REPETITION, TRANSFERENCE AND SOMATOSIS

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It is a great pleasure for me to be here in fascinating Berlin sharing this panel with my very distinguished colleagues: Evelyne Sechaud and Marilia Aisenstein from Paris, Lila Kalinich from New York and Peter Wegner from Tübingen, Germany. Within the framework of this congress we'll try to transmit our ideas which come from different regions of IPA about “Repetition, transference and somatosis”.

I think the concept of repetition is at the core of the psychoanalytical theory as this formulation is linked to the characteristics of the unconscious and of the drive and also to transference.

Our task, analysis, works when repetition starts in transference.

What is repeated? What strives to come out? There is not a univocal answer. There are different repetitions.

In general, the authors who have written about this subject, specially André Green, Michel de M’Uzan, René Rousillon, as well as those I had the chance to discuss this with: Madeleine Baranger, Stefano Bolognini, Fernando Riolo and Norberto Marucco among others, point out that it is necessary to differentiate the diverse kinds of repetition. I fully agree.

Therefore I think:

a) In the origins there is the search for the repetition of the pleasure of the experience of satisfaction with the primary object. This repetition will turn into the structuring of desire and repressed Unconscious. This functioning at the basis of positive transference surely paves the way for the installation of the treatment.

b) It is repeated that which has no word-representation. Different from memory. You repeat what strives to come out. We assume this is the investment of the thing-representation, detached from affect and/or from word-representation by

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repression and by other neurotic defences aroused by oedipal conflict and castration anxiety. This is the \textit{mise en scène} of oedipal rivalry: both erotic or aggressive desires of the hetero or homosexual dimension and narcissistic wounds or deficit in the narcissistic confirmation at the oedipal crossroad and it will give rise either to love of transference or to negative or hostile transference. We are with Freud 1914.

c) Symptoms, inhibitions, characterological features, defences set in character, resistances which hinder the access to unconscious derivates are also repeated.

d) In the above mentioned items repetition occurs within the pleasure principle. Yet there is repetition beyond the pleasure principle, such as, in repetition compulsion of the sensorial, primitive, traumatic traces which find expression in different short-circuits: to the body, somatosis; to the act, acting-outs or accidents and to the mind, hallucinations. We are with Freud 1920 and 1937.

These statements point to two fundamental lines:

I. Benign or desirable repetition, which renders treatment feasible, which is within the pleasure principle, the field of psychoneurotic functioning, the Oedipus, the repressed Unconscious, as it is the product of the investment of representations.

II. Evil repetition, which is beyond the pleasure principle, the non-neurotic or narcissistic functioning, in the field of the non-repressed Unconscious or the proper Unconscious.

The latter kind of repetition is linked to Thanatos, to helplessness anxiety, to early or pre-psychic traumas which, not having been transformed into psychic structures, keep the primitive sensorial traces split, that is the absolute Unconscious. Such traces, once invested, come into the scene and become the object of the exploration of the extensions of psychoanalysis, that is, of contemporary psychoanalysis, as I prefer to call it.

Today we are faced with the challenge of exploring into the \textit{mise en scène} of the marks of the amnesic memory, as André Green calls it, of what has never become conscious, of the proper or genuine Unconscious with roots in the soma, the Id of the second topic as Freud delineates in Lecture 31 in 1933.

Among possible short-circuits: act, soma or hallucination, our object of study is somatosis, the expressions of the investments of the perceptive traces which have not been able yet to be transformed into psychic tissue, but that when they are
invested by the drive emerge in the soma “waiting” to be constructed by the interlocutor.

Our current clinic and theoretical practice compels us to create something new between patient and analyst when we deal with non-neurotic structures. Something similar to the work carried out by an artist in the creation, as he can by himself transform into figurations his primitive traumatic traces.

This calls for construction (Freud, 1937), the construction of the memory accomplished by the analyst’s mind. And this raises the problem of the patient’s conviction whether the analyst’s formulation corresponds to his truth or not.

**Repetition and drive**

As I have already stated, repetition is a characteristic of the drive, therefore we may think that it allows psychic survival by contributing to keep the drive alive. Repetition can also lead to the emergence of creativity and of something new.

In 1915 Freud defined drive as formed by representation plus affect, and this corresponds to the erotic drive and/or to the mix of both drives (1920, 1924) turned into sadomasochism. Instead, another Freudian formulation of the drive also in 1915, presents it as a boundary concept between psyche and soma, originating in the endosomatic excitation produced by internal and external perceptions of the relation with the object, excitation which will be translated into a psychic representative of the drive (1923), giving rise to the structuring of the apparatus and to the psychoneurotic functioning.

On the other hand, when this quantity of endosomatic excitation between soma and psyche fails to attain psychic transformation, in my opinion, we are confronted with actual neuroses as Freud formulated them at the beginning of his theories.

This quantity that has no representation, that is not bound, that is desobjectalized, seems to me closer to the idea of the death drive. Death drive which will invest the pre-psychic traces thus leading to evil repetition. Somatosis is one of the possible outcomes.

