links couches, the institutionalization of practice and institutions and training and I think there's something about the Jungian, there are several Jungian institutes in London. They've all had to be accepted and so on. It's like group analysis. It hasn't got a coherent theory. Which means some people can't stand it but it does have creative possibilities. The ossification of theory like you know, the ultimate scientific method which seems to me a tyranny. So that's where I'm speaking from now.

**Researcher:** So you're not going to get in to being one of the tyrants or the tyrannies?

**Participant 1:** Well I'm sure I do but I don't have to admire it. Or aspire to it.

**Researcher:** It sounds like quotable quote. Do you think that when the couch is working at it's best that it helps an analysand's psychological life to emerge or do you think it's just different?

**Participant 1:** Well, I haven't got a lot of other reference frames but I think it's one of the things that helps. One of the parameters, and in terms of conventions in psychotherapeutic structure. But it's also dependent on both participants. In other words I think it's a tool. My sense of listening to you is it's given a bit too much power in the 'it helps'. It facilitates. Yes I think it does.

**Researcher:** Facilitates is a better word, yes? When you look at the dark side of that, have you had people say that actually being on the couch starts to make things more frightening because there's too much coming.

**Participant 1:** Well I would say that the dark side often is very important to be present [information removed], [analysis] lends itself to caricature [information removed] in which it was assumed because someone's sitting on a chair and someone's lying on a couch and there are associations and communications, that something organic is happening. That's my difficulty with looking at the physical structure. I don't think, and I'm very concerned not to foster a point of view in your research that suggests that this task is primarily dependent on physical structure. Because I feel strongly it isn't. Further more I think it's dangerous to encourage that. Positively misleading.

**Researcher:** I'll see if I can remember to come back to that because you've touched on something that's very interesting to me. In the same light as that last question, do you recall anyone saying that they were frightened that they would lose control in some way?

**Participant 1:** Well I've got one person [information removed] who's issue is enormously about fear of loss of control, aspires to and doesn't dare use the couch. So there's a strong very current instance of what it represents. And I think of someone else who sat for a time and wanted to use the couch and interestingly she said: 'I feel as if I need you to carry my over'. It was almost like a marriage crossing the threshold. She was slightly embarrassed. So I think there it was almost an excitement. Kind of erotic and conjugal and aspiration so I think when you say the dark side I'm sure we're in a realm of opposites and in a sense if the work is about helping people to be free within their living then that fearfulness and the loss of control, is there, and I think it is but it's fear and encouraging and supporting and enabling that I think could be done in other ways but yes, I'm sure that's so that there is quite often an anxiety. At least anxiety is part of it and also hope and desire to let go of control.

**Researcher:** It's not just fearing that it's all going to go down but it's quite nice to have that taken care of or just let it go.

**Participant 1:** I think that taken care of is an interesting one too. It's funny I don't think about that although I do in other contexts. It's almost as if I have a kind of work ethic about the practice. Yes, I have to think about that. Interesting.

**Researcher:** Okay. When people move to the couch or when they move back. We'll do them one by one but when they move to the couch is there anything about that as a process that sort of stands out for you. Is it a process or I've got for me that it's not just a given. It might happen.

**Participant 1:** I think it's almost, I'm looking at your certificates here, it's almost in some way, in some ways it's got elements of a rite of passage or a ritual crossing. There are elements of that. Sometimes working with trainees, they almost measure themselves by you know 'have you got him/her on the couch yet?' I think it's a bit like do you do sex or do you make love? I think one dimension is something of that kind but in a sense it's moving to a context where more exploration can happen but I think the sensitivity about what that might mean or be for a person is very important and as it's not a natural form of discourse and evokes on the one hand anxieties and on the other hand, and also have quite a lot of evidence of this, erotic fears and excitement that all of that I feel isn't to be taken for granted. And you could say 'well just get on with it' but I think to just get on with it itself is a missed opportunity. To an extent.

**Researcher:** So you find yourself working with that process in any way?

**Participant 1:** Not as a primary concern but as part of the whole dimension. If you think of anthropologist going to work in other peoples settings. And I'm a bit mindful people are coming into my strange setting and I don't feel that I should take for granted what that means. I think I'm more or less open to finding out and there are a

lot of varieties for instance one person I worked with sitting this distance apart said 'I need to move my chair nearer to you'. And we did that some time ago. And I thought: Oh crumbs I haven't been trained in this what does it mean? And now more recently someone else I'm working with who is also comes once a week, is having art therapy, has gone to various intensive workshops and I feel it's all part of a process you know I don't feel ownership and he said 'Participant 1 could you please move closer to me' and I was thinking: Well I can interpret this and so on and so forth but actually in this context this is what I do. So I feel there are a lot of parameters like do you have moving chairs? Yes sometimes.

**Researcher:** And have you had the experience where someone has been on the couch for some time and then decides to go back to face to face? Did anything stand out for you?

**Participant 1:** Not really. I think we were both struggling to find some context that was more facilitating and this person then moved in due course back to the couch. I think this was somebody I felt was very stuck and this was just a collusion of the stuckness and I needed to encourage something more. So I think it was just a struggle. Not usual. Not usual in my experience. But sometimes somebody will say and this is the kind of interesting to me 'I think I'll lie on the couch today' or 'I think I'll sit up today' and I feel, and this is a particular person, I feel okay well these resources are here and he's also using his own kind of sensitivity not necessarily about avoidance so that's the kind of open and I see that as useful.

**Researcher:** I want to try and get this into things that are very much more speculative and there are two things I want to ask about. The first is: The overall experience of using the couch, and it seems to me that what you're saying is that it's not not the couch or the couch but it's more that this is something that is a part of a certain kind of relationship that I have with this person. So there are two things that I want to ask the first one being, are you saying or do you think that there's a kind of analytic way of being that the couch then becomes facilitative of.

**Participant 1:** I think it's an analytic attitude. As an analogy I went to an exhibition in Bristol of to get a sense of what it's like to be blind and he asked us to put these things on and there was a rail of objects and you could apprehend them by touch and I think there is a facilitating environment for analytic inquiry. It's primarily about a state of mind but and having, I'm not sure about the fixed time that's more pragmatic, but having privacy and continuity, encourage that. But I do, I think it isn't about the physical structure. I think it's much more about the state of mind and trying to reduce the clutter in the physical structure and it's not so much, it's a mixture of what useful and what gets in the way.

**[Interview ends in a digression away from the topic.]**

**Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) extracted and numbered and converted to constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant**

Meaning Units	Constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands use the couch.</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> Well I need to sort of almost deconstruct your question in a way with a kind of example. A couple of examples. But they're a bit blurred so I need to try and... the general thing I would say is it all depends and the examples which aren't differentiated at the moment is that I have experience of somebody getting up from the couch, moving onto the couch, moving from the chair to the couch.</p> <p>1. To me it isn't a generalized experience. For instance I'm thinking back to one person I was working with who [information removed] over some time he came for initial consultation and a few follow ups and then into more of a continuity where he came regularly and then one day I don't remember why, I think it was a moment of curiosity or somehow the conversation had reached not quite impasse but some kind of something and kind of my response was 'well maybe you'd like to try using the couch' as if it was another door way or something.</p> <p>This was after a year or so's work and he lay down on the couch and</p> <p>2. it was enormously powerful. He said 'I feel as if the whole room is --.' you know and</p> <p>3. it seemed to me that what was happening was in making that physical move for this person and not having the eye contact and the familiar that it</p>	<p>Using the couch is not a generalized experience for this participant. [1]</p> <p>Using the couch can effect the ambience of the analytic space and be numinous. [2]</p> <p>Using the couch provides privacy which is unfamiliar and shelters the analytic couple from gaze. This can change the nature of intersubjective awareness in a positive way.</p>

<p>shifted him into a whole other realm of awareness which in our experience of each other had not happened for him before.</p>	<p>[3]</p>
<p>4. But I can also think of somebody who had kind of identified that the couch was the method. It wasn't my idea. It was sophisticated culture. And I had a sense of actually there's no connection happening here. It's a disadvantage, it's a cultural assumption which not only is functioning as a defense but almost enhancing it and I felt some concern that I was colluding with an institutionalization of something that was not --. So I think I said 'well maybe we just need to see each other' or something.</p>	<p>However, when only arising from a 'cultural' assumption the use of the couch can equally change the nature of intersubjective awareness in a negative way. [4]</p>
<p>5. Also this chair is here, that chair is there. I used to sit right behind and at some point through various [unclear] and discourses and things I shifted so I now sit somewhere like there. So then again it's like the couch in relation to the coucher has shifted.</p>	<p>The participant does not follow the traditional setting of couch and chair in that his analysands could see him if they wished. [5]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> So the way you practice now, your analysands could see you but they need to make a bit of effort.</p>	
<p><b>Participant 1:</b> Well, I would not be in the immediate line of vision but I can be seen.</p>	
<p>6. But interestingly none of my current people using the couch seem to look at me although they listen to my voice. Although I can be seen actually very interesting, I'm not looked at. Another aspect of this is I've been working with somebody [information removed] and one of her aspirations is that she will one day use the couch. But it's all so an aspiration in line with other aspects of life which means that she can't ever imagine that she will.</p>	<p>In spite of being able to, none of his current analysands avail themselves of the chance to look at him although they listen to his voice. [6]</p>



<p>7. But it's taken on that very specific -- so that's what I say about deconstruct. Because in that frame it has it's own reference frame of meaning.</p>	<p>The use of the couch can take on very specific meaning for an analysand in her particular psychic terms of reference. [7]</p>
<p>8. <b>Researcher:</b> That's very helpful. Those first two examples in particular are very helpful to me. If we can go to the first one. It seems it became quite vital once he moved to the couch. Is it possible to describe what it felt like for you when the process became vital.</p>	<p>The ambience of the couch is not a monolithic, linear presence except in its invitation to ambiguity. [8]</p>
<p><b>Participant 1:</b> Well, again it's not a linear thing. It's not a particular transition and didn't necessarily stay that way. I think I was surprised. It was a bit like if you suggest a possibility you don't quite know where it's going, so</p>	
<p>9. I was surprised by the extent of his response. A bit, you know, a bit anxious too I think 'you know is this guy alright what's going to happen' yet it was a very big reaction and in another way it was 'oh yes, this is taking us to another level that important and good.' It had mixed range and also it had another kind which has very much become part of who I am I guess, it was also curiosity, it wasn't just a fixed response it was also like 'well here we are'.</p>	<p>The participant gave an example of the ambience of ambiguity when using the couch. It may be experienced as encompassing a numinous reaction, moving to another level of experience, inviting the participant's curiosity as well as sense of being-there. [9]</p>
<p>10. <b>Researcher:</b> So you were very interested to see what was going to happen.</p>	<p>[10] discarded</p>
<p><b>Participant 1:</b> See where it would go. As well. That [seeing what would happen] probably was the most important or somehow what I was most consciously registering was research.</p>	
<p>11. As you were saying earlier. So it took on a different frame. This data had come and impinged itself and I didn't know why, but it happened that the couch happened to be a factor. Why it</p>	<p>Using the couch can be a factor in the analysis making a transition to a different frame for the participant. The couch is not, however, a fixed influence but a context-based means to this end. [11]</p>

was a factor and how it was a factor and whether if I'd had said 'would you like a cup of tea?' it would have had the same effect. Or a differently same or other effect or whether it was a moment of transition that I could have said 'try closing your eyes' or 'watch my fingers' I don't know. But it was part of a transition but I suppose it also gave me a sense of 'oh yes, there's something about this which at this point here now seems to be meaningful or seems to have a validity.'

**Researcher:** Again there seem to be sub divisions of stuff because you say there are times when it was particularly vital and times when it was less vital. So I'll come to the less vital now. But the particularly vital times, if you were to use a word picture to describe the feel of when it was vital, is it possible?

**Participant 1:** Well I was thinking about what you said earlier about phenomenology and hermeneutics, experience and interpretation, vital! [In response to the question of whether the couch state was vital or not.]

12. I don't actually think of it that way whether it was vital or not.

**Researcher:** What word would you use?

13. **Participant 1:** I'd say it's part of the context of my professional presence and although initially with adults it was a taken for granted part, it isn't now and it doesn't feel to me vital or not.

14. I think more that sometimes what's called the couch encourages in an obviously way whatever eye contact for somebody means, is less available. And I sometimes have a sense that this looks useful for where ever this person is and other times I don't feel that and it relates to theory in a way certainly in

In response to a leading question the participant denied that vital was an appropriate word to use to describe the ambience of the couch. [12]

The couch forms part of the context of the participant's professional presence. [13]

The privacy afforded by the couch means that eye contact is less available. [14]

<p>terms of British psychoanalytic concepts that they aren't polarised but that there is a degree of separation in them between a process of finding meaning and something more evident like the British</p> <p>could look at what's sort of a corrective experience something about the relationship and the process of discovery. To me now they aren't about positions but about people so I think those factors are relative too and I think in the context of discovering meanings,</p> <p>15. the couch as a structure which doesn't require looking another person in the eye is facilitating.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> That's helpful in some way.</p> <p>16. <b>Participant 1:</b> Can be often facilitating.</p> <p>17. In terms of the quality of relationship, it can be, yes, it can be the opposite it can be unhelpful.</p> <p>18. Eyes, windows of the soul, crying resonating the visual dimension of mirroring. I think that in so far as we are the psychophysiological spiritual beings that the parameters are too small to be that interesting. It think there's much more going on that often holds my interest more than this kind of differentiation. Although it does come in to my awareness and practice.</p> <p>19. So 'vital', I why I wouldn't say 'vital' is because if we were just talking about my professional practice I wouldn't necessarily introduce this as a big thing. Although looked at from the outside, depending on what others attribute to it and the context of your research it's the thing you've chosen so obviously it is a big thing. There's this patient for</p>	<p>The use of the couch constitutes a structure which facilitates analysis because it shelters the analytic couple from the gaze. [15, 16]</p> <p>Contrariwise the use of the couch can obstruct the creation of a good quality relationship between analyst and analysand. [17]</p> <p>The couch is unhelpful of relationship insofar as the lack of gaze makes unavailable the visual dimensions of recognition, expression and mirroring. [18]</p> <p>For this participant the use of the couch is not central or vital but of contextual importance. [19]</p>
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whom it feels a vital aspiration. She thinks, I think she thinks that I think that she will then be a proper analysand. But then it's so mixed up with her own history that she never feels a proper person for the other, that she's taking it as the assumption of my culture because that's what I represent in the town and so on.

**Researcher:** I want to come back to some more of the refined bits that you raised but I want to ask you some mundane questions. When you use the couch, when you have an analysand use the couch, have you noticed any particular habits that you might have? Like looking at a pattern on the wall or the floor or a picture or your shoe?

20. **Participant 1:** I think that what happens is my visual, what the word I'm looking for? Visual activity, looking, actually tends to get suspended. So I'm not aware of looking. Doesn't mean I'm not. But I think I sort of would be as I'm demonstrating now, it would not be unusual for me to close my eyes. Or if I am looking it would not be in a focused way or sometimes I would be looking at the person on the couch. So no I think it's more an unfocusing of visual than a focusing in a particular place.

21. But if I did focus it would more like to be on the person to get some sense of expression or body language.

**Researcher:** So you're not aware of any, I'm just in of mind of Anna Freud's knitting.  
So there's no repetitive thing that you're aware of doing?

**Participant 1:** Well, knitting is not visual.

22. **Researcher:** Yes, good point. Can you think of any other non-visual repetitive patterns?

For this participant there is a bodily suspension of visual activity. [20]

If he was to focus visually it would be to gain some sense of an analysand's expression or body language. [21]

In response to a direct question the participant denied engaging in any type of bodily (sensory or motor) rhythms. [22]

**Participant 1:** No,

23. what I find is and in that sense I suppose in some ways I prefer people on the couch but not always because I don't need to be visually or physically, you know I can sort of – [tone of voice implies relaxed state].

**Researcher:** Relaxing

**Participant 1:** It is relaxed yes

24. but almost shift the focus, you know that if somebody's watching me there's that interactive communication. Now sometimes I feel that's really important but the value for me that is the looking and the habits so for me it seems to be a facilitating space for my own kind of, for instance I was working with somebody, still am who has a lot of issues around, a lot of issues about conforming, he's very pressed to do things right. He knows what should be done and he can't do it. And there's a lot of intensity and

25. he will kind of stare at me and I find that quite tiring. Is the power of that. It's quite hard for me. And he'll say 'I know what I should do' or 'You look tired' you know he doesn't say it but he conveys it and I feel that I'm containing the strain of that and it's important for him .

26. And we've kind of moved a bit on that line and now he's used the couch a couple of times and I found that I can sort of think more, got a bit more space. But it's not that clear cut because I also find that having sustained the intensity of his looking and engaging with that that

27. I can also find a space if he's not on the couch. So they overlap.

An appeal of the couch is that it relieves the participant from certain aspects of bodyliness. [23]

The privacy of the couch effects a shift in focus from interactive communication to a facilitating space for the participant. [24]

Although it can be important for the analysand and the analytic process the gaze of working face-to-face is tiring for the participant. [25]

Even using the couch can mean that the participant has to sustain the intensity of engaging with the analysand in a visual way at times. [26]

However, there may be a demand to engage with the analysand even when the couch is

<p>28. <b>Researcher:</b> Yes there's an overlap but there's some change that -- yes.</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> It's not that discreet. It's in the direction of. I think that's right.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Yes, you anticipating some of my questions which is great. Are there any particular sensations or emotions that you think are characteristic of when you use the couch or is it again just a varying thing?</p> <p>29. <b>Participant 1:</b> Well just coming back sort of slightly perseverating on what you said earlier. My sense is there is something about the eyes are the window of the soul and there is something that also gets missed. That what I miss is sometimes the quality of the presence of what the eyes convey. It maybe, you know, the soul behind it, maybe the tears are easier to see. More eyes than anything else really so. I was just perseverating on that. What was your question again?</p> <p>30. <b>Researcher:</b> I am just wonder if there are any particular emotions or sensations that you tend to get when you're using the couch?</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> I don't see a pattern. I don't see a pattern. No I don't. I mean I think that -- no I don't think so. Maybe but nothing I'm aware of.</p> <p>31. <b>Researcher:</b> Time. Does the quality of time seem to change at all. Does it get shorter or longer?</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> The quality of time does change but not along that variable.</p> <p>32. <b>Researcher:</b> Okay, it's just a different sense.</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> I mean time will, well I</p>	<p>not used. [27]</p> <p>The participant intimates that the phenomenon of interpersonal demand ambiguously shades over into both couch and face-to-face work. [28]</p> <p>Using the couch can deprive the participant of the quality of presence which the eyes convey. [29]</p> <p>[30] discarded</p> <p>During a session the quality of time can change but this does not appear related to the use of the couch. [31, 32]</p>
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have subjective experiences of time and also quite a good sense after many years of the time of a session. Sometimes not. Nearly always. But it doesn't seem linked to where somebody's positioned themselves in the room.

33. Much more to the atmosphere and the issues that we're engaging with.

34. **Researcher:** And your associations and thoughts that you have, do you find that they are different that they're more available, less available?

**Participant 1:** Well I think what's more available is space for introspection.

35. What's less available is registering the visual communication and that more often in this kind of analytically inclined work, you know, the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on, they tend to be more available.

36. Well it's not so clear because the people I'm seeing three and four times a week, all but one, do use the couch so I don't know and also those are people that I'm more immersed in their process because I'm seeing them more often.

**Researcher:** It could be the frequency.

**Participant 1:** So I haven't got that clarity of control group so I don't know.

37. I think I'm more open to associations and discovery but it's also the people and it hadn't occurred to me to say what it would be like if whatever. Well one of these people I worked with on the phone. He had a serious operation and wasn't able to come. It was a long distance and we had our sessions on the phone for I think it was perhaps getting on for a month and in some way, it was

Any effects on time are more related to the atmosphere and issues which the analytic couple are relating to. [33]

Using the couch the participant experiences more space for introspection. [34]

Using the couch the participant experiences his own associations and dream-stuff as more available. [35]

However, the participant is not sure of the exact contribution of the couch as he is drawing on experience with analysands who he sees more often and whose process he is more immersed in. [36]

Using the couch the participant is more open to associations and discovery but at the same time the specific people with whom he experiences this may make a contribution independently of the couch. [37]

<p>quite interesting, that was a bit like working on the couch. The work wasn't the same but it had a resemblance. It had a resemblance.</p>	
<p>38. <b>Researcher:</b> It's a bit tricky here because the group that uses the couch are also a very particular group because they're coming frequently and you're sort of very deep into what's going on.</p>	<p>[38] discarded</p>
<p>39. <b>Participant 1:</b> More into their process. I think that actually the parameter again it isn't always but speaks more something about frequency which is also complicated in another way but I suppose if ones looking at variables one is frequency and the other is couch. And one would need a sort of Venn diagram of --.</p>	<p>Both the couch and frequency contribute to the quality of the analysis. [39]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Unfortunately I've got some other people who use the couch less frequently. Can you think of any people who come once a week and use the couch.</p>	
<p><b>Participant 1:</b> Yeah, I've had many over the years. One at the moment comes to mind immediately. What's the question?</p>	
<p>40. <b>Researcher:</b> Well, I'm thinking again of the quality of your associations.</p>	<p>The usefulness of the couch fluctuates, sometimes being facilitative of analysis and other time not. [40]</p>
<p><b>Participant 1:</b> Well sometimes with this particular person [who comes once a week], but it's very specific, I feel it would be a good idea if this person is drifting off and I'm drifting off you know and actually would be good if they just stand-up. And with the same person at other times I'm thinking 'now I wouldn't be able to explore this if she were sitting up.'</p>	
<p>41. Because she's somebody who as it were quite inhibited and I would perhaps also feel inhibited and there's a certain kind of freedom, not quite</p>	<p>The use of the couch facilitates a context of freedom in which there can be a spirit of greater freedom of enquiry. [41]</p>



analogous to somebody reporting a dream but it's sort of not quite permission but a different frame work of freedom. I think I tend to feel that when I sometimes encourage or invite people who are coming once a week and say 'perhaps you'd like to try the couch and see' or sometimes half way through sessions so that people don't feel trapped you know. And that I think it's usually in the spirit of greater freedom of inquiry. For instance I've been working with somebody who [information removed] [are] almost too conscious [information removed]. It's like he knows that. But he's stuck. And so I kind of at some point when he seemed less anxious about you know and he felt I'd heard his story I said 'lets try the couch' and he did and half way, and this was quite recent, towards the end of the session and then he came back the next week which was last week, and said 'I was quite uncomfortable in the last part of the session so perhaps I need to try it again'. Now I haven't got an elaboration about that but in some ways that he could feel uncomfortable was not necessarily bad news, not that I wanted him to be uncomfortable but you know, this is somebody who is almost suicidal and in his life very withdrawn and that some energy was surfacing and that he felt inclined to that. So that was quite, so

42. I think you know, the general sense I have is 'hey this is quite a useful dimension of analytic practice but not as a thing in itself.' It's always for me in the context. If I was working four or five times a week all the time I have a sense it would probably become the norm with exceptions.

43. And it would just gravitate to that and how much that's history, identification, culture, what people expect I don't

The couch is a useful dimension of analytic practice but contextually, not a thing in itself. [42]

The use of the couch is a useful and workable process. [43]

know. But it's a workable process. It's workable and I wouldn't see any good reason for the people on the couch now to say 'now look, we could try sitting up' it would be an intrusion on the work that we're engaged in. And also the people who are doing it seem to find that quite a natural sort thing.

44. I think one of the things is it sort of encourages a different kind of intimacy which I think is, I don't kind of get too mystical about it and I don't like making things sound gobbledy gookish like if you haven't had analysis you don't know what it's about, but I think there is something quite particular, hard to get bearings on, that that way of discourse supports or encourages or promotes in it's creative dimension.

45. I think there is another kind you know, hello client patient analysand onto the couch, which is quite different which encourages a kind of patriarchal or passive dependent and so on. And I think that's probably why I've shifted from sitting behind a person. Because I think it seems to me that's too strong a statement of control.

46. It's very interesting because sitting at an angle, and it may be my own experience or something, I am not aware of people taking that opportunity of looking at me but I've come to feel that people are entitled to have that possibility and I don't want them having to get up to say something.

47. **Researcher:** So do you think that that alteration of the traditional angling of the chair and couch and so on, is it going too far to say that you've detected a possibility for a sort of dominance dynamic that that helps alleviate?

**Participant 1:** Well I think the kind of

In its creative dimension the use of the couch supports, encourages and promotes a type of intimacy which is hard to describe. [44]

The couch may also encourage another type of intimacy which is controlling and in which the analysand may be patriarchally dominated or rendered passive dependent. [45]

It is in order to obviate such a relationship of dominance of the analysand that the participant has altered the angle of his chair from the traditional configuration. However, he notes that although this empowers the analysand to look at him he is not aware of them taking the opportunity. [46]

With qualifications the participant agreed that he had detected a possibility for the couch to generate a power dynamic. [47]

sitting behind and out of sight has come to connote for me, but I'm not convinced that it's absolutely true, something of that culture in England where those issues about feminism and power and so on are much, and I'm not sure if it's some kind of unconscious appeasement or actually it makes it different. But you're right to identify that dimension.

48. I think I'm kind of assuming that sitting right behind and out of sight invites too much of a passive dominance, I'm assuming it encourages too stylised a transference and I think that Freud's exclusive emphasis on the Oedipal bypasses the spiritual and the sibling dimensions which seem to me to also need to have possibilities. Something like that.

**Researcher:** Okay. Now you've gone through a part which is actually an important aspect for me in terms of trying to critically assess the use of the couch so I'm thinking about the gender things which almost engendered nature of psychoanalysis, at least which is claimed or stated to be. What people believe is it's engendered nature, it tends to have that basic gender dominance. You're saying that yes, that might be the case, and you're trying to make a way around it but you're not sure it's intrinsic to it. What do you think?

**Participant 1:** You see I think what I'm trying within all sorts of limitations is to open the space. Now for instance in my kind of initial training, opening the space meant having no objects in the room. And I came to view that as much provocative as opening.

**Researcher:** Closing it as well as opening.

**Participant 1:** It's obvious that you can have the opposite view that you're so present in your objects that the other person

The couch encourages a state of passive domination of the analysand, encourages a stylized transference and oedipal dynamics and bypasses other dimensions such as the spiritual and sibling dynamics. [48]

hasn't got any space. So that's kind of links to -- say your question again?

**Researcher:** It's nice what you've said, that's good but I was looking more at specifically you know, let me word it properly that's why you're not getting the question. Some of the feminist critics of psychoanalysis --.

49. **Participant 1:** I've got it. I think the trouble with that kind of [feminist] dimension it becomes either or.

50. It seems to be another paradigm in the couch and sitting is parent-child.

So it's like if that's your paradigm then -- so I think there's something about if you're sensitive to something it determines the field as if that was the issue.

But it also seems to me an imposition [the dominance dimension] because as parent-child it can be attention relaxed and responsibility and permission and it's a whole range of parameters don't to me, and it's not that I'm insensitive to these power issues but I think that they can also be imposed in a way that narrows the data into one dimensions and I think there are a variety of parameters at work.

51. And also for a specific person I think that's much more person specific in my experience and the other is about alliance or co operation and the parameters of that which I think the sociocultural ethos has a bearing but it isn't the totality.

**Researcher:** But it's not the whole thing.

**Participant 1:** Yes, So I don't know. I don't know.

52. **Researcher:** Now I have to look at this

The participant was not prepared to frame the dominance dynamic in feminist terms because in his experience it too rigidly understood the power dynamic in feminist terms. [49]

The couch may also produce the power dynamic of the parent-child. [50]

The power effects which emerge when the couch is used are person rather than couch specific. [51]

In response to a direct question the

a little bit because quite a bit of what I was going to ask you you've already given to me. When you were speaking earlier on about your own almost allowing your associations to arise and so on -- would you describe that as a sort of state of reverie or not?

**Participant 1:** I suppose yes,

53. I mean when I was talking about trying to get some bearing on what processes are facilitated in me it's a problem in a way because reverie for me denotes maternal reverie like a child and I'm not a mother and I'm not with a child so if that's the analogy I have to say I don't have any experience of it because I don't know it. So my association with the word doesn't take me close to it because where I live that word was around the sense of maternal reverie and I can imagine the process but it's a bit too specific for me to engage with.

**Researcher:** Let me put it another way. This is tricky because obviously one's unconscious of the unconscious but I'm thinking of your total response. In a quiet way your total response, both your conscious and your unconscious response.

**Participant 1:** I think there is something and it's also about language and words and meaning. There is something. [information removed.] There is something about, I think

54. we need a thesaurus around the word reverie but it's in the right territory. I mean it's in a meaningful territory. Certainly.

**Researcher:** And then a more particular question. When the analysand can't see you they can't rely on the visual cues they get from you so the vocal rhythms. I'm wondering if vocal rhythms and other rhythms of movement that you're aware of

participant initially agreed that the couch facilitated a state of reverie. [52]

He clarified that by reverie he did not mean a state of maternal reverie. [53]

In response to the researcher's redefinition of reverie as a notion entailing both a conscious and unconscious response to the analysand the participant agreed that the word 'reverie' alluded to his experience. [54]

whether those become more important.

