

Grasping psychoanalysts' practice in its own merits

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The central objective of this presentation is to reflect on the obstacles involved in the task proposed by the Chicago Congress, which is to explore convergences and divergences in psychoanalytic practice. The author discusses two major obstacles. First, the epistemological and methodological problems in relation to the construction of theory in psychoanalysis and especially the inaccessibility, in any reliable way, of what psychoanalysts really do in the intimacy of their practice. He proposes to separate, at least in part, theory from practice in psychoanalysis, in an attempt to grasp psychoanalysts' practice in its own merits. He then outlines a phenomenology of the practice of psychoanalysis, which reveals that, in their work with patients, analysts are guided more by practical reasons than theoretical reasons; that is, their interventions are predictions rather than explanations. Since these practical reasons need to be validated constantly in the analytic relationship based on th