Language and Psychoanalysis

Volume 2, Issue 2, 2013

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We welcome a wide range of original contributions that further the understanding of the interaction between Linguistic Analysis and Theory & Psychoanalytic Theories and Techniques. Any relevant manuscripts with an emphasis on language and psychoanalysis will be considered, including papers on methodology, theory, philosophy, child development, psychopathology, psychotherapy, embodied cognition, cognitive science, applied dynamical system theory, consciousness studies, cross-cultural research, and case studies. The journal also publishes short research reports, book reviews, interviews, obituaries, and readers' comments.

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Conversation Analysis – A Powerful Tool for Psychoanalytic Practice and Psychotherapy Research

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Abstract

Psychoanalysis does not have an easy stand in documenting what "clinical facts" are. This paper proposes to use an established research tool such as Conversation Analysis (CA) in order to analyze how psychoanalytic conversation is performed in the consulting room. The vicinity of CA-approaches and psychoanalytic intuitions is documented by selected examples. We provide an outline of CA-research in psychoanalysis. Finally we debate whether psychoanalysis be science or hermeneutics; these positions are seen as two sides of a coin. One side is always in the dark. Metaphorically speaking, the future will have the task to bring this coin to an upright stand which can be managed only when the coin is given a thrilling turn by acknowledging that both, hermeneutics and science, in far reaching dimensions ignored the (micro-)social dimension of the psychoanalytic endeavor: conversation, talk-in-interaction. This will help to more clearly get in view what "clinical facts" are.

Introduction

In recent years many efforts were undertaken to understand what psychoanalysis is and what psychoanalysts do. For former generations it sufficed to define psychoanalysis as the science created by Freud. What psychoanalysts do could be described by the word "interpretation". Several developments darkened this idyllic picture:

1. Many studies conducted by experienced psychoanalytic psychotherapy researchers (see for an overview Bachrach et al,. 1991) tried to demonstrate systematic differences between "psychoanalysis proper" and "psychodynamic psychotherapy". This difference could not convincingly be established (Sandell, 2012). In high frequency psychoanalyses not only interpretations were used but analysts also provided advice and emotional support (Bush & Meehan 2011); in once-a-week psychodynamic psychotherapies also unconscious material was interpreted in addition to advice and social support.

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2. To define the "common ground" of the multitude of psychoanalytic schools turned out to be increasingly difficult. The Rome Conference papers profoundly demonstrated that every author - pretending to know what the "common ground" was - just figured out his personal position. Titles were "Common ground: The centrality of the oedipus complex" (Feldman 1990), "The search for the common ground" (Schafer, 1990), "Empathy. A common ground" (Feiner et al., 1994), "Countertransference: The emerging common ground" (Gabbard, 1995), "The illusion of common ground" (Green 2005), and, finally, ironic titles like "Common (under)ground of psychoanalysis: The question of a Weltanschauung revisited" (Figueira, 1990).

3. David Tuckett (1993) pointed out that there is even no agreement what "clinical facts" are; "facts" appear in the horizon of a given theory. Therefore Tuckett lamented of having Winnicottian, Kohutian, Bionian, Kleinian and classical facts and today one could add a lot more, e.g., Bollasian or interpersonal/relational "facts".

4. Studying psychoanalysts-at-work (Tuckett, 2012) allows to regain the domain of conversation. This rediscovery will open the door to a world of a rich caleidoscopic shimmer in all colours of the human rainbow.

For example an EPF working group identified 6 types of interventions psychoanalysts have described (Tuckett et al., 2008, p. 140):

1. Maintaining the basic setting
2. Adding an element to facilitate unconscious process
3. Questions, clarifications, reformulations, aimed at making matters conscious
4. Designating here and now emotional and phantasy meaning of the situation with the analyst
5. Constructions directed at providing elaborated meaning
6. Sudden and apparently glaring reactions not easy to relate to a certain analyst's normal method

This group recommends shifting attention more on what the analyst does. Such a comparison of what psychoanalysts do, what kind of inter-action psychoanalysis is comes in view. Such a comparative approach unavoidably discovers how different analysts work – beyond every idealistic description and self-description. Dana Birksted-Breen warns about the risks of this endeavor:

The novelty of this comparative method lies in a dual shift in perspective: from the patient to the analyst and from emphasizing a single 'truth' to valuing difference. Instead of the traditional discussion of a 'case' in which the leader and participants suggest a better or deeper understanding of the clinical material, there is a radical shift of focus towards understanding the analyst herself, what she is doing in the psychoanalytic encounter, and for what reason. The attempt to elucidate the implicit model of the presenter/analyst shifts attention away from evaluation and towards understanding (Tuckett et al., 2008, p. 2)

Having presented a clinical report the German analyst Helmut Hinz echoes in the same direction: "To recognize difference is the beginning of recognizing the richness of the universe of reality" (Hinz, in Tuckett et al., 2008, p. 109).

What psychoanalysis *is* begins to be defined in terms of what psychoanalysts *do*. To apply CA-methods to psychoanalysis endorses that line of thinking. CA contributes to precisely describe *how* it is done. This seems to be a remedy for this confusing situation and it is in good psychoanalytic tradition. Anna O. termed what Breuer and she had done together as "talking cure". Today, this valuable metaphor is much more to the point than ever. In psychoanalysis no "variables" are "applied"; simply two people talk together although in a quite specific way. When directing attention to conversation we have a chance to catch sight of what "clinical facts" are.

The aim of our paper is to inform about some of the research results and outline further possibilities. This seems politically important. Influential parties in evidence-based medicine have constructed manuals instead of old fashioned textbooks of therapy in which a therapist is someone producing preformulated text blocks with respect to diagnoses. Psychotherapy in general is in danger to be reduced to something like a trivial machine without own reflection. Against this trend it might be important that psychoanalysts remind psychotherapy in general as a highly specialized *and* creative form of dialogue and directing research to analyze the special ingredients of psychoanalytic conversation as opposed to other therapies.

Conversation – A core concept

The formula of "talking cure" opens sight for the core questions of psychotherapy research: What are the qualities of a "healing conversation" (Symington, 2006)? What are the details? How to describe conversational practices with the aim of "healing"? And: How come that conversation influences cognition? If we glance into the consulting rooms of therapeutic neighbors like music therapy or art therapy or even cognitive behavior therapy we are endowed with a superior argument: more than 90 percent of activities there are not the special ingredients which a given therapeutic school proclaims to be effective. No, it's just - talking! And, of course, at the same time psychoanalysts could stick to the claim "Not Just Talking" (Pain, 2009); conversation analysts see this as the gift to therapy and they did begin to analyze "Talk as therapy" (Pawelczyk, 2011). In this seeming contradiction of "Just talking" vs. "Not just Talking" we see how psychoanalysis is formed by a central paradox: Therapy = Talk *and* Therapy ≠ Talk. Both equations are valid at the same time. Psychoanalytic patients and their analysts do talk and, according to Freuds (1917) didactic formula nothing happens but an "exchange of words". Yet, still more happens. As "talking cure" psychoanalysis operates in a medium which transcends the logic of secondary process thinking, it comes close to primary process thinking where these logical contradictions are tolerated and creatively processed. But how is it done? And the question then arises as to the difference between psychoanalysis and other therapies?