**Participant 1:** It's very interesting in the spirit of research and listening to what you said. Two responses the first was when you said the client or analysand can't see you and I thought: actually that's really interesting. It doesn't go too abstruse but actually maybe they do see me. Something about is the seen or you know. In some ways I think I'm more 'seen' when it isn't visual but

55. coming more to the focus bit of your question I think it does enhance a sense about tone. Tone of voice. It does and I noticed once a person would be absolutely in tune to my breathing. 'Ah I think you're getting a bit sleepy there' which is usually a bit true and enough to wake me up. And also I'm more aware of tone.

56. I think the sensory apparatus becomes more the ear because the visual is –

57. but it's very interesting that because in a way coming back to your sense of reverie, I was probably reaching for a space which is not about visual auditory sensations but something else. But probably when the visual stimuli are removed the auditory take on more of the conveyance system.

**[Digression]**

**Participant 1:** I think what my kind of slight struggle, resistance to the focus of our discourse is it puts an emphasis on a particular frame which is okay as long as it doesn't get too privileged. Because what I feel is it isn't about the structure of these things are a bit primitive, a bit useful, a bit clumsy but they don't seem to me inherently what it's about.

**Researcher:** The very fact that I'm focusing on this very particular thing and it

The couch enhances both the participant's and his analysand's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the other. [55]

The use of the couch foregrounds hearing over vision. [56]

The production of reverie is implicated in the foregrounding of hearing. [57]

gets an importance which for you experientially is not in proportion to.

**Participant 1:** It gets privileged in a way that can become a power thing. Well it can be until you get interested in what's going on. And then it maybe quite other. So yes, but I think it's something to do with my kind of identification with psychoanalytic or analytic curiosity. And research methodology that requires focusing on a variable in a kind of rigorous way and my kind of curiosity is an endeavor not to. To kind of always hopefully be a bit surprised and unclear. So there's a bit of tension and discourse.

**Researcher:** Yes, there would be. This is like really focused and it might not work especially in the light of what you just said

58. but just coming back to if vocal body rhythm becomes more noticeable becomes more fore grounded.

**Participant 1:** Vocal especially.

59. **Researcher:** Do you think that there might be times when you're communicating even contrary messages by your vocal rhythm compared to what you might be saying interpretively?

**Participant 1:** Well, the instance where I think where that was strongest recently was not where this person was on the couch. So that's a bit of a dilemma. This particular instance was, this is kind of anecdotal, but it perhaps, I thought: my gosh I'm seeing too many people here I really, you know. In my counter transference of that week I was really tending to treat people as if they should be well. You know they're coming too much or something. That was retrospective of course. And then one person came back the following week, who's not on the couch, and said: I don't think you know, more or less that was your

The participant agreed that when the couch is used the vocal body rhythm becomes fore grounded. [58]

Drawing on an example the participant agreed that there are times when his vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication might be at variance. [59]

convincing you. And I said: Yeah, I think it was. So that was a case where, and I haven't given it to you verbatim but I think I was offering something interpretively but actually it was that I felt too much work, go away. The client picked it up. So I think that's always a risk. Whether it's a visual message, or a verbal message or a physical message or the way. Beyond the door of my consulting room there's another door. People come in and there's an intermediate door and I have an entry phone system so I go, the entry phone is in the passage, so I open the entry phone, then I open the intermediate door and I go back and stand by my door. And one time I didn't do that I did it slightly differently and this person immediately put a whole constellation of meaning on that. That I was angry with her and so forth. So it's complicated because it's what am I conveying as a biggest message and it's not so sometimes very clear. And what is it that this person is attributing to me and I don't think --.

**Researcher:** So that's a mix really.

**Participant 1:** Well it's always a potential mix and the task is to try and differentiate in a good enough way.

60. But as the discourse is spoken obviously if there is a double message it often will be in the spoken. I don't know that's particularly couch related.

61. **Researcher:** So it could be in any sphere.

**Participant 1:** I think so and it could be in any instant. For instance what if somebody else rings the bell and how does one ring the bell and how does one deal with that and what's the message to the person who's present. People write papers about these things it's quite interesting the way they get interpreted. I don't think it's exclusive.

The participant did not believe that a double message was exclusive to the couch. [60, 61]



**Researcher:** It's a general -- ?

**Participant 1:** About discourse and meaning and practice.

**Researcher:** Do you think that there are some analysts who you can really see in some way, should not be using the couch.

**Participant 1:** I think the difficulty for me as I listen to your question is the way it's formulated. Because there is does get into what you were saying earlier about 'feminists and power' and I may at the moment feel, and I have, I wish this person would sit up and talk to me, I'm finding it difficult to stay with this, but should not imply as a level of coherent conviction that makes this a critical issue in illness and in health and I have no evidence so far over 30 years of practice that this is a prominent issue. It's not been in my experience. I've had other concerns but this has not intruded itself.

**Researcher:** Let me just explain because my sense of how this sort of research is done is co authored research. In other words its fine for me to tell you where I'm coming from with the things. There's no virtue in my being mysterious. Some of the people I've been reading have got very clear cut ideas that 'this sort of client will not be suitable for the couch.' Others, funny enough Jungians mostly, are saying: 'no it's much more of a work it out in the analytic process.'

**Participant 1:** Well, I think if you think of Jungians relationship to Melanie Klein and psychoanalysis and so on, I'm trying to from the stereotypical when I was a Kleinian point of view, the Jungians were promiscuous people who could take these things and claim they were engaging with them. But they weren't fully circumcised members of the clan. So I remember that position. Now I'm thinking something about Jung and Freud co-authors went on

some kind of holiday and shared their dreams and Freud said he wasn't prepared to go any further and so it touches on the whole area of collaboration. Now for me, my work now, in my mind is potential collaboration. I am respectful but for some of my clients it certainly isn't. I have one person who's coming very frequently and we started to talk about all the 'me's' she has in her mind and I need to respect that. That they're all real for her. But my own position is much more what you're saying the Jungian which is sort of work it out in a mix. Well, sometimes it isn't workable but I don't find value in that kind of prescriptiveness. [information removed].

62. [Assessment is] not really meaningful, it's more to do with the counter-transference and the anxieties of practitioners and the ethos of culture and reducing risks than inherently about truth and discovery. In our earlier conversation in the car, there's something about can the practice develop the theory. It's that kind of thing that seems to me that's very important to keep that alive. Very very important. So when you said some people shouldn't use the couch, it seems to me such a parochial and political statement that it's awful. And it says more about the making of the statement than about anything inherently interesting about little truths. That's what I now feel.

**Researcher:** Okay.

**Participant 1:** And it also links couches, the institutionalization of practice and institutions and training and I think there's something about the Jungian, there are several Jungian institutes in London. They've all had to be accepted and so on. It's like group analysis. It hasn't got a coherent theory. Which means some people can't stand it but it does have creative possibilities. The ossification of theory like

The participant sees contraindications to the couch as specific to the analysand and contextual and not correlative with . . . psychodynamics in a manualized way. [62]

you know, the ultimate scientific method which seems to me a tyranny. So that's where I'm speaking from now.

**Researcher:** So you're not going to get in to being one of the tyrants or the tyrannies?

**Participant 1:** Well I'm sure I do but I don't have to admire it. Or aspire to it.

**Researcher:** It sounds like quotable quote.

63. Do you think that when the couch is working at it's best that it helps an analysand's psychological life to emerge or do you think it's just different?

**Participant 1:** Well, I haven't got a lot of other reference frames but I think it's one of the things that helps. One of the parameters, and in terms of conventions in psychotherapeutic structure. But it's also dependent on both participants. In other words I think it's a tool. My sense of listening to you is it's given a bit too much power in the 'it helps'. It facilitates. Yes I think it does.

**Researcher:** Facilitates is a better word, yes? When you look at the dark side of that, have you had people say that actually being on the couch starts to make things more frightening because there's too much coming.

64. **Participant 1:** Well I would say that the dark side often is very important to be present [information removed], [analysis] lends itself to caricature [information removed] in which it was assumed because someone's sitting on a chair and someone's lying on a couch and there are associations and communications, that something organic is happening. That's my difficulty with looking at the physical structure. I don't think, and I'm very concerned not to foster a point of view

The participant feels that the couch is one but only one of the devices which facilitates the emergence of the analysand's psychological life. [63]

The participant stressed that he did not believe that the production of an analytic discourse was primarily dependent on physical structure such as the provision and geography of the couch. [64]

in your research that suggests that this task is primarily dependent on physical structure. Because I feel strongly it isn't. Further more I think it's dangerous to encourage that. Positively misleading.

**Researcher:** I'll see if I can remember to come back to that because you've touched on something that's very interesting to me. In the same light as that last question,

65. do you recall anyone saying that they were frightened that they would lose control in some way?

**Participant 1:** Well I've got one person [information removed] who's issue is enormously about fear of loss of control, aspires to and doesn't dare use the couch. So there's a strong very current instance of what it represents. And I think of someone else who sat for a time and wanted to use the couch and interestingly she said: 'I feel as if I need you to carry my over'. It was almost like a marriage crossing the threshold. She was slightly embarrassed. So I think there it was almost an excitement. Kind of erotic and conjugal and aspiration so I think when you say the dark side I'm sure we're in a realm of opposites and in a sense if the work is about helping people to be free within their living then that fearfulness and the loss of control, is there, and I think it is but it's fear and encouraging and supporting and enabling that I think could be done in other ways but yes, I'm sure that's so that there is quite often an anxiety. At least anxiety is part of it and also hope and desire to let go of control.

**Researcher:** It's not just fearing that it's all going to go down but it's quite nice to have that taken care of or just let it go.

**Participant 1:** I think that taken care of is an interesting one too. It's funny I don't think about that although I do in other

In response to a direct question the participant stated that whilst the couch could produce anxiety in the analysand it was also generative of hope, the desire to let go of control, encouraging, supporting and enabling of the analysand. [65]

contexts. It's almost as if I have a kind of work ethic about the practice. Yes, I have to think about that. Interesting.

66. **Researcher:** Okay. When people move to the couch or when they move back. We'll do them one by one but when they move to the couch is there anything about that as a process that sort of stands out for you. Is it a process or I've got for me that it's not just a given. It might happen.

**Participant 1:** I think it's almost, I'm looking at your certificates here, it's almost in some way, in some ways it's got elements of a rite of passage or a ritual crossing.

67. There are elements of that. Sometimes working with trainees, they almost measure themselves by you know 'have you got him/her on the couch yet?' I think it's a bit like do you do sex or do you make love?

68. I think one dimension is something of that kind but in a sense it's moving to a context where more exploration can happen but I think the sensitivity about what that might mean or be for a person is very important and as it's not a natural form of discourse and evokes on the one hand anxieties and on the other hand, and also have quite a lot of evidence of this, erotic fears and excitement that all of that I feel isn't to be taken for granted. And you could say 'well just get on with it' but I think to just get on with it itself is a missed opportunity. To an extent.

**Researcher:** So you find yourself working with that process in any way?

**Participant 1:** Not as a primary concern but as part of the whole dimension. If you think of anthropologist going to work in other peoples settings. And I'm a bit

In some respects moving to and from the couch has elements of a rite of passage or ritual of crossing. [66]

Using the couch may act for trainees as a symbol of the process being psychoanalysis. [67]

Using the couch is about moving to a context in which exploration can occur. However, as it is not a natural form of discourse and can evoke anxiety, erotic fears and excitement the facilitation of exploration cannot be taken for granted. [68]

mindful people are coming into my strange setting and I don't feel that I should take for granted what that means. I think I'm more or less open to finding out and there are a lot of varieties for instance one person I worked with sitting this distance apart said 'I need to move my chair nearer to you'. And we did that some time ago. And I thought: Oh crumbs I haven't been trained in this what does it mean? And now more recently someone else I'm working with who is also comes once a week, is having art therapy, has gone to various intensive workshops and I feel it's all part of a process you know I don't feel ownership and he said 'Participant 1 could you please move closer to me' and I was thinking: Well I can interpret this and so on and so forth but actually in this context this is what I do. So I feel there are a lot of parameters like do you have moving chairs? Yes sometimes.

**69. Researcher:** And have you had the experience where someone has been on the couch for some time and then decides to go back to face to face? Did anything stand out for you?

**Participant 1:** Not really. I think we were both struggling to find some context that was more facilitating and this person then moved in due course back to the couch. I think this was somebody I felt was very stuck and this was just a collusion of the stuckness and I needed to encourage something more. So I think it was just a struggle. Not usual. Not usual in my experience. But sometimes somebody will say and this is the kind of interesting to me 'I think I'll lie on the couch today' or 'I think I'll sit up today' and I feel, and this is a particular person, I feel okay well these resources are here and he's also using his own kind of sensitivity not necessarily about avoidance so that's the kind of open and I see that as useful.

**Researcher:** I want to try and get this into

In the participant's experience nothing really stands out when an analysand moves from the couch to face-to-face. [69]

things that are very much more speculative and there are two things I want to ask about. The first is: The overall experience of using the couch, and it seems to me that what you're saying is that it's not not the couch or the couch but it's more that this is something that is a part of a certain kind of relationship that I have with this person. So there are two things that I want to ask the first one being, are you saying or

70. do you think that there's a kind of analytic way of being that the couch then becomes facilitative of.

**Participant 1:** I think it's an analytic attitude.

As an analogy I went to an exhibition in Bristol of to get a sense of what it's like to be blind and he asked us to put these things on and there was a rail of objects and you could apprehend them by touch and

71. I think there is a facilitating environment for analytic inquiry. It's primarily about a state of mind but and having, I'm not sure about the fixed time that's more pragmatic, but having privacy and continuity, encourage that. But I do, I think it isn't about the physical structure. I think it's much more about the state of mind and trying to reduce the clutter in the physical structure and it's not so much, it's a mixture of what useful and what gets in the way.

**[Interview ends in a digression away from the topic.]**

In response to direct question the participant agreed that the couch is facilitative of an analytic attitude. [70]

Using the couch reduces the clutter in the physical structure and this produces an environment that produces a state of mind that is facilitative of analytic enquiry. This state of mind is encouraged by the privacy of the couch and continuity of the analytic process. [71]

### Interview with second participant

**Researcher:** I'm just going to start off with a general orienting question and I basically just want you to cast your mind back to the first time when you as a practitioner first had an analysis and use the couch? Maybe you can describe that to me in as much detail as possible.

**Participant 2:** What happened to me was, just to put it into context, I came back from the U.K with the intention of doing neuropsychiatry so I was established near Kingsbury Hospital and I started seeing people mostly that were going to be neuropsychiatry patients and general psychiatry and then discovered it was quite helpful to talk to those people with head injuries and other things and so I started doing more therapy and then became involved with psychoanalytic group and that had quite a strong emphasis on obviously on analytic study and so I practiced there for a year and at that time it was only face to face but then I had a growing sense that the couch would be quite a useful thing to use and so when I moved to the [new rooms] I bought a couch at that time, like a chaise at that time, so then effectively with that move it was a good excuse to suddenly introduce a couch into that setting. Quite a few people, in fact I think probably the bulk of my practice that I was seeing face to face, those that stayed with me, ended up going onto the couch. I just want to think back to someone I was seeing at that time, for example I was seeing a . . . ballet student that I was seeing face to face and she went, I think within a session or two, went to the couch basically and I remember being astounded at how different it was and how much it just cleared my mind and how I was able to think in a way that I wasn't able to think before. I remember talking to, I was also potentially quite criticised for using the couch, within the psychoanalytic group, that there was sense that I wasn't senior enough to do it, that I wasn't seeing people often enough to do it and kind of who was I to be using it. But I spoke quite strongly in favour of it and there was, Joan R, [she was facilitating a study group that I was involved in] and she was quite encouraging about that. And particularly about the experience that for the first time I could actually relax and think and allow myself to work out what processes were actually going on for the first time. I found it an enormous relief. I also found that it really took away the social interaction, which for me was actually helpful, and I had a sense somehow of now I was beginning to do analysis and I think that sort of stayed with me. I do even now, my practice is, maybe I should work out how many, it's probably about 40% of people I do see on the couch and I have quite a different experience with those people. It feels like I'm doing a kind of a different type of therapy. Not necessarily even analysis but it feels like it has a different quality to it. And the other stuff I find quite easily can be too chatty and too social and I can be swayed I suppose in some ways by not maintaining the silences in the face to face therapy. In fact I'd say it's very much easier keeping to that rule

**Researcher:** So it was a kind of mixture experimentation and . . . Had you at this stage had an experience of the couch or not?

**Participant 2:** No



**Researcher:** Okay. It's not uncommon.

**Participant 2:** And then I think partly because of that when I look for a therapist [who became his training analyst] I looked for somebody who used the couch. It's probably the most important criterion.

**Researcher:** That's quite nice because just where you started from has immediately led to what I want to focus on but I want to just put that focus again. Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands used the couch.

**Participant 2:** I think the overall sense of it is that there is a very strict, probably the most significant thing is that there is a sense that the patient is going to do most of the work and the responsibility is going to be on the patient to get what they're going to get out of it. And there's, from the sort of opening where I see people at the door, there is a much stricter sense of formality I think from people I see on the couch. They don't kind of dither around at the door. They might briefly say: 'Hi, how are you?' And I'll say: 'Fine'. And they'll go to the couch and then they'll begin speaking. And that I suppose is contrasted with people that I see face to face where they might kind of chat a little bit more on the way to the chair and I might find myself saying something like: 'How have you been?' or 'What's the week been like?' or whatever and also, and in a similar way kind of facilitating the conversation almost in an interpersonal way like in a social context way. And pauses then are much harder to maintain. For example if somebody has difficulty starting I will in some ways get them started and if it's clear that they have nothing to say or it's kind of running dry then I'll often pick up on something rather like in a social setting. There is one person who comes to mind who has great difficulty in starting each session, but I have a kind of a faith that she will be able to start once she's over her discomfort on the couch. Whereas I think somebody like that it would feel agonising to wait for them to begin to talk about what they have to talk about. So it becomes much easier for me to maintain a frame on the couch, in a kind of psychoanalytic way than it would face to face.

**Researcher:** That experience of not being coerced and being able to stay in your analytic position is really important. In the first part you described the analysis as being different. I'm going to use a particular word here and it's fine if you disagree with it. Do you think the analysis might be more vital or how would you describe it. How would you describe the ambiance of the analysis when the couch is used?

**Participant 2:** I wouldn't say vital I suppose because, you know this woman I've just described has a difficulty starting, there's a deadness about that particular analysis so she comes to mind I suppose because I see her twice a week she's more, or else I see her three times in cycle of two weeks she's more sort of at the forefront of my mind. I should say most people I see once a week on the couch and in fact someone I only see once every second week who for a while I was seeing once a week and have dropped it back. There's a kind of, there's a much greater seriousness about the task of beginning to look at unconscious things on the couch whereas the face to face, and I should probably also

qualify, a lot of people I see face to face I might be seeing because they are in a particular crisis or they are depressed and they might be on medication. And in fact there's a selective bias I suppose in that those, some of those people will graduate to the couch and they will graduate usually when their immediate crisis is over and when I feel they have the potential to take it further and they have the interest in taking it further. So it's almost by definition then the people I see on the couch are somehow a bit more serious about the task of psychoanalysis and in general although not always tend to be often higher functioning rather than lower functioning. Because one of the things and maybe I should talk about now are people who can't tolerate the couch and then move back which has happened in particular with borderline patients who find it intolerable. And I've noticed from quite early on, I think people who have been sexually abused find it very very difficult and in fact intolerable and they don't like the idea of speaking into the void and they don't like not being able seeing me and knowing what I'm up to. I think that's quite a bit and obviously there's huge sexual symbolism of actually lying prone and being in a way exposing yourself to somebody who can't see you. I keep coming back to this lady [identifying material removed] who has difficulty starting, should I just name her because it makes things easier, her name's Ann, she was sexually abused by her father for years and in particular had the repeated experience of her father standing over her bed at night and her lying dead still pretending that she's asleep. And for example she will make sure I can't see her by turning towards the wall and I think by closing her eyes although I don't know. And in some ways it is quite a disadvantage because sometimes I'm not sure exactly where she is emotionally. For example she might be crying about something and I don't fully realize she's crying, she'll never reach for a tissue or anything else. So there's a sort of concealment she has in the couch. But the two people that spring to mind are my two most difficult people who started off face to face and migrated to the couch as a kind of an experiment but found it intolerable and moved back. And I think in retrospect with people like that I wouldn't expect them to be on the couch having had that experience they found it very, the one lady [Dorothy] described it as being, as though she was kind of dissected, she felt like she was being prodded and probed on the couch, she's also a background of sexual abuse. [Identifying material removed.] She felt like it was like a medical examination. That was her association with the couch. Just as I say that she also had an abortion that was very traumatic for her, it was very medicalised. [Identifying material removed – in summary she had very traumatic experiences of the medical profession] and so I think that put me into the very powerful role of being this distant doctor. And then the other lady is the butterfly lady who migrated in fact off the couch again. The reasons there are complicated.

**Researcher:** There's very profound pathology there!

**Participant 2:** Ja

**Researcher:** In a sense you've answered this but I just want to ask it. It seems to be more private for you. There's a kind of way in which there's a certain privacy.

**Participant 2:** Ja, you mean for me as well as the patient? Ja, no I think there is. I think, it sounds potentially strange but it's a great relief to kind of not have the dead pan face

and to be careful not to respond to things. Whereas I find when I'm actually thinking I like to kind of not quite literally scratch my head but ja, do the various things and think about things. And I find I can't do that face to face. And the other experience that makes it quite different is that I take notes behind the couch which I kind of learnt from [my own training analyst]. At time obviously in case reports and stuff I would often then take pretty close to verbatim notes that I could reconstruct which was helpful very much in the learning phases of being able to dissect what actually went on. And more and more I have found that I've moved onto much shorter notes which funny enough I don't refer back to in subsequent sessions. It helps me to organize my thoughts within that session and it also helps me to track themes which is quite useful and it helps me to discharge my own thoughts that I don't have to put them out there if it doesn't feel like the right time to do it but they're somehow not lost in the void. So I find that quite helpful.

**Researcher:** That's very interesting. To jump a little what does your body feel like when you use the couch? Do you think there's any change in your bodily presence.

**Participant 2:** Ja, I've got, I suppose at a superficial level I've got a chair behind the couch which I find actually more comfortable than another chair, because the other chair in some way reflects the therapy. The patient and I have identical rather comfortable leather chairs. But behind the couch I've got a kind of more of an office chair with a high back and so on which allows me to move backwards and forwards and either lock it in a comfortable position or move it around so I can move with much greater ease without me feeling like I'm going to distract the patient at a particular time. And I've had feel back on something, I sit mostly very still and Dorothy said to me that on occasions, like when I had a back problem briefly it was about me, this sort of stillness. But at the same time I've also been in the situation with her when I've moved which she's taken to be very distracting, that I've sort of a defensive posture that I've shifted or something, which didn't really feel like that it just felt like I was uncomfortable and needed to move. So I have a much greater degree of comfort in my body and much less stiffness. I think in a way I'm probably overly stiff in face to face and I think it's because of a few experiences with more fragile patients. And only now in my practice do I gradually realize that most people are quite healthy and are not so put off by it and I can be relatively flexible with those people and in a way a few people have spoilt it for the others if that makes sense. A lot of the stiffness and formality is in dealing with the more disturbed.

**Researcher:** It a bit protective?

**Participant 2:** It's protective of me and protective of patients often but maybe overly protective of patients, a feeling that I literally can't distract them I just about can't blink at that time. It's an enormous relief for me not to feel like I'm on display which is Freud's original idea. That I can yawn if I have to yawn or I can turn a page you know, without distracting the flow of the patient's thoughts.

**Researcher:** Apart from the writing, have you got any particular things you might do. I at one time described this as a rhythmical sort of thing but practices or habits can be rhythmical and what I have in mind there is Anna Freud used to knit while she was

seeing cases and that would be a real rhythmical practice. It's not necessarily that but that could be the kind of thing. Is there anything, do you look at things or . . . ?

**Participant 2:** Yea I do, I've got a nice view of the mountain so I spend a lot of time, looking at the mountain it's a big part of it and also I can see my child's school, play school, from where I am and I always forget to look but theoretically I could look out and notice the child-minder collect the child and leave the school and I've seen it on a few occasions and quite often I, without formalizing it, think at half past twelve I should look out, should see what's going on, but I don't because I often get lost in what's happening. I find it actually helps this otherwise sense of claustrophobia, kind of sitting in a closed room, to look out and see the clouds pouring over the mountain or the waterfalls or cars going up and ja, it's.....I find it quite soothing. I've also got a picture on the wall next to the couch that I look at quite a lot which is of the wall of the Sistine Chapel and it's a lovely sort of big poster and I study the figures quite carefully and find myself looking at that quite a lot and then I can also look around the room at another painting I've got that I also, because it's sort of modern art, I don't quite get tired of it so I look at that quite often. The other thing is that I haven't done, sort of formally noted it but my positions can be quite different because this chair is on wheels as well so I would sit in a particular position but I might realize when I look out the window and see what part of the mountain I can see or not see that I'm in quite a different position for each patient. Whereas face to face it's very, it's kind of formalized. The chairs sit in a certain place in relation to a Persian carpet so it's pretty much the same. And then the other thing that strikes me is because this is a chaise and because it's movable, in some ways patients sometimes, also depending on how the couch is displaced, might be much more horizontal than other times. And I have a sort of a fantasy that the more horizontal they are the deeper the level of the analysis if you like, in some ways. Again it's not a tested idea but I have that sense about it and sometimes I find myself wishing that the couch was in a slightly different position that somebody might feel a bit uncomfortable because it's somehow too low. I think, but haven't done anything about it, about how I should stabilise the couch in a particular position.

**Researcher:** Being removed from each other we might expect the need for vocal connection to increase. That being so do you think the use of the couch has any effect on the sensitivity to and importance of vocal rhythms for both of you?

**Participant 2:** I think why I'm battling to think of the answer is that it's easier for me to think of my own rhythm is on occasions, I might say very little I might say, today for example admittedly a patient arrived 20 minutes late, she was on the couch and I might have said only two kind of interpretations or interjections really and the patient has their own rhythm and the patient speaks in such a way that they pretty much occupy their time on the couch, this is Otto. He will keep the conversation and that he'll say: 'You know I feel unhappy and miserable and melancholic and in despair' or whatever. He'll kind of keep the lines open in a way that allows him to talk almost without interruption. There are hardly pauses in it so I mean I think there is sort of some sense of some verbal connection there. But my own experience is that I very rarely will even um or ah unless I feel that the patient is somehow drifting away from me and that the patient feels almost as

if I'm not there in that moment that I find myself uming or if the patient makes reference to something which has gone before like they might say: 'You know the guy Edward that was going to move in with us?' then I might say: 'mmm' in other words you don't have to go on because I've made the connection. Whereas in face to face I would have made that known to the person. So you have to compensate in some ways on some occasions for the lack of connection.

**Researcher:** Do you think they might have more tone or prosodic presence in the sense that they speak in certain way, your speaking about Otto sounds as if he might kind of, have a rhythmical quality.

**Participant 2:** I think they do. Because I think their flow is not interrupted so I think they get into their own pattern and way of talking. So I would say, I definitely interrupt people, not that I literally interrupt them but I interrupt their own natural rhythm when I'm face to face in a way that I don't usually do on the couch. My philosophy on the couch is to only intervene if I can do something which is helpful to the process and in general most of the people on the couch are largely engaged in the process so I find I don't have to do very much. But I think people sitting face to face want some kind of a prompt or at least some sort of a response. I suppose that's also, cause the other thing is how do you sell the idea of the couch to people cause there was a phase that I had that I would have happily had everybody on the couch. I've moved away from that, I've been more selective. But I think the initial kind of euphoria of how nice it is to do therapy on the couch, I went through phase of trying to get everybody on the couch. That was like how I practised. And some of those people have stayed on and others have dropped out and now when I see people I might only introduce the idea of the couch very much later on. As I say when I feel like they've got through the initial, it might be six or eight sessions, and then the crises is over and we need to explore something then it feels like it's easier on the couch. So one of the ways when I say to people, put it this way one of my selection criteria is often when people are very sensitive to social cue's and I think it's slightly unfair because I think most people are very sensitive to social cue's, but some people I'm more aware of the fact that they really are searching my face to see whether I approve or disapprove and whether I'm on the right track and I suppose that's me as well and so for that reason that's part of my choice as a therapist it's not going to lead me down that path. I often say to people that it takes away the social interaction a bit and it takes away their responsibility for the therapist and what the therapist's feelings might be and from the therapist from interfering with their thought and the idea of rhythm comes to mind but I won't use that. It's that sort of sense about it that their story will develop and unfold in the most natural way without worrying about me.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you in particular have any sort of emotions or sensations that stand out for you when you have an analysand using the couch?

**Participant 2:** That's really difficult because it depends really on who I'm seeing at that particular time. I have periods of intense boredom with Ann because she doesn't get going or she's going over the same stuff. For example she's terrified to look around to see what I'm doing and there's enormous fantasy about that again with the father that

stood over her bed. She's paralyzed. After reading in a book somewhere I suggested she just turn around and look at me and kind of try and get rid of the fantasy but she's never done that. She said maybe sometime she'll be able to do it but she's never kind of do it. But I think because of her isolation in every aspect of her life that I feel a similar sort of isolation. I then feel a kind of intense boredom and sort of the idea of knitting would appeal to me. I could happily play, in the silences play a game of chess if I could get by with doing it except that I would feel so guilt ridden or something to distract me from going absolutely out of my mind. And I do experience it in some face to face people as well that what they're saying I suppose the disconnection leads to sort of an intense boredom. But it's a much more, put it this way, on the couch I experience the boredom much more intensely in a bodily sense. And I know on occasions when I'm feeling tired like birth of children and that stuff I've just sat there looking at the carpet and thinking: 'God I'd love to just curl up on the carpet'. That sort of intense boredom whereas with people in face to face I feel a great sense of discomfort. I feel like it's a social. On the couch I feel like if somebody wants to be quiet that's okay, that's alright but if somebody's sitting expecting me to somehow do something as they do face to face then I feel the kind of social awkwardness I feel some how it's not working it's not analysis. So anyway that's a long way of saying it depends largely on who I'm seeing.

