

A CLINICAL NOTE ILLUSTRATING PSYCHOANALYTIC PROCESS 8/10/92

At the beginning of the previous session the patient had noted the fact that he was a few minutes late. In a kind of jocular way, he said, "I know that you analysts make something of it, but I don't think there was any reason behind my coming late."

At the beginning of this session, however, the patient said, "I am late this time and there must be a reason, because I could have come on time. Instead I dawdled. I took a long time having the coffee. I read the newspaper. I watched a bit of the news on television and I thought I would take my time about coming here. I'm not sure why I felt that way but I know that I was doing it purposely."

"My wife remained in bed. She said that she was tired, so I said to her, 'Stay there and rest. I will take the car.' Ordinarily she drives me. This time I drove myself to the appointment. And on the way here, while driving in the car, I was nauseated. You know, I don't know if I ever told you that, when I was a child, I used to have car sickness regularly and also sometimes I would get either anxious or uncomfortable traveling in buses and in airplanes, but during childhood car sickness was a regular feature."

The patient then began to talk about his superior in the law firm, whom we shall call Andrew. The two of them had been working on a case in Florida. They worked together in Washington. The opposite party had asked for certain immediate rulings from the judge and the patient's superior, Andrew, had to

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submit a brief right away. Accordingly, the previous day and a half, the patient had devoted himself assiduously to writing the brief. He thought it was a marvelous brief. Andrew got it, looked at it, didn't say a word of praise, didn't say anything about the fact that the patient had worked through the night in order to fax the papers to him on time. As the patient said, he added a few phrases of his own and submitted it to the judge. As it was, the judge ruled against them. "But we'll be able to get a reversal on that," the patient said. "The judge doesn't know the law. He didn't appreciate the argument that I was making in my brief.

"That reminds me. I had a dream last night. Michele came. She came with her husband. She came to my house. She came with the children. There were lots of them. Also her relatives, mother and father were there. It was a big troop, and they were asking to be invited in. Michele is part of my French family. They were exactly like my family the year that I spent in France while I was a student, and she was next to me in age. We became good friends. I love them all very much. Recently Michele wrote to me and she wanted to come and visit me. She was really trying to get me to invite her and I meant to invite her." There was a pause here and the patient then added, "But I never did. It was just the opposite of what happened in the dream."

The patient went on to say, "I'm disappointed in my house. When we first moved in, it all seemed so wonderful. I felt cosy and comfortable in it. But now I'm dissatisfied with

it. The roof needs repairs. There is a leak around the windows that we have in the skylight. I have to repair it and I don't feel like doing anything about it.

My wife is preoccupied and tired. When I saw her sitting in the chair, exhausted, the other day, she reminded me of my mother. She looks exactly like her in that position. She is this way ever since she is pregnant. We just learned a few days ago that she is definitely pregnant, and above all, she has lost interest in sex. I don't hold it against her, because I know that she is tired.

"Feel hungry now, and I think that after I leave, I will get something to eat. You know, I feel guilty towards my wife. I have been interested in sex with her. Instead, I have been masturbating and I've been using those girlie magazines. She surely will feel bad if she ever discovers them."

The patient went on to talk about being worried about money. When the baby comes, his wife will not be able to work any more. There will be only one income and he is not sure whether he will be able to afford the treatment. Perhaps he will have to leave the treatment. He won't really be that strapped but at least that's the way he was thinking.

(The only intervention the analyst made was to say that he is angry with his wife because she doesn't seem to care as much for him as he would like. He made no connection to the fact that the wife was pregnant. No mention was made either of the fact that this was the last week before the vacation.)

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THE NEXT DAY

The patient came in on time and he said, "I had a weird, weird dream last night. I dreamt I was walking the streets in Washington, DC and I saw a man emptying out a house. He was taking all the furniture out of the house and putting it in the street. He looked like a very dangerous character and I thought I'd better get away from him. I tried to get away from him by jumping over a fence and I found myself in a small, boxed-in courtyard. I was afraid that he was going to follow me there. I awoke from the dream very anxious."

The patient's associations had to do with his reading the newspaper accounts of the various crimes that take place on the streets of Washington DC, where he works. The patient goes on to say, it's gotten so that he is afraid to go out in the street at night. However, he doesn't want to give up the street. He thinks very often of using cabs and sometimes he does use cabs because he is fearful, but he hates to be in such a position. He then related various accounts of crimes of violence that were committed on the streets of Washington. He mentioned in particular an experience in which a lawyer was shot by a 14-year old youngster. He kept saying, "Imagine, a kid of 14, shooting a grown man, a lawyer." (At no time did the analyst point out that the patient himself is a lawyer.)

The patient then went on at great length discussing the violence inherent in human nature. He thinks, "Do I think that I am capable of such violence? No, I don't think so," he

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concludes. "I'm glad I'm not that kind of a person, but sometimes I am afraid. You know, there are all kinds of crazy people around, capable of doing the weirdest kinds of murders. Fortunately," he said, "there are very few Charles Mansons among us."

(Just as the analyst didn't point out that the patient was a lawyer, so he failed to connect the fact that Charles Manson and his followers killed Sharon Tate and she was pregnant at the time. In other words, he killed mother and child at one time. The analyst recalled that Manson was a murderer, but he blocked out entirely the fact that Sharon Tate was pregnant at the time that she was murdered.)

The first session is striking in many respects:

(1) The issue of lateness, which was not taken up, connected with the imminent experience of separation, points to a possible connection with the ultimate appointment, that is, who controls life and death. This certainly was borne out by the material of the second session.

(2) There is a recurrent and coherent theme in the material. All the objects mentioned, the analyst, Andrew, the patient's superior, the judge who did not honor his argument, the wife, and the mother -- every object that was mentioned was an object that was disappointing to the patient. In this connection, therefore, one could also include the disappointing house as a representation of the disappointing wife-mother.

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(3) The material contains a recapitulation of an historic event in the patient's childhood. At some time he must have gone to his mother and wanted some attention, perhaps wanted to be fed, and she was too tired to take care of his needs immediately.

(4) The presence of representation by opposite is important. In the dream Michele and the family are supposed to be welcomed. The patient says he did the opposite. He never invited her as he was supposed to. In that connection, he says that her family was exactly like his family, in other words, they were just as welcome or unwelcome as his family was unwelcome to him. And, of course, as unwelcome as the coming child is.

(5) The deprivation of sex becomes linked with deprivation of food. The patient retaliates in kind. His wife is not interested in him sexually because she is preoccupied with the baby, he thinks. Therefore, he retaliates in kind. He doesn't "feed her." He denies her sex by indulging himself and, in that connection, he says he is hungry. After the session he will go for something to eat.

(6) Retaliation in the transference takes the form of abandoning and withholding money (food, love).

(7) The second session expands and elaborates the unconscious content implied in the first session. A man is emptying out the house. He is a criminal. This is a projection of the patient's own wish to empty out the womb. Accordingly, the patient is afraid of the criminal in him and wishes to run

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away from him. Note that he runs to the safety of an enclosure-claustrum.

(8) The retaliation is prominent in the notion of a younger person who can kill an older, established person like the patient.

(9) The idea of killing both mother and fetus is clear in the Charles Manson association.

(10) The patient is the oldest of 13 children.