To prefer "talking cure" over "chimney sweeping" - the other term Anna O. unforgettably coined for her psychoanalytic experience - has good reasons. Talking is the most neutral description for what happens in a treatment room; although, of course, not every talk is treatment or psychoanalysis. Of course, Freud did not exclude gesture and tears, mimic

and prosody, nor pause and silence. Explaining (Freud, 1926) how to introduce the basic rule he used the term "conversation". In such a conversation it happens that certain kinds of experience are condensed in a metaphor like "chimney sweeping". Others, often heard, are e.g., "diving deeply" or the (religious) metaphor of "confession" and many others. Anna O's "chimney sweeping" was later replaced by Freud by "purification".

These metaphors encompass a smaller or greater part of conversation. They never contain all aspects. Metaphors for conversation become part of conversation when they are occasionally used as frames for the ongoing conversation. As such they are part of conversation and, at the same time, create a reflective stance for conversation. Thus, conversation or "talking" is the superior concept one has to begin with.

Why not speak of communication, but of Conversation?

Early communication research used a technological model where one speaker is analogized with a transmitter, sending a coded message to a receiver who has to decode the message (Krippendorf, 1969). This technological provides an instruction for learning "communicative behavior", to teach people to "say what you really mean". It is widely used in mass communication, social psychology of groups and in many other areas like coaching, communication trainings etc.

The technological model ignores many highly relevant dimensions of human affairs (Peräkylä, 2004). One of them is that a listener pays attention to a speaker! What might be the reason for this active contribution by the listener? Before he knows that a "message" is to be "decoded" the listener listens! How is it done that they don't start talking together at the same moment? One must simply remember that babies do this and one without further instruction grasps that there must be a history in it. And more: A listener pushes back of his mind any irrelevant "noise". Before he can "decode" he has to *differentiate* the "noise" from the rest. This active participation of the listener is completely overlooked in the technological model, but it is highly relevant for conversation. Participants in conversation have an implicit knowledge of this dimension. One can observe how speakers end their contribution with what CA-researchers call a "tag", a little sound like "eh!", in German some use "gell", in Switzerland "o:dr" ("oder?") is used; in British conversation one encounters "isn't it?". Obviously these activities are directed to activate the listeners attention and in some cases to provoke the listener to give a prosodic sound that he still listens: "hm:m". Another problem is how a listener might be sure to have "decoded the message correctly"? He cannot have a measure for correct translation before the beginning – which would be required in the technological model. Otherwise a "decoding" of the message would not work.

In conversational activities there is more than the conveyance of information. The technological model is a "folk theory" of talking. Reddy (1979) termed it the "Conduit metaphor". Conversation is more. It consists of, at least, three components that have to be identified from the outset: A listener has to differentiate being *addressed* from the *content* and he has to use this *difference* in order to produce *understanding*. This is the full circle. Conversation does not happen from one to the other (this might be the case in military commands), it demands active participation on both sides.

Conceptual obstacles of a technological model are easily to overcome if we do speak of "conversation" in a tradition that goes back to Wittgenstein. Language is less a transporter system for "information" but a form of human practice. Thus, CA-researchers reject a technological blueprint for human and naturalistic affairs as it denies the sociable, gregarious dimension, the convivial element in conversation. Originally, conversation was not a scientific concept. It was meant for the coming together, for the social gathering of well educated people in a friendly manner. The place where they met was the salon (Miller, 2006, p. 71) like the salon of Rachel Varnhagen in Berlin or the Ephrussi family's salon in Paris or those in St. Petersburg or Moscow so marvelously described by Tolstoj. What these people did was called "doing conversation". Their conversation followed certain rules all designed to support one aim: conversation should not stop, it should go on. Thus, tone had to avoid themes like religion or politics which might result in quarrels or serious controversies. Topics should be changed before it came to a decision because a decision in a question of relevance might someone feel excluded. Exclusion was considered a serious violation of conversational rules. Another rule was to care for the inclusion of everyone, even women. Those who were not excluded where considered members in conversational participation. Persons excluded should be re-"membered" into the conversational circle. So they could be re-"minded". Etymology reflects the idea that to be re-minded meant to become healthy again by being re-membered, by being re-included in the community.

In contrast, a scientific conversation had completely different aims. Scientific questions urge to be answered, they have a penchant for closure in order to turn oneself to other questions. If you want to know if an answer is "true" or "false" you have to debate it to the end, you cannot change topics or consider about someone being excluded. From this double origin of conversation the famous Freudian inseparable bond of "cure and research" herited (1927a, p. 256). His formulation includes both in order to make perceptible by scientifically guided self-reflection the healing effects of conversation. Healing is effected by re-including.

Freud´s use of the term "conversation" displays several connotations. To analyze conversation and to analyze a "psyche" has a huge semantic overlap of meaning; everything you can analyze must come through the narrow passage of conversation, including all elusive phenomena as slips of the tongue, a glance, a gesture or a curious word used. Everything that can be heard and seen can become part of conversation analysis. Affect displays are included in this conception of conversation (Krause & Merten, 1999). Or vice versa: if it is not heard nor seen it cannot be noticed and then, not analyzed until it appears on the common screen of conversation.

Psychoanalysts are interested in certain topics in their patients' life which they think are repressed and refrain from appearing on the conversational screen. So we have a first (not the first) description of what analysts sometimes do: they actualize hidden dimensions excluded from conversation (Smith, 1991). They do this actualization in the medium of – conversation and cannot avoid this paradox. It follows, that even interpretations are embedded in conversation; they are part of conversational history. Much can be said to further analyze the How, When and Why of different kinds of actualizing activities. But for the moment we want to turn to another line of thinking.

The Origins of CA

Conversation analysis is the name for a research practice deriving from several traditions in sociology and sociolinguistics. It was Erving Goffman (1964, 1983) who directed attention to the phenomena of everyday verbal and nonverbal exchange between participants in interaction. He considered the difference between backstage and front stage in a very similar way as psychoanalysts, he saw how important "frames" of interaction are and could make plausible that these frames guide institutional conversation in a way perceptible for everyone, but largely ignored. In families, preschoolers are sometimes asked "Paul, do you know how much is two and two?" At school, then, the format of the question is changed: "How much is two and two – Paul?" The personal reference changes its place from the first utterance to the last. This format communicates meaning which is not in the words. It fits to classroom conversation (Gardner, 2013) which is different from family intimacy. Harold Garfinkel, another social scientist and founder of what he called "ethno-methodology" worked at similar problems and found that every subcultural ethnic community uses "methods" how they organize their conversations in order to make sure that there is "order at every point". Even in excited quarrels one can find "orderliness", but in times before Garfinkel (1967) neither participants nor observers could see it.

It was Harvey Sacks (1978, 1980), a gifted young student of conversation, who coined the term of conversation analysis (CA). His lectures were later published by Gail Jefferson (1992); Sacks untimely died in an accident in 1975. Gail Jefferson and Emanuel A. Schegloff belong to the first who understood the enormous relevance of studying the details of conversation in everyday talk, in institutions as patient-doctor interactions, in classrooms or at court, and influenced others to pay special attention to the details of conversation among children. In all these different institutional places it could be shown how conversational routines as questions and answers, referencing to present or absent persons or practices like storytelling make influential differences. Even the expression of emotion, the regulation of affiliation, the production of laughter or gaze direction was analyzed and it could be demonstrated that in conversation not only words are exchanged but bodies participate in a way confirming the basic premise of "order at every point". Jefferson (1984 a and b) could demonstrate this orderliness in such emotional moving interactions as "trouble talk" or, more positive, in how laughter is "organized". Others have felt touched by the potential of CA to analyze psychotherapeutic processes in general more broadly. Madill et al. (2001) defined CA as "the study of talk in interaction and of how, through talk, people accomplish actions and make sense of the world around them" (p. 414). Forrester and Reason (2006) admit that CA might be "an exercise of disciplinary demystification" (p. 44) but they cannot see how CA deals with the "ontological status of the unconscious" (p. 53). Both papers focus on sequence organization of therapeutic talk and hope to gain a more detailed view of therapeutic practices.