**Researcher:** Your sense of time. What's that like? Not necessarily the boring things, it could be the boring things but it could be other things. What's your sense of time like?

**Participant 2:** It's interesting. When I feel that I'm engaged and I'm working hard the times skips on. When I'm not, there was a Bart Simpson cartoon when he was sitting in the classroom and the clock would tick backwards and from where I sit I look across the patient can't, well I suppose they can now I've become less strict about it they can see the time but there are times that I actually you know it will be on half past or whatever and . . . I'll look again and it will somehow still be on half past. It really can happen. I suppose the other advantage for me on the couch is that I can monitor the time much more easily whereas face to face I'm always again I'm scared to distract people by looking at the time because the message is that your bored or something. So ja, and I say what I tend to do is face to face hardly ever look at the clock until I'm aware that we're getting towards the end of the session whereas on the couch in general I often look at the clock. I use it in some ways also to pace me so an example would be Otto who was twenty minutes late. It kind of felt like I had to do some interventions in the remaining time and it also helps me Gavin Ivey once said 'Don't' make interpretations in the last five minutes, allow people enough time to do things'. And I sort of tend to stick by that on the couch in general, not always. So I have a closer check on the time.

**Researcher:** There's a different presence and you're freer to do certain things, like check the clock.

**Participant 2:** But it does feel different, I think again the inter-patient differences and the inter-session differences are more striking than when I'm trying to do face to face therapy.

**Researcher:** What are your own associations and thoughts like? How do you experience them when the analysand uses the couch?

**Participant 2:** Dramatically freer and dramatically, again to me it feels like I'm doing much closer to what my idealized analysis would be like when I'm in general with people on the couch especially if they're working hard and stuff is there and comes out. I feel like I can, it's a great relief not to, it's a great to have the freedom to have to think of whatever I want to think and in a way if I look like I'm wandering off because I have my own reverie, that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face to face. Well I don't experience it as being allowable face to face but maybe that's you know, I'm concerned if I look like I'm drifting off that people will think that I'm not listening and partly they're right but I think that's the only way I can get to some kind of associations. It's hard to all of the time be tracking exactly what somebody's saying. Once you've had a general sense of what they're saying, I think the other thing on the couch is it's almost like things get slowed down. That I have a much greater manoeuvrability of my thoughts. It sounds a bit strange but it's almost like there's such, when I'm behind the couch, there's such a delay in what people are saying even if they're talking constantly because they tend to repeat things and because one thing follows onto the next, it's almost like the telephone line thing where you can sneak email messages and whatever internet bytes in in between, I can do that with my thoughts in a way that I can't do in a face to face way. In a face to face way I think I'm also bombarded by the body language and my own body language and other things that are going on that fill those gaps. But I feel like, what was the fabulous movie – the Matrix, did you see that, you know where the bullet is coming to you and then it slows down and you kind of bend backwards and it's that not in such a dramatic way but there's space to manoeuvre with the space and I'm actually free to think.

**Researcher:** You used the word reverie, which is a very nice word because it touches on something. Do you think, in a sense you have said that you do - but I really want to point it - do you think that the couch has a role to play in the use of reverie?

**Participant 2:** I must say that I'm slightly skeptical of the over use of the word 'reverie'. There's a classic paper where an analyst talks about, he's sitting there and he looks across and he sees an envelope and he sees that it's type written and feels that's really important because it's now a personal letter to him and then he notices the franking on the envelope, just looking on his desk is like machine stamped and he suddenly feels jarred by that and then his thoughts go to his car that's in the garage that he needs to pick up and then bring them all to do with what's going on with the patient. I'm a bit skeptical about that level of reverie. But I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face. I know you were asking a bit about body and didn't, it was more a sense of that I feel the patients depression in my throat when they're depressed in a way I don't quite so easily face to face. And I often feel the intense frustration or I feel like I want to get in and do something. Like somebody who's wife is picking on them then that kind of will rile me on the couch in a way that it's doesn't otherwise. It's almost like there's some kind of a shared possession, it's like it's put into that space and that space is uncontaminated and

really between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one in a way that's it's harder to face to face. It feels, unlike face to face, that there is the patient, yourself and the third sort of space and somewhere there's a merging of these two. One of the images that I quite like, cause I was going to use this for a letterhead, is of two people in those racing canoes where they're facing in the same direction and they're pulling backwards together. That sort of symbolizes what analysis is for me, that's a symbol that I'd go for more than the kind of the face to face. It's the idea that, one of my patients [(identifying *details removed*) compared me to another analyst whom he had seen face to face and described] the face to face was that sort of feminine way of engaging and the masculine way of engaging is to get the child to kind of look out. And that crosses my mind quite often in that I know that the way that men hold children and the way that women hold children are different and I know from my own experience that I've carried a child usually looking out in that way, and I sort of quite like that, I like the image of that I find it quite helpful. And I also like that people come there and they sit and look at the mountain and that the mountain has symbolism for them and that this is also an off the wall comment, I saw somebody who was disturbed, very borderline, also off and then on and then off the couch, I've got this panoramic view that part of [my office block] is constructed in such a way that there's also this like a slab of concrete at the top and she said some comment about : 'sitting here week after week staring at the concrete'. In such a like in like an attacking way, such a derogatory comment whereas most people look past that and see this spectacular mountain. And patients comment to me that they'll drive into Town and become a bit anxious, that there's, in some ways, the mountain becomes linked into the therapeutic process. And it's also interesting that I'm climbing the mountain much more and I want to go up the front of the mountain where I've never really gone before, I've kind of looked and seen whether it's possible. Again I'm straight off the point but ja. Just remind me what because I feel like I'm getting to a point and I've got distracted.

**Researcher:** It's was what your associations are like.

**Participant 2:** Yes, yea okay.

**Researcher:** How do you kind of find, in a way you've touched on this, but how do you find your interpretations forming.

**Participant 2:** I found what used to happen to me, I used to have the luxury of really being able to craft an interpretation. So in a way that I would write, sometimes, although when I look at my notes afterwards if I'm trying to reconstruct what happened, I often don't quite write what it is I wanted to say, but I sometimes find, with some patients anyway that I would kind of meticulous construct, craft like the ideal interpretation but I would miss it completely and it would be missed because of the timing of it that it would somehow come to late and it sound a bit stilted and it would be lost and it was in a way that I had then worked through it but the patient hadn't and they were a bit sort of stunned, there was too much. So I tend more to use interpretations more freely when they come to mind rather than wait and package it in a perfect way.



**Researcher:** That's something you've learnt along the way?

**Participant 2:** Ja. And interpretation is an interesting idea because I find I don't use interpretations as much as I somehow theoretically feel like I should be using interpretations and that I do although my background is not asking questions and whatever that I do find that I ask questions in a way that will begin to lead people towards I suppose discovering their own interpretations, moving towards that's. Sometimes it's just pure clarifications and sometimes because I think it's important that we look at that particular aspect. Sometimes it is because I have something particular in mind I kind of want to.....

**Researcher:** That's a way to get to it.

**Participant 2:** Ja, and I find that more helpful and I've, often the clever interpretations are seen very much like the clever interpretations and they don't work well for me and they don't work for the patient and I think actually in a funny kind of way I err on interpreting too little. I'm scared that....., I remember also an experience on the couch where I was saying something that I thought was very straight forward and very obvious and they were quite astounded by it. And it made me realize that I often have those very obvious thoughts that I don't put into the room. I sort of think they're a given but I think they're useful anchor points often. So how do the interpretations come to me? They come to me in a much easier way, again I think just because I'm free to just sort of think about things and also I've got the advantage then of seeing the patterns in a much clearer way and separating a lot of the words from the themes I suppose.

**Researcher:** So I'm now really kind of putting the idea and words into your mouth but is this possible or does this happen that the interpretive statement might almost crystallize or condense out of the saturated space or something like that?

**Participant 2:** Ja, it's something about sort of being able to see the wood for the trees' that there's lots of data that gets thrown out is kind of digested in a sort of in like a composty way and stuff does trickle out so it's about a kind of a super saturation and then things falling out of that, theme's falling out of that.

**Researcher:** Then, sort of at right angles from the rest of what we've been saying, do you think there's anything about power involved in this, in using the couch.

**Participant 2:** Ja, you know it's..... there was one point that it was clearer to me that most of the men that I saw I'd see them on the couch and I remember explaining it to somebody that in a way it's partly because I felt threatened by the power of those men and that.....and there were some quite powerful men that I was seeing and like older men or men that were very successful in business, there was one man in particular who I saw because he was, he'd had a number of affairs and it was almost he kind of one of those who had to come and see me, his wife had set it up but he was a powerful business man and he was about ten years older than me and he was quite narcissistic and it helped me very much to establish the power structure within a relationship like that. That I it felt

like this is my domain, that you know he's lying down, I'm the one who's all seeing, I am able to think clearly, he's the one who as to talk and so on. And there's quite a lot of that and I suppose as I feel less threatened by men in general it doesn't become so important. I'm trying to think now if I would encourage men or more powerful people to be on the couch. It certainly gives me more of a home ground advantage in a way that face to face, well face to face does to a certain extent but there's much great pressure on me to perform in a way. I feel people are much more forgiving in a funny kind of way on the couch, that they kind of also like the idea that they're in analysis and that they're in it in a traditional form, there's some power that it gives to them as well and there's some one-up-man-ship you know about being on the couch.

**Researcher:** Socially they can say: 'my therapist uses the couch'.

**Participant 2:** Ja, absolutely ja, that's : 'I'm in real therapy you know, having real analysis' I think it does feel like there's a limit to that and I suppose I have it also in my mind this sort of idea that people graduate towards the couch as part of that there are certain people who will do better than others on the couch and that .....I mean it is a different therapy so I suppose it's not entirely that it's just about the movies and so on. People also make comments about those things quite often and I know maybe it's one of the things you want to talk about.

**Researcher:** Can you find a thought?

**Participant 2:** Ja, just that the couch is also a very powerful symbol in a funny way and also this letterhead story it is tempting to use a couch because of the power of it but also somehow not totally of the image I want to project necessarily because there's also great skepticism about that because the idea of you know five times a week for ten years and nothing really ever changes dramatically you still come out like Woody Allen at the end of it and somebody that has just made the migration, a very bright young woman [academic] I spoke to her about going onto the couch and she was quite keen on the idea and then said to me when she arrived and sort of said you know, she said: 'I didn't realize you meant literally on the couch'. She thought it was sort of a symbol for a more in depth kind of therapy that she somehow would still have face to face and I suppose the other thing that comes to mind is an architect who on his first visit and I obviously see people, face to face on their first visit, he said to me: 'Why is it that every psychiatrist has a chaise in his room' as a joke thinking that somehow it was something I might just lie on in my free time and stare out at the mountain not realizing that actually in time somehow he would be on it as well. It sort of amused me in a funny kind of way. He thought it was a joke he didn't realize it was there as part of the equipment as well.

**Researcher:** Is there anything that you, that's in your mind that about, that maybe I somehow haven't touched on.

**Participant 2:** Well the one thing that you spoke about earlier is one's own experience of being on the couch. My own experience was sort of good and bad. That I found that I could really go into a space a sort of meditative kind space that I couldn't do otherwise

which was quite, you know in his room I'd sort of lie and look at the edge of a picture that he had and it would kind of blur in and out of focus and so on so it did feel like, and it was quite darkish, and so I could kind of talk about things and talk about things without embarrassment to a large extent which I found quite, I found that quite useful. And then my other experience [identifying material removed] [was where] the therapist says 'mmm, mmm, mmm' behind the couch and how it sort of, I found it really interrupted my flow, I didn't need the reassurance that that person was there and how that interrupted the flow and then how I criticised and how that disappeared and then the analysis was all over. [The first psychoanalyst I saw] didn't speak or didn't umm which worked for me and I suppose I carried that over into.....

**Researcher:** That became part of your practice.

**Participant 2:** Yea and the other thing is I didn't watch Big Brother but one of my patients also said: 'You know this is a funny process, this is what happens apparently in Big Brother' is you go into this room and you don't see the person that's on the other side and you say things and this person just sort of asks questions or makes odd questions without saying anything and you manage to resolve your own crisis without the person in a funny way. So it's kind of, in some ways I feel like it's more empowering for those people, that actually, again Otto is an experience. I happen to say quite a lot last week and he came in this time and said: 'You know it's funny last week I just found myself talking and that I managed to solve these problems in an amazing way', It's like people also forget about your presence and it's almost again this idea that you're more like closer to them, that you can make interpretations which they own in a way which feels more like their own interpretations because it's almost like it comes from the back of their head in a funny way, it comes to mind and it's forgotten about which is hard for our own narcissism but actually I'd rather have it that way and people have only really said that to me on the couch that it's like, that they can't believe that they just will talk and that this stuff will sort itself or will settle out even when I know I've been working really hard and kind of guiding it in a way. Nobody has ever said that to me in face to face. Face to face they have to consider you in a funny way. I think that's one of those.....

**Researcher:** It's quite a paradoxical thing because in a certain sense it's quite intimate and yet at the same time it's almost as if there's nobody else in the room.

**Participant 2:** That's right ja. It's like you're alone with your thoughts but you just, you've been prodded by some other consciousness that is actually, is part of your own as well.

**Researcher:** Is there anything else that comes to mind.

**Participant 2:** I'll probably think of a million things when I walk out. The other thing that is interesting to me is that when people break away from the frame of using the couch that I find it quite unsettling in a funny kind of a way. For example the notes that I take, I'm very careful to conceal those notes and so when people walk in I'll have my note pad on a clipboard which would be like face down and then when they leave I'll first

put it face down. I don't really want to let on what goes on and I think there's also quite a fascination about what is, sometimes, what goes on in the notes. I remember from my own analysis saying to [my training analyst], because I hadn't taken notes before [then] and I was aware that he took notes, and thinking maybe he uses it for teaching or maybe, he uses it, maybe he's writing like a brilliant summary of what's going....., not summary but in fact I think patients would be quite disappointed to read what is written there. And patients sometimes on the couch will say to me: 'God how did you remember that did you write it down.' And I didn't write it down it just stuck.

**Researcher:** So the note taking in particular constitutes a very particular.....

**Participant 2:** Yea so that's part of the sort of like the, almost like the secrecy of it. I also have a note pad in face to face in a similar kind of way but invariably I don't write in it unless I'm writing a dream then I'll write the details or I might need to make a note of somebody's name if it's an unusual name and even then I find that people are quite sort of distracted by – why are you writing now and not then. And also this Ann on one occasion came in late and said: 'You seem to be writing a lot before I actually said something I wonder if you were writing about me being late or something.' In fact I hadn't been writing. There's that sort of thing and I know it's separate from the couch but for me it's one of the big differences but the other thing, the reason I got onto that is when people break the use of the couch – that brings another thought to mind – is I suspect people when they leave want to kind of drink you in at the door sometimes it's like this person that knows them but they feel like they don't know this person and they will sometimes ask things at the door they kind of splitting the transference idea. Not, always but there's, they kind of, some people search my face when.....because it's kind of the only cue that they're going to get the entrance and the exit. So is he pissed off about what I said last week or what else is going on. I have some patients who actually turn around to talk to me and I find it slightly throws me off balance because I can't just do..... then it becomes obviously much more like face to face and I find it slightly uncomfortable I'd rather they didn't do it. And I also find that some patients that a clue to whether somebody is in analysis or not in analysis is sometimes when they keep a foot on the floor and there's a joke about sex doesn't count when.... you have one foot on the floor, it comes to mind. There are some people who I know, ja, it's almost like a useful sign in a way. There's also Ann who I see who becomes slightly agitated and then kicks her foot rather like a cat would flick it's tail. It's almost like because I have the view of this person lying there it's a very sort of obvious sign to me, you know, the focus. And somebody will get up to demonstrate something to me like a guy will get up off the couch to say: 'When I sit I often squat like this.' And he'll squat down. I quite like it, in that they're often the people who don't have such authoritarian issues are different to them. They don't over respect authority. Now my own experience is I'm much to scared to do that or it would feel like you have to do it properly and I know quite a lot of people who have to do it properly. But I've got some people who are quite different and they're the same people who might make a joke on the way in or the way out or will jump out to write me a cheque or you will sort of.....they're much more fluid around the boundaries, and it sort of rattles my own.....

**Researcher:** It's a little disruptive....

**Participant 2:** Ja, that's the other thing is if somebody comes in and says, and they're on the couch and they say well how much do I owe you or whatever. Or I'll put the account on the couch and so they'll come and they'll open it up and they'll come and lean across my desk and then I'll not quite be sure of that interaction whereas in a face to face thing that's not a problem. Other things that become dynamics are not really a problem in face to face and I do think there is a kind of a defensiveness it's sort of like the yellow brick road. You know the guy behind the curtain? They allow go off to find the [tape recording unclear] or whatever and there's this big machine there that's doing stuff and they whip back the curtain and there's this little guy [tape recording unclear] that sort of stuff. That it kind of provides a bit of that that you can use like this power of the analysis behind the couch in a way that feels a little exposing when the curtains are drawn back.

Meaning Units	Constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
<p><b>Researcher:</b> I'm just going to start off with a general orienting question and I basically just want you to cast you mind back to the first time when you as a practitioner first had an analysand use the couch? Maybe you can describe that to me in as much detail as possible.</p> <p><b>[BEFORE THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION]</b></p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> What happened to me was, just to put it into context, I came back from the U.K with the intention of doing neuropsychiatry so I was established near Kingsbury Hospital and I started seen people mostly that were going to be neuropsychiatry patients and general psychiatry and then discovered it was quite helpful to talk to those people with head injuries and other things and so I started doing more therapy and then became involved with psychoanalytic group and that had quite a strong emphasis on obviously on analytic study and so I practiced there for a year and at that time it was only face to face but then I had a growing sense that the couch would be quite a useful thing to use and so when I moved to the [new rooms] I bought a couch at that time, like a chaise at that time, so then effectively with that move it was a good excuse to suddenly introduce a couch into that setting. Quite a few people, in fact I think probably the bulk of my practice that I was seeing face to face, those that stayed with me, ended up going onto the couch. I just want to think back to someone I was seeing at that time, for example I was seeing a . . . ballet student that I was seeing</p>	

<p>face to face and she went,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think within a session or two, went to the couch basically and I remember being astounded at how different it was</li> <li>2. and how much it just cleared my mind and how I was able to think in a way that I wasn't able to think before.</li> </ol> <p>I remember talking to, I was also potentially quite criticised for using the couch, within the psychoanalytic group, that there was sense that I wasn't senior enough to do it, that I wasn't seeing people often enough to do it and kind of who was I to be using it. But I spoke quite strongly in favour of it and there was, 'J', [she was facilitating a study group that I was involved in] and she was quite encouraging about that.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. And particularly about the experience that for the first time I could actually relax and think and allow myself to work out what processes were actually going on for the first time. I found it an enormous relief.</li> <li>4. I also found that it really took away the social interaction, which for me was actually helpful,</li> <li>5. and I had a sense somehow of now I was beginning to do analysis and I think that sort of stayed with me. I do even now, my practice is, maybe I should work out how many, it's probably about 40% of people I do see on the couch and I have quite a different experience with those people.</li> </ol> <p>It feels like I'm doing a kind of a different</p>	<p>The participant described how he was astounded at how different it felt to conduct psychotherapy when using the couch. [1]</p> <p>Its use cleared his mind and he was able to think in a new way. [2]</p> <p>The participant described how he was enormously relieved to discover that the use of the couch freed him to relax, think and permit himself to work out what psychotherapeutic processes were occurring. [3]</p> <p>The participant also described how using the couch was helpful in that it freed him from having to engage with the analysand in a social way. [4]</p> <p>The participant described how the use of the couch gave him an enduring sense that he was doing analysis and that it is quite different to face to face psychotherapy. [5]</p>
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type of therapy. Not necessarily even analysis but it feels like it has a different quality to it.

6. And the other stuff I find quite easily can to be too chatty and too social and I can be swayed I suppose in some ways by not maintaining the silences in the face to face therapy. In fact I'd say it's very much easier keeping to that rule

**Researcher:** So it was a kind of mixture experimentation and . . . . Had you at this stage had an experience of the couch or not? **Participant 2:** No **Researcher:** Okay. It's not uncommon.

**Participant 2:** And then I think partly because of that when I looked for a therapist [who became his training analyst] I looked for somebody who used the couch. It's probably the most important criterion.

**Researcher:** That's quite nice because just where you started from has immediately led to what I want to focus on but I want to just put that focus again. Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands used the couch.

7. **Participant 2:** I think the overall sense of it is that there is a very strict, probably the most significant thing is that there is a sense that the patient is going to do most of the work and the responsibility is going to be on the patient to get what they're going to get out of it. And there's, from the sort of opening where I see people at the door, there is a much stricter sense of formality I think from people I see on the couch. They don't kind of dither

The participant described how in using the couch he was much more able to be abstinent and maintain an analytic timbre than in face to face work. [6]

The use of the couch introduces a certain ambience of stringency and formality to the analytic endeavour such that there is a greater sense of the analysand taking responsibility for the analysis in a business like way. [7]



around at the door. They might briefly say: 'Hi, how are you?' And I'll say: 'Fine'. And they'll go to the couch and then they'll begin speaking.

8. And that I suppose is contrasted with people that I see face to face where they might kind of chat a little bit more on the way to the chair and I might find myself saying something like: 'How have you been?' or 'What's the week been like?' or whatever and also, and in a similar way kind of facilitating the conversation almost in an interpersonal way like in a social context way.
9. And pauses then are much harder to maintain. For example if somebody has difficulty starting I will in some ways get them started and if it's clear that they have nothing to say or it's kind of running dry then I'll often pick up on something rather like in a social setting.
10. There is one person who comes to mind who has great difficulty in starting each session, but I have a kind of a faith that she will be able to start once she's over her discomfort on the couch. Whereas I think somebody like that it would feel agonizing to wait for them to begin to talk about what they have to talk about. So it becomes much easier for me to maintain a frame on the couch, in a kind of psychoanalytic way than it would face to face.

**Researcher:** That experience of not being coerced and being able to stay in your analytic position is really important. In the first part you described the analysis as being different. I'm going to use a particular word here and it's fine if you disagree with it. Do you think the analysis might be more vital or how would you

By way of contrast face to face work creates an ambience whereby the analyst is drawn into facilitating conversation as if it were a social encounter. [8]

By way of contrast silences in analysis are easier to tolerate when the couch is used as it does not feel like a social set-up as face to face does. [9]

In particular the use of the couch gives the participant a kind of faith in the analytic process when commencing a session such that it is much easier to maintain the frame than it would face to face. [10]

describe it. How would you describe the ambiance of the analysis when the couch is used?

**Participant 2:** I wouldn't say vital I suppose because, you know this woman I've just described has a difficulty starting, there's a deadness about that particular analysis so she comes to mind I suppose because I see her twice a week she's more, or else I see her three times in cycle of two weeks she's more sort of at the forefront of my mind. I should say most people I see once a week on the couch and in fact someone I only see once every second week who for a while I was seeing once a week and have dropped it back.

11. There's a kind of, there's a much greater seriousness about the task of beginning to look at unconscious things on the couch whereas the face to face,

and I should probably also qualify, a lot of people I see face to face I might be seeing because they are in a particular crisis or they are depressed and they might be on medication and in fact there's a selective bias I suppose in that those, some of those people will graduate to the couch and they will graduate usually when their immediate crisis is over and when I feel they have the potential to take it further and they have the interest in taking it further. So it's almost by definition then the people I see on the couch are somehow a bit more serious about the task of psychoanalysis and in general although not always tend to be often higher functioning rather than lower functioning.

Because one of the things and maybe I should talk about now are people who can't tolerate the couch and then move back which has happened in particular with

There is a much greater seriousness about the task of looking at unconscious material. [11]

borderline patients who find it intolerable.	
12. And I've noticed from quite early on, I think people who have been sexually abused find it very very difficult and in fact intolerable and	The participant believes that analysands who have been sexually abused find it extremely difficult, even intolerable, to use the couch. [12]
13. they don't like the idea of speaking into the void and they don't like not being able seeing me and knowing what I'm up to.	In particular such people dislike speaking into the void created by use of the couch, they dislike being unable to see the analyst and what he might be doing. [13]
14. I think that's quite a bit and obviously there's huge sexual symbolism of actually lying prone and being in a way exposing yourself to somebody who can't see you.	The participant attributed this reaction to the sexual symbolism of lying prone and in a way exposing oneself to somebody who can not be seen. [14]
I keep coming back to this lady [identifying material removed] who has difficulty starting, should I just name her because it makes things easier, her name's 'A', she was sexually abused by her father for years and in particular had the repeated experience of her father standing over her bed at night and her lying dead still pretending that she's asleep.	
And for example she will make sure I can't see her by turning towards the wall and I think by closing her eyes although I don't know.	
15. And in some ways it is quite a disadvantage because sometimes I'm not sure exactly where she is emotionally. For example she might be crying about something and I don't fully realize she's crying, she'll never reach for a tissue or anything else. So there's a sort of concealment she has in	Use of the couch also conceals the analysand from the analyst who may then be at a disadvantage, being less sure where the analysand is emotionally. [15]

the couch.

But the two people that spring to mind are my two most difficult people who started off face to face and migrated to the couch as a kind of an experiment but found it intolerable and moved back. And I think in retrospect with people like that I wouldn't expect them to be on the couch having had that experience they found it very,

16. the one lady described it as being, as though she was kind of dissected, she felt like she was being prodded and probed on the couch,

she's also a background of sexual abuse. [Identifying material removed.] She felt like it was like a medical examination. That was her association with the couch. Just as I say that she also had an abortion that was very traumatic for her, it was very medicalised. [Identifying material removed – in summary she had very traumatic experiences of the medical profession] and so I think that put me into the very powerful role of being this distant doctor.

And then the other lady is the butterfly lady who migrated in fact off the couch again. The reasons there are complicated.

**Researcher:** There's very profound pathology there!

**Participant 2:** Ja

17. **Researcher:** In a sense you've answered this but I just want to ask it. It seems to be more private for you.

The participant gave an example of an analysand who responded badly to the couch, feeling that she was prodded and probed on the couch in a medical manner. This experience was accountable in transference terms as she had been sexually abused and had also had traumatic experiences at the hands of the medical profession. [16]

In response to a question from the Researcher the participant agreed that the use of the couch gave him more privacy.

<p>There's a kind of way in which there's a certain privacy.</p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> Ja, you mean for me as well as the patient? Ja, no I think there is.</p> <p>18. I think, it sounds potentially strange but it's a great relief to kind of not have the dead pan face and to be careful not to respond to things.</p> <p>19. Whereas I find when I'm actually thinking I like to kind of not quite literally scratch my head but ja, do the various things and think about things. And I find I can't do that face to face.</p> <p>And the other experience that makes it quite different is that I take notes behind the couch which I kind of learnt from [my own training analyst]. At time obviously in case reports and stuff I would often then take pretty close to verbatim notes that I could reconstruct which was helpful very much in the learning phases of being able to dissect what actually went on. And more and more I have found that I've moved onto much shorter notes which funny enough I don't refer back to in subsequent sessions. It helps me to organize my thoughts within that session and it also helps me to track themes which is quite useful and it helps me to discharge my own thoughts that I don't have to put them out there if it doesn't feel like the right time to do it but they're somehow not lost in the void. So I find that quite helpful.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> That's very interesting. To jump a little what does your body feel like when you use the couch? Do you think there's any change in your bodily presence.</p>	<p>[17]</p> <p>It is relieving to be unguarded about facial and bodily responses to the analysand's material. [18]</p> <p>Being free in this way allowed the participant to respond to the analysand's material in a more embodied way. [19]</p>
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<p>20. <b>Participant 2:</b> Ja, I've got, I suppose at a superficial level I've got a chair behind the couch which I find actually more comfortable than another chair, because the other chair in some way reflects the therapy. The patient and I have identical rather comfortable leather chairs.</p>	<p>The participant experiences using the couch as symbolizing analysis, whereas the using the chair symbolizes psychotherapy. [20]</p>
<p>21. But behind the couch I've got a kind of more of an office chair with a high back and so on which allows me to move backwards and forwards and either lock it in a comfortable position or move it around so I can move with much greater ease without me feeling like I'm going to distract the patient at a particular time.</p>	<p>Practically his couch chair allows him to change his position with greater ease without feeling that he is going to distract the analysand. [21]</p>
<p>22. And I've had feel back on something, I sit mostly very still and Dorothy said to me that on occasions, like when I had a back problem briefly it was about me, this sort of stillness.</p>	<p>The participant gave an example of a time when he had a back problem and a particular analysand who, hyper alert to his movements in the chair behind her, took his movements to be meaningful, which the participant doubted. [22]</p>
<p>But at the same time I've also been in the situation with her when I've moved which she's taken to be very distracting, that I've sort of a defensive posture that I've shifted or something, which didn't really feel like that it just felt like I was uncomfortable and needed to move.</p>	
<p>23. So I have a much greater degree of comfort in my body and much less stiffness. I think in a way I'm probably overly stiff in face to face and I think it's because of a few experiences with more fragile patients.</p>	<p>The participant owned that, due to experiences with fragile analysands, he tended to be overly stiff working face-to-face. [23]</p>
<p>And only now in my practice do I gradually realize that most people are quite healthy and are not so put off by it and I can be relatively flexible with those people</p>	

and in a way a few people have spoilt it for the others if that makes sense. A lot of the stiffness and formality is in dealing with the more disturbed.

