



pending, and of their deliberately unsaturated character, they demand from the analyst the constant exercise of doubt and a critical attitude towards any form of school-related dogmatism.

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Response by **Jorge Luis Maldonado**⁶

The dynamic unconscious in the analytic relationship

Research on the unconscious initially centred on considerations of memory and its vicissitudes. Interest subsequently extended to the transformations of the unconscious phantasies which arise in the analysand–analyst relationship and are manifested in the analytic process. This process comprises cycles of dynamic, economic, and structural changes that occur in the analysand and assume meaning in the transference relationship. I shall refer to unconscious processes here only in so far as they are observable in the analytic relationship.

Isolated manifestations of the unconscious can be observed in the pathology of everyday life and may also be considered by other disciplines. However, what is specific to psychoanalysis is the study of, and the drawing of conclusions about, unconscious phantasies and the subject's distortions of his or her infantile experiences, which are evaluated in the relationship between a subject and his or her object in the analytic situation. The purpose of the analytic situation is to create – for both the analysand and the analyst – a context of containment and of meaning to permit the construction of hypotheses about unconscious phenomena. The rule of abstinence and the establishment of the setting are intended to limit the arbitrariness of the analyst, and constitute the context of containment.

Changes, transformations, and working through

The introduction of the concept of 'working through' (Freud, 1914) was a milestone in the recognition of analysis as a succession of transformations. The dynamic conception thus relates not only to the situation of opposing forces, but also to the transformations of unconscious phantasies arising in

⁶Translated by Philip Slotkin MA Cantab. MITI

the relationship of a subject with an object, and of the symbols with which these unconscious phantasies are constructed. The concept of 'working through' showed that every apposite interpretation generates a sequence of changes in unconscious processes and establishes a dialectic between the analyst and the analysand's unconscious. It is not enough to imagine that, by virtue of the interpretation of resistances, the ego opens up in a singular act to allow the passage of derivatives of the unconscious, after which it closes again. With the introduction of the notion of working through, analysis came to be seen as a sequence of transformations of unconscious phantasy. These occur when interpretation has the effect that symbolic equations relinquish their symbolic equivalence with the 'thing' and take on the properties of a symbol distinct from the 'thing'. These modifications in the structure of the symbol are paradigmatic of the dynamic situation of the unconscious – and so too are the various processes of identification and the corresponding disidentifications.

The discovery of the negative therapeutic reaction (Freud, 1923) was the second milestone in the study of the process, in that it thereby became possible to evaluate the process in terms of its failures. Consideration was subsequently given to other kinds of interference with unconscious working through, resulting from inapposite interpretation and, in particular, personal factors in the analyst.

Interpretation

Interpretation is in my view the factor responsible for structural change on the level of the unconscious. It operates in the context of an asymmetrical relationship between analyst and analysand which is intended solely to resolve the analysand's conflicts and which precludes any kind of mutuality.

Certain aspects of the analyst's emotional make-up and positive personal characteristics do not in my opinion directly influence the modifications of the unconscious. Other theories, by contrast, do emphasize the value of these personal factors in the analyst. As I see the situation, personal factors are involved in the unfolding of a process as a 'necessary condition' (Etchegoyen, 2010, personal communication), but do not amount to a 'sufficient condition' for bringing about change. This 'sufficient condition' is achieved by means of apposite interpretations, which lead the analysand to give something up – namely, the possession of endogamic objects, possessive infantile forms of object relationship, and narcissistic omnipotence. Interpretations may perhaps give rise to insight and result in changes in the analysand's unconscious, through the attribution of new meaning to the infantile phantasies that previously distorted historical events [*Nachträglichkeit*].

On the other hand, when the negative factors in the analyst's person constitute counter-resistances, they may indeed prove to be a 'sufficient condition' for interference with the development of the process. Studies exist on treatments that have gone awry owing to the involvement of the analyst's own personal conflicts (Gabbard, 2003; Maldonado, 1984, 2008), as well as on the potential harm done to patients in such a situation (Hernández de Tubert, 2004).