There is still the other line of thinking in CA, the analysis of category bound activities (Lepper, 2000; Sacks, 1980; Schegloff, 2007). Let's have a short look at the case illustration used by Forrester and Reason (2006, p. 53). The patient has reported a dream. They, as observers, see "from a psychoanalytic-psychotherapeutic perspective", that "the client offers the therapist a gift" (p. 48).

To interpret a dream(-telling) as a "gift" constructs a metaphorical equation – by observers. Nothing is shown how participants, therapist and client, treat this episode. To

criticize the therapist for not acknowledging the dream as a gift might be relevant from a clinical point of view. Clinical thinking is full of constructing metaphors of this kind. This is, what clinicians helpful do, it is one of the practices often used in doing psychoanalysis.

CA analyzes such practice as category activity. How do participants create and introduce into conversation new categories such as metaphors (or others) used to self-describe what they are just talking about? Are there relevant places where such categorical constructions can be introduced? Which conversational problem of the participants is solved when one of them does this? How come that Anna O. suddenly used the metaphor of "talking cure" for the kind of conversation she had with Joseph Breuer? Metaphors are powerful conversational tools to condense conversational experience of both participants and sometimes they create a new level of reflection, sometimes they fail and next speakers refuse them or do not agree. Here is a chance to integrate metaphor analysis (Ahrens, 2012; Angus, 1996; Buchholz, 2007; Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Carveth, 1984; Quinn, 2010) and CA.

A link between conversation and cognition (Molder & Potter, 2005) can be drawn. Leading cognitive linguist George Lakoff (1987) used "What categories reveal about the mind" as subtitle for his famous book and he drew on categories of very different kinds, logical and, of course, metaphorical. We have analyzed these links methodologically (Buchholz 2006) and used them empirically in our research about sexual offenders (Buchholz, Lamott & Mörtl, 2008; Mörtl et al., 2010). In our view, it is not that CA overlooks the "ontological status" of the unconscious; CA enriches psychoanalytic conceptions of the unconscious by focusing on other activities (sequences and categories) more than traditional conceptions of the unconscious do.

Participants unconsciously use tacit skills for three purposes:

a) to orient their contribution to a common activity focus ("What are we doing here together?") – in conversation is a capability for *cooperation*. In the future one could describe the special kinds of cooperation patients display or refuse.

b) to commonly organize – without conscious planning – their turn-by-turn organization; they "know" certain formats of talk, e.g., when a storyteller makes a pause but wants to continue or, alternatively, the listener may take the turn and pose a question; they "know" when it is interdicted to tell a joke (Sacks, 1978) or how to gossip (Bergmann, 1987) and violate moral rules of conduct (Hakulinen & Sorjonen, 2011; Bergmann, 1999; Pomerantz, 2012). This kind of tacit knowledge contributes to the overall organization of talking, in psychoanalytic observation it is widely ignored. Common organization means that there is a sense of *sharing* something together.

c) to further process their common conversational tasks and aims embedded in a context of interactional organization. For example, when you hear a "thank you" you follow the rules of polite complementarity, e.g., "you are welcome", "my pleasure" etc.). But therapists, when they hear at the end of an interview a "thank you" while shaking hands don't respond this way. Therapists nod with their heads and keep silent sticking to their professional attitudes documenting that the interview was not an everyday kind of talk. Therapists use small violations of an everday-rule-of-conduct as professional markers for demonstrating the difference between everyday-types of conversation and the consulting room. This is an example for a general human sense of using self-produced context to *produce a surplus of meaning* (McHoul et al., 2008).

In recent years a Finnish conversation analyst, Anssi Peräkylä, trained as a psychoanalyst, began to research psychoanalytic conversation. Psychoanalysis is talking, but, of course, not every talk is psychoanalysis (Peräkylä et al., 2008). So what details make the difference? To find this out is one aim of CA-research in psychoanalysis. It will result in a variety of knowledge of how psychoanalysts talk. Thus, CA-research is a powerful tool to contribute to important psychoanalytic questions, e.g., what clinical facts are. If you go back in the history to CA-research activities one is surprised to find how close this comes to psychoanalytic interests. This closeness has several dimensions:

a) The kind of data is not numbers, but talk-in-action (Heritage & Clayman, 2010)
b) The mode of careful observation is not global ("overall diagnosis" as in DSM or ICD) but directed to the details
c) Conclusions go from gathering the details to the more global conceptions, or, as William Blake once said: "There is a world in every grain of sand".

Here are some examples to exemplify this closeness between CA-research and psychoanalysis.

Small Examples

These examples are not taken from the consultation room. They are a selection of early CA-research in order to show how these researchers are engaged in topics which Freud paid careful attention to. They are elusive phenomena, often overlooked. Jefferson in 1996 published an article "On the Poetics of Ordinary Talk" which led her close to Freudian positions. She started with an observation: The poet's job is it to arrange sounds and categories. She provided a few examples and then went further to a clinical question: "What is the difference between what the psychotic does and what the poet does?" (p. 4) She gathered examples of Freudian slips. Here are three of them:

a) A record from the US-Crandall Show where the host is reading out a commercial for suits named "Bond' Blue Chips". His exact wording but was:

"˜B[ig, [be)eautiful] from America's [l]argest [cl[othier. [B)oh- Bond's. Blondes, my

goodness. Wuh that's a Freudian Slip" (quoted from Jefferson, 1996, p. 6)

Jefferson sees the double sound-row of the letters b and l and comments there is "something moving towards 'blonds boo'". This is a classical Freudian interpretation based on an exact analysis of what the speaker said. Freud saw a slip of the tongue composed of a conscious intention to say something interfering with another unconscious intention to say something different. The condition for the slip is this combination of conscious and unconscious intentions.

Here is a second example from Jefferson:
b) A plane made a rough landing and the stewardess a few seconds later announces:

Stew: On behalf of the who(l)e f(r)ight - f(l)ight c(r)ew I'd like to thank you for flying

Air California (p. 7)

And Jefferson comments like a Freudian analyst using her countertransference: "'Fright', and how! Freudian Slips! Lots of nudging and grinning among us passengers. But then I thought, no, it's one of those sound-selection things. As with dreep drop, blonds boo, flight foyed, here we are on the way to 'fright cloo'" (p. 7)

c) Jefferson informs about another type of slip based on category-formed errors. An example is when a male speaker, Larry, says:

"Hi. I'm Carol's sister - uh brother" (p. 10)

This example is one of "categorization": one's self is wrongly categorized – and then corrected. Examples of this kind are well known in psychoanalysis. We mention them to counteract the prejudice that CA is anti-mentalistic or simply behaviorally oriented. CA is engaged in similar topics as psychoanalysis. If Freud had had the technology of audio- and video recording he would have used it with respect to his patients' needs for anonymity. As in his days this technology was not available he had no other possibility than to ensure his readers that he had a "phonographic memory" as in the introduction to his 1916-17 "Introductory Lessons" (Freud, 1916-17).