**Researcher:** It a bit protective?

24. **Participant 2:** It's protective of me and protective of patients often

but maybe overly protective of patients, a feeling that I literally can't distract them I just about can't blink at that time.

25. It's an enormous relief for me not to feel like I'm on display which is Freud's original idea. That I can yawn if I have to yawn or I can turn a page you know, without distracting the flow of the patient's thoughts.

26. **Researcher:** Apart from the writing, have you got any particular things you might do. I at one time described this as a rhythmical sort of thing but practices or habits can be rhythmical and what I have in mind there is Anna Freud used to knit while she was seeing cases and that would be a real rhythmical practice. It's not necessarily that but that could be the kind of thing. Is there anything, do you look at things or . . . ?

**Participant 2:** Yea I do, I've got a nice view of the mountain so I spend a lot of time looking at the mountain it's a big part of it and also I can see my child's school, play school, from where I am and I always forget to look but theoretically I could look out and notice the child-minder collect the child and leave the school and I've seen it on a few occasions and quite often I,

The participant believed that use of the couch was protective of both himself and his analysands. [24]

Linking the use of the couch to Freud's initial statements for using the couch, for this participant its use provides relief from feeling on display as well as relief from concern about interfering with the flow of his analysand's thoughts. [25]

In response to the Researcher asking about any of the participant's actions which were of a repetitive or rhythmical nature the participant first followed a drift of associations which suggested that his attention was free to wander away from attention to events in the analytic room. [26]

without formalizing it, think at half past twelve I should look out, should see what's going on, but I don't because I often get lost in what's happening.

27. I find it actually helps this otherwise sense of claustrophobia, kind of sitting in a closed room, to look out and see the clouds pouring over the mountain or the waterfalls or cars going up and ja, it's.....I find it quite soothing.

28. I've also got a picture on the wall next to the couch that I look at quite a lot which is of the wall of the Sistine Chapel and it's a lovely sort of big poster and I study the figures quite carefully and find myself looking at that quite a lot and then I can also look around the room at another painting I've got that I also, because it's sort of modern art, I don't quite get tired of it so I look at that quite often.

29. The other thing is that I haven't done, sort of formally noted it but my positions can be quite different because this chair is on wheels as well so I would sit in a particular position but I might realize when I look out the window and see what part of the mountain I can see or not see that I'm in quite a different position for each patient. Whereas face to face it's very, it's kind of formalized.

The chairs sit in a certain place in relation to a Persian carpet so it's pretty much the same.

30. And then the other thing that strikes me is because this is a chaise and because it's movable, in some ways patients sometimes, also depending on how the

This freedom relieved a sense of claustrophobia and was quite soothing to the participant. [27]

He secondly noted that he habitually looked at some pictures in his room, studying the figures carefully. [28]

The participant also noted that the position of his couch chair might vary, unlike the face-to-face work in which the position of the chairs was fixed. [29]

The participant also had the impression that the position of the couch and the analysands might vary. In particular he had the fantasy that the more horizontal they



couch is displaced, might be much more horizontal than other times. And I have a sort of a fantasy that the more horizontal they are the deeper the level of the analysis if you like, in some ways.

Again it's not a tested idea but I have that sense about it and sometimes I find myself wishing that the couch was in a slightly different position that somebody might feel a bit uncomfortable because it's somehow too low. I think, but haven't done anything about it, about how I should stabilise the couch in a particular position.

**Researcher:** Being removed from each other we might expect the need for vocal connection to increase. That being so, do you think the use of the couch has any effect on the sensitivity to and importance of vocal rhythms for both of you?

**Participant 2:** I think why I'm battling to think of the answer is that it's easier for me to think of my own rhythm is on occasions, I might say very little I might say, today for example admittedly a patient arrived 20 minutes late, she was on the couch and I might have said only two kind of interpretations or interjections really and the patient has their own rhythm and the patient speaks in such a way that they pretty much occupy their time on the couch, this is Otto. He will keep the conversation and that he'll say: 'You know I feel unhappy and miserable and melancholic and in despair' or whatever. He'll kind of keep the lines open in a way that allows him to talk almost without interruption. There are hardly pauses in it so I mean I think there is sort of some sense of some verbal connection there. But my own experience is that I very rarely will even um or ah unless I feel that the patient

are the deeper the level of the analysis. [30]

[Participant misunderstands question replacing a question of prosody with one of frequency of interpretation – comments made are not pertinent to the couch, except:]

is somehow drifting away from me and that the patient feels almost as if I'm not there in that moment that I find myself uming or if the patient makes reference to something which has gone before like they might say: 'You know the guy Edward that was going to move in with us?' then I might say: 'mmm' in other words you don't have to go on because I've made the connection.

Whereas in face to face I would have made that known to the person. So you have to compensate in some ways on some occasions for the lack of connection.

**Researcher:** Do you think they might have more tone or prosodic presence in the sense that they speak in certain way, your speaking about Otto sounds as if he might kind of have a rhythmical quality.

31. **Participant 2:** I think they do. Because I think their flow is not interrupted so I think they get into their own pattern and way of talking.

The participant thought that analysands did show a more rhythmical prosody when using the couch. He attributed this to their getting into their own pattern and way of talking because not interrupted so much on the couch. [31]

32. So I would say, I definitely interrupt people, not that I literally interrupt them but I interrupt their own natural rhythm when I'm face to face in a way that I don't usually do on the couch.

The participant believed that he interrupted analysands' natural rhythm more when face-to-face than when on the couch. [32]

33. My philosophy on the couch is to only intervene if I can do something which is helpful to the process and in general most of the people on the couch are largely engaged in the process so I find I don't have to do very much.

The participant felt that when on the couch analysands were dominantly in their own (analytic) process and therefore did not need to be influenced in any way by the analyst. [33]

34. But I think people sitting face to face want some kind of a prompt or at least some sort of a response.

He also thought that face-to-face analysands wanted more prompting or response from the analyst. [34]

35. I suppose that's also, cause the other thing is how do you sell the idea of the couch to people cause there was a phase that I had that I would have happily had everybody on the couch.

I've moved away from that, I've been more selective.

But I think the initial kind of euphoria of how nice it is to do therapy on the couch. I went through phase of trying to get everybody on the couch. That was like how I practised. And some of those people have stayed on and others have dropped out and now when I see people I might only introduce the idea of the couch very much later on. As I say when I feel like they've got through the initial, it might be six or eight sessions, and then the crises is over and we need to explore something then it feels like it's easier on the couch. So one of the ways when I say to people, put it this way one of my selection criteria is often when people are very sensitive to social cue's and I think it's slightly unfair because I think most people are very sensitive to social cue's, but some people I'm more aware of the fact that they really are searching my face to see whether I approve or disapprove and whether I'm on the right track and I suppose that's me as well and so for that reason that's part of my choice as a therapist it's not going to lead me down that path. I often say to people that it takes away the social interaction a bit and it takes away their responsibility for the therapist and what the therapist's feelings might be and from the therapist from interfering with their thought and the idea of rhythm comes to mind but I won't use that.

When he first started using the couch it led to a kind of euphoria because it was so pleasant conducting analysis on the couch. This in turn led to the participant inducing all his analysands to move onto the couch. Currently he doubts the wisdom of that and would be more selective. [35]

36. It's that sort of sense about it that their story will develop and unfold in the most natural way without worrying about me.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you in particular have any sort of emotions or sensations that stand out for you when you have an analysand using the couch?

**Participant 2:** That's really difficult because it depends really on who I'm seeing at that particular time.

I have periods of intense boredom with Ann because she doesn't get going or she's going over the same stuff.

For example she's terrified to look around to see what I'm doing and there's enormous fantasy about that again with the father that stood over her bed. She's paralyzed.

After reading in a book somewhere I suggested she just turn around and look at me and kind of try and get rid of the fantasy but she's never done that.

She said maybe sometime she'll be able to do it but she's never kind of do it.

But I think because of her isolation in every aspect of her life that I feel a similar sort of isolation. I then feel a kind of intense boredom and sort of the idea of knitting would appeal to me. I could happily play, in the silences play a game of chess if I could get by with doing it except that I would feel so guilt ridden or something to distract me from going absolutely out of my mind.

37. And I do experience it in some face to face people as well that what they're

His sense is that when the couch is used his analysands' stories develop and unfold in the most natural, uninfluenced way. [36]

Although he does become bored when working face-to-face the boredom of the

<p>saying I suppose the disconnection leads to sort of an intense boredom.</p> <p>But it's a much more, put it this way, on the couch I experience the boredom much more intensely in a bodily sense.</p> <p>And I know on occasions when I'm feeling tired like birth of children and that stuff I've just sat there looking at the carpet and thinking: 'God I'd love to just curl up on the carpet'. That sort of intense boredom whereas with people in face to face I feel a great sense of discomfort. I feel like it's a social.</p> <p>38. On the couch I feel like if somebody wants to be quiet that's okay, that's alright but if somebody's sitting expecting me to somehow do something as they do face to face then I feel the kind of social awkwardness</p> <p>39. I feel some how it's not working it's not analysis. So anyway that's a long way of saying it depends largely on who I'm seeing.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Your sense of time. What's that like? Not necessarily the boring things, it could be the boring things but it could be other things. What's your sense of time like?</p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> It's interesting. When I feel that I'm engaged and I'm working hard the times skips on.</p> <p>When I'm not, there was a Bart Simpson cartoon when he was sitting in the classroom and the clock would tick backwards and from where I sit I look across the patient can't, well I suppose they</p>	<p>couch is much more intense in a bodily sense. [37]</p> <p>The analysand's desires for social gratification are much more intensely felt by the participant face-to-face. [38]</p> <p>For this participant the feeling which these expectations make feel as if the analytic process is not occurring. [39]</p>
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can now I've become less strict about it they can see the time but there are times that I actually you know it will be on half past or whatever and . . . . I'll look again and it will somehow still be on half past. It really can happen.

40. I suppose the other advantage for me on the couch is that I can monitor the time much more easily whereas face to face I'm always again I'm scared to distract people by looking at the time because the message is that your bored or something.

41. So ja, and I say what I tend to do is face to face hardly ever look at the clock until I'm aware that we're getting towards the end of the session whereas on the couch in general I often look at the clock.

42. I use it in some ways also to pace me so an example would be Otto who was twenty minutes late. It kind of felt like I had to do some interventions in the remaining time and it also helps me Gavin Ivey once said 'Don't' make interpretations in the last five minutes, allow people enough time to do things'. And I sort of tend to stick by that on the couch in general, not always. So I have a closer check on the time.

43. **Researcher:** There's a different presence and you're freer to do certain things, like check the clock.

**Participant 2:** But it does feel different, I think again the inter-patient differences and the inter-session differences are more striking than when I'm trying to do face to face therapy.

**Researcher:** What are your own

Using the couch makes it easier to monitor the time without disturbing the analysand by doing so. [40]

The effect is that the participant restrains himself from looking at the clock when working face-to-face whereas when using the couch he looks at the clock quite often. [41]

Being aware of the time also affects when the participant makes interventions and he is more aware of this because of checking the clock when using the couch. [42]

Generalizing from this the analysis has a different presence such that inter-session and inter-analysand differences are more striking than when working face-to-face. [43]

associations and thoughts like? How do you experience them when the analysand uses the couch?

44. **Participant 2:** Dramatically freer and dramatically, again to me it feels like I'm doing much closer to what my idealized analysis would be like when I'm in general with people on the couch especially if they're working hard and stuff is there and comes out.

The participant's own associations and thoughts are dramatically freer when the couch is used. [44]

45. I feel like I can, it's a great relief not to, it's a great to have the freedom to have to think of whatever I want to think

The participant experiences relief as the couch provides him with the freedom to think whatever he wants to think. [45]

46. and in a way if I look like I'm wandering off because I have my own reverie, that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face to face.

He was also relieved that the analysand could not see him following his own psychic processes in reverie. [46]

Well I don't experience it as being allowable face to face but maybe that's you know, I'm concerned if I look like I'm drifting off that people will think that I'm not listening and partly they're right

47. but I think that's the only way I can get to some kind of associations.

Going into reverie is however the only way in which he can get to his own association. [47]

48. It's hard to all of the time be tracking exactly what somebody's saying. Once you've had a general sense of what they're saying.

It is easier to follow the analysand in this way than to consciously track. [48]

49. I think the other thing on the couch is it's almost like things get slowed down. That I have a much greater manoeuvrability of my thoughts. It sounds a bit strange but it's almost like there's such, when I'm behind the couch, there's such a delay in what people are saying even if they're talking constantly because they tend to

Using the couch slows down the lived experience of psychological processes. [49a] Notably the participant's thoughts have a much greater manoeuvrability and there is a sense of the analysand's material slowing. The participant felt that this was like finding space for his own thoughts between the analysand's associations. [49b]

repeat things and because one thing follows onto the next, it's almost like the telephone line thing where you can sneak email messages and whatever internet bytes in in between, I can do that with my thoughts in a way that I can't do in a face to face way.

50. In a face to face way I think I'm also bombarded by the body language and my own body language and other things that are going on that fill those gaps.

51. But I feel like, what was the fabulous movie – the Matrix, did you see that, you know where the bullet is coming to you and then it slows down and you kind of bend backwards and it's that not in such a dramatic way but there's space to manoeuvre with the space and I'm actually free to think.

**Researcher:** You used the word reverie, which is a very nice word because it touches on something. Do you think, in a sense you have said that you do - but I really want to point it - do you think that the couch has a role to play in the use of reverie?

**Participant 2:** I must say that I'm slightly skeptical of the over use of the word 'reverie'.

There's a classic paper where an analyst talks about, he's sitting there and he looks across and he sees an envelope and he sees that it's type written and feels that's really important because it's now a personal letter to him and then he notices the franking on the envelope, just looking on his desk is like machine stamped and he suddenly feels jarred by that and then his thoughts go

Working face-to-face can lead to the participant feeling overwhelmed by body language. [50]

Using the couch grants 'space' in which to think. The participant described this space metaphorically by reference to a film, *The Matrix*: A bullet is coming at the hero and then it slows down and the hero kind of bends backwards and there's space to manoeuvre. [51]



<p>to his car that's in the garage that he needs to pick up and then bring them all to do with what's going on with the patient.</p>	
<p>I'm a bit skeptical about that level of reverie.</p>	
<p>52. But I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face.</p>	<p>(wrt reverie) the participant is much more closely in tune with experiencing what the analysand is telling him in an experiential bodily way than he would be face-to-face. [52]</p>
<p>I know you were asking a bit about body and didn't, it was more a sense of that I feel the patients depression in my throat when they're depressed in a way I don't quite so easily face to face.</p>	
<p>53. And I often feel the intense frustration or I feel like I want to get in and do something. Like somebody who's wife is picking on them then that kind of will rile me on the couch in a way that it's doesn't otherwise.</p>	<p>(Wrt reverie) the participant stated that he responded en accorde/counter-transferentially much more when using the couch. [53]</p>
<p>54. It's almost like there's some kind of a shared possession, it's like it's put into that space and that space is uncontaminated and really between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one in a way that's it's harder to face to face.</p>	<p>With respect to reverie the participant described the presence of some kind of shared possession put into the analytic space. That space is uncontaminated and really between the analysand and the participant in a way that they kind of become one. This union is harder to achieve face-to-face. [54]</p>
<p>55. It feels, unlike face to face, that there is the patient, yourself and the third sort of space and somewhere there's a merging of these two.</p>	<p>Unlike face-to-face, with the use of the couch the participant experiences the analysand, himself and some sort of 'third' space that is somehow a merging of analyst and analysand. [55]</p>
<p>One of the images that I quite like, cause I was going to use this for a letterhead, is of two people in those racing canoes where they're facing in the same direction and</p>	

they're pulling backwards together. That sort of symbolizes what analysis is for me, that's a symbol that I'd go for more than the kind of the face to face.

It's the idea that, one of my patients [identifying details removed] compared me to another analyst whom he had seen face to face and described] the face to face was that sort of feminine way of engaging and the masculine way of engaging is to get the child to kind of look out. And that crosses my mind quite often in that I know that the way that men hold children and the way that women hold children are different and I know from my own experience that I've carried a child usually looking out in that way, and I sort of quite like that, I like the image of that I find it quite helpful.

And I also like that people come there and they sit and look at the mountain and that the mountain has symbolism for them and that this is also an off the wall comment, I saw somebody who was disturbed, very borderline, also off and then on and then off the couch, I've got this panoramic view that part of [my office block] is constructed in such a way that there's also this like a slab of concrete at the top and she said some comment about : 'sitting here week after week staring at the concrete'. In such a like in like an attacking way, such a derogatory comment whereas most people look past that and see this spectacular mountain. And patients comment to me that they'll drive into Town and become a bit anxious, that there's, in some ways, the mountain becomes linked into the therapeutic process. And it's also interesting that I'm climbing the mountain much more and I want to go up the front of the mountain where I've never really gone before, I've kind of looked and seen whether it's possible. Again I'm straight

off the point but ja. Just remind me what because I feel like I'm getting to a point and I've got distracted.

**Researcher:** It's was what your associations are like.

**Participant 2:** Yes, yea okay.

**Researcher:** How do you kind of find, in a way you've touched on this, but how do you find your interpretations forming.

**Participant 2:** I found what used to happen to me, I used to have the luxury of really being able to craft an interpretation. So in a way that I would write, sometimes, although when I look at my notes afterwards if I'm trying to reconstruct what happened, I often don't quite write what it is I wanted to say, but I sometimes find, with some patients anyway that I would kind of meticulous construct, craft like the ideal interpretation but I would miss it completely and it would be missed because of the timing of it that it would somehow come to late and it sound a bit stilted and it would be lost and it was in a way that I had then worked through it but the patient hadn't and they were a bit sort of stunned, there was too much.

So I tend more to use interpretations more freely when they come to mind rather than wait and package it in a perfect way.

**Researcher:** That's something you've learnt along the way?

**Participant 2:** Ja. And interpretation is an interesting idea because I find I don't use interpretations as much as I somehow theoretically feel like I should be using interpretations and that I do although my background is not asking questions and

whatever that

I do find that I ask questions in a way that will begin to lead people towards I suppose discovering their own interpretations, moving towards that's. Sometimes it's just pure clarifications and sometimes because I think it's important that we look at that particular aspect. Sometimes it is because I have something particular in mind I kind of want to.....

**Researcher:** That's a way to get to it.

**Participant 2:** Ja, and I find that more helpful and I've, often the clever interpretations are seen very much like the clever interpretations and they don't work well for me and they don't work for the patient and I think actually in a funny kind of way I err on interpreting too little.

I'm scared that....., I remember also an experience on the couch where I was saying something that I thought was very straight forward and very obvious and they were quite astounded by it.

And it made me realize that I often have those very obvious thoughts that I don't put into the room. I sort of think they're a given but I think they're useful anchor points often.

56. So how do the interpretations come to me? They come to me in a much easier way, again I think just because I'm free to just sort of think about things and also I've got the advantage then of seeing the patterns in a much clearer way

57. and separating a lot of the words from the themes I suppose.

Using the couch interpretations come to the participant in a much easier way. He attributed this to the freedom provided by the couch to allow him to think about things, observe and detect patterns in a clearer way. [56]

He could separate themes from the mass of words. [57]

58. **Researcher:** So I'm now really kind of putting the idea and words into your mouth but is this possible or does this happen that the interpretive statement might almost crystallize or condense out of the saturated space or something like that? **Participant 2:** Ja, it's something about sort of being able to see the wood for the trees that there's lots of data that gets thrown out is kind of digested in a sort of in like a composty way and stuff does trickle out so it's about a kind of a super saturation and then things falling out of that, theme's falling out of that.

59. **Researcher:** Then, sort of at right angles from the rest of what we've been saying, do you think there's anything about power involved in this, in using the couch. **Participant 2:** Ja, you know it's.....

60. there was one point that it was clearer to me that most of the men that I saw I'd see them on the couch and I remember explaining it to somebody that in a way it's partly because I felt threatened by the power of those men

and that....and there were some quite powerful men that I was seeing and like older men or men that were very successful in business, there was one man in particular who I saw because he was, he'd had a number of affairs and it was almost he kind of one of those who had to come and see me, his wife had set it up but he was a powerful business man and he was about ten years older than me and he was quite narcissistic and it helped me very much to establish the power structure within a relationship like that.

In response to a leading question the participant agreed with and elaborated on the idea that an interpretive statement might be said to crystallize or condense out of the saturated analytic space. [58]

In response to a question about power the participant stated that there was for him an element of power in using the couch. [59]

He elaborated on this stating that he had at one time encouraged male analysands to use the couch partly because he felt threatened by their power. [60]

<p>61. That I it felt like this is my domain, that you know he's lying down, I'm the one who's all seeing, I am able to think clearly, he's the one who has to talk and so on.</p>	<p>The participant stated that at one time when the analysand was supine he felt omniscient and able to think clearly, whereas the analysand was submissively required to provide associations. [61]</p>
<p>And there's quite a lot of that and I suppose as I feel less threatened by men in general it doesn't become so important.</p>	
<p>62. I'm trying to think now if I would encourage men or more powerful people to be on the couch.</p> <p>It certainly gives me more of a home ground advantage in a way that face to face,</p>	<p>The participant felt that the use of the couch left him more powerful than the analysand, because the analysis was been conducted on his terms. [62]</p>
<p>63. well face to face does to a certain extent but there's much great pressure on me to perform in a way.</p>	<p>This also occurred face-to-face but this placed greater pressure on the participant to perform. [63]</p>
<p>64. I feel people are much more forgiving in a funny kind of way on the couch,</p>	<p>The participant felt that analysands were more forgiving of his ineptness when the couch was used. [64]</p>
<p>65. That they kind of also like the idea that they're in analysis and that they're in it in a traditional form,</p>	<p>The participant felt that analysands enjoyed using the couch as it symbolized the idea that they were in analysis in its traditional form. [65]</p>
<p>66. there's some power that it gives to them as well and there's some one-up-man-ship you know about being on the couch.</p>	<p>He also felt that they experienced a sense of prestige from using the couch. [66]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Socially they can say: 'my therapist uses the couch'.</p>	
<p><b>Participant 2:</b> Ja, absolutely ja, that's : 'I'm in real therapy you know, having real analysis' I think it does feel like there's a</p>	

limit to that and I suppose I have it also in my mind this sort of idea that people graduate towards the couch as part of that there are certain people who will do better than others on the couch and that .....

67. I mean it is a different therapy so I suppose it's not entirely that it's just about the movies and so on. People also make comments about those things quite often and I know maybe it's one of the things you want to talk about.

**Researcher:** Can you find a thought?

68. **Participant 2:** Ja, just that the couch is also a very powerful symbol in a funny way and also this letterhead story it is tempting to use a couch because of the power of it

69. but also somehow not totally of the image I want to project necessarily because there's also great skepticism about that because the idea of you know five times a week for ten years and nothing really ever changes dramatically you still come out like Woody Allen at the end of it

70. and somebody that has just made the migration, a very bright young woman [academic] I spoke to her about going onto the couch and she was quite keen on the idea and then said to me when she arrived and sort of said you know, she said: 'I didn't realize you meant literally on the couch'.

\*She thought it was sort of a symbol for a more in depth kind of therapy that she somehow would still have face to face and I suppose the other thing that comes to mind is an architect who on his first visit and I obviously see people face to face on

For the participant when the couch is used the psychotherapeutic process is different which is not only due to media depictions of analysis. [67]

The participant stated that the couch was itself a very powerful symbol and that it was therefore tempting to use this symbolic nature in order capitalize on this power. [68]

At the same time the participant was ambivalent about being known to use the couch because of the skeptical critical caricature of analysis with which the couch was associated. [69]

He gave an example of an analysand who was surprised that she might literally use the couch. [70]

their first visit, he said to me: 'Why is it that every psychiatrist has a chaise in his room' as a joke thinking that somehow it was something I might just lie on in my free time and stare out at the mountain not realizing that actually in time somehow he would be on it as well.

It sort of amused me in a funny kind of way. He thought it was a joke he didn't realize it was there as part of the equipment as well.

**Researcher:** Is there anything that you, that's in your mind that about, that maybe I somehow haven't touched on.

**Participant 2:** Well the one thing that you spoke about earlier is one's own experience of being on the couch. My own experience was sort of good and bad. That I found that I could really go into a space a sort of meditative kind space that I couldn't do otherwise which was quite, you know in his room I'd sort of lie and look at the edge of a picture that he had and it would kind of blur in and out of focus and so on so it did feel like, and it was quite darkish, and so I could kind of talk about things and talk about things without embarrassment to a large extent which I found quite, I found that quite useful. And then my other experience [identifying material removed] [was where] the therapist says 'mmm, mmm, mmm' behind the couch and how it sort of, I found it really interrupted my flow, I didn't need the reassurance that that person was there and how that interrupted the flow and then how I criticised and how that disappeared and then the analysis was all over. [The first psychoanalyst I saw] didn't speak or didn't umm which worked for me and I suppose I carried that over into.....



**Researcher:** That became part of your practice.

**Participant 2:** Yea, and the other thing is I didn't watch Big Brother but one of my patients also said: 'You know this is a funny process, this is what happens apparently in Big Brother' is you go into this room and you don't see the person that's on the other side and you say things and this person just sort of asks questions or makes odd questions without saying anything and you manage to resolve your own crisis without the person in a funny way.

So it's kind of, in some ways I feel like it's more empowering for those people, that actually, again Otto is an experience. I happen to say quite a lot last week and he came in this time and said: 'You know it's funny last week I just found myself talking and that I managed to solve these problems in an amazing way',

71. It's like people also forget about your presence and it's almost again this idea that you're more like closer to them,

The participant described the use of the couch as paradoxically making the analytic couple closer whilst making the analysand forgetful of the analyst's presence. [71]

72. that you can make interpretations which they own in a way which feels more like their own interpretations because it's almost like it comes from the back of their head in a funny way,

He also felt that the literal geography of the couch contributed to the analysand accepting the analyst's interpretations as his/her own because they come from the back of the analysand's head. [72]

73. it comes to mind and it's forgotten about which is hard for our own narcissism but actually I'd rather have it that way and people have only really said that to me on the couch that it's like, that they can't believe that they just will talk and that this stuff will sort itself or will settle out even when I

The participant noted that this undermined the analyst's sense of his/her own importance not to be acknowledged even though the internal work of the analyst was hard and he/she had been guiding the analytic process. [73]

<p>know I've been working really hard and kind of guiding it in a way.</p> <p>Nobody has ever said that to me in face to face. Face to face they have to consider you in a funny way. I think that's one of those.....</p> <p>74. <b>Researcher:</b> It's quite a paradoxical thing because in a certain sense it's quite intimate and yet at the same time it's almost as if there's nobody else in the room. <b>Participant 2:</b> That's right ja.</p> <p>75. It's like you're alone with your thoughts but you just, you've been prodded by some other consciousness that is actually, is part of your own as well.</p> <p>Remainder of interview removed as a diversion without significant reference to the meaning of the couch.</p>	<p>[74] discarded</p> <p>The participant elaborated on this paradox stating that the analysand is alone with his/her thoughts but being stimulated by another consciousness which is partially other and partially your own. [75]</p>
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### Interview with third participant

**Researcher:** Okay, so in the first bit maybe you can just tell me a bit about how you came to use the couch. This is not necessarily going to be incorporated it's more of a beginning thing but just, I mean how did it start for you. How did you start off having patients use the couch?

**Participant 3:** Well I didn't when [I started (identifying information removed)] but I did have a long term plan to [glossed] do it. And then when we moved here, [identifying information removed] there was a lot of talk about analysis and I thought, well, I would do it as soon as we moved. We were in a rented house, it wasn't possible. I had a twice a week patient who I'd seen there and I said that when we moved there would be a possibility of using the couch. And she was keen to, she'd been in therapy before and the therapist had used a, it wasn't a couch but she described a sort of recliner away from the therapist, so yes, when I moved that was an important part of the room.

**Researcher:** Now just to put you in the picture with this because being not my main question but it's easier to bring it in first. To a large extent, and it's very clear from me speaking to people and from the literature, there's a whole big thing people have got about the couch and their identity. In other words somehow using the couch would identify one as an analyst and if you don't quite feel that you are an analyst or entitled to that status then you don't quite use the couch or you feel that you, and all that stuff. Can I ask if that's played any role for you, I mean has it been a sort of little hump to get over to use it for those reasons or is it just practical things?

**Participant 3:** I think it was a mixture because I hadn't worked that much with adults I mean I had worked with the parents but my training had been with children and adolescents and none of them had been suitable. I mean I think it varies, I think some of the training cases who were adolescents do want to use the couch. That might have been easier if I'd had that sort of child.

**Researcher:** You didn't really have that? Yes, okay. Do you think that people, I mean do you think that it's a kind of identification thing, people identify themselves in a certain way?

**Participant 3:** I do but I think for me it was more starting to work intensely with adults rather than that.

**Researcher:** So it's more pragmatic for you than an identity thing for you!

**Participant 3:** Ja, I think I was sort of hesitant but I think there'd been a lot of Tavistock people who'd encouraged clinicians here to do it or to use the couch.