A message from the unconscious

'The wish rejected by the higher mental agencies (the repressed dream wish) stirs up the mental underworld (the unconscious) in order to get a hearing'.

(Freud, letter to Werner Achelis dated 30 January 1927, Freud EL, 1961, p. 375)

The unconscious wish is expressed by means of a message, sent in search of someone to listen to it and disentangle its meaning, as is suggested by the words 'in order to get a hearing'. However, just as a dream has its navel, "the spot where it reaches down into the unknown" (Freud, 1900, p. 525), part of the message transmitted by the unconscious too may remain inaccessible to any possibility of understanding.

The analytic situation is intended to facilitate communication between the analysand's unconscious, governed by primary processes, and someone who responds by means of the secondary process. Being potentially capable of understanding the meaning of unconscious formations, the analyst becomes the addressee of transferences that give him or her the status of a 'privileged interlocutor' of the unconscious. It is due to the transference that symptom formations and derivatives of the unconscious assume the character of messages whose destination is the analyst, who will decode them and retransmit them in words, but who will not use them in an acting out. By virtue of this status of a 'privileged interlocutor' accorded to the analyst, the analytic transference differs from any other transference that may be established with libidinal objects in other contexts where the search for the meaning of the unconscious message is not the main purpose of the relationship and the subject's message is not intended for interpretation.

Differences from other theories

The dynamic unconscious arises out of psychic conflict; it is conceived as a primary division established between psychic agencies, and in Freud's conception it culminates in the repression inherent in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. It is characterized by a radical division between psychic agencies. The intrapsychic conflict finds expression in the unconscious phantasy that contains the wish. At certain junctures in the analytic relationship, the unconscious phantasy is a mutual construction of the analyst and the analysand (Baranger *et al.*, 1983), representing what is tantamount to an interplay of the dynamic unconscious. The unconscious arising out of the conflict is anchored to the phantasy and the wish in a context determined exclusively by the analytic situation in which the unconscious processes unfold. This distinguishes the dynamic unconscious studied by psychoanalysis from the descriptive, non-dynamic unconscious investigated by other disciplines which do not consider the central role that interpretations play in psychic change. The results of research that can be conducted by other disciplines using different investigative procedures cannot be compared with those obtained by the study of unconscious phantasy in a transference situation.

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Response by Miguel Kolteniuk Krauze (Mexico)

This question, the real leitmotiv of this congress, requires some clarification. First, we could refer to the existence of one or several unconsciouss that could be situated as ‘objects’ of study in the psychic apparatus or, alternatively, we could see it as the existence of one or several concepts of ‘unconscious’ formulated by different psychoanalytic theories.

The author’s paper falls within the second approach. Even though ‘the unconscious’ is nearly universally accepted as the foundational discovery of psychoanalysis and all authors ‘take it for granted’ in diverse post-Freudian theorizations, a close look actually reveals the existence of several concepts of ‘unconscious’ that they assume which not only do not coincide but are sometimes incompatible and mutually exclusive. Is the same concept of ‘unconscious’ used by Freudians and Kleinians, by ego psychology, self psychology, intersubjectivists and followers of Winnicott, Bion, Lacan, Meltzer, Laplanche or Green, for example?

Needless to say, this author does not think so. Each author and especially each school gradually introduces semantic variants into the concept of unconscious in order to adapt it to their needs of consistency and thus delineate a growingly disperse spectrum of meanings.

The author considers that the person most responsible for this ‘multivocal character’ of the unconscious is Freud himself. Until 1915 he held to the conception of the ‘systemic’ unconscious, that is to say, a system ‘beneath’ the preconscious system, separated by the barrier of repression and seat of the primary process in which neither denial, logic, causality nor temporality operate. This is the concept of ‘unconscious’ of his first topic.