Senses and Embodiment

The astonishing equivalence between CA and psychoanalysis goes further. CA analyzes talk in a manner including the body and senses and with an excellent attention to the details. Details are elusive and cannot be reproduced nor experimentally manipulated, but they are those hearable and viewable elements in the Freudian tradition that are considered able to show that there is unconscious activity. Schegloff (2007) explains his interest in how people acknowledge each other with a personal anecdote and an important observation:

I often find myself walking on campus and encountering someone coming the other way who was an undergraduate student in my class. And we have this odd game of not-quite-mutual gaze. They look at me half expectantly, and as my eyes start coming to them they look away, figuring that there is no way I would recognize them as they recognize me, and to be caught looking at me like that would be . . . what? Intrusive? Presumptuous? Mocking? And if the pas de deux goes their way, we pass each other without ever meeting one another's gaze and with no mutual acknowledgement; and if it goes my way, I trap them, and recognize them – sometimes by name which blows their mind – and we greet each other, and it's very nice. This is the way the logic plays out when the very issue is whether there is to be any interaction at all in the first place.

On the telephone, the parties are already in the interaction, so it plays out a bit differently, but the same logic is involved. I know him, but does he know me? and does he know that I know him? and does he know that I know that he knows me? (Schegloff, 2007, pp. 132-133).

This inclusion of personal experience follows Freud in showing how his personal experience "from everyday" steered his scientific interests deeply. Important here that the interpersonal "logic" of this "pas de deux" plays out in another area: On the telephone when people have no visual contact to each other! Here are some of Schegloff's examples:

Example (6) TG, 1 (Schegloff, 1979: #42)

1   ((ring))

2   Ava: H'llo:?

3   Bea: –> hHi:,

4   Ava: Hi:?

Example (7) NB, #114 (Schegloff, 1979: #44)

5   ((ring))

6   Cla: Hello::,

7   Agn: –> Hi:::,

8   Cla: Oh: hi:: 'ow are you Agne::s,

Example (8) HG 2

9   1 ((ring))

10   2 Nan: H'llo::?

11   3 Hyl: –> Hi:,

12   4 Nan: HI::." (Schegloff, 2007, p. 133)

These examples clearly demonstrate the same pattern of "pas de deux" on telephone calls as when meeting on the university campus. From the senses of seeing to the sense we encounter the same transmodal pattern.
Schegloff explains:

In their first turn, callers do a greeting that in the first instance claims to have

recognized the answerer as the person they meant to reach, and which also provides a

voice sample to the answerer from which callers, in effect, propose and require that the

answerer recognize them. In these three instances, it is about as small a voice sample

as it could be; some callers are a bit more generous and say 'hello', providing the

answerer with two syllables from which to recognize. In these three instances, and in a

great many more, it works. With no hearable delay, answerers return the greeting in

the next turn, which serves not only to reciprocate the greeting, but to claim that

answerers have reciprocated the recognition as well. The operative word here is

'claim'; in Example (7) Clara shows that she has recognized the caller (her sister) by

addressing her by name; in Example (6) and (8), no such demonstration is provided.

(p. 133)

These examples display interesting dimensions of CA-research for psychoanalytic topics and theorizing. Freud's programmatic declaration that the essential part of the Ego is the body today is worked through in other fields under the heading of "embodiment" research (Pfeifer & Leuzinger-Bohleber, 1986). From Schegloff's fresh analysis one can get an impression of how this sensual "transference" from "seeing-each-other" to "calling-each-other" might work. The same pattern of "pas de deux" is executed and it is this kind of pattern we look for in psychoanalytic practice.

We mention just one example (Emde, 1988) here from the rich body of evidence in infant research. The baby is given into his open mouth a nubbly dummy without the possibility to see it before. The baby feels the dummy is different. After the dummy is removed the baby sees several pictures of dummies on a screen. The baby stares longest when it sees the picture of a nubbly dummy. She makes a kind of "conclusion" from one sensual experience to the other, from the mouth to visual perception. This mental "gestalt" (Bernfeld 1934) confirms what Freud had in mind when he spoke of "transference" in his first versions – from one sensual modality to another. Or, in Schegloff's example, from one encounter on a University Campus to another when starting a telephone call. Or, as Emde (1988) formulated, from relationships to "relationships on relationships". Infant researchers show in this kind of experimenting an observation and the baby's "method" to proceed from the observable to the unobservable. We see how mind comes into sensual experience, works in sensual transference and then up to relationships on relationships.

Nobody would conclude that Schegloff's observation of "pas de deux" in gaze-to-gaze-movement and then in acoustic verbal exchanges while starting a telephone call would be

"regressive" and "baby-like". No, one can learn that these processes are elementary and constitutive for the beginning of new interactions.

Resistance in Conversation

There is an important debate what basic psychoanalytical concepts mean. Spurling (2008), in reviewing some famous case histories asks himself why he in his consulting room does not encounter the phenomenon of "regression" which is to appear regularly according to authors like Winnicott he re-reads? He concludes that in regression there is much contribution from the therapist's side. At the same conclusion arrive other psychoanalyst (Minolli, 2004; Rousillion, 2010; Wainrib, 2012), when reconsidering the phenomena of narcissism. Kächele et al. (2009) insist that psychoanalytic concepts have value only when they can be precisely documented in conversational practice in the consulting room. Convincingly they documented how by tape-recording of analytical session complex levels of psychoanalytic treatment can contribute to theoretical debates. Clinical facts can be documented when analysts give up their resistance against tape-recording of sessions. There is a small, but growing body of CA-literature on resistance. Gerhardt & Stinson (1995) have shown how ambivalently the concept of resistance can be used as a basic operation for a patient's striving for autonomy or as opposing a method. Others (Fleisher Feldman, 1995; Caplan, 1995) have responded to this exposed alternative but the conclusion was that there is no "objectivity" in defining resistance; everything depends on the analyst's emotional and epistemological position.

"Resistance" has been borrowed from psychoanalysis generating productive conversational research in related fields as advice giving, e.g., in medical conversation, genetic counseling, telephone help services and the like. How do professionals in these areas deal with resistance? Hepburn and Potter (2011) describe three practices:
   a) Resisted advice is packed in a more idiomatic form
   b) Sometimes a "tag" is added so that the listeners is defined as someone who already knows the relevant version
   c) The counselor dampens down the requirement for a response by "continuing past the transition place" (p. 217).