**Researcher:** That made it less of a sort of prohibition.

**Participant 3:** Ja

**Researcher:** Now I need to read my main question: Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands used the couch.

**Participant 3:** I mean I, well there seems to be a slightly different process in (train) they seem to come in and the wait before they start talking seems more part of the process. I mean I have people who sit across often sort of look at me or smile or look anxious um so I think the whole process is slightly different. I can remember Sheila Miller saying to me: You know you don't have to watch your facial expressions when you use the couch. And I think in a way that's the freedom to sort of sit there and really listen and think in away that I think might look odd if

**Researcher:** If you were face to face?

**Participant 3:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Okay, that's very nice. So am I putting words in your mouth if I say that there's a kind of different ambiance?

**Participant 3:** I, there is. I mean my sense is that patients feel you're going to have more control if they use the couch but in fact you have less control and they feel freer. I think from my own experience of being an analysand, I suppose I sort of barely registered the ambiance when I walked in whereas I think that people who are sitting face to face are picking up all sorts of cues all the time. But then one becomes attuned to the nuance of the voice and other cues I suppose.

**Researcher:** Can you say a bit more about those other cues and nuance of the voice? Can you give me a sense of what it is?

**Participant 3:** Well, you can tell the mood and a lot about what the analyst possibly is going to start saying OR picking up by that voice rather than the expression. You pick up the little noises they make habitually.

**Researcher:** Do you think that might touch on things like rhythm and intonation and accenting their voice and things like that? Or is it hard to say.

**Participant 3:** No, I think it does.

**Researcher:** [Glossed because audiotape unclear. One idea is] that one actually enters a whole different order of processing when you're out of sight and that that order is more dependent on bodily rhythms and things like intonation and prosody than what your actual speaking is. So it seems to me that you're saying that there is something like that maybe going on. Or is that going too far?

**Participant 3:** No I think you get to know your analyst in another sort of way which I think people who are apprehensive about using the couch don't have a sense of. You know, and I certainly think that the sort of noises that [you] make just before the end of a session and I think I probably have my own set of them or similar but certainly people who know the couch either from themselves have a sense of when time is almost up. Or there is something in the rhythm and I think there is also something in the way one is available that changes in those last few minutes.

**Researcher:** A bit more mysterious than just it could just be the presence that changes somehow. That they really don't know how the analyst's presence is communicated but their presence changes.

**Participant 3:** Ja but I think your availability is also part of your presence and I think your availability shifts in those last few minutes.

**Researcher:** Can I go back to the first part when I was talking about the ambiance. Would it be going too far to say that the analysis is more vital, that there is more life in it using the couch or is it just different?

**Participant 3:** I'm not sure about the word vital. I think it's possibly easier to get to different states of mind. I mean just while we're talking I keep thinking of infants and mothers and that you know the sort of recapitulation of that sort of experience rather than it being something that you can look and cognitively process. I mean you obviously cognitively process all sorts of things.

**Researcher:** Okay, so would you classify, you've run onto one of my questions that I pop in at the end usually but that's great. Would you go so far as to say that the couch facilitates something like reverie? Or is that going too far.

**Participant 3:** No I think it's possibly the only way you could work four times a week with an adult. Or five times a week. I think it allows something to take place. And you know it allows you to have different scenes. One man who used the couch with me, I put up a sort of shade awning, I've got a vine outside my room, and he turned to me and he said: You knew that I used to look at those things and imagine them to be figures and now you've taken that away from me. Now I think you'd have to not be looking at somebody and be in a different state to say that sort of thing.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the analysands are sort of more in a sense are they able to more easily able to express what they're feeling or what they're thinking?

**Participant 3:** Mmmm and I suppose it varies but I think for some people they're more able to express the irrational or strange.

**Researcher:** Okay, and do you think it's, I mean it's a bit of a second year text book on psychology when they mention psychoanalysis, they tell you that the couch is used to

encourage regression and in fact this is one of the dangers of the couch. Do you think regression is one of the things that occurs and if so what kind of regression?

**Participant 3:** I don't think it encourages regression in the way that we understood it in the late '60's you know where I suppose you know Ronnie Laing's work and Mary Barnes. I mean that was the flavour of the time that one would almost become something. I think allowing infantile states to emerge is something a bit different because I think they exist hand in hand so I wouldn't go along with the idea of regression being whole hearted. You know a sort of complete thing. My sense is it allows earlier states of mind to emerge. But probably not to be completely overwhelming. I mean I think, certainly when I started my analysis I found it extremely disruptive and distressing and I kept thinking I hope she knows what she's doing and you know that I'll be able to carry on working and I sort of hoped that I was right. And of course I did manage to keep on you know drive from analysis straight to work and carry on with the day while having contained something very psychically disruptive. So I think it allows, I mean, obviously they do emerge face to face but I think it's

**Researcher:** Easier?

**Participant 3:** Ja

**Researcher:** Can we sort of turn to your there you are sitting behind the couch. How do you feel, how does your mind engage with the analysand you know that sort of, yes, let me not go any further and see how that touches off you. How does your mind engage with what they're saying and how they're being. What does that feel like?

**Participant 3:** Gosh, 'cos you're not asking about technique, you're saying how does it feel (pause) I think with the couch there is a sense of, you know, potentiality. I think when people are sitting across from you you do get a sense of what's going to come or their mood, quite quickly. I suppose I'm always incredibly interested how people would start and when it changes from being a sort of reportage a sort of bringing you up to date to a more sort of in the moment. But that's sort of before they start talking that's the anticipation and I don't think you meant that because you said when they engage with your mind.

**Researcher:** Well, that's interesting what you've said about, that's very interesting that's also something I want to know about but yes, you're right. What I'm thinking about is that there's your analysand's lines of words and associations and you've got your evenly suspended attention and what does that feel like to have evenly suspended attention and how does it interact with the words. Do you find yourself being pulled along, do you find emotions being evoked in you?

**Participant 3:** I think I try and monitor what the emotions are being evoked in me before I say anything. And try and think you know, do they link to what's being said. You know there is a clue there about what they're trying to say or there is something about the transference or the relationship coming out. It feels different to normal

conversation. I remember one of my friend's children went to a psychologist and said: She was very nice but she gets a bit like X sometimes. And I think that there is that when one thinks or does the work one is a bit slower or more thoughtful than you'd be in ordinary conversation. And that's interesting because you probably use your spontaneous responses more than you do in socialising that in a way it's a sort of weaving and I suppose I'm very conscious of always trying to see what it is the patient can do first before I step in. Or I find I often say: Well I've got a different take. Or: What do you make of that. I mean just thinking about it my sense is that one can work or play in that area more if their minds are available. I mean obviously it varies.

**Researcher:** Now do you think the couch helps you do that?

**Participant 3:** Mmmmm I do.

**Researcher:** 'Cos you've got to do a lot of things, you've got to listen, you've got to feel what you're feeling, you've got to think about what you want to say and imagine what effect that would have on the analysand, you've got to think about that. There's a whole process and I'm kind of suspecting that the couch kind of makes it easier to stay with that process.

**Participant 3:** I think so. And I think the thing I learnt from my own analysis that used to surprise me was how she used to just let great drifts of what I said just go. And I think in normal conversation and in face to face therapy you know often people just look at you and expect some sort of response to what they've just said. As I think that technically it's different that if you just let something go and maybe come back to it later, when someone's on the couch that process is much easier.

**Researcher:** Okay. Now this might sound a little bit strange. Do you think you've ever had the experience of your thoughts or your feelings running ahead of your analysands. In other words you might literally anticipate words that they're going to say or feelings that they're about to announce that they have. Can you recall any experience.

**Participant 3:** Mmmmm. I mean I think one is sometimes waiting to see if they get there first. And I think when there starts to be progress and the patient makes links where they've relied on you to make links before. That's very exciting but I think you might be saying something different.

**Researcher:** I'm saying that you might literally think a word and that's exactly the word they use next. Not anticipating in a cognitive way.

**Participant 3:** I don't think I've had that experience with a word but I've certainly had it with an idea or a link that there's something there that I'm about to say and that's what they've gone on to say. But I don't know about a precise word.

**Researcher:** I made a mistake once before of being too literal about this and describing it as rhythmical but I think it could be a rhythm but it's not necessarily a rhythm. Are there

any particular habits you have when you have an analysand using the couch so things like following a pattern or looking at a particular object in the room. Do you find anything like that happening?

**Participant 3:** No but then I have very few objects and the patients look out onto the garden. I think peripherally I notice colours in the garden.

**Researcher:** You don't find yourself focusing on a particular thing? It could be the sole of your shoe.

**Participant 3:** I think I probably look at the bit of the patient I can see probably more than I should. I mean I can remember reading Melford keeps his eyes shut.

**Researcher:** You'll be pleased to know there are other clinicians that say that's exactly what you should be doing.

**Participant 3:** Well, I was just struck because I was thinking, I think the once or twice I've noticed is when I'm really trying to grapple with something and then maybe I do need to cut out things but I can't actually think I focus on

**Researcher:** Anything in particular. Because you know Anna Freud used to knit. That's what she focused on and there is some evidence to suggest people might focus on something but it's not necessarily something everyone does. I think someone has gone as far as the crack in the wall or something.

**Participant 3:** I can understand doing something where sort of part of, you know where you're doing something repetitive that you don't need to think about but no.

**Researcher:** And then do you notice anything in particular about the experience of your body when you have people using the couch. Your experience of your body?

**Participant 3:** No.

**Researcher:** Your sense of time?

**Participant 3:** I mean use the same chair whatever work I'm doing so maybe that's also something.

**Researcher:** The chair you have at the top of your couch is the same chair, it's moveable?

**Participant 3:** Well I have it sort of tangentially because I've got a small room

**Researcher:** That's another thing I wanted to come to ask you about. So it's the same chair, which is what most people do.



**Participant 3:** I suppose if I were to think about my body I try and do the Alexander (something here I can't hear) Because I am aware of what Nina Coltart says how people who sit in a chair all day. It's not the healthiest thing.

**Researcher:** And time? What's your experience of time like?

**Participant 3:** I think it goes quite quickly. I mean obviously one's very conscious of being ready on time and being available to start on time but I (pause)

**Researcher:** Do you think your sense of time becomes more diffuse?

**Participant 3:** Ja, I think particularly in the middle of a session when you seem to have got the rhythm going and work going and I mean I think without watching the clock that fifty minutes is quite ingrained in me.

**Researcher:** So your internal clock is going on anyway so you can abandon yourself to this almost different kind of time that occurs in that space.

**Participant 3:** Ja

[Irrelevant and personal information removed.]

**Researcher:** What are your own associations like when your analysand uses the couch. I presume you have a set of associations as well. Can you say anything about that? It's okay if you can't.

**Participant 3:** Not in a global way. I suppose one's associating all the time, I mean there's that very nice paper in the Journal of Psychoanalysis where one American, and it's started where [audiotape indistinct]. I have a sense that even in intensive work one's just dealing with a very small part of the patients life and associations I mean certainly I can remember being a patient and having a whole raft of things and choosing one stream to go with. And I think one's having associations all the time and discarding and going and, I mean occasionally with one patient one will get the same set of responses when you're working on something.

**Researcher:** Another question on that, you see that selecting and discarding process, I'm imagining and I'm just putting this in for argument, I'm imagining that when one's face to face the analyst may in fact be a lot less aware of their own associations and maybe much more aware of their response. Whereas when you're sitting quietly behind the couch you've actually got a little bit more space in your mind to just allow your own associations to surface. You may discard them as before but it might be something more aware discarding process. Does that sound right or can't you say?

**Participant 3:** I think it does you know because I work a lot with children as well and you know often they aren't in eye to eye contact and then one's much freer to comment and to think. It's those that perpetually engage with you which I mean it's a different sort

of transference one's talking about but there's less of that sort transitional space. And I always find it a relief when they stop.

**Researcher:** Stop engaging and get on with the play!

**Participant 3:** Yes and feel free enough.

**Researcher:** When you form interpretations - of course what exactly is interpretations but I'll leave that up to you - can you say something about that process when you're using the couch?

**Participant 3:** I think when you're using the couch you've probably got a bit more space and time to assemble one [an interpretation] and maybe to use the past with the present and the transference to try and, I don't know I haven't thought much about it but I guess face to face one's maybe working with one or two aspects.

**Researcher:** Okay so you've got a bit more space to assemble what it is you're going to say. To get more bits and pieces together.

**Participant 3:** I think so.

**Researcher:** I want to go back to some technique things now. Well they're not really technique they're really have to do with the critical areas that I'm going to look at. There's no reason why I need to be dark about that and not let you know what the critical things are that we look at. The main things are really all tangled in with each other and it's got to do with dominance and genderisation and all that. Some people maintain that using the couch is a kind of dominating, it's the way the therapist dominates [unclear] and I'm particularly using that language now because I'm talking [from a] feminist perspective. What is your experience and what have your analysands said about feelings of dominance or if anything has been dominated?

**Participant 3:** I think it's more of an issue for people who're fearful of using the couch and refuse to and don't feel able to and people who actually do.

**Researcher:** They don't complain about it happening?

**Participant 3:** I had someone jumping between the two and I think his actual preference was the couch and he was somebody with very difficult current life and past history and he was used to seeing the shock in peoples eyes and it was a different quality when he was left to sort of process it and not use it so much but got to different places.

**Researcher:** So it was freeing for him in a way?

**Participant 3:** I think so.

**Researcher:** There's a whole body of thinking and it's not usually about the couch it's about psychoanalysis but if you look at the words Freud uses when he talks and there are a few places where he talks about getting people to use the couch it does sound like he's imposing his will on them. Most particularly people have said this is a kind of male/female thing this a patriarchy story that the person on the couch gets feminised in the dominance sense. Do you have any thoughts or feelings about that?

**Participant 3:** I suppose one of the themes that I've been talking about is that it's easier to do the work if someone uses the couch and I suppose if you take that as something in the analyst's interests you know maybe there is a wish to have the patient more,

**Researcher:** More compliant in a way?

**Participant 3:** Yes

**Researcher:** But it could be just a wish to have your analysis and working easier but there could be a difference. I've taken what you've said to mean that analysis and work easier on the couch and it's easier to work with them on the couch and it's easier thing for you to do but what you're saying now is that just maybe it could be a compliance thing.

**Participant 3:** Ja, in the analysis's interest. I was young, 26, when I had my analysis I wasn't about to, I didn't feel it to be dreadfully unequal even then. I certainly didn't like it to start with but I didn't,

**Researcher:** Your experience with them being on the couch are you relating to them as a subject as another person or are you [seeing them more as objects, that] is the question. Or are they becoming more sort of objectified?

**Participant 3:** No I think there's still a subject but a subject who's unconscious is sort of a bigger presence. I don't think, I mean I never objectify patients in therapy. I mean I know all the stuff about hospitals and kidneys. [Audiotape unclear]

**Researcher:** [Audiotape unclear] but I also feel that we don't really treat people as people, as subjects, but the question does arise do we objectify, do they become this Oedipus complex with whatever? You're saying it doesn't feel like it for you!

**Participant 3:** No.

**Researcher:** Two questions, quite different. The first one is just the process of getting people to move to couch. What's that like?

**Participant 3:** It varies I mean I, my sense is if people, I'm not so sure about using it once a week but I think if people are coming twice or more it certainly is a possibility. I feel that the people who have had to watch their appearance very closely for whatever reason then end up watching me very closely are you know really helped enormously by not having that control almost. I mean I've got one patient at the moment who I really

want to use the couch but I mean control and sussing things out are just so important for her that we can't get there at the moment. I think she'd experience a great sense of relief but maybe she won't. Maybe she's right.

**Researcher:** She badly needs to look you in the eye basically to keep you under surveillance.

**Participant 3:** But I try and keep it alive and I think you know eventually she will but there's so much in her material that addressed. I mean it's terribly hard for her just to even have an opinion on what she does or what happens to her to we're I guess quite far from, she is somebody I think has kept control, who's been to see me and then stopped, put me on probation so and I think I have possibly been more gentle and accommodating to her than might be in her interest.

**Researcher:** And then just in line with this, it's not the next question, do you think there are people who shouldn't use the couch? Do you judge them to be somebody, some people who shouldn't, it would be unwise?

**Participant 3:** Ja, you know I think bearing in mind in Cape Town very few people are seen say four times a week or three times a week to contain. [Information about case slightly changed to disguise information: For example, with a woman therapist with an incredibly sexually acting out male patient]. I don't, you know I wouldn't think that would be a helpful thing. I mean one might get too much early material. I think [the therapist] would be terrified. You know how much one would get the erotic transference going on I think could be an issue. I think also for some very disturbed people, borderline, I mean I know it's done, but I'd have to think of each case by merit. I mean I don't know are there particular injunctions about it?

**Researcher:** Some people say yes and some people say no. My last thing is, I think it's my last thing. Do you think having the experience of using the couch influenced your thinking about the kind of theory of psychoanalysis, either the process, theories about the process or theory about what's actually going on in the human mind?

**Participant 3:** Gosh, how do you separate out the couch from the experience of being or having psychoanalysis. For me they pretty much went hand in hand. When I started my training I started analysis. And that experience of having psychoanalysis has deeply affected how I, who I am and how I think.

**Researcher:** When you think of your own use of the couch, when you've got an analysand on the couch, do you think psychoanalysis is fundamentally a method of investigation and cure that takes into account resistance and transference. That's all it is really. That maybe you've formed some additional hypotheses, you think maybe it's not just resistance and transference it might be this it might be that?

**Participant 3:** I mean you're almost saying have I got some additional theories? I mean I think I don't at a [audiotape unclear] level have a theory that has been changed. I mean

I just, I suppose, in a very ordinary way which I suppose is what a lot of people deal with is just how interesting and exciting but also how much emotional energy goes into it. And one does have to be, rightly or wrongly, I suppose some psychologists and feminists would say this is a bad thing, a somewhat different person than one is with one's family and it's coming towards the end of the year and I'm looking forward to letting go. I suppose one has to, although one is continually emotionally effective one also have some sort of ability to put it in another place.

**Researcher:** So now, just more specifically, I think I did understand what you were saying, I would imagine it's easier to put forward your analytic foot so to speak if you're using the couch than if you were sitting face to face. Does that sound right to you. It's a bit of a leading question.

**Participant 3:** Ja, I think so. I mean I also do, with children, it's obviously also easier to do it with those who have a creative mind and some sense of an internal space. It's much more painstaking with those that don't. I mean the adults I get to see are pretty high functioning. I guess maybe it's a function of private practice I mean not everybody has such well patients. I mean I can't really say what it would be like say with a borderline.

**Researcher:** Just to finish off is there anything that you can think of that somehow I haven't, that you think is important that I haven't covered or I've warded off?

**Participant 3:** I think there is something about lying down and feeling reasonably comfortable that is quite soothing to the spirit and I just think how nice it used to be to get back to analysis after a break you know when one had worked through an early embracing issue. I just had a patient come back yesterday from a trip and I think that sinking back into something that is familiar but is still unknown that maybe the couch is a symbol but it also provides something,

**Researcher:** Something literally

**Participant 3:** Ja, it's not exactly a container is it, but maybe people use it. But you know I think lying down and being looked after is such an [audiotape unclear] experience. And then of course we begin to see why it's so complicated for some people to think of going. No, I mean, I suppose I'm going to start thinking about this and have thoughts in a delayed.....

**Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) extracted and numbered and converted to constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant**

Meaning Units	Constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Okay, so in the first bit maybe you can just tell me a bit about how you came to use the couch. This is not necessarily going to be incorporated it's more of a beginning thing but just, I mean how did it start for you. How did you start off having patients use the couch?</p> <p>1. <b>Participant 3:</b> Well I didn't when [I started (identifying information removed)] but I did have a long term plan to [glossed] do it. And then when we moved here, [identifying information removed] there was a lot of talk about analysis and I thought, well, I would do it as soon as we moved. We were in a rented house, it wasn't possible. I had a twice a week patient who I'd seen there and I said that when we moved there would be a possibility of using the couch. And she was keen to, she'd been in therapy before and the therapist had used a, it wasn't a couch but she described a sort of recliner away from the therapist, so yes, when I moved that was an important part of the room.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Now just to put you in the picture with this because being not my main question but it's easier to bring it in first. To a large extent, and it's very clear from me speaking to people and from the literature, there's a whole big thing people have got about the couch and their identity. In other words somehow using the couch would identify one as an analyst and if you</p>	<p>[DELETED] [1]</p>

don't quite feel that you are an analyst or entitled to that status then you don't quite use the couch or you feel that you, and all that stuff. Can I ask if that's played any role for you, I mean has it been a sort of little hump to get over to use it for those reasons or is it just practical things?

2. **Participant 3:** I think it was a mixture because I hadn't worked that much with adults I mean I had worked with the parents but my training had been with children and adolescents and none of them had been suitable. I mean I think it varies, I think some of the training cases who were adolescents do want to use the couch. That might have been easier if I'd had that sort of child.

**Researcher:** You didn't really have that? Yes, okay. Do you think that people, I mean do you think that it's a kind of identification thing, people identify themselves in a certain way?

3. **Participant 3:** I do but I think for me it was more starting to work intensely with adults rather than that.

4. **Researcher:** So it's more pragmatic for you than an identity thing for you?

**Participant 3:** Ja,

5. I think I was sort of hesitant but I think there'd been a lot of Tavistock people who'd encouraged clinicians here to do it or to use the couch.

**Researcher:** That made it less of a sort of prohibition.

[DELETED] [2]

In response to a direct question the participant stated that although the couch can act as a signifier of analysis and of the analyst's identity as such, for her the use of the couch had more to do with working intensely with adults. [3]

For this participant the use of the couch is more a pragmatic measure than symbolic of the analyst's identity. [4]

Initially, the participant had been hesitant to presume to use the couch but the support of esteemed colleagues encouraged her to do so.[5]

<p><b>Participant 3:</b> Ja</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Now I need to read my main question: Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands used the couch.</p> <p>6. <b>Participant 3:</b> I mean I, well there seems to be a slightly different process in training they seem to come in and the wait before they start talking seems more part of the process. I mean I have people who sit across often sort of look at me or smile or look anxious um so</p> <p>7. I think the whole process is slightly different.</p> <p>8. I can remember Sheila Miller saying to me: You know you don't have to watch your facial expressions when you use the couch. And I think in a way that's the freedom to sort of sit there and really listen and think in a way that I think might look odd if</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> If you were face to face?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Ja.</p> <p>9. <b>Researcher:</b> Okay, that's very nice. So am I putting words in your mouth if I say that there's a kind of different ambience?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I, there is.</p> <p>10. I mean my sense is that patients feel you're going to have more control if they use the couch but in fact you have less control and they feel freer.</p>	<p>Analysands who both use the couch, and who are familiar with psychoanalytic principles (i.e. people in training) exert less interpersonal pressure on the participant to break the silence as it seems to be more part of the process. [6]</p> <p>The whole process of analysis when the couch is used feels different to face-to-face. [7]</p> <p>In particular the privacy afforded by the couch allows the analyst the chance to be less guarded and more free to wait, listen and think. [8]</p> <p>In response to a direct enquiry the participant agreed that the use of the couch provided a distinctive ambience. [9]</p> <p>In this participant's experience, although analysands may expect the use of the couch to give the analyst the power of control in fact the analyst has less control and the analysand may experience more freedom. [10]</p>
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<p>11. I think from my own experience of being an analysand, I suppose I sort of barely registered the ambience when I walked in whereas I think that people who are sitting face to face are picking up all sorts of clues all the time.</p> <p>12. But then one becomes attuned to the nuance of the voice and other cues I suppose.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Can you say a bit more about those other cues and nuance of the voice? Can you give me a sense of what it is?</p> <p>13. <b>Participant 3:</b> Well, you can tell the mood and a lot about what the analyst possibly is going to start saying OR picking up by that voice rather than the expression. You pick up the little noises they make habitually.</p> <p>14a. <b>Researcher:</b> Do you think that might touch on things like rhythm and intonation and accenting their voice and things like that? Or is it hard to say.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> No, I think it does.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> [(Glossed because audiotape unclear.) One idea is] that one actually enters a whole different order of processing when you're out of sight and that that order is more dependent on bodily rhythms and things like intonation and prosody than what your actual speaking is. So it seems to me that you're saying that there is</p>	<p>Drawing on her own experience as an analysand using the couch, the participant noted that the analysand is less influenced by interpersonal cues than she would be face-to-face. [11]</p> <p>The above notwithstanding the participant believed that in time an analysand would re-sensitize to non-verbal communications by becoming attuned to voice and other cues. [12]</p> <p>The analysand can intuit information about the analyst (such as her mood) by relying on the analyst's vocal rather than gestural presence. [13]</p> <p>[14a] discarded</p>
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something like that maybe going on. Or is that going too far?

**14b. Participant 3:** No I think you get to know your analyst in another sort of way which I think people who are apprehensive about using the couch don't have a sense of.

15. You know, and I certainly think that the sort of noises that [you] make just before the end of a session and I think I probably have my own set of them or similar but certainly people who know the couch either from themselves have a sense of when time is almost up. Or there is something in the rhythm and I think there is also something in the way one is available that changes in those last few minutes.

16. **Researcher:** A bit more mysterious than just it could just be the presence that changes somehow. That they really don't know how the analyst's presence is communicated but their presence changes.

**Participant 3:** Ja but I think your availability is also part of your presence and I think your availability shifts in those last few minutes.

**Researcher:** Can I go back to the first part when I was talking about the ambience. Would it be going too far to say that the analysis is more vital, that there is more life in it using the couch or is it just different?

17. **Participant 3:** I'm not sure about the word vital. I think it's possibly easier to get to different states of mind.

In respect of prosody and rhythm, using the couch leads the analysand to get to know the analyst in a way quite different from working face-to-face. [14b]

Both vocal rhythm and the analyst's projected presence influence the analysand who, using the couch, is sensitively attuned to the analyst's presence. [15]

In response to a direct question the participant agreed that the analyst's presence could change mysteriously, but added that the analyst's presence depended upon the analyst's emotional availability. [16]

The participant stated that using the couch possibly rendered it easier for the analytic couple to access different states of mind. [17]

<p>18. I mean just while we're talking I keep thinking of infants and mothers and that you know the sort of recapitulation of that sort of experience rather than it being something that you can look and cognitively process. I mean you obviously cognitively process all sorts of things.</p>	<p>The participant implied that these different states of mind found with the analytic couple were similar to the states of mind obtained between with a nursing couple (mother and infant). [18]</p>
<p>19. <b>Researcher:</b> Okay, so would you classify, you've run onto one of my questions that I pop in at the end usually but that's great. Would you go so far as to say that the couch facilitates something like reverie? Or is that going too far.</p>	<p>In response to a direct question the participant concurred that the couch produced something like a state of reverie. [19]</p>
<p><b>Participant 3:</b> No I think it's possibly the only way you could work four times a week with an adult. Or five times a week. I think it allows something to take place. And you know it allows you to have different scenes.</p>	
<p>20. One man who used the couch with me, I put up a sort of shade awning, I've got a vine outside my room, and he turned to me and he said: You knew that I used to look at those things and imagine them to be figures and now you've taken that away from me. Now I think you'd have to not be looking at somebody and be in a different state to say that sort of thing.</p>	<p>Using an example of one analysand's response to the physical setting, the participant concluded that using the couch fosters a different state of mind. [20]</p>
<p>21. <b>Researcher:</b> Do you think that the analysands are sort of more in a sense are they able to more easily able to express what they're feeling or what they're thinking?</p>	<p>In response to a question the participant expressed the opinion that using the couch allowed analysands to more easily express what they feel or think. [21]</p>
<p><b>Participant 3:</b> Mmmm and I suppose it varies but I think for some people they're more able to express the irrational or strange.</p>	

22. **Researcher:** Okay, and do you think it's, I mean it's a bit of a second year text book on psychology when they mention psychoanalysis, they tell you that the couch is used to encourage regression and in fact this is one of the dangers of the couch. Do you think regression is one of the things that occurs and if so what kind of regression?

**Participant 3:** I don't think it encourages regression in the way that we understood it in the late '60's you know where I suppose you know Ronnie Laing's work and Mary Barnes. I mean that was the flavour of the time that one would almost become something.

23. I think allowing infantile states to emerge is something a bit different because I think they exist hand in hand so I wouldn't go along with the idea of regression being whole hearted. You know a sort of complete thing. My sense is it allows earlier states of mind to emerge. But probably not to be completely overwhelming.

24. I mean I think, certainly when I started my analysis I found it extremely disruptive and distressing and I kept thinking I hope she knows what she's doing and you know that I'll be able to carry on working and I sort of hoped that I was right. And of course I did manage to keep on, you know drive from analysis straight to work and carry on with the day while having contained something very psychically disruptive. So I think it allows, I mean obviously they do emerge face to face but I think it's

In response to a question the participant stated that she did not believe that the couch fostered regression in the traditional sense of the word. [22]

In the participant's experience use of the couch allowed developmentally earlier states of mind to emerge. [23]

From her own experience as an analysand using the couch the participant observed that the analytic process was disruptive and more distressing than working face-to-face whilst not being disabling. [24]

**Researcher:** Easier?

**Participant 3:** Ja

25. **Researcher:** Can we sort of turn to your there you are sitting behind the couch. How do you feel, how does your mind engage with the analysand you know that sort of, yes, let me not go any further and see how that touches off you. How does your mind engage with what they're saying and how they're being. What does that feel like?

**Participant 3:** Gosh, 'cos you're not asking about technique, you're saying how does it feel (pause) I think with the couch there is a sense of, you know, potentiality.

26. I think when people are sitting across from you you do get a sense of what's going to come or their mood, quite quickly.

27. I suppose I'm always incredibly interested how people would start and when it changes from being a sort of reportage a sort of bringing you up to date to a more sort of in the moment. But that's sort of before they start talking that's the anticipation and I don't think you meant that because you said when they engage with your mind.

28. **Researcher:** Well, that's interesting what you've said about, that's very interesting that's also something I want to know about but yes, you're right. What I'm thinking about is that there's your analysand's lines of words and associations and you've got your evenly suspended attention and what does that feel like to have evenly suspended attention and how does it interact with the words. Do you find

Using the couch gives this participant a sense of potentiality. [25]

Working face-to-face the analysand's productions are experienced by the participant as appearing quickly. [26]

In general this participant is interestedly expectant of what the analysand will produce. [27]

<p>yourself being pulled along, do you find emotions being evoked in you?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I think I try and monitor what the emotions are being evoked in me before I say anything. And try and think you know, do they link to what's being said. You know there is a clue there about what they're trying to say or there is something about the transference or the relationship coming out.</p> <p>29. It feels different to normal conversation.</p> <p>30. I remember one of my friend's children went to a psychologist and said: She was very nice but she gets a bit like X sometimes. And I think that there is that when one thinks or does the work one is a bit slower or more thoughtful than you'd be in ordinary conversation. And that's interesting because you probably use your spontaneous responses more than you do in socialising that in a way it's a sort of weaving and I suppose I'm very conscious of always trying to see what it is the patient can do first before I step in. Or I find I often say: Well I've got a different take. Or: What do you make of that. I mean just thinking about it my sense is that one can work or play in that area more if their minds are available. I mean obviously it varies.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Now do you think the couch helps you do that?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Mmmmm I do.</p> <p>31. <b>Researcher:</b> 'Cos you've got to do a lot of things, you've got to listen,</p>	<p>Using the couch the participant tries to monitor the emotions evoked in her by the analysand's narrative, at the same time trying to elucidate patterns of meaning before saying anything.[28]</p> <p>When using the couch the participant experiences the interaction as different to normal conversation. [29]</p> <p>The use of the couch aids the participant to think and work in a slower and more reflective way than ordinary conversation. Whilst using her spontaneous responses more than in social conversation, she also allows the analysand to work in an autonomous way before herself contributing. [30]</p>
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you've got to feel what you're feeling, you've got to think about what you want to say and imagine what effect that would have on the analysand, you've got to think about that. There's a whole process and I'm kind of suspecting that the couch kind of makes it easier to stay with that process.

**Participant 3:** I think so.

32. And I think the thing I learnt from my own analysis that used to surprise me was how she used to just let great drifts of what I said just go. And I think in normal conversation and in face to face therapy you know often people just look at you and expect some sort of response to what they've just said. As I think that technically it's different that if you just let something go and maybe come back to it later, when someone's on the couch that process is much easier.

33. **Researcher:** Okay. Now this might sound a little bit strange. Do you think you've ever had the experience of your thoughts or your feelings running ahead of your analysands. In other words you might literally anticipate words that they're going to say or feelings that they're about to announce that they have. Can you recall any experience?

**Participant 3:** Mmmmm. I mean I think one is sometimes waiting to see if they get there first. And I think when there starts to be progress and the patient makes links where they've relied on you to make links before. That's very exciting but I think you might be saying something different.

**Researcher:** I'm saying that you might

In response to a direct comment the participant agreed that the couch made it easier to stay with the analytic process. [31] Linking these observations to her own training analysis the participant stated that, unlike social interaction, she would let go of much of her analysand's material and that using the couch made this process easier. [32]

In response to a direct question the participant stated that she has had the experience of anticipating one of her analysand's ideas or links. [33]

literally think a word and that's exactly the word they use next. Not anticipating in a cognitive way.

**Participant 3:** I don't think I've had that experience with a word but I've certainly had it with an idea or a link that there's something there that I'm about to say and that's what they've gone on to say. But I don't know about a precise word.

34. **Researcher:** I made a mistake once before of being too literal about this and describing it as rhythmical but I think it could be a rhythm but it's not necessarily a rhythm. Are there any particular habits you have when you have an analysis and using the couch so things like following a pattern or looking at a particular object in the room. Do you find anything like that happening?

**Participant 3:** No but then I have very few objects and the patients look out onto the garden. I think peripherally I notice colours in the garden.

35. **Researcher:** You don't find yourself focusing on a particular thing? It could be the sole of your shoe.

**Participant 3:** I think I probably look at the bit of the patient I can see probably more than I should. I mean I can remember reading Melford keeps his eyes shut.

**Researcher:** You'll be pleased to know there are other clinicians that say that's exactly what you should be doing.

**Participant 3:** Well, I was just struck

Using the couch the participant stated, with some uncertainty, that she peripherally noticed the colours in her garden. [34]

Using the couch the participant will look at the part of her analysis that she can see more than she believes she should. [35]



<p>because I was thinking,</p> <p>36. I think the once or twice I've noticed is when I'm really trying to grapple with something and then maybe I do need to cut out things but I can't actually think I focus on,</p> <p>37. <b>Researcher:</b> Anything in particular. Because you know Anna Freud used to knit. That's what she focused on and there is some evidence to suggest people might focus on something but it's not necessarily something everyone does. I think someone has gone as far as the crack in the wall or something.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I can understand doing something where sort of part of, you know where you're doing something repetitive that you don't need to think about but no.</p> <p>38. <b>Researcher:</b> And then do you notice anything in particular about the experience of your body when you have people using the couch. Your experience of your body?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> No.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Your sense of time?</p> <p>39. <b>Participant 3:</b> I mean use the same chair whatever work I'm doing so maybe that's also something.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> The chair you have at the top of your couch is the same chair, it's moveable?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Well I have it sort of tangentially because I've got a small room</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> That's another thing I wanted to come to ask you about. So it's the same</p>	<p>Without being very clear about the process, the participant stated that when grappling with some things she needed to 'cut out things'. [36]</p> <p>[37] discarded</p> <p>The participant initially denied noticing anything in particular about her bodily-ness when using the couch. [38]</p> <p>The participant is aware of the literal effects, on her body, of sitting in a chair all day. [39]</p>
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<p>chair, which is what most people do.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I suppose if I were to think about my body I try and do the Alexander (something here I can't hear) Because I am aware of what Nina Coltart says how people who sit in a chair all day. It's not the healthiest thing.</p> <p>40. <b>Researcher:</b> And time? What's your experience of time like?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I think it goes quite quickly. I mean obviously one's very conscious of being ready on time and being available to start on time but I (pause)</p> <p>41. <b>Researcher:</b> Do you think your sense of time becomes more diffuse?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Ja,</p> <p>42. I think particularly in the middle of a session when you seem to have got the rhythm going and work going and I mean I think without watching the clock that fifty minutes is quite ingrained in me.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> So your internal clock is going on anyway so</p> <p>43. you can abandon yourself to this almost different kind of time that occurs in that space.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Ja</p> <p>[Irrelevant and personal information removed.]</p> <p>44. <b>Researcher:</b> What are your own associations like when your analysand uses the couch. I presume you have a set of associations as well. Can you say</p>	<p>In response to a direct question the participant stated that when using the couch, time seemed to pass quickly. [40]</p> <p>[41] discarded</p> <p>Once the session is underway and a rhythm of work is established the participant is pre-reflectively aware of time. [42]</p> <p>[43] discarded</p> <p>The participant stated that although she associates all the time whilst conducting analysis using the couch, she was unable to comment on this as a particular experience. [44]</p>
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<p>anything about that? It's okay if you can't.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Not in a global way. I suppose one's associating all the time, I mean there's that very nice paper in the Journal of Psychoanalysis where one American, and it's started where [audiotape indistinct].</p> <p>45. I have a sense that even in intensive work one's just dealing with a very small part of the patients life and associations I mean certainly I can remember being a patient and having a whole raft of things and choosing one stream to go with.</p> <p>46. And I think one's having associations all the time and discarding and going and, I mean occasionally with one patient one will get the same set of responses when you're working on something.</p> <p>47. <b>Researcher:</b> Another question on that, you see that selecting and discarding process, I'm imagining and I'm just putting this in for argument, I'm imagining that when one's face to face the analyst may in fact be a lot less aware of their own associations and maybe much more aware of their response. Whereas when you're sitting quietly behind the couch you've actually got a little bit more space in your mind to just allow your own associations to surface. You may discard them as before but it might be something more aware discarding process. Does that sound right or can't you say?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> I think it does</p>	<p>The participant's sense was that even in intensive work she is only working on a portion of the analysand's life and drawing on her own experience as an analysand she stated that one selects from a host of associations. [45]</p> <p>The participant stated that as the analyst she has and selects associations all the time which occasionally naturally converge with the analysand's work. [46]</p> <p>[47] discarded</p> <p>Drawing on her experience with children,</p>
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<p>48. you know because I work a lot with children as well and you know often they aren't in eye to eye contact and then one's much freer to comment and to think.</p>	<p>where there is less eye to eye contact, the participant stated that lack of eye contact (as is obtained with the couch) allows the analyst to be much freer to think and comment. [48]</p>
<p>49. It's those that perpetually engage with you which I mean it's a different sort of transference one's talking about but there's less of that, a sort of transitional space. And I always find it a relief when they stop.</p>	<p>With children, as with the couch, the freedom of not being engaged in an eye to eye fashion and the movement into a transitional space, is a relief to the participant. [49]</p>
<p>50. <b>Researcher:</b> Stop engaging and get on with the play! <b>Participant 3:</b> Yes and feel free enough.</p>	<p>With children, as with the couch, not working face-to-face leads to disengagement from an interpersonal relationship with the analyst and entry to a transitional or play space. [50]</p>
<p>51. <b>Researcher:</b> When you form interpretations - of course what exactly is interpretations but I'll leave that up to you - can you say something about that process when you're using the couch?</p>	<p>Using the couch the participant experienced more space and time to assemble an interpretation as well as the opportunity to consider more aspects (past, present, transference) of the analysand's material than face-to-face. [51]</p>
<p><b>Participant 3:</b> I think when you're using the couch you've probably got a bit more space and time to assemble one [an interpretation] and maybe to use the past with the present and the transference to try and, I don't know I haven't thought much about it but I guess face to face one's maybe working with one or two aspects.</p>	<p>[52] discarded</p>
<p>52. <b>Researcher:</b> Okay so you've got a bit more space to assemble what it is you're going to say. To get more bits and pieces together.</p>	

**Participant 3:** I think so.

**Researcher:** I want to go back to some technique things now. Well they're not really technique they really have to do with the critical areas that I'm going to look at. There's no reason why I need to be dark about that and not let you know what the critical things are that we look at. The main things are really all tangled in with each other and it's got to do with dominance and genderisation and all that.

53. Some people maintain that using the couch is a kind of dominating, it's the way the therapist dominates [unclear] and I'm particularly using that language now because I'm talking [from a] feminist perspective. What is your experience and what have your analysands said about feelings of dominance or if anything has been dominated?

**Participant 3:** I think it's more of an issue for people who're fearful of using the couch and refuse to and don't feel able to and people who actually do.

54. **Researcher:** They don't complain about it happening?

**Participant 3:** I had someone jumping between the two and I think his actual preference was the couch and he was somebody with very difficult current life and past history and he was used to seeing the shock in people's eyes and it was a different quality when he was left to sort of

In response to a question the participant denied that analysands who chose to use the couch felt dominated, but rather that concern about domination was found with people who were fearful of using the couch. [53]

Paradoxically the participant gave an example of how the use of the couch freed an analysand from the domination of the gaze of the 'other'. [54]

process it and not use it so much but got to different places.

**Researcher:** So it was freeing for him in a way?

**Participant 3:** I think so.

**Researcher:** There's a whole body of thinking and it's not usually about the couch it's about psychoanalysis but if you look at the words Freud uses when he talks and there are a few places where he talks about getting people to use the couch it does sound like he's imposing his will on them.

55. Most particularly people have said this is a kind of male/female thing this a patriarchy story that the person on the couch gets feminised in the dominance sense. Do you have any thoughts or feelings about that?

**Participant 3:** I suppose one of the themes that I've been talking about is that it's easier to do the work if someone uses the couch and I suppose if you take that as something in the analyst's interests you know maybe there is a wish to have the patient more,

**Researcher:** More compliant in a way?

**Participant 3:** Yes

56. **Researcher:** But it could be just a wish to have your analysand working easier but there could be a difference. I've taken what you've said to mean that analysands work easier on the couch and it's easier to work with them

The participant stated that it is easier to conduct analysis when using the couch. She then implied, ambiguously, that using the couch made the analysand more compliant and that this was in the analyst's (professional) interest and therefore desired. [55]

The participant agreed with the researcher's précis: simply put it is easier to have the analysand use the couch and therefore in the analyst's interests, however, it could also be that it was easier because the analysand was compliant. [56]

<p>on the couch and it's easier thing for you to do but what you're saying now is that just maybe it could be a compliance thing.</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> Ja, in the analysis's interest.</p> <p>57. I was young, 26, when I had my analysis. I wasn't about to, I didn't feel it to be dreadfully unequal even then. I certainly didn't like it to start with but I didn't,</p> <p>58. <b>Researcher:</b> Your experience with them being on the couch are you relating to them as a subject as another person or are you [seeing them more as objects, that] is the question. Or are they becoming more sort of objectified?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> No I think there's still a subject but a subject who's unconscious is sort of a bigger presence. I don't think, I mean I never objectify patients in therapy. I mean I know all the stuff about hospitals and kidneys. [Audiotape unclear]</p> <p>59. <b>Researcher:</b> [Audiotape unclear] but I also feel that we don't really treat people as people, as subjects, but the question does arise do we objectify, do they become this Oedipus complex with whatever? You're saying it doesn't feel like it for you?</p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> No.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Two questions, quite different.</p> <p>60. The first one is just the process of getting people to move to the couch. What's that like?</p>	<p>The participant stated, from her own experience of analysis on the couch (when she was a young person), that although initially unpleasant, analysis was not concerned with dominance. [57]</p> <p>In response to a direct question from the researcher the participant stated that she did not objectify her analysands but related to them as a subject albeit a subject whose unconscious was foregrounded. [58]</p> <p>In response to further questioning the participant specifically denied objectifying analysands in any way. [59]</p> <p>In the participant's opinion (and drawing on clinical material) the privacy of the couch relieves analysands who have a need to control themselves and monitor the analyst. [60]</p>
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**Participant 3:** It varies I mean I, my sense is if people, I'm not so sure about using it once a week but I think if people are coming twice or more it certainly is a possibility. I feel that the people who have had to watch their appearance very closely for whatever reason then end up watching me very closely are you know really helped enormously by not having that control almost. I mean I've got one patient at the moment who I really want to use the couch but I mean control and sussing things out are just so important for her that we can't get there at the moment. I think she'd experience a great sense of relief but maybe she won't. Maybe she's right.

**Researcher:** She badly needs to look you in the eye basically to keep you under surveillance.

**Participant 3:** But I try and keep it alive and I think you know eventually she will but there's so much in her material that addressed. I mean it's terribly hard for her just to even have an opinion on what she does or what happens to her to we're I guess quite far from, she is somebody I think has kept control, who's been to see me and then stopped, put me on probation so and I think I have possibly been more gentle and accommodating to her than might be in her interest.

**Researcher:** And then just in line with this, it's not the next question,

61. do you think there are people who shouldn't use the couch? Do you judge them to be somebody, some people who shouldn't, it would be unwise?

**Participant 3:** Ja, you know I think bearing in mind in Cape Town very few people are seen say four times a week or

The participant believes that the use of the couch is contraindicated for certain analysands. For example, in the case of certain excessive erotic transferences or with very disturbed analysands. [61]



three times a week to contain.  
 [Information about case slightly changed to disguise information: For example, with a woman therapist with an incredibly sexually acting out male patient]. I don't, you know I wouldn't think that would be a helpful thing. I mean one might get too much early material. I think [the therapist] would be terrified. You know how much one would get the erotic transference going on I think could be an issue. I think also for some very disturbed people, borderline, I mean I know it's done, but I'd have to think of each case by merit. I mean I don't know are there particular injunctions about it?

**Researcher:** Some people say yes and some people say no.

62. My last thing is, I think it's my last thing. Do you think having the experience of using the couch influenced your thinking about the kind of theory of psychoanalysis, either the process, theories about the process or theory about what's actually going on in the human mind?

**Participant 3:** Gosh, how do you separate out the couch from the experience of being or having psychoanalysis. For me they pretty much went hand in hand. When I started my training I started analysis. And that experience of having psychoanalysis has deeply affected how I, who I am and how I think.

**Researcher:** When you think of your own use of the couch, when you've got an analysand on the couch, do you think psychoanalysis is fundamentally a method

In response to a direct question the participant stated, firstly that using the couch and being in analysis are inseparable and secondly experiencing analysis affects one's identity and therefore influences one's thinking about psychoanalysis. [62]

of investigation and cure that takes into account resistance and transference. That's all it is really. That maybe you've formed some additional hypotheses, you think maybe it's not just resistance and transference it might be this it might be that?

63. **Participant 3:** I mean you're almost saying have I got some additional theories? I mean I think I don't at a [audiotape unclear] level have a theory that has been changed. I mean I just, I suppose, in a very ordinary way which I suppose is what a lot of people deal with is just how interesting and exciting but also how much emotional energy goes into it. And one does have to be, rightly or wrongly, I suppose some psychologists and feminists would say this is a bad thing, a somewhat different person than one is with one's family and it's coming towards the end of the year and I'm looking forward to letting go. I suppose one has to, although one is continually emotionally effective one also have some sort of ability to put it in another place.

**Researcher:** So now, just more specifically, I think I did understand what you were saying,

64. I would imagine it's easier to put forward your analytic foot so to speak if you're using the couch than if you were sitting face to face. Does that sound right to you. It's a bit of a leading question.

**Participant 3:** Ja, I think so. I mean I also do, with children, it's obviously also easier to do it with those who have a creative mind and some sense of an internal space.

The participant stated that essentially her understanding of psychoanalytic theory had not changed at all, couch or no couch. However, she did observe that when conducting analysis she was in a different mind space to that she occupied outside of analysis, with family and friends. [63]

[64] discarded

It's much more painstaking with those that don't. I mean the adults I get to see are pretty high functioning. I guess maybe it's a function of private practice I mean not everybody has such well patients. I mean I can't really say what it would be like say with a borderline.

**Researcher:** Just to finish off is there anything that you can think of that somehow I haven't, that you think is important that I haven't covered or I've warded off?

65. **Participant 3:** I think there is something about lying down and feeling reasonably comfortable that is quite soothing to the spirit and

I just think how nice it used to be to get back to analysis after a break you know when one had worked through an early embracing issue. I just had a patient come back yesterday from a trip and I think

66. that sinking back into something that is familiar but is still unknown that maybe the couch is a symbol but it also provides something,

**Researcher:** Something literally

67. **Participant 3:** Ja, it's not exactly a container is it, but maybe people use it. But you know I think lying down and being looked after is such an [audiotape unclear] experience. And then of course we begin to see why it's so complicated for some people to think of going. No, I mean, I suppose I'm going to start thinking about this and have thoughts in a delayed.....

From her own experience the participant described using the couch as soothing to the spirit. [65]

From the participant's own experience, apart from being a symbol, the couch provides something literal to an analysand. [66]

From her own experience as an analysand the participant thought that whilst the couch might not exactly be a container it does provide the analysand with an experience about which they feel ambivalent. [67]

### Interview with fourth participant

**Researcher:** Even though I know this I'm going to ask you if you could tell me about yourself as a clinician. How you came to be interested in psychoanalysis, a little about your practical and theoretical background and you can add onto that how you came to have your analysands use the couch. So just a little bit about how you started.

**Participant 4:** My social work training had led me to believe I was interested in working with couples and with families, couples and groups and then once I started working I went into therapy myself and by the end of the first year of therapy I was very involved in the process of my own therapy, very struck by what emerged when somebody simply listened to me which was a very different orientation from my social work orientation of setting goals, of prioritizing what one would work with. And so I found myself very drawn to becoming a therapist and inevitably began to practice what I was experiencing but had not the proper training nor adequate supervision so very soon got myself in deep into transference where the first person was really quite a borderline woman and I ... I was way out of my depth you know which meant that I then went and found an analyst as a supervisor and increasingly looked for opportunities to....to train as a psychotherapist. Is the next one about the couch?

**Researcher:** It is about how you came to have your analysands use the couch. How did it start?

**Participant 4:** How did it start? Well it started because I'd had an experience....I had a work experience at the Tavistock in London [ identifying information removed] and a number of the staff did some individual work as well and they almost all had couches or folding couches in their rooms. And I had a brief therapy when I was in London and the woman I saw had a couch and I guess I was feeling so unsettled that the couch seemed quite a containing option and I settled into it very soon and felt really contained. I hadn't wanted to work with a woman but a woman was someone who was willing to see me twice a week for three months. And I guess in the presence of it being a woman I kind of needed the additional containment. My therapist at home was a man and I was having a break in that therapy while I was in London.

**Researcher:** So your beginning was with your using the couch. And then how did you, so did you, was it just a natural thing that you then when you had a chance used the couch yourself with one of your analysands.

**Participant 4:** I felt very strongly that it really assisted me. My therapist back home wasn't into using the couch and wasn't to be persuaded but I put a couch into my room with the option of it being available. And then there were three people who had longish therapy somewhere between three and five years each who used the couch for most of that time. Do you want me to go on about them?

**Researcher:** Maybe, I just want to sort of get a sense of what brought you to it, so it seems you just came to it. Firstly you had a practical experience of it yourself and it seemed useful to you and you found yourself offering it to your analysands.

**Participant 4:** Yes, I had a second experience with an analyst who provided a couch when I requested it and I had great difficulty settling with her. I decided to go to a woman after finishing therapy with the man. I felt I needed to work with a woman but found it a very difficult thing to do. And I struggled to settle for about a year and she provided a couch and I settled almost immediately and then had a two year experience of working on her couch.

**Researcher:** Maybe there will be things that will come back to you. Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands use the couch.

**Participant 4:** I think one of the first things is that I feel much more relaxed. I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive and concurrently I have a great deal more space to think about what's going on. I also have an opportunity to take some notes during a session as I need to. And I think it's cardinal that I...I have a thinking space. A better thinking space. That I guess would be the central experience.

**Researcher:** I just want to take off from something you've said there. Just go to kind of one of my more specific focal things. You've been familiar with Bion's idea of reverie. So do you think that the use of the couch has any bearing on your experience and your use of reverie, when you're in a state of reverie.

**Participant 4:** I think so partly because I'm not being watched and ..... if I think about [certain clients] they were so vigilant about me, that if I seemed to be lost or distracted or not paying attention to every bit, they got agitated and when they were on the couch they were aware of...they were less aware of me and I think that created a reverie state.

**Researcher:** So it helps them because they are less aware of you, they are freed up in some way and it helps you because you are freed up in some way.

**Participant 4:** They are less vigilant of me and I'm more relaxed because I'm not having to look attentive all the time that I can relax and think and associate to their material.

**Researcher:** So there'd be a much easier flow of your own associations.

**Participant 4:** Mmmm

**Researcher:** Okay. So let me read to you this question. Describe what your associations and thoughts are like when an analysand uses the couch.

**Participant 4:** Well I mean there was a very clear one. The woman had a child of about two and she was having considerable difficulty as a parent and she was asking for a lot of

parental guidance. And essentially I'm a pragmatist to it's relatively easy for me to fall into being a pragmatist but I was aware of being able to think about 'is this about the two year old in her. Is this about, I mean the internal two year old. Is this about her own lived experience of being a two year old?' And there was a third thing which I don't recall now but what I came to as we worked with that and as I could abstain from giving parental guidance, but work analytically with the material, was that her longing was that her own mother would listen to her struggles with her child. Her own mother could not be empathic about her difficulties, her own mother was very disinterested in her children. Her mother never, although she lived in the city, never came to visit her, never sent a meal when she had sick children, the mother had no involvement. And the longing in a sense was that her own mother be able to share the parenting in some way, be concerned about the parent. But I was aware of being, you know being able to think about is it this? How much is it this? How much is it this? How much is it that? And to explore those with her. And I doubt that I would have been able to do that if she had been facing me and pushing me for concrete practical....

**Researcher:** So it kind of protects your capacity to, to restrain sort of gratification, restrain yourself and restrain her demands. Rather get them into an analytical space.

**Participant 4:** Yes, that's very accurately put.

**Researcher:** So one of the things you've been saying in a way, I think, is that it's more private for you. Is that right?

**Participant 4:** Mmmm it is it also means that I seem to be more there, for her.

**Researcher:** In some way you're more present, it might be more private but you're more present. This is a word I've used in every interview and some people take issue with this particular word, but it's just a kicking off point. Do you think that using the couch affects the vitality of the analysis?

**Participant 4:** I don't think so. I think to the extent that the couch allows somebody to feel more contained. They risk more, the analysand risks more and I think I as a clinician, as an analyst, I am able to risk more also. Because there's an observing space.

**Researcher:** So does that affect, I'm just going to use a word here it's not a question just a word coming to mind, does that affect for example the texture or the ambience of the space? Is the ambience different. Is there a couch ambience?

**Participant 4:** I would say that it's about the analysand having more space to evoke, produce, reflect internal experience. There's less cueing from me and there's less moderation of what they might say for fear of how I might respond. I would think that the free association is more flowing and more often. And my experience I think has been that the dreams, the remembered dreams come out in the course of the hour rather than someone arriving and saying 'I've had a dream'. That's it's as they're talking it's 'oh and I had this dream' or 'this bit from this dream'.

**Researcher:** Let's shift, what's your experience of your body like in analysis when you have an analysand using the couch?

**Participant 4:** I'm generally comfortable in the chair, I'm relaxed alert. I'm quite subject to counter transference in a visceral way but it's not limited to work with the couch. It can happen in face to face work.

**Researcher:** I'm going to ask you something quite sort of focal, thinking about this - and it might not come and you might well say 'Well I haven't thought about it' - but do you think that the use of the couch has any effect on the importance of either your own or your analysands bodily or vocal rhythms such as prosody, intonation, silences, humour, punning, anything that's got a rhythmical prosodic quality?

**Participant 4:** It's not something I've thought about. I think, except that I think the silences for the analysand are more easily borne. And probably for me to. That I cope with less anxiety about decoding the silence or getting the feel of the silence with someone who's on the couch. It's an easier process for me than someone who's face to face and seems frozen and I'm having trouble even getting a feel of what might be in the silence. So think that the analysands tolerate their silences better and I tolerate their silence very much better when they're on the couch.

**Researcher:** If you just, I'm really going to push this but if nothing comes, nothing comes, but have you got a sense of your....the rhythm of your speech. Do you think it's different and if you think it's different can you think of how it's different.

**Participant 4:** Except that things are generally more thought out before I say them. So they're perhaps they more succinct, they're clearer. I think that I'm more aware of the infant parts or the infancy of the analysand and may speak in a more appropriate mode, with couch work. That I'm not always able to hold in mind the infant aspects in chair work and so I may speak past them, or I may....I think I'm more in tune with someone who's on the couch and so more able to speak to that part of the person.

**Researcher:** Okay, now this is really pushing it but being more in tune with someone on the couch, can you, have you got any sense of picking up any of their rhythms so it might be fiddling with their fingers or the way they speak, where the tension is located in their body. Is that different in any way is there anything that stands out for you?

**Participant 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Not? Okay and have you noticed whether you've got any kind of particular habits that you might have. For example some people report following a pattern on a wall, Anna Freud used to knit so it was a kind of rhythmical thing going on. Is there anything that you've noticed that you do that's kind of a habitual thing?

**Participant 4:** Well, from where my chair is positioned, I look out of the window and so it's the trees and the movement of the birds and any movement of birds in the sky, any gathering or flocking or.....

**Researcher:** So you do that okay.

**Participant 4:** But when I have someone in the chair I'm needing to move between that and pay attention to them occasionally to make the visual contact so it's a more to and fro, thing but I use the trees and the birds.

**Researcher:** How do you think that using the couch reflects your receptivity of your analysand? Are you more receptive, less receptive, no different or receptive in a different way?

**Participant 4:** I think that with those I have in mind, while they may have been receptive in their hours I'm not sure they really internalised the input. And I think that they weren't well chosen in terms of couch work. Well, all three of them were personality disordered in some way and had difficulty with interpretations, being integrating and rooting. So I think they felt cared for in a maternal way and receptive to that, to that experience, but I'm not sure the content, the interpretation necessarily rooted for them.

**Researcher:** Okay, if you think of yourself, this is very specific but have you ever had any images or sensations or emotions or thoughts or even words that you can anticipate what your analysands going to say or run almost parallel to what they're going to say.

**Participant 4:** Yes, oh yes but it's not confined to couch use. But oh yes.

**Researcher:** So do you think it's more, less, indifferently, prevalent to the couch compared to the chair?

**Participant 4:** I would think it has more to do with personalities than couch or chair.

**Researcher:** Okay. There's something I want to go to and come back to this. And that's your sense of time when the couch is used.?

**Participant 4:** I think the analytic hour goes by more swiftly.

**Researcher:** And I'm sticking to the more practical, almost practical things just to get your view on them. Do you insist on a minimum frequency if you've got you know three times a week or something or does it not matter to you. Could it be once a week.