These reflections make me think that Eros and Thanatos have a different essence. Eros is an organized drive represented in the psyche, whereas Thanatos is disorganized quantity, pre-psychic or on the boundary between soma and psyche. The former undergoes the vicissitudes of psychoneurotic functioning, while the latter prevails in non-neurotic functionings.
Repetition and memory
We psychoanalysts have still pending a theory of memory in our field. Dealing with psychoneurotic functioning, our aim is to retrieve the forgotten or repressed memory of the oedipal conflictive, while our present challenge, contemporary psychoanalysis, includes the non-neurotic functioning which strives to “construct memory”, to elucidate primitive experiences earlier than words, which never became conscious, what Green calls “amnesic memory”.

In the field of somatosis, Joyce McDougall already in 1995 called body memory the primitive marks, origin of the short-circuit to the soma. As an antecedent to these ideas we find in Pollock his description of the anniversary reaction and also in Engel’s an interesting fragment of self-analysis on this subject.

I would like to remember here a remarkable teacher of my society, José Bleger, who in 1967 referred to primitive aspects deposited on the setting, which are not repressed but split and that when are interpreted “give rise to the secondary process. The object of interpretation is not memory gaps, but rather that which was never part of memory”. The value and relevance of this statement points to the pre-verbal primitive functioning, which has not turned into psychic tissue and which has to be constructed in the analytical situation.

Repetition and transference
The most important repetition for psychoanalysts is the one that takes place in transference, since this is what enables us to accomplish our task.

In my opinion, psychic/pre-psychic functioning can be classified into three registers: drive, narcissism and the archaic. I think that the drive (erotic or mixed) is the field which lends itself for the inscription of the representation which finds expression in the transference to the word; that narcissism (secondary) turns into identifications: primary or secondary, structuring or disstructuring. The last ones need to transform into representation.

Transference to the word belongs to the field of the drive, whereas transference to the object belongs to the field of narcissism.

Finally, the archaic stemming from early perceptive traces, emerges as passage to the act or to the soma and must be constructed in the analytic field.

This is the archaic register, almost mythical, of the sensorial marks which, I suppose, are between soma and psyche, which have no psychic existence and
which only come into being when they transform into psychic tissue by the construction of the remembrance which is attained by patient and analyst in the transference-counter-transference situation.

Repetition and remembrance

In psychoanalysis remembrance is the psychic action which gives rise to the emergence of a memory or memories, accompanied by affects, in the analytic situation.

This is the aim to be reached when we work with psychoneurotic functioning, attempting through interpretation to make the repressed memories come out. But when we are in the field of non-neurotic functioning, as it is the case with somatosis, we have to construct memories: this is a broader remembrance. We then try to construct it through repetition in the transference and in the counter-transference.

In this task involving two people, patient and analyst, that has caught the attention of psychoanalysts during the second half of the XX c, there are two groups of remarkable authors who also worked as a pair: Cesar and Sara Botella in Paris with their contribution about figurability and Willy and Madeleine Baranger in Buenos Aires with their formulations about the analytic field.

I shouldn’t forget de M’Uzan with her excellent idea of “chimera” and Bion with his priceless concept of *reverie*. All of them account for the communication between two psyches in the analytic situation.

Conviction

The use of construction leads us to the problem of conviction in the patient. It means the patient can take the analyst’s construction and feel it as his own.

In 1937 Freud advanced the importance of the patient’s conviction and this would be later on brilliantly developed by Cesar and Sara Botella in their works.

I think that conviction has at least two sources of confirmation: one, the feeling of experiencing the repetition in the transference-counter-transference, which the analyst through his constructive hypotheses will try to transform into a representation; the other, the appearance of dreams, indicators of the transformation of traumatic traces into an attempt to fulfil a desire, as Freud states in 1932.
Dream production is a sign of transformation of sensorial traces into psychic tissue, into an apparatus to think, into psychoneurotic functioning and contributes to give the patient the conviction that this is his truth or a material that belongs to him.

**Repetition and somatosis**

Some points as synthesis.

1) Somatosis belongs to another psychic functioning which is non-neurotic and co-exists with psychoneurotic functioning.

2) Somatosis is an expression of the genuine Unconscious or proper Unconscious, whereas psychoneurotic functioning is an expression of the repressed Unconscious.

3) Somatosis is the *mise en scène* of sensorial traces potentially traumatic, which have not had transformation, which may be between soma and psyche and which, when invested by the excess of endosomatic excitation as product of extero and intero perception, cannot turn into drive so they short-circuit to the soma. This quantity might be the essence of Thanatos.

4) These marks are primitive experiences, earlier than words, which never became conscious and which a trauma or a present mourning set in motion.

5) Repetition in the transference gives the opportunity to gain sense, to transform those traces into representations, into psychic tissue, to turn the genuine Unconscious into repressed Unconscious as well as to bring about creativity and something new.

To conclude now. I hope I have succeeded in transmitting in this brief text the theoretical-clinical importance of somatosis in contemporary psychoanalysis.

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