To give advice has a normative dimension and it is asymmetric. The advice giver defines himself as someone who claims to know how things are done "right". These interactional dimensions are handled by the three practices described. The difference to the psychoanalytic notion of resistance is not huge. To overcome resistance also in psychoanalysis means to make the patient accept the momentary asymmetry and to accept that the analyst might be "right" – and the analyst tries to balance this asymmetry by verbal activities of the kind described. Resistance can be aggravated by the conversation format of how a patient's problem is formulated (Morris, 2005). In question-driven therapies resistance is aggravated by this kind of conducting therapy (MacMartin, 2008). Patients find covert modes to resist advice while they openly consent. Hepburn and Potter (2011, p. 221) describe an "endemic epistemic asymmetry" – the advice giver in telephone emergency calls never has a full picture and the caller can withdrew to informations not yet or never given. The advice giver never gains control whether his advice is followed or not. This might operate in psychoanalytic conversations, too. Vehviläinen (2008), contributing with the first article on CA about resistance in psychoanalysis, describes the "interpretative trajectory":

The analyst does preparatory work to create the relevance, and an interactional 'slot', for the interpretation, thereby co-constructing it with the client. Connections and contradictions in the associated materials, pointed by the analyst, provide puzzles: noteworthy, enigmatic issues calling for exploration and explanation. In a stepwise manner, the analyst treats some aspects of the client's talk as worth exploring. The interpretative statements that typically follow attend to these puzzles, providing explanations. They draw on the materials the client has provided, but reorganize them or add something new. This is, then, the core interactional practice of showing the client something that she or he 'has not been aware of'… (pp. 121-122)

This trajectory is not a theoretical description but substantiated by a series of transcribed data. Thus we have two basic operative procedures in dealing with resistance: First, the analyst uses the client's material but arranges it in a new way. Second, the analyst adds something new, a new perspective or a new combination with other materials the client had delivered in earlier moments. We propose to term these practices under the headline of "changing the frame"-procedures with a notable aspect: the new frame has to be made relevant for the client in order to be accepted. Here, Vehviläinen is right in speaking of analysts solving puzzles. Vehviläinen (p. 137) points out that the analyst's task to figure out the puzzles in a client's talk must provoke "trouble", attempts to justify oneself, to rationalize or to defend oneself in other manners. These practices show how psychoanalysis makes clients accountable for actions where accountability has been denied. This involves risky aspects of being blamed. But, of course, it is inavoidable. So, *how this is done* becomes a question of enormous practical relevance. We are at the beginning here. Freud was right, when he saw a cornerstone of psychoanalysis in the concept of resistance and claiming that the whole psychoanalytic theory is built on this concept.

From today's point of view it might be worth considering that theory is a necessary protective resource for this special kind of conversation psychoanalysts try to conduct every day. In his 6-days-a-week practice Freud (1913, p. 460) observed what he called the "Monday crust", the patient reappearing a little bit hardened as compared to the Saturday session. But the humorous metaphor of "Monday crust" clearly is more than an observation. It serves as a means to continue with a practice Freud called in other writings as an "impossible profession".

Talk in Professional Psychoanalytic Practice

We hear and see what can be heard and seen and listened to and in everyday interaction we turn our attention away from things which co-interactants commonly exclude – these things are "categorized" as "not-relevant to what-is-going-on". In contrast, *as*

psychoanalysts we try to re-mind what has been excluded from conversation, we pay special attention to what was made strange and try to re-member these elements. We strive to catch for the invisible – but we can catch it only when we are attentive to what is simply "documented" in what can be heard and seen. The "behavioral" dimension of conversation is just the access to the so important invisible dimension which we term the Unconscious. Here CA-research and psychoanalytic intuitions converge. In this paragraph we follow the work of Peräkylä for some convincing demonstrations.

Traditional domains of CA are medical communication, in court, in classrooms – summarized as "institutional communication". In institutions of that kind on can find conversational routines which make deviances meaningful. Obviously, psychotherapeutic communication cannot be subsumed under the headline of "institutional conversation" in general. The variations from analytic dyad to analytic dyad are immense.

But, there are of course routine parts as e.g., the way how to end a session. Most analysts use a standard formula like "Our time is over" or the like to end a session. In this standard routine lies a chance for deviance. When there was a touching session with tears or otherwise emotionally moving so that analyst and patient share a common experience sensitive analysts end a session in deviance from the standard formula. This deviance then is uploaded with an unsaid meaning as the patient can "co-read" the analyst's being emotionally moved and his sharing of emotional experience during the session – but the analyst must not explicitly "inform" his patient about his participation. Sensitive analysts do this because intuitively they feel that to use a standard routine of "good bye" can be "heard as" a kind of cold neutrality. In anticipation of this possibly hurting "being heard as" the good-bye formula is changed. And, as it were, incidentally let the patient participate for a moment of the own emotional state. Without saying or telling, nor talking nor informing, it is no "communication". It just violates a standard routine. Psychoanalytic conversation might be found in this "intermediate" region where something is "said" *and* "not said" in the same move. Everyday logic cannot think this "at the same time". In everyday logic A=A *and not* A≠B. But in our conversations sometimes it happens that we meet another logic which comes close to what Freud (1900) in "The Interpretation of Dreams" had termed the *primary process*. The new discovery is that these characteristics of primary process appear not beyond or "behind" the conversational surface. They appear *on* the surface and we can direct our attention to them.

When analyzing the use of metaphors in psychoanalytic dialogue (Buchholz, 1996) there is a similar observation. Metaphors operate on the base that A=B *and* A≠B. "His mind is a mill" means, of course, that his mind *is not* a mill. Stählin (1914) showed in order to understand the meaning of a metaphor it is important to develop a "consciousness of double meaning". If one hears the sentence "He is gone crazy of love for her" and you expect to find the man in a psychiatric ward you have not understood the metaphor. To understand metaphors means to renounce the sentence of excluded third. Metaphors show that there is an excluded "Third" between formal structured logic. Metaphors (Ogden, 1997; Borbely, 2008; Cacciari, 2008; Aragno, 2009; Buchholz, 1993) demonstrate this primary process logic *on the surface* of our talking. This kind of intuitively "catching" emotional hints is observed by Peräkylä (2011) in other examples of psychoanalytic conversation, too.

Peräkylä (2013, p. 552) critizices this "going beyond" of what is said and done.

While ordinarily in interaction, language and other signs are understood as means for displaying and recognizing the speaker's *communicative intentions…*, in psychotherapy there is an endemic orientation in the therapist, and usually in the patient, to examine the patient's talk *beyond its intended meanings.*

Psychoanalysts' practices can be described as using *formulations.* Formulations (Antaki, 2008) are utterances which indicate in what way a speaker came to understand what in the other speaker's turn has been said before. Using such formulations psychoanalysts do not exactly reproduce the words the patient used. They give meaning by slightly shifting utterances. They use turn-initial particles like "*It seems as if you were …*" or "*It sounds like…*". The practical implication of such formulations is that they sound like saying the same and operate as "just-understanding". But they do more. Vehviläinen (2003) sees that in such formulations a new content is packed in making a different (unconscious?) meaning for the hearer easier acceptable.

Psychoanalysts expand meanings by repeating a patient's words and add additional formulations: "*You say this made you angry, but no feelings of being disappointed before*?" or they make utterances like "*You say it is hard. I think you mean painful*". Rae (2008) calls this a "lexical substitution" aiming to find the correct word for an emotional state and its intensity.

Peräkylä (2011) made an interesting observation. The analyst's formulation is spoken in a "first position", the patient's response illustrates a move from a "second position". When analyzing the material of 58 audio-recorded sessions of psychoanalyses conducted by two psychoanalysts with 3 patients Peräkylä (2011) finds that analysts modify slightly what they have said in their first-position move. Sometimes they intensify the words for emotional experience or they additionally point to layers of experience not addressed to in the first-move-utterance before. These *reformulations* are not made explicitly with an accent on "this is right now!", rather they come in a way to open a discrete opportunity for the patient to change how she understood the first interpretation given. Analysts contribute to the process by respecting the patient's autonomy and at the same time intuitively demonstrate their adaptation to the patient's response to the first interpretation given. Can this kind of micro-analyzing clear the difference between therapy and other forms of talk? The answer is yes and a short review can show this.