**Participant 4:** It would be a minimum, well it would be a minimum of twice a week.

**Researcher:** Okay, because of the way it worked out or do you have some thoughts about that?



**Participant 4:** I think because of the regression that the couch can evoke, it's more containing for an analysand to be along twice a week, three if possible but twice at least

**Researcher:** The thing is when one uses the word regression some people think that that puts the analysand in a dependent position and that brings in ideas of power. Do you have any concerns or have you had any concerns expressed by your analysands that their sense of person power gets decreased by them using the couch.

**Participant 4:** No

**Researcher:** And more specifically do you think there are any gender implications in using the couch.?

**Participant 4:** Difficult to say because I've only had women on the couch and I've only used the couch when I've had a woman analyst.

**Researcher:** Okay.

**Researcher:** Have you got any thoughts about that anyway?

**Participant 4:** Only that I would have appreciated it if my male analyst had been willing to use the couch....I would have used it. I suppose again my particular issues are not particularly around men and their power so I'm not sure.

**Researcher:** So that doesn't ring any bells for you?

**Participant 4:** Mmm, Mmm (negative)

**Researcher:** It's almost a feminist cliché, analysis has been seen as a tool for gender domination and the couch really sort of rubs it in or appears to. But you don't have that sense necessarily?

**Participant 4:** No

**Researcher:** Do you think that the couch helps your analysand concentrate his or her attention on his or her own self-observation. It helps you it seems when you talk about getting to reverie, it seems you can become more self reflective do you think it can help your analysand become more self reflective?

**Participant 4:** I think so.

**Researcher:** And then to sort of go at a bit of a right angle to it do you think there are some analysands who you would not want to have use the couch or where you've had experiences where you think it's unwise that they use the couch?

**Participant 4:** I wonder with [certain] whether it was wise. I think my understanding now would be that people need to function quite well psychologically to really benefit from couch use. I suggested it to one man who has a generalized anxiety disorder, quite a severe disorder and, because he was really having difficulty talking and he just said it would increase his anxiety beyond measure.

**Researcher:** So one of my questions is actually you know, do you have any apprehension that some analysands fear that using the couch would make them feel out of control, would this be a case or is it some other anxiety that he was on about?

**Participant 4:** I think it would be a specific thing for him where he was very much the servant of his mother that he would feel better being able to keep an eye on me than not being able to keep an eye on me. So it would be about what power I had if he can't see what I'm up to technically um.....

**Researcher:** So his reluctance or his difficulty in using the couch itself becomes a whole, that as a topic becomes a whole domain of analysis in it's own right.

**Participant 4:** Yes

**Researcher:** It may even take years to get through that analysis but that would become.....

**Participant 4:** Yes. What did you ask me?

**Researcher:** I was just commenting that that would become a domain of analysis.

**Participant 4:** Yes, absolutely.

**Researcher:** And then again another right angle to it, your experience of analysands moving onto the couch and then moving off the couch and how they feel about moving on and how they feel about moving off. Do you have any sense of that. What's your experience of them doing that.

**Participant 4:** They took a session or two to being on the couch and when they came off the couch, one of them was a nursing mother who had two infants during her analysis with me and she had the baby with her for some months so in those months she was on the chair. Found it difficult to make contact with me, found it more difficult to be in the room, difficult to look at me, would often sort of swivel her chair so she didn't have to look at me although she was on a chair so the going on was easier than the coming off. And it's something about eye contact.

**Researcher:** So somehow the privacy for the analysand is also very important. Okay now this is a tricky question for some people. I'm coming back right to the beginning to your original reason for using the couch was because you had the experience yourself and you could see the benefit but there's quite a lot of discussion, in the little bit of literature that

there is, there is quite a lot of discussion about the fact that the use of the couch confers or can confer identity upon both the analysand and the analyst because it is a kind of, it's almost a cliched kind of configuration of analysis. So when using the couch you definitively become an analyst. Has that ever been a thought for you and if it was did it help you to feel like an analyst and if it did, did it stay like that or after a while did it change?

**Participant 4:** That's got more to do with me because I still think of myself as a therapist although I have a title of an analyst. This is an off the wall one but I suppose it's really not confined to that I'm aware of being an analyst in other contexts. My husband is disparaging about my map reading and I have to remind myself that he's doing it because his sense of direction is much worse than mine and my guess is it's a burden to be an analyst so it's life that reminds me that I'm an analyst rather than the couch.

**Researcher:** There were some examples of work that people who had no allegiance to psychoanalysis at all in fact had couches in their consulting rooms because it helped them feel that they were some kind of authority.

**Participant 4:** I mean it's going back to the beginning but my time at Tavistock was very influential, it was a short time but I was in a psychoanalytic community in a way that I had never been before or since and so there was a lot of talk about the use of couches and people who had them and people who....well just about everybody did so there was a permission to explore it that I might not have gone into had I not had that opportunity.

**Researcher:** There is a way in which using the couch is kind of, well I don't know, maybe not for you - this is question - is kind of off limits for some people but it's a kind of, you need that kind of permission a kind of initiation. Am I going too far?

**Participant 4:** I had it experientially. I don't think I would have thought about it if I had not had Tavistock and that woman in London. She had a beautiful black couch.

**Researcher:** I want to just check and see if there is anything that I've somehow left out because you know I don't do this in any particular order and then it's very frustrating to see there was an important thing that I should have touched on that I haven't but I think we have in fact. While I'm doing does anything cross you mind to add or modify?

**Participant 4:** I suppose the one thing is that when I've had people on the couch and they've had a dream, because I feel free to write the dream down during that session I can almost see the dream. There's a visual quality to it for me that there may not be when people are face to face. The whole texture of the dream is rich. I can almost lend my imagination to it in terms of asking questions you know 'how big was the tree' and 'do you know what kind of tree it was?' that I'm able to assist the fleshing out more. And I don't see myself as someone who is particularly good with dreams so it's a salutary experience to have times when I have more of a room for imagination to roam.

**Researcher:** It does that.

**Participant 4:** Ja.

**Researcher:** As it turns out seems we've have covered everything.

**Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) extracted and numbered and converted to constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant**

Meaning Units	Constituents revelatory of the meaning of the use of the couch for the participant
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Even though I know this I'm going to ask you if you could tell me about yourself as a clinician. How you came to be interested in psychoanalysis, a little about your practical and theoretical background and you can add onto that how you came to have your analysands use the couch. So just a little bit about how you started.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> My social work training had led me to believe I was interested in working with couples and with families, couples and groups and then once I started working I went into therapy myself and by the end of the first year of therapy I was very involved in the process of my own therapy, very struck by what emerged when somebody simply listened to me which was a very different orientation from my social work orientation of setting goals, of prioritizing what one would work with. And so I found myself very drawn to becoming a therapist and inevitably began to practice what I was experiencing but had not the proper training nor adequate supervision so very soon got myself in deep into transference where the first person was really quite a borderline woman and I ... I was way out of my depth you know which meant that I then went and found an analyst as a supervisor and increasingly looked for opportunities to....to train as a psychotherapist. Is the next one about the couch?</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> It is about how you came to have your analysands use the couch. How did it start?</p>	

**Participant 4:** How did it start? Well it started because I'd had an experience....I had a work experience at the Tavistock in London [ identifying information removed] and a number of the staff did some individual work as well and they almost all had couches or folding couches in their rooms. And I had a brief therapy when I was in London and the woman I saw had a couch and I guess I was feeling so unsettled that the couch seemed quite a containing option and I settled into it very soon and felt really contained. I hadn't wanted to work with a woman but a woman was someone who was willing to see me twice a week for three months. And I guess in the presence of it being a woman I kind of needed the additional containment. My therapist at home was a man and I was having a break in that therapy while I was in London.

**Researcher:** So your beginning was with your using the couch. And then how did you, so did you, was it just a natural thing that you then when you had a chance used the couch yourself with one of your analysands.

**Participant 4:** I felt very strongly that it really assisted me. My therapist back home wasn't into using the couch and wasn't to be persuaded but I put a couch into my room with the option of it being available. And then there were three people who had longish therapy somewhere between three and five years each who used the couch for most of that time. Do you want me to go on about them?

**Researcher:** Maybe, I just want to sort of get a sense of what brought you to it, so it seems you just came to it. Firstly you had a practical experience of it yourself and it

seemed useful to you and you found yourself offering it to your analysands.

**Participant 4:** Yes, I had a second experience with an analyst who provided a couch when I requested it and I had great difficulty settling with her. I decided to go to a woman after finishing therapy with the man. I felt I needed to work with a woman but found it a very difficult thing to do. And I struggled to settle for about a year and she provided a couch and I settled almost immediately and then had a two year experience of working on her couch.

**Researcher:** Maybe there will be things that will come back to you. Could you please describe, in as much detail as possible, your experience of analysis when you've had analysands use the couch.

1. **Participant 4:** I think one of the first things is that I feel much more relaxed. I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive
2. and concurrently I have a great deal more space to think about what's going on.
3. I also have an opportunity to take some notes during a session as I need to.
4. And I think it's cardinal that I...I have a thinking space. A better thinking space. That I guess would be the central experience.

**Researcher:** I just want to take off from something you've said there. Just go to kind of one of my more specific focal things. You're familiar with Bion's idea of reverie. So

5. do you think that the use of the couch

Using the couch means that the participant feels much more relaxed because she does not have to look interested and attentive. [1]

Using the couch means that the participant has much more space to think about what is occurring. [2]

The participant is able to take notes. [3]

The central experience of using the couch is the availability of a good quality space in which to think. [4]

Drawing on experiences from conducting

has any bearing on your experience and your use of reverie, when you're in a state of reverie.

**Participant 4:** I think so partly because I'm not being watched and ..... if I think about [certain clients] they were so vigilant about me, that if I seemed to be lost or distracted or not paying attention to every bit, they got agitated and when they were on the couch they were aware of...they were less aware of me and I think that created a reverie state.

6. **Researcher:** So it helps them because they are less aware of you, they are freed up in some way and it helps you because you are freed up in some way.

**Participant 4:** They are less vigilant of me and I'm more relaxed because I'm not having to look attentive all the time that I can relax and think and associate to their material.

**Researcher:** So there'd be a much easier flow of your own associations.

**Participant 4:** Mmmm

7. **Researcher:** Okay. So let me read to you this question. Describe what your associations and thoughts are like when an analysand uses the couch.

**[Participant 4:** Well I mean there was a very clear one. The woman had a child of about two and she was having considerable difficulty as a parent and she was asking for a lot of parental guidance. And essentially I'm a pragmatist to it's relatively easy for me to fall into being a pragmatist but I was aware of being able to think about 'is this about the two year old in her. Is this about, I mean the internal two

analysis the participant stated that the privacy provided by the couch reduced analysands' awareness of the participant and so created a state of reverie.[5]

The privacy of the couch means that the participant is more relaxed because she does not have to look attentive and therefore can relax, think and associate to the analysands' material. [6]

The shelter of the privacy of the couch frees the participant from the analysand's pressure on her to be concrete and practical in her response, rather than analytic. Instead the participant can allow her thinking to be wide ranging and reflective. [7]



year old. Is this about her own lived experience of being a two year old?' And there was a third thing which I don't recall now but what I came to as we worked with that and as I could abstain from giving parental guidance, but work analytically with the material, was that her longing was that her own mother would listen to her struggles with her child. Her own mother could not be empathic about her difficulties, her own mother was very disinterested in her children. Her mother never, although she lived in the city, never came to visit her, never sent a meal when she had sick children, the mother had no involvement. And the longing in a sense was that her own mother be able to share the parenting in some way, be concerned about the parent.] **But I was aware of being, you know being able to think about is it this? How much is it this? How much is it this? How much is it that? And to explore those with her. And I doubt that I would have been able to do that if she had been facing me and pushing me for concrete practical....**

8. **Researcher:** So it kind of protects your capacity to, to restrain sort of gratification, restrain yourself and restrain her demands. Rather get them into an analytical space.

**Participant 4:** Yes, that's very accurately put.

**Researcher:** So one of the things you've been saying in a way, I think, is that it's more private for you. Is that right?

9. **Participant 4:** Mmmm it is it also means that I seem to be more there, for her.

10. **Researcher:** In someway you're more

The participant concurred with the researcher's summary statement that use of the couch protects her capacity to sustain abstinence and so enter an analytic space. [8]

Whilst being more private the participant also felt that she is more present to her analysands. [9]

In response to a direct question the

<p>present, it might be more private but you're more present. This is a word I've used in every interview and some people take issue with this particular word, but it's just kicking off point. Do you think that using the couch affects the vitality of the analysis?</p>	<p>participant denied that analysis was more vital when the couch was used. [10]</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> I don't think so.</p>	
<p>11. I think to the extent that the couch allows somebody to feel more contained.</p>	<p>Through containing the analytic couple the couch provides an observing space and allows both analyst and analysand to risk more. [11, 12]</p>
<p>12. They risk more, the analysand risks more and I think I as a clinician, as an analyst, I am able to risk more also. Because there's an observing space.</p>	
<p><b>Researcher:</b> So does that affect, I'm just going to use a word here it's not a question just a word coming to mind, does that affect for example the texture or the ambience of the space? Is the ambience different.</p>	
<p>13. Is there a couch ambience?</p>	<p>In the participant's experience the use of the couch provides the analysand with more space to evoke, produce and reflect upon internal experience. [13]</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> I would say that it's about the analysand having more space to evoke, produce, reflect internal experience.</p>	
<p>14. There's less cueing from me and there's less moderation of what they might say for fear of how I might respond.</p>	<p>The participant stated that she cued her analysands less and that analysands are less prone to moderate what they say for fear of how she might respond. [14]</p>
<p>15. I would think that the free association is more flowing and more often. And my experience I think has been that the dreams, the remembered dreams come out in the course of the hour rather than someone arriving and saying 'I've had a dream'. That's it's as they're talking</p>	<p>The participant experiences her analysands' free association as more flowing and frequent. In addition dreams are presented more as an integral part of the session. [15]</p>

<p>it's 'oh and I had this dream' or 'this bit from this dream'.</p> <p>16. <b>Researcher:</b> Let's shift, what's your experience of your body like in analysis when you have an analysand using the couch?</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> I'm generally comfortable in the chair, I'm relaxed alert. I'm quite subject to counter transference in a visceral way but it's not limited to work with the couch. It can happen in face to face work.</p> <p>17. <b>Researcher:</b> I'm going to ask you something quite sort of focal, thinking about this - and it might not come and you might well say 'Well I haven't thought about it' - but do you think that the use of the couch has any effect on the importance of either your own or your analysand's bodily or vocal rhythms such as prosody, intonation, silences, humour, punning, anything that's got a rhythmical prosodic quality?</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> It's not something I've thought about.</p> <p>18. I think, except that I think the silences for the analysand are more easily borne. And probably for me too. That I cope with less anxiety about decoding the silence or getting the feel of the silence with someone who's on the couch. It's an easier process for me than someone who's face to face and seems frozen and I'm having trouble even getting a feel of what might be in the silence. So think that the analysands tolerate their silences better and I tolerate their silence very much better when they're on the couch.</p>	<p>Although she reports being responsive to counter-transference in a visceral way this participant did not believe that her experience of her body differed between using the couch and working vis á vis. [16]</p> <p>In response to a direct question the participant stated that she had not thought about the effect of using the couch on either her own or an analysand's bodily or vocal rhythms. [17]</p> <p>The participant believes that using the couch silences are more easily tolerated by both herself and analysands. [18]</p>
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**Researcher:** If you just, I'm really going to push this but if nothing comes, nothing comes, but have you got a sense of your....the rhythm of your speech. Do you think it's different and if you think it's different can you think of how it's different.

19. **Participant 4: a.** Except that things are generally more thought out before I say them. So they're perhaps they more succinct, they're clearer. I think that

19.b. I'm more aware of the infant parts or the infancy of the analysand and may speak in a more appropriate mode, with couch work. That I'm not always able to hold in mind the infant aspects in chair work and so I may speak past them, or I may....I think I'm more in tune with someone who's on the couch and so more able to speak to that part of the person.

20. **Researcher:** Okay, now this is really pushing it but being more in tune with someone on the couch, can you, have you got any sense of picking up any of their rhythms so it might be fiddling with their fingers or the way they speak, where the tension is located in their body. Is that different in any way is there anything that stands out for you?

**Participant 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Not? Okay and have you noticed whether you've got any kind of particular habits that you might have. For example some people report following a pattern on a wall, Anna Freud used to knit so it was a kind of rhythmical thing going on. Is there anything that you've noticed that you do that's kind of a habitual thing?

Using the couch the participant thinks through her response before speaking rendering her statements clearer and more succinct. [19a]

Using the couch the participant is more aware of the infant parts of the analysand and is more able to hold these in mind and speak to these parts. [19b]

The participant denied being aware of the analysand's bodily rhythms. [20]

In response to specific enquiry the

<p>21. <b>Participant 4:</b> Well, from where my chair is positioned, I look out of the window and so it's the trees and the movement of the birds and any movement of birds in the sky, any gathering or flocking or.....</p>	<p>participant stated that using the couch she does habitually look out of her window at trees and the movements of birds. [21]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> So you do that okay.</p>	
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> But when I have someone in the chair I'm needing to move between that and pay attention to them occasionally to make the visual contact so it's a more to and fro thing but I use the trees and the birds.</p>	
<p>22. <b>Researcher:</b> How do you think that using the couch reflects your receptivity of your analysand? Are you more receptive, less receptive, no different or receptive in a different way?</p>	<p>The participant believes that analysands experience her as having a more receptive and maternal presence. [22]</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> I think that with those [analysands] I have in mind, while they may have been receptive in their hours I'm not sure they really internalised the input. And I think that they weren't well chosen in terms of couch work. Well, all three of them were personality disordered in some way and had difficulty with interpretations, being integrating and rooting. So I think they felt cared for in a maternal way and receptive to that, to that experience,</p>	
<p>23. but I'm not sure the content, the interpretation necessarily rooted for them.</p>	<p>It was the participant's receptivity not her use of interpretations which rooted these analysands. [23]</p>
<p>24. <b>Researcher:</b> Okay, if you think of yourself, this is very specific but have you ever had any images or sensations or emotions or thoughts or even words that you can anticipate what your analysands going to say or run almost</p>	<p>In response to a specific enquiry the participant agreed that she experienced images, sensations, emotions, thoughts and even words that anticipated what her analysands associations but that this</p>

<p>parallel to what they're going to say.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> Yes, oh yes but it's not confined to couch use. But oh yes.</p> <p>25. <b>Researcher:</b> So do you think it's more, less, indifferently, prevalent to the couch compared to the chair?</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> I would think it has more to do with personalities than couch or chair.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Okay. There's something I want to go to and come back to this. And that's your sense of time when the couch is used.?</p> <p>26. <b>Participant 4:</b> I think the analytic hour goes by more swiftly.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> And I'm sticking to the more practical, almost practical things just to get your view on them. Do you insist on a minimum frequency if you've got you know three times a week or something or does it not matter to you. Could it be once a week.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> It would be a minimum, well it would be a minimum of twice a week.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Okay, because of the way it worked out or do you have some thoughts about that?</p> <p>27. <b>Participant 4:</b> I think because of the regression that the couch can evoke, it's more containing for an analysand to be along twice a week, three if possible but twice at least.</p> <p>28. <b>Researcher:</b> The thing is when one uses the word regression some people think that that puts the analysand in a</p>	<p>experience was not confined to use of the couch. [24]</p> <p>This experience has more to do with the analysand's personality than the use of couch or chair.[25]</p> <p>The participant experiences time as passing more swiftly when the couch is used. [26]</p> <p>In response to a specific enquiry the participant expressed the belief that it was more appropriately containing for the analysand to come at least twice weekly if the couch was used. [27]</p> <p>In response to a specific enquiry the participant stated that neither she nor her</p>
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<p>dependent position and that brings in ideas of power. Do you have any concerns or have you had any concerns expressed by your analysands that their sense of person power gets decreased by them using the couch.</p>	<p>analysands had experienced concerns about the use of the couch decreasing the analysand's sense of power. [28]</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> No</p>	
<p>29. <b>Researcher:</b> And more specifically do you think there are any gender implications in using the couch.?</p>	<p>It was difficult for the participant to comment on gender concerns in using the couch as she had only had woman</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> Difficult to say because I've only had women on the couch and I've only used the couch when I've had a woman analyst.</p>	<p>analysands use the couch and her own experience of being in analysis using the couch was with women analysts. [29]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Okay.</p>	
<p>30. <b>Researcher:</b> Have you got any thoughts about that anyway?</p>	
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> Only that I would have appreciated it if my male analyst had been willing to use the couch....I would have used it. I suppose again my particular issues are not particularly around men and their power so I'm not sure.</p>	<p>The participant would have appreciated it if her own male analyst had been prepared to use the couch but noted that her own particular issues were not around men and their power. [30]</p>
<p><b>Researcher:</b> So that doesn't ring any bells for you?</p>	
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> Mmm, Mmm (negative)</p>	
<p>31. <b>Researcher:</b> It's almost a feminist cliché, analysis has been seen as a tool for gender domination and the couch really sort of rubs it in or appears to. But you don't have that sense necessarily?</p>	<p>In response to a direct enquiry the participant denied that the couch was a tool of gender domination. [31]</p>
<p><b>Participant 4:</b> No</p>	

<p>32. <b>Researcher:</b> Do you think that the couch helps your analysand concentrate his or her attention on his or her own self-observation. It helps you it seems when you talk about getting to reverie, it seems you can become more self reflective do you think it can help your analysand become more self reflective?</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> I think so.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> And then to sort of go at a bit of a right angle to it do you think there are some analysands who you would not want to have use the couch or where you've had experiences where you think it's unwise that they use the couch?</p> <p>33. <b>Participant 4:</b> I wonder with [certain people] whether it was wise. I think my understanding now would be that people need to function quite well psychologically to really benefit from couch use. I suggested it to one man who has a generalized anxiety disorder, quite a severe disorder and, because he was really having difficulty talking and he just said it would increase his anxiety beyond measure.</p> <p>34. <b>Researcher:</b> So one of my questions is actually you know, do you have any apprehension that some analysands fear that using the couch would make them feel out of control, would this be a case or is it some other anxiety that he was on about?</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> I think it would be a specific thing for him where he was very much the servant of his mother that he would feel better being able to keep an eye on me than not being able to keep an eye on me.</p>	<p>[32] discarded</p> <p>The participant considers the use of the couch to be contraindicated with certain analysands. [33]</p> <p>She believes that these contraindications are case specific. [34]</p>
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<p>35. So it would be about what power I had if he can't see what I'm up to technically um.....</p> <p>36. <b>Researcher:</b> So his reluctance or his difficulty in using the couch itself becomes a whole, that as a topic becomes a whole domain of analysis in it's own right.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> It may even take years to get through that analysis but that would become.....</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> Yes. What did you ask me?</p> <p>37. <b>Researcher:</b> I was just commenting that that would become a domain of analysis.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> Yes, absolutely.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> And then again another right angle to it, your experience of analysands moving onto the couch and then moving off the couch and how they feel about moving on and how they feel about moving off. Do you have any sense of that. What's your experience of them doing that.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> They took a session or two to being on the couch and when they came off the couch, one of them was a nursing mother who had two infants during her analysis with me and she had the baby with her for some months so in those months she was on the chair.</p> <p>38. Found it difficult to make contact with me, found it more difficult to be in the room, difficult to look at me, would often sort of swivel her chair so she</p>	<p>[35] discarded</p> <p>In response to a direct enquiry the participant agreed that an analysand's difficulty with the couch was in itself analysable. [36]</p> <p>In response to a direct enquiry the participant agreed that an analysand's difficulty with the couch was in itself analysable. [37]</p> <p>The privacy of the couch may be used by an analysand to protect them from eye contact with the analyst. [38]</p>
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didn't have to look at me although she was on a chair so the going on was easier than the coming off. And it's something about eye contact.

**Researcher:** So somehow the privacy for the analysand is also very important.

Okay now this is a tricky question for some people. I'm coming back right to the beginning to your original reason for using the couch was because you had the experience yourself and you could see the benefit but there's quite a lot of discussion, in the little bit of literature that there is, there is quite a lot of discussion about the fact that the use of the couch confers or can confer identity upon both the analysand and the analyst because it is a kind of, it's almost a cliched kind of configuration of analysis. So when using the couch you definitively become an analyst.

39. Has that ever been a thought for you and if it was did it help you to feel like an analyst and if it did, did it stay like that or after a while did it change?

**Participant 4:** That's got more to do with me because I still think of myself as a therapist although I have a title of an analyst. This is an off the wall one but I suppose it's really not confined to that I'm aware of being an analyst in other contexts. My husband is disparaging about my map reading and I have to remind myself that he's doing it because his sense of direction is much worse than mine and my guess is it's a burden to be an analyst so

40. it's life that reminds me that I'm an analyst rather than the couch.

**Researcher:** There were some examples of work that people who had no allegiance to

The couch does not act as a signifier of this analyst's identity as analyst. [39]

Her life experience signifies her identity as analyst rather than the use of the couch. [40]

psychoanalysis at all in fact had couches in their consulting rooms because it helped them feel that they were some kind of authority.

41. **Participant 4:** I mean it's going back to the beginning but my time at Tavistock was very influential, it was a short time but I was in a psychoanalytic community in a way that I had never been before or since and so there was a lot of talk about the use of couches and people who had them and people who....well just about everybody did so there was a permission to explore it that I might not have gone into had I not had that opportunity.

42. **Researcher:** There is a way in which using the couch is kind of, well I don't know, maybe not for you, - this is question - is kind of off limits for some people but it's a kind of, you need that kind of permission a kind of initiation. Am I going too far?

**Participant 4:** I had it experientially. I don't think I would have thought about it if I had not had Tavistock and that woman in London. She had a beautiful black couch.

**Researcher:** I want to just check and see if there is anything that I've somehow left out because you know I don't do this in any particular order and then it's very frustrating to see there was an important thing that I should have touched on that I haven't but I think we have in fact. While I'm doing does anything cross your mind to add or modify?

43. **Participant 4:** I suppose the one thing is that when I've had people on the couch and they've had a dream, because I feel free to write the dream

The participant's authority to use the couch stemmed from the encouragement of a psychoanalytic milieu in which she worked and the latent permission of respected colleagues to do so. [41]

The participant was experientially initiated into the use of a couch through her own initial couch analysis and the milieu in which she worked. [42]

The use of the couch gives the participant more room for her imagination to roam and this is particularly helpful when dealing with an analysand's dreams. [43]

down during that session I can almost see the dream. There's a visual quality to it for me that there may not be when people are face to face. The whole texture of the dream is rich. I can almost lend my imagination to it in terms of asking questions you know 'how big was the tree' and 'do you know what kind of tree it was?' that I'm able to assist the fleshing out more. And I don't see myself as someone who is particularly good with dreams so it's a salutary experience to have times when I have more of a room for imagination to roam.

**Researcher:** It does that.

**Participant 4:** Ja.

**Researcher:** As it turns out seems we've have covered everything.

**Constituents of the meaning of the couch expressed more directly, pooled from each participant, clustered into dimensions/sub-components of dimensions and expressed in summary statements of the dimensions of this analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch**

**First dimension: The ambiguity of the meaning of the couch**

*First dimension: sub-component 1: The context-based and ambiguous nature of using the couch*

The nature of the experience of using the couch is not homogeneous. [participant 1: 1]

Using the couch can both positively and negatively influence the nature of intersubjective awareness. [participant 1: 3, 4]

The ambience of the use of the couch is not a monolithic, linear presence except in its invitation to ambiguity. [participant 1: 8]

For this analyst the ambience of using the couch is imbued with an ambiguity that is numinous, transposes experience to another level, and invites this analyst's curiosity and sense of being-there. [participant 1: 9]

For this analyst using the couch has a context-based rather than fixed influence. [participant 1: 11b]

The use of the couch can both foster and hinder the relationship between analyst and analysand. [participant 1: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19]

The ambiguity of making a distinction between the effect of the use of the couch (as well as the type of analysands) on several parameters of analytic practice is compounded by the high frequency of these analyses and the depth of the work. [participant 1: 36, 38, 39]

The usefulness of the couch fluctuates, sometimes being facilitative of analysis and at other times not. [participant 1: 40]

Contextually, but not essentially, the use of the couch is a useful dimension of analytic practice. [participant 1: 42]

The use of the couch is one, but only one, of the devices which facilitates the emergence of the analysand's psychological life. [participant 1: 63]

The production of an analytic discourse is not primarily dependent on physical structure such as the provision and geography of using the couch. [participant 1: 64]

*First dimension: sub-component 2: The couch's effect on the experience of power*

Using the couch may also encourage a type of intimacy which is controlling and in which the analysand may be patriarchally dominated or rendered passive dependent. [participant 1: 45]

In order to obviate such a relationship of dominance of the analysand this analyst has altered the angle of his chair from the traditional configuration. However, he notes that although this empowers the analysand to look at him he is not aware of them taking the opportunity. [participant 1: 46]

Under some conditions the use of the couch may generate a power dynamic. [participant 1: 47]

Using the couch encourages a state of passive domination of the analysand, encourages a stylized transference and oedipal dynamics and bypasses other dimensions of life, such as the spiritual and sibling dynamics. [participant 1: 48]

For this analyst the feminist understanding of domination is too narrow and therefore not appropriately extendable to understanding the power dynamic of the couch. [participant 1: 49]

The couch is a very powerful symbol for this analyst who may be tempted to capitalize on this power. [participant 2: 68]

For this analyst there is an element of power in using the couch. [participant 2: 59]

In particular this analyst had at one time specifically encouraged male analysands to use the couch because he had felt threatened by their power. [participant 2: 60]

With the analysand supine, this analyst at one time felt omniscient and able to think clearly whereas the analysand was submissively required to provide associations. [participant 2: [participant 2: 61]

This analyst experiences using the couch as making him more powerful as the analysand has submitted to this analyst's terms by lying on the couch. [participant 2: 62]

The power issue seems to be related to an issue of this analyst's sense of professional authority. In noting that he has to work harder to achieve power vis á vis he suggests that this 'power' is achieved through the acquisition of numinous authority. [participant 2: 63]

Paradoxically this analyst felt that analysands are more forgiving of his ineptness when the couch was used. [participant 2: 64]

Paradoxically, when the couch is used this analyst has less control over the analysand who has more freedom. [participant 3: 10]

In this analyst's experience, analysand's who were fearful of using the couch were generally concerned about domination by this analyst whereas analysands who chose to use the couch did not feel dominated. [participant 3: 53]

Using the couch frees the analysand from the domination of this analyst's gaze. [participant 3: 54]

It is in this analyst's professional interest to use the couch because the analysand is compliant to the analytic process which makes analysis easier. [participant 3: 55, 56]

From her own experience as an analysand this analyst did not experience the use of the couch as concerned with dominance. [participant 3: 57]

This analyst does not objectify her analysands in any way but relates to them as subjects albeit as subjects whose unconscious is foregrounded. [participant 3: 58, 59]

*First dimension: sub-component 3: The couch and sexual dynamics*

In this analyst's experience, the use of the couch appears to be extremely difficult, even intolerable, for analysands who have been sexually abused. [participant 2: 12]

This analyst observed that these analysands particularly disliked being unable to see this analyst and what he might be doing, and of speaking into what was experienced as a void. [participant 2: 13]

This analyst attributed this to the sexual nature of lying prone and powerlessly exposing oneself to somebody out of sight. [participant 2: 14]

This analyst gave a specific example where the analysand's experience of sexual intrusion extended to the medical nature of lying prone for examination and traumatic associations to this. [participant 2: 16]

*First dimension: sub-component 4: Contraindications to the use of the couch*

The use of a couch can take on a meaning for the analysand contingent on his/her personal dynamics. [participant 1: 7]

Contraindications to using the couch are specific to the analysand and context-based and do not correlate with psychodynamics in a manualized way. [participant 1: 62]

Whilst using the couch can produce anxiety in the analysand it is also generative of hope, the desire to let go of control and is encouraging, supportive and enabling of the analysand. [participant 1: 65]

The facilitation of psychological exploration cannot, however, be taken for granted as using the couch may evoke anxiety and excitement. [participant 1: 68b]

The use of the couch is contraindicated for certain analysands, e.g. in the case erotized transferences or with very disturbed analysands. [participant 3: 61]

**Summary statement of first dimension: The ambiguity of the meaning of the couch**

*The meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but context-based and ambiguous. The analytic enterprise is not dependent on the physical structure of analysis, and the couch is only a device that may facilitate analysis. The couch's contribution to analysis is ambiguous — it is sometimes facilitative of analysis and sometimes not.*

*The ambiguity of the couch means that analysts need to be mindful of its effect. In particular, issues such as power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use depend on the psychodynamics of the analyst and analysand. The couch may give the analyst actual and perceived power over the analysand through its induction of compliance in the analysand and sense of omniscience in the analyst. However, the same compliance generally facilitates analysis.*

**Second dimension: The couch as symbol**

Using the couch can effect the ambience of the analytic space and be numinous. [participant 1: 2]

The ambience of the couch is imbued with an ambiguity that is numinous, transposes experience to another level, and invites this analyst's curiosity and sense of being-there. [participant 1: 9]

At times using the couch can be a factor in analysis which effects a transition to a different frame of reference for this analyst. [participant 1: 11a]

The couch forms part of the context of this analyst's professional presence. [participant 1: 13]

In some respects moving to and from the couch has elements of a rite of passage or ritual of crossing. [participant 1: 66]



Under certain conditions the couch may symbolize the process of analysis as analysis. [participant 1: 67]

The use of the couch gives this analyst the enduring sense that he is conducting analysis. [participant 2: 5]

Using the couch symbolizes analysis more than the chair does. [participant 2: 20]

This analyst believes that using the couch vouchsafes the psychotherapeutic process as traditional analysis for analysands. [participant 2: 65]

This analyst believes that using the couch also vouchsafes a sense of prestige to analysands. [participant 2: 66]

Using the couch renders the psychotherapeutic process distinctive in its own right. [participant 2: 67]

The couch is a very powerful symbol for this analyst who may be tempted to capitalize on this power. [participant 2: 68]

The couch has been reported by an analysand to be a symbol of a deeper sort of psychotherapy. [participant 2: 11]

In this analyst's experience the couch principally symbolizes working intensely and also signifies both analysis and this analyst's identity [participant 3: 3]

The symbolic power of the couch makes analysts hesitate to presume to use it without the sanction of esteemed colleagues. [participant 3: 5]

Authority to use the couch stems from the encouragement of respected colleagues and the psychoanalytic milieu in which this analyst works. [participant 4: 41]

An analyst's initiation into using the couch can arise from personal experience of couch based analysis and the milieu in which one works. [participant 4: 42]

**Summary statement of second dimension: The couch as symbol**

*The couch symbolizes the analyst as analyst and the process of analysis as analysis. Its use vouchsafes the analytic process as prestigious and authentic psychoanalysis.*

*Consequently, its use must have the sanction of a psychoanalytic community.*

*The couch can be experienced as numinous, ambiguous and facilitative of multiple registers of experience and frames of reference. Its use renders the analytic process distinctive, powerful, intense and profound.*

### **Third dimension: The couch's mediation of mode of being-with**

#### *Third dimension sub-component 1: The felt sense of working with the couch*

Using the couch can effect the ambience of the analytic space and be numinous. [participant 1: 2]

The ambience of using the couch is not a monolithic, linear presence except in its invitation to ambiguity. [participant 1: 8]

For this analyst the ambience of using the couch is imbued with an ambiguity that is numinous, transposes experience to another level, and invites this analyst's curiosity and sense of being-there. [participant 1: 9]

At times using the couch can be a factor in analysis which effects a transition to a different frame of reference for this analyst. [participant 1: 11a]

The use of the couch provides an ambience of freedom of enquiry. [participant 1: 41]

In its creative dimension the use of the couch supports, encourages and promotes a type of intimacy which is hard to describe. [participant 1: 44]

Using the couch is facilitative of an analytic attitude. [participant 1: 70]

Lack of physical clutter, privacy, and the continuity of analytic process associated with using the couch produces a state of mind which is facilitative of analytic enquiry. [participant 1: 71]

Conducting psychotherapy feels different using the couch. [participant 2: 1]

Conducting analysis on the couch is different to working vis á vis. [participant 2: 67]

Using the couch provides this analyst with a clarity of mind and a novel way of thinking. [participant 2: 2]

The use of the couch fosters seriousness about the task of examining unconscious material. [participant 2: 11]

When the couch is used the analysand's stories are experienced as developing and unfolding in the most natural and free way. [participant 2: 36]

The analysis has an ambience such that inter-session and inter-analysand differences are more striking than working vis á vis. [participant 2: 43]

Paradoxically using the couch increases intimacy but inclines the analysand to be forgetful of this analyst's presence. [participant 2: 71]

75, 72 and 73 speculate about the analysand's state of mind, but it can be said that:

The experience of using the couch led to participant to believe that the analysand was alone with his/her thoughts but stimulated by another consciousness. [participant 2: 75]

This analyst's sense of his own importance was undermined as his internal work on the analytic material was not acknowledged by the analysand. [participant 2: 73]

Conversely to working vis á vis the ambience of using the couch spares this analyst from being drawn into facilitating conversation, as if it were a social encounter. [participant 2: 8]

Using the couch produces an ambience of privacy which is freeing and soothing to this analyst. [participant 2: 27]

Using the couch produces an ambience that frees this analyst's thinking. [participant 2: 45]

Using the couch introduces an ambience of stringency and formality so that this analyst is freed from desire to take responsibility for the analysis. [participant 2: 7]

The whole process of analysis when the couch is used feels different to vis á vis. [participant 3: 7]

When using the couch this analyst experiences the interaction as different to normal conversation. [participant 3: 29]

Using the couch gives this analyst a sense of potentiality. [participant 3: 25]

The ambience of the couch is soothing for the analysand [participant 3: 65]

The central experience of using the couch for this analyst is its provision of a good quality space in which to think. [participant 4: 4]

The use of the couch contains the analytic couple and thus provides an observing space in which both analyst and analysand can risk more. [participant 4: 11, 12]

In this analyst's experience the use of the couch provides the analysand with a space which evokes and produces internal experience as well as reflection upon it. [participant 4: 13]

*Third dimension: sub-component 2: The couch's effect on the experience of mental processes*

Using the couch renders this analyst's own associations and dream-stuff more available. [participant 1: 35]

Although not exclusive to use of the couch, when using it this analyst is more open to his own associations and processes of discovery. [participant 1: 37]

Lack of physical clutter, privacy, and the continuity of analytic process associated with using the couch produces a state of mind which is facilitative of analytic enquiry. [participant 1: 71]

Using the couch provides this analyst with a clarity of mind and a novel way of thinking. [participant 2: 2]

This analyst was relieved to discover that the use of the couch allows him to relax, think and attend to analytic processes. [participant 2: 3]

The use of the couch frees this analyst's focus to wander away from attention in the analytic room. [participant 2: 26]

This analyst's own associations and thoughts are dramatically freer when the couch is used. [participant 2: 44]

Using the couch produces an ambience that frees this analyst's thinking. [participant 2: 45]

As if finding space for his own thoughts between the analysand's associations this analyst experiences a slowing of the analysand's associations as well as increased manoeuvrability of his own thoughts. [participant 2: 49a]

Using the couch gives this analyst a mind space in which events are slowed and his thoughts are more maneuverable. [participant 2: 51]

Using the couch slows the lived experience of psychological processes. [participant 2: 49a]

More specifically this analyst experiences his own thinking as being more maneuverable and finding space between the analysand's associations whereas the analysand's material seems to slow down. [participant 2: 49b]

The experiential privacy afforded by using the couch is consistent with Freud's pronouncements of how it frees this analyst from feeling on display and thus interfering with the analysand's associations. [participant 2: 25]

The privacy of using the couch helps this analyst interrupt the analysand's rhythm less than when working vis á vis. [participant 2: 32]

The privacy of using the couch shelters this analyst by affording him freedom to think without restraint. [participant 2: 45]

Entering reverie was the only way in which this analyst believes he can access his own associations. [participant 2: 47]

It is easier to follow the analysand whilst in a state of reverie than it is to consciously track. [participant 2: 48]

Using the couch helps this analyst observe the analysand's material and his own response, think about it and detect patterns. It therefore also helps this analyst make interpretations. [participant 2: 56]

In particular this analyst notes that he can separate themes from the mass of words. [participant 2: 57]

With the analysand supine this analyst at one time felt omniscient and able to think clearly whereas the analysand was submissively required to provide associations. [participant 2: 61]

Using the couch disposes this analyst to restrainedly monitor the emotions evoked in her by the analysand's narrative whilst at the same time trying to elucidate patterns of meaning. [participant 3: 28]

The use of the couch makes it easier for this analyst to stay with the analytic process. [participant 3: 31]

Using the couch assists and disposes this analyst to relax and let go of certain of the analysand's material. [participant 3: 32, 36]

This analyst has her own associations all the time from which she selects and which occasionally naturally converge with the analysand's work. [participant 3: 46]

In contrast to working vis á vis, this analyst experiences the analysand's productions as appearing slowly when the couch is used. [participant 3: 26]

The use of the couch aids this analyst think and work in a slower and more reflective way than in ordinary conversation. Whilst using her spontaneous responses more than in

social conversation, she also first allows the analysand to work in an autonomous way before herself contributing. [participant 3: 30]

Using the couch this analyst experiences more time to consider various aspects of the analysand's material as well as to assemble interpretations. [participant 3: 51]

The use of the couch provides this analyst with more space in which to think about what is occurring during the session. [participant 4: 2]

The central experience of using the couch for this analyst is its provision of a good quality space in which to think. [participant 4: 4]

The privacy of using the couch relieves this analyst from looking attentive of her analysand which facilitates easy associating to and thinking about the analysand's material. [participant 4: 6]

The privacy of using the couch allows this analyst to be analytic, with wide ranging and reflective thinking, rather than being non-analytic, by being literal and practical in her response. [participant 4: 7]

In this analyst's experience the use of the couch provides the analysand with a space which evoke and produces internal experience as well as reflection upon it. [participant 4: 13]

Analysand's free association appears more flowing and frequent and dreams form an integral part of the session. [participant 4: 15]

Using the couch aids this analyst's reflection on her response as well as the formulation of clear and succinct statements. [participant 4: 19a]

Using the couch allows this analyst's imagination to roam and this is particularly helpful in dealing with an analysand's dreams. [participant 4: 43]

***Third dimension: sub-component 3: The couch's effect on the experience of time***

During a session the quality of time can change but this does not appear related to the use of the couch. [participant 1: 31, 32]

Any effects on time are more related to the atmosphere and issues which the analytic couple are relating to. [participant 1: 33]

The privacy afforded this analyst by using the couch frees him to check the clock without restraint. [participant 2: 41]

Using the couch slows the lived experience of psychological processes. [participant 2: 49]

Using the couch makes time seem to pass more quickly. [participant 3: 40]

Using the couch this analyst experiences more time to consider various aspects of the analysand's material as well as to assemble interpretations. [participant 3: 51]

This analyst experiences time as passing more quickly when the couch is used. [participant 4: 26]

The privacy afforded by using the couch means that eye contact is less available. [participant 1: 14]

*Third dimension: sub-component 4: The couch's effect on the experience of bodilyness*

The use of the couch constitutes a structure which facilitates analysis because it shelters the analytic couple from the gaze. [participant 1: 15, 16]

Using the couch means that there is a suspension of the bodily dimension of visual activity. [participant 1: 20]

For this analyst an appeal of using the couch is that it relieves him from certain aspects of bodily-ness. [participant 1: 23]

For this analyst although it can be important for the analysand and the analytic process the gaze of vis á vis is tiring. [participant 1: 25]

Even when using the couch this analyst may, at times, have to sustain the intensity of visually engaging with the analysand. [participant 1: 26]

The demand to engage visually with the analysand may also occur when the couch is not used. [participant 1: 27]

The phenomenon of interpersonal demand ambiguously shades over into both couch and vis á vis work. [participant 1: 28]

Using the couch can deprive this analyst of the quality of presence which the eyes convey. [participant 1: 29]

The use of the couch foregrounds hearing and backgrounds vision as receptive modalities. [participant 1: 56]

The production of reverie is implicated in the fore-grounding of hearing. [participant 1: 57]

At times this analyst's vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication may be at variance. [participant 1: 59]

On occasion however, analysand's are still aware of this analyst's movements and may attribute meaning to them. [participant 2: 22]

For this analyst using the couch allows him to be more physically relaxed. [participant 2: 23]

The privacy of using the couch shelters this analyst from feeling overwhelmed by body language. [participant 2: 50]

Using the couch does dispose this analyst to focus on certain visual perceptions. [participant 4: 21]

*Third dimension: sub-component 5: The couch's effect on rhythm and prosodic presence*

Should this analyst focus visually it would be in order to gain some sense of the analysand's body language. [participant 1: 21]

Using the couch enhances both this analyst's and the analysand's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the other. [participant 1: 55]

When the couch is used vocal body rhythm becomes fore-grounded. [participant 1: 58]

When using the couch this analyst habitually focuses and examines pictures in his room. [participant 2: 28]

When using the couch this analyst experiences his analysands as being free to establish a more rhythmical prosody. [participant 2: 31]

In respect of rhythm and prosodic presence, using the couch makes the analysand more sensitive to this analyst's presence, and this influences the way in which the analysand experiences this analyst. [participant 3: 14b, 15]

This analyst believes that analysands experience her as having a more receptive and maternal presence. [participant 4: 22]

At times using the couch can be a factor in analysis which effects a transition to a different frame of reference for this analyst. [participant 1: 11a]

Using the couch provides this analyst with more space for introspection. [participant 1: 34]



**Summary statement of the third dimension: The couch's mediation of a mode of being-with**

*The couch mediates a mode of being (or analytic space) that is containing, and increases intimacy, a sense of clarity, ambiguity and potentiality. This mode of being provides an evocative and observing space.*

*The couch helps the analyst feel more relaxed and attentive. Through this he/she is more able to track the analysand's material, reflect on it and elucidate patterns and themes. The analyst's own associations, emotions and responses to the analysand are freer and more available. Time may expand, become more diffuse and pass more quickly, allowing the analyst's own thoughts to be more manoeuvrable.*

*In this mode, both the analyst and the analysand may have a more rhythmical presence. The analyst's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the analysand increases. In particular, the sensory accent shifts from vision to vocal body-rhythm. The analyst is nonetheless relieved of certain aspects of bodyliness (e.g. the effort of visual contact) and therefore is more physically relaxed and less vigilant of his/her own body language. However, it is notable that the analyst's own vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication may be dissonant.*

**Fourth dimension: The couch's provision of privacy**

*Fourth dimension: sub-component 1: The couch's effect on the experience of interpersonal factors*

Using the couch provides a privacy which is novel in psychotherapeutic work. The privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of gaze which can positively influence the nature of intersubjective awareness. [participant 1: 3]

The privacy afforded by using the couch means that eye contact is less available. [participant 1: 14]

The use of the couch constitutes a structure which facilitates analysis because it shelters the analytic couple from each other's gaze. [participant 1: 15, 16]

The privacy of using the couch affects a shift in focus from interactive communication to a facilitating space. [participant 1: 24]

Lack of physical clutter, privacy, and the continuity of analytic process associated with using the couch produces a state of mind which is facilitative of analytic enquiry. [participant 1: 71]

Use of the couch grants this analyst more privacy than vis á vis. [participant 2: 17]

The privacy of using the couch protects both analyst and analysand. [participant 2: 24]

Using the couch produces an ambience of privacy that is freeing and soothing to this analyst. [participant 2: 27]

The privacy of using the couch shelters this analyst by affording him freedom to think without restraint. [participant 2: 45]

Being hidden from the analysand allows this analyst to follow his own psychic processes in reverie. [participant 2: 46]

The privacy of using the couch also permits this analyst to be unguarded about his facial and bodily responses to the analysand's material. [participant 2: 18]

The privacy of using the couch shelters this analyst from feeling overwhelmed by body language. [participant 2: 50]

The privacy of using the couch frees this analyst to respond to the analysand in a more embodied way. [participant 2: 19]

The privacy of using the couch frees this analyst from having to engage with the analysand in a social way. [participant 2: 4]

Conversely to working vis á vis, the ambience of the couch spares this analyst from being drawn into facilitating conversation as if it were a social encounter. [participant 2: 8]

The privacy of using the couch reduced the analysand's expressions of desire to be prompted or responded to by this analyst. [participant 2: 34]

The privacy of using the couch reduces the intensity with which this analyst experiences the analysand's desire for social interaction. [participant 2: 38]

The freedom from social pressures provided by using the couch facilitates this analyst's abstinence with respect to maintaining silences. [participant 2: 9]

Decrease in these desires supports this analyst's experience of the process as analytic. [participant 2: 39]

The privacy afforded by using the couch aids this analyst in being abstinent and thus maintain an analytic timbre. [participant 2: 6]

The privacy of using the couch helps this analyst interrupt the analysand's rhythm less than when working vis á vis. [participant 2: 32]

The privacy of using the couch shelters this analyst from anxieties about the effect which the display of his reverie might have on the analysand. [participant 2: 73]

Using the couch provides this analyst with the privacy necessary to relieve him of concerns about distracting the analysand. [participant 2: 21]

The experiential privacy afforded by using the couch is consistent with Freud's pronouncements of how it frees this analyst from feeling on display and thus interfering with the analysand's associations. [participant 2: 25]

The privacy of using the couch seems to this analyst to increase the analysand's autonomous involvement in analysis. [participant 2: 33]

The privacy afforded by using the couch permits this analyst to be less guarded interpersonally and freer to abstinely track, dwell and comment upon the analysand's associations. [participant 3: 8, 48]

The privacy afforded by using the couch shelters the analysand from the influence of this analyst's interpersonal cues. [participant 3: 11, 54]

In this analyst's experience the privacy of using the couch allows analysands to more easily express what they feel and think. [participant 3: 21]

The privacy of using the couch assists this analyst to enter a liminal space. [participant 3: 49]

The privacy of using the couch relieves analysands from a need to monitor this analyst and control themselves. [participant 3: 60]

Using the couch is relaxing for this analyst as its privacy relieves her from needing to appear interested in and attentive of her analysand. [participant 4: 1]

The privacy provided by using the couch reduces the analysand's awareness of this analyst. This reduced awareness on behalf of the analysand is experienced by this analyst as fostering a state of reverie. [participant 4: 5]

The privacy of using the couch relieves this analyst from looking attentive of her analysand which facilitates easy associating to, and thinking about, the analysand's material. [participant 4: 6]

The privacy of using the couch allows this analyst to be analytic, with wide ranging and reflective thinking, rather than being non-analytic, by being literal and practical in her response. [participant 4: 7]

Whilst being more private this analyst is also more present to the analysand. [participant 4: 9]

This analyst influences her analysands less and they are therefore less fearful and prone to moderate what they say. [participant 4: 14]

Both analyst and analysand tolerate silences better when the couch is used. [participant 4: 18]

The privacy afforded by using the couch may help protect an analysand from eye contact with the analyst. [participant 4: 38]

***Fourth dimension: sub-component 2: The couch's effect on the experience of abstinence***

The privacy afforded by the couch aids this analyst in being abstinent and thus maintain an analytic timbre. [participant 2: 6]

With using the couch this analyst experiences an ambience of stringency and formality which lead to the analysand taking responsibility for the analysis. [participant 2: 7]

In this analyst's experience using the couch contributes to analytically informed analysands complying with frame conditions and reducing interpersonal pressure on this analyst. [participant 3: 6]

Both analyst and analysand tolerate silences better when the couch is used. [participant 4: 18]

**Summary statement of the fourth dimension: The couch's provision of privacy**

*The privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its mediation of a mode of being. In particular privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language and obligation to appear interested and attentive, and allows the analyst to respond in an unguarded embodied way.*

*Furthermore, privacy protects abstinence as it reduces the analyst's urge to respond to the analysand's interpersonal pressure to deviate from an analytic attitude.*

#### **Fifth dimension: The couch and reverie**

At times using the couch can be a factor in analysis which effects a transition to a different frame of reference for this analyst. [participant 1: 11a]

Using the couch facilitates a state of reverie. [participant 1: 52]

Reverie when using the couch is not the same as maternal reverie. [participant 1: 53]

This analyst experiences reverie as a notion which entails both a conscious and unconscious response to the analysand. [participant 1: 54]

Lack of physical clutter, privacy, and the continuity of analytic process associated with using the couch produces a state of mind which is facilitative of analytic enquiry. [participant 1: 71]

The couch produces an ambience that frees this analyst's thinking. [participant 2: 45]

Being hidden from the analysand allows this analyst to in reverie. [participant 2: 46]

Reverie allows this analyst access his own associations. [participant 2: 47]

It is easier to track an analysand in reverie than consciously. [participant 2: 48]

Reverie, promoted by using the couch, facilitates this analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential bodily register. [participant 2: 52]

Reverie, promoted by using the couch, facilitates this analyst's counter-transferential responsiveness. [participant 2: 53]

The process of reverie, promoted by using the couch, is implicated in the provision of a pure third analytic element that is the shared 'property' of both analyst and analysand. This third element 'lies' between this analyst and analysand and arises from the union of their subjectivities. [participant 2: 54]

Using the couch renders it easier for the analytic couple to access different states of mind. [participant 3: 17, 20]

These states of mind are similar to the states of mind obtained between a nursing couple. [participant 3: 18]

Using the couch is productive of a state of reverie. [participant 3: 19]

The state of mind fostered by using the couch is not regression in the traditional sense of the word. [participant 3: 22]

Using the couch allows developmentally earlier states of mind to emerge. [participant 3: 23]

The analytic process when using the couch can lead to emotional turmoil whilst, at the same time, not being disabling. [participant 3: 24]

The privacy of using the couch assists this analyst to enter a liminal space. [participant 3: 49]

Working with the couch, in common with working with children, leads the analysand to disengage from the interpersonal relationship with this analyst and enter a transitional or play space. [participant 3: 50]

This analyst experiences the privacy provided by using the couch as reducing the analysand's awareness of her. [participant 4: 5]

The use of the couch contains the analytic couple and thus provides an observing space in which both analyst and analysand can risk more. [participant 4: 11, 12]

In this analyst's experience the use of the couch provides the analysand with a space which evoke and produces internal experience as well as reflection upon it. [participant 4: 13]

Using the couch helps this analyst be more aware of, focus on and address the analysand's infant parts of mind. [participant 4: 19b]

#### **Summary statement of the fifth dimension: The couch and reverie**

*The couch effects a transition to a state of 'reverie' which gives the analytic couple access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind. Reverie helps the analyst to automatically track the analysand, facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register, facilitates the analyst's counter-transferential responsiveness, and provides the analyst with access to his/her own associations.*

**Sixth dimension: The couch's provision of a third analytic element**

The process of reverie, promoted by using the couch, is implicated in the provision of a pure third analytic element that is the shared 'property' of both analyst and analysand. This third element 'lies' between this analyst and analysand and arises from the union of their subjectivities. [participant 2: 54]

Only with using the couch does this analyst experience an analytic third element which is formed from the merging of the subjectivities of analyst and analysand. [participant 2: 55]

An image of the collaborative merger of the analytic couple's subjectivities symbolizes the meaning of analysis when the couch is used. [participant 2: 56]

**Summary statement of the sixth dimension: The couch's provision of a third analytic element**

*The couch helps constellate a third analytic element located within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand, and formed out of the merging of their subjectivities. The constellation of a third analytic element is related to the process of 'reverie' which the couch promotes.*

Aggregation of summary statements of dimensions/sub-components of the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch into a single statement of meaning

Summary statement of first dimension: The ambiguity of the couch

*The meaning of the couch is not given or essential, but context-based and ambiguous. The analytic enterprise is not dependent on the physical structure of analysis, and the couch is only a device that may facilitate analysis. The couch's contribution to analysis is ambiguous — it is sometimes facilitative of analysis and sometimes not.*

*The ambiguity of the couch means that analysts need to be mindful of its effect. In particular, issues such as power, sexuality, anxiety and contraindications to its use depend on the psychodynamics of the analyst and analysand. The couch may give the analyst actual and perceived power over the analysand through its induction of compliance in the analysand and sense of omniscience in the analyst. However, the same compliance generally facilitates analysis.*

Summary statement of second dimension: The couch as symbol

*The couch symbolizes the analyst as analyst and the process of analysis as analysis. Its use vouchsafes the analytic process as prestigious and authentic psychoanalysis. Consequently, its use must have the sanction of a psychoanalytic community.*

*The couch can be experienced as numinous, ambiguous and facilitative of multiple registers of experience and frames of reference. Its use renders the analytic process distinctive, powerful, intense and profound.*

Summary statement of the third dimension: The couch's mediation of a mode of being-with

*The couch mediates a mode of being (or analytic space) that is containing, and increases intimacy, a sense of clarity, ambiguity and potentiality. This mode of being provides an evocative and observing space.*



*The couch helps the analyst feel more relaxed and attentive. Through this he/she is more able to track the analysand's material, reflect on it and elucidate patterns and themes. The analyst's own associations, emotions and responses to the analysand are freer and more available. Time may expand, become more diffuse and pass more quickly, allowing the analyst's own thoughts to be more manoeuvrable.*

*In this mode, both the analyst and the analysand may have a more rhythmical presence. The analyst's awareness of the rhythmic and prosodic presence of the analysand increases. In particular, the sensory accent shifts from vision to vocal body-rhythm. The analyst is nonetheless relieved of certain aspects of bodyliness (e.g. the effort of visual contact) and therefore is more physically relaxed and less vigilant of his/her own body language. However, it is notable that the analyst's own vocal rhythmic communication and verbal communication may be dissonant.*

**Summary statement of the fourth dimension: The couch's provision of privacy**

*The privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its mediation of a mode of being. In particular privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language and obligation to appear interested and attentive, and allows the analyst to respond in an unguarded embodied way.*

*Furthermore, privacy protects abstinence as it reduces the analyst's urge to respond to the analysand's interpersonal pressure to deviate from an analytic attitude.*

**Summary statement of the fifth dimension: The couch and reverie**

*The couch effects a transition to a state of 'reverie' which gives the analytic couple access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind. Reverie helps the analyst to automatically track the analysand, facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register, facilitates the analyst's*

*counter-transferential responsiveness, and provides the analyst with access to his/her own associations.*

**Summary statement of the sixth dimension: The couch's provision of a third analytic element**

*The couch helps constellate a third analytic element located within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand, and formed out of the merging of their subjectivities. The constellation of a third analytic element is related to the process of 'reverie' which the couch promotes.*