CA in Psychoanalytic therapy Research

One distinguishing feature is the amount questions from the therapist. Putting questions to someone has a multitude of conversational dimension of which we mention here only one: it responds to the silent question who holds the initiative? In question-answer therapies the conversation stops if no questions are posed or this threat is permanently present. In contrast, psychoanalysis has aimed to give the patient the power of initiative and thus to pose the analyst in a listening position. After silencing of some length

therapists utter a "hm-hm", obviously an attempt to bring themselves in a listener's position (see first example below, line 5).

Pittenger et al. (1960) in their research on "The First Five Minutes" established some principles of therapeutic talk ("recurrence", "immanent reference", "adjustment" (p. 229-244) which demonstrate the firm wish to empirically base their intuition of difference in therapeutic talk on research data. Scheflen (1972) included in his analysis the bodily movements of hands and gestures and positioning which synchronized with conversational intent. His material was a detailed analysis of a family therapy session which influenced family therapy research of authors like Wynne (1984). Labov and Fanshel (1977) analyzed the first 15 minutes of session 25 observing four levels: a) the elements of text including all pauses; b) the elements of paralinguistic cues (p. 42) with which loudness, laughter, breath and rate was included; c) the level of "expansion" by bringing together verbal and paralinguistic data together with elements of the situation; d) the level of interaction by which participants identify their actions mutually. Their methodological instrument was speech-act theory. They come to formulate 4 basic types of conversational action: metacommunication, representation, request and challenge (p. 77-110). Turner (1976) directed his attention to the question when a session does begin? What makes the difference between "informal" talk *before* the "official" work session starts? His material were group therapy sessions and he finds that in the informal first parts therapist omit those "second moves" to which they are urged after "official" session parts had started. This distinction is a complicated matter in handling psychoanalytic sessions. We have gathered three starts of psychoanalytic sessions from fully trained psychoanalysts, examples which demonstrate how important it is to draw the line between "informal" and "official" session. In all three examples one participant starts talking with a special demand:

First example:

13 T (male): Mrs R., t'day (.) I would let my cell phone online and if i:t were

my family I wou::ld respond the call becau:z (..) my father is in the hospital

14 *(1,5)*

15 P (female): My stepgrandfather too. I mea::n Irene's father. A:lso (.) came

today to the hospital

16 (3)

17 T: m:mh

18 (7)

19 T: How are you doing?

Second example:

20 P (male): well, at first uhm; next Tuesday (.) we could drop our session (-)
    or shift it.(1) Be::cause (-) I would have to attend another meeting

21   ((P and T are laughing))

22 T (female): ä::uhm (1,5) ä::uhm we could shift it to Thursday

23 P: Yeah:: okay::uhm it should work ((stands up, walks to his bag and
    takes his blackberry out))

24 T: this is the 25th.

25 P: also at seven pm or? That (.) sounds good (-) I ll put it down (-) to be on
    the safe side (--) perfect!

26 (8)

27 ((P and T are laughing))

28 P: tzen I ll switch off (.) my machine(--) you really look good, relaxed

29 T: thanks. ((laughs))

30 P: sun burned ((laughs))

Third Example:

31 T (male): Uhm::hh (..) I have a small info first (..), uhm

32 (1)

33 P (male): Yes::

34 T: It will ring any moment (.) someone will deliver at the door (-) I ll first
    have to open it

35 (.)

36 P: ((sighs))

37 T: that you (-) will be (.) prepared

38 P: ((sighs, loud inspiration,))

39 (60)

40 P: Yes: =I just had a nice experience and a surprise (reports a pleasurable
    situation with his wife)

These examples have something in common and they are different. The three psychoanalysts follow the technical rule to begin a session with information about a change of the formal frame of the session if this should become necessary. These things

happen in psychoanalytic sessions and it is, following Tuckett, not necessary to deal with it whether it is appropriate or not. CA has not the task to evaluate a procedure but to describe the steps by which conversation is organized.

In the first example the therapist informs his client that he wants to learn what happens with his father in a hospital and that the session might probably be interrupted. The client's answer is of a very ambivalent kind. Even after repeated careful listening to the tape it was not possible if this is a response of rivalry-in-suffering (My stepgrandfather too) or is it an utterance categorized as empathic with the analyst's situation. The ambivalence of how to categorize the client's response makes the analyst (line 5) attempt to bring himself into a listener's position by uttering "m:mh" which produces no client's response but a continuation of silence. After seven seconds the analyst tries an everyday start in order to overcome the line between the informal and the official part of the session.

In the second example it is the client who wants to change the date of a session. With "well, at first uhm" he informs the analyst about his drawing a line between the two parts of the session, it is his categorizing activity. But here the analyst does not come to participate in drawing that line. The common laughter (in line 2 and 8) is a co-production of resistance against differentiating "informal" from "formal" parts of the session. The last chance to differentiate these two parts of a session is lost after the internal pause (--) in line 9. This is a turn-transition point, the client switches of his blackberry, informs the analyst about this activity and ends with a pause. If the analyst does not take the turn here this can be heard by the patient as a "silent continuer" - as if a "go on" is uttered. The client goes on with informal talk and makes his comments about the after-holiday fashion of his analyst. The analyst responds in a conventional everyday manner ("thanks") and instantiates the patients hearing that the line between informal talk and official work is not yet established. This might further the patient's courage to talk about his analyst or it might lead to an aggravation of this kind of resistance.

The third example starts in a similar way like the first. The analyst does not have such a justifying account as if he expects the session to become interrupted because of a father in hospital. But he justifies his pre-session information in a similar fashion (line 7: "that you (-) will be (.) prepared"). The patient moans several times, the therapist does not actively try to restart conversation. After a "felt long" pause of 60 seconds it is the patient who takes his initiative.

These examples might serve as an illustration as to how CA can help to clearly analyze the enormous difficulties to cope with in psychoanalytic practice. It is not only sequentiality of turn-taking, it is category-bound activity (to differentiate the informal from the formal part of the session) as well as mutually reading intentions of both participants (including unconscious intentions) that has to be skillfully managed in professional practice. In psychoanalytic practice more happens than just "giving interpretations".

This early discovery originated from a project on "discursive structures in psychoanalytic therapy" (Flader et al. 1982) showing special properties of psychoanalytic conversation: a) a specialization of mental participation in dialogue; b) deviant participation structures simply as to the amount of verbal activity by the therapist; c) therapists exhibit unusual conversation practices in long silences and non-responding to questions; d) both

participants need time for establishing their special kind of cooperation; e) finally, the question of asymmetric anonymity.

These authors used the concept of "defense" for explaining certain conversational features instead of analyzing how this acts in conversation itself. One task they described might be remembered because of its practical value: Patients at the beginning of treatment have to be socialized into that special kind of conversation tolerating deviances from everyday expectations as not answering, long pauses and the analyst's attempt to keep secure his anonymity. There is training in specialized conversational practices than only gaining "insight". A patient cannot, as in most conversational opportunities of other kind, select the analyst as a next speaker. The patient might put a question to the analyst and make the experience not to receive an answer. Spence et al. (1994), while "monitoring the analytic surface" observed a related phenomenon. They were interested in just one type of utterance when a patient directly addresses his analyst by sentences like "I think of yesterday when you said…" This connection of "I" and "you" in close approximation in one sentence can be easily detected. They find that there are sessions with a lot of such sentences ("related hours") and sessions without any ("isolated hours"). The important conversational feature is: in "related hours" the analyst does not only speak more, but earlier in the session.

The phenomenon once found it is not difficult to explain. When the analyst is directly addressed this exerts a certain conversational pressure to respond. This kind of research detects a phenomenon of how the analyst is steered by his patient's utterance format. And this phenomenon must be conversationally unconscious. Up to now it had not been described in textbooks and it is not a documented part of treatment technique – but it operates in psychoanalytic conversation.

Grabhorn et al. (2005) analyze speech of an anorectic patient during a 12-week treatment in a psychotherapeutic ward. At the beginning of treatment they find high levels of resistance indicated by the SASB-method (Benjamin, 1974); in the middle of treatment resistance gradually disappears and a therapeutic alliance can be built up. At the end they find more autonomy. Spence et al.'s (1994) findings are more fine grained: in the beginning of treatment this patient used the addressing of the therapist very often, clinically this indicated low levels of autonomy and autoplastic adaption to treatment conditions. When in the middle phase of treatment the conversation phenomenon disappeared this was clinically interpreted as a necessary self-reorganizational retreat; the reappearance of addressing the therapist was considered as a new step in autonomy.

CA – Opening a New Way between the Scylla of Hermeneutics and the Charybdis of Science

So far we have reviewed relevant CA-research and included some excerpts of our own study in order to show that the distinction of metacommunication, representation, request and challenge, as described by Labov and Fanshel (1977) would not suffice to fully describe the complex phenomena here. More mental or cognitive dimensions like category-bound activity, sequentiality or unconsciously luring of the analyst's response cannot be described within the framework of Labov & Fanshel's early work. CA underlines that patients need confirmation and ratification by the other subject. This reminds one of Tomasellos (2008) differentiation between types of conversation as

inform, request and *sharing*. According to this author the ability to share (information, perspective, knowledge) is a human condition and not found in apes.

Addressed in this line of research is a very relevant aspect of process research: how conversational and cognitive processing relate to each other. Hepburn and Potter (2011) regret in the period of developing one's own research strategies, "conversation analytic work has not attended to cognitive matters" (p. 219). Today CA-research addresses the psychological more directly. Analyzing category-bound activity during conversation characterizes the interface of CA and psychoanalysis.

This is a very delicate domain as it is traditionally assumed that talk follows other rules than mental and cognitive processes, that thinking is much faster than talking and that both have very different capabilities. Psychoanalysis is somewhat "mentalistic" while conversation is seen as outward directed and concerned with the observable only. If things are left in this way conversation and psyche could never be brought together. This is obviously a false conception as people at least in therapies strive for letting another person know what they feel is in their psyche. So a way must be found to bring both sides together without giving up methodological rigorism and precision of observation.

Peräyklä (2011), experienced in both practices of analysis, proposes as a third way to overcome the dichotomy of "inner" and "outer" experience and to see this difference as one produced by cultural and conversational practice. He defines psychoanalysis

> as a practice in which the client and the analyst explore their inner experiences, and
>
> step by step either *recognise* dimensions of affect and cognition that appear for them
>
> as ones that have always been there but have not been perceived with clarity before, or
>
> *achieve* new dimensions of affect and cognition that are real but have not been
>
> possible to be experienced before the psychoanalytic process. In short, feelings,
>
> thoughts, hopes, desires appear as *real* phenomena in psychoanalytic practice – not
>
> merely as artefacts or projections produced by linguistic and interactive processes in
>
> the consultation room or elsewhere (p. 237).

He comes to propose a new sight. The "inner" world and its difference to the outer world are demarcated by a symbolic and interactive border. Here operates a category-bound activity of a very important kind. This border is in itself constituted by conversational and interactive practice defining an individual's personal, private, "inner" sphere and it is a culturally widespread distinction. In case of a projection this inner sphere is outside of the individual, in case of introjections the outside world is inside.

Self and conversation can be considered as the two sides of a coin: the system of mutual affective regulation. Interactional and more psychological ("inner") processes of

regulation can be brought together. The details of this "come together" are tasks for the future. Here we offer a perspective to analyze process dimensions of psychoanalytic talk from both sides: from conversation and psychoanalysis. The psychoanalyst´s responses to a patient are describable as related to contexts which are self produced for the moment, emerging and then fading away replaced by new contexts in and by conversation. Thus, a central problem of psychoanalysis can be brought closer to a solution: How is the relationship between a *general* theory and a practice which operates helpful only when the *individual* dimension of the unconscious is approached and can be recognized, addressed, touched and seen? This dilemma of general theory and individual truth is contained in the ongoing and never ending controversy about the question: is psychoanalysis a science or is it hermeneutics? (Thomä & Kächele, 1975).

This controversy goes back to the German philosopher's Wilhelm Dilthey distinction between these types of scientific endeavor and it lasts on to our days (Boesky 2008). One could conclude that the two models of "hermeneutic" and "science" are in itself insufficient. A psychoanalyst does not "interprete a text" and he does not "apply" a general theory to an individual patient. Merton Gill remarked that to *apply* a theory in psychoanalytic consultation equals like having earwax in the third ear. Both, hermeneutic and science, differently appreciate the subjective dimension of human existence. While hermeneutic positions favor this dimension they are rebuked for this as they never could achieve in a mature position in academic controversies; while scientific positions claim to work scientifically they are rebuked from the other side to ignore individual suffering, meanings, dimensions. If human beings were fully determined by the laws of nature there would be no place for subjectivity and individual decisions; if human beings were fully "free" in every respect one never could substantiate human sciences. This controversy became part of *repetition compulsion in psychoanalytic generation building*. Same topics are treated again and again in every new generation and clearing up operations in theoretical questions that have been solved are widely left out. The most serious consequence was that psychoanalysis did not evolve a research paradigm in its own right. Both positions suffer from a fundamental inability to conceptualize a basic dimension of humanity, which is the social dimension expressed in conversation and interaction. It is in this social dimension only that we are constituted as individual persons with a personal history brought into new interactive encounters with others who contribute to change our conceptions of who and how we are. It is time to include a (micro-)social dimension into psychoanalytic theorizing and give it a more central place. This enables psychoanalysis to give answers to what "clinical facts" are. Psychoanalysis and its clinical facts are locally produced, naturally organized, reflectively accountable, ongoing in practical achievement, always, only, exactly and entirely, by participants' work in and during sessions - this is the fundamental phenomenon.

Psychoanalytic process research seeks to provide detailed analyses of the assemblages of practices which are partially based on tacit knowledge through which the work of accomplishing local "social order" of an individual psychoanalysis is achieved. It is as Winnicott wrote that there is no baby without its mother. And there is no psychoanalytic patient without an analyst. We can turn this statement around: there is no analyst without a patient. Both must come together to produce what we consider as psychoanalysis. This production is a social phenomenon including hidden dimensions of conversation, of tacit knowledge and individual skillfulness on both sides. We can approach the riddle of "clinical facts" when we begin to consider the dyadic nature of the psychoanalytic endeavor. And CA is a powerful tool for psychoanalysis. The "common ground" of

psychoanalysis might neither be Oedipus theory nor early envy, neither repetition compulsion nor death instinct, neither phantasy nor reality and what other conflictual themes might come to mind. This all is on the level of theory "applied".

Our theoretical conceptions allow a huge range of individual variability of technique embedded in an enormous amount of individual variability of patients and analysts. Debates might receive a new and fresh drive when psychoanalytic treatments are conceptualized as social patterns of relating and affiliating, of formulations and reformulations, of discovery and interpretation. Including more strictly the social dimension might help to join a research program that has begun to show that some of our most urgent problems can be brought closer to a helpful solution. If hermeneutics and science are two sides of a coin the whole debate always saw one side covered in the dark, either hermeneutics or science, either subjective dimensions or the more general law, either individual meanings or the more general theory. To bring this coin to stand up in order to make both sides visible will demand to give this coin the knack: to make it turn as fast as possible by conversation and other social influences. There is no standstill.

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Multilingual Clients' Experience of Psychotherapy

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Abstract
The present study focuses on the experiences of 182 multilingual clients who had been exposed to various therapeutic approaches in various countries. An on-line questionnaire was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis of feedback from clients with multilingual therapists showed that clients use or initiate significantly more code-switching (CS) than their therapists, and that it typically occurs when the emotional tone is raised. Gender was unrelated to CS frequency. CS is used strategically when discussing episodes of trauma and shame, creating proximity or distance. CS allows clients to express themselves more fully to the therapist, adding depth and nuance to the therapy. The therapist's multilingualism promotes empathy and clients' own multilingualism constitutes an important aspect of their sense of self. Multilingual clients benefit from a therapeutic environment where multilingualism is appreciated, and where they can use CS.

Introduction

Over the past decade various attempts have been made to address the design and relevance of social and health services for an increasingly diverse population. Researchers have focused on the nature and challenges of offering psychological support and therapy across cultures (Eleftheriadou, 2010; Fernando, 2010; Fernando & Keating, 2009; Lago, 2006; Lowe, 2013; Martinovic & Altarriba, 2013). Gradually more attention has been paid to the role of multilingualism in therapy and the exploration of the relationship between language and therapy (Amati-Mehler, Argentieri & Canestri, 1993; Kokaliari, Catanzarite & Berzoff, 2013; Perez Foster, 1998; Santiago-Rivera & Altarriba, 2002; Szekacs-Weisz, 2004). Marcos (1976) is one of the pioneering studies in this domain. He considered interactions of non-native English-speaking (LX) clients with their English native speaker therapist. Being forced to use an LX has both advantages and disadvantages for clients. They risk encountering encoding difficulties 'in integrating emotions and experiences, the displacement and blocking of affects, and the reinforcement of obsessive resistances [which] may give rise to misinterpretations and distortions of their problems'. (p. 552) However, the emotional distancing linked to the use of the LX, which he calls the detachment effect, 'may facilitate the verbalization of highly charged material by clients who feel "protected" by the linguistic detachment'. (p. 552)

More recently there has been an increase in research into the experiences of multilingual therapists providing therapy in a language in which they have not been trained (Verdinelli & Biever, 2009). However, very little research to date seems to have incorporated the

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voice and adopted the perspective of the multilingual clients (see however Espin, 2013). Such an emic approach allows researchers to explore participants' perspective, their interpretation of behaviour, events and situation using their own language (Pike, 1964).

The present study aims to fill this gap. It was prompted by an initial investigation into the experiences of monolingual and multilingual therapists with their multilingual clients (Costa & Dewaele, 2012, 2013). The research described in this paper aims to open up the discussion about multilingualism and therapy; to listen to and to convey the voice of the multilingual client; and to compare and contrast the views of multilingual clients with the views of multilingual therapists. The literature reviewed below characteristically presents the opinion that multilingualism can be a useful resource which psychotherapy can draw upon. Where there is a possibility of code-switching (defined as 'changes from one language to another in the course of conversation' (Li Wei, 2007, p. 14)), this choice can be 'strategically used as a unique therapeutic technique.' (Pitta, Marcos & Alpert, 1978, p. 255). As already mentioned, there is little or no published research from the multilingual client's point of view. The review therefore draws together a number of themes which emerge from the literature regarding multilingual therapists' experiences as well as the experiences of clients.

Themes emerging from the review of the literature

Collusion and management of boundaries

Antinucci (2004) proposes that common language and cultural identity can become part of a collusive process between the client and the therapist. She believes that it is the therapists' task to address their cultural identity and fantasies that surround the desire to collude. In this way, the professional therapeutic frame can be maintained. Similarly, Akhtar (2006) uses the term 'nostalgic collusion' to denote a clinical situation where the client and the therapist collude in avoidance. Mourning and idealisation of a lost culture is not addressed, possibly due to the therapist's unacknowledged grief over certain aspects of his or her lost cultural history and language. The 101 multilingual therapists interviewed in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) acknowledged the potential for collusion. One of the therapists suggested that there was a joint unspoken union: 'We know nobody else understands us, it's only us' (p. 7). This could lead clients to feel that there was a special and intimate relationship with the therapists, which transcended the professional role. The therapists highlighted the importance of attending to boundaries in a way that shaped clients' expectations about the limits of their role. The therapists also believed that, although there were concerns about possible collusion, the benefits were that they were able to help clients to feel more connected and less isolated.

Attunement

Costa and Dewaele (2013) found that psychotherapists agreed that learning a foreign language made them better attuned to other languages and to multilingual clients: 'I think that if you have to learn various languages for whatever reason, you become much more attuned to what the other person is saying, to try to understand (…) You are more attuned to whether people understand or don't understand' (p. 6).

Similar views emerged from Verdinelli and Biever's (2009) research with 13 Spanish-English bilingual psychotherapists. The psychotherapists reported that they felt more connected to clients with whom they shared their native language (L1) and that this had a positive effect on the therapy. Amati-Mehler (2004) suggests that it is not only language-matching between client and therapist which enhances the capacity for attunement of the multilingual therapist. She suggests that as a speaker of multiple languages, her ability to hold multiple meanings and associations may make her more available for the complexity and disordered language of some of her patients. A multilingual person may experience less anxiety and greater ability to suspend immediate comprehension and to tolerate ambiguous meanings. In a similar vein, Jimenez (2004) suggests that his multilingualism allowed him to treat patients in Germany despite his imperfect knowledge of German. He suggests that his ability to move between 'the confusion of tongues' and the 'gift of tongues' contributed to the patient's movement from confusion to clarification.

Frustration because of lack of training

The majority of the therapists who participated in the Verdinelli and Biever (2009) study had taught themselves or had learned to provide bilingual therapy services by trial and error. They all acknowledged the lack of attention in current training and supervision to multilingual issues in therapy. The therapists in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) also mentioned lack of training and the difficulties they experienced working in their L1 in therapy where they did not have access to the professional vocabulary or experience in relating professionally in their L1: 'Well, when I was thinking about coming to do this interview, I wondered whether I wasn't really a fraud, because although I do speak various languages, I've always been trained in only one..., I find it incredibly difficult to explain, because I've never picked up a French textbook about CBT.' (2013, p. 8).

Language gap and switching

Although no therapist in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) had tried out inviting other languages into the therapy, they were interested and saw the potential of trying this. This is consistent with the experiences of therapists in Verdinelli and Biever (2009). These therapists did engage in code-switching (CS), but only 2 of the 13 participants had learned formally about CS. The others had discovered the advantage of its use by experience and by trial and error. Although Pitta et al. (1978) regard CS in therapy to be a useful tool, they caution that the client can choose languages which support their resistance to the therapy. This was a view shared by some therapists in Verdinelli and Biever (2009). Pitta et al. (1978) suggest that the dominant language has richer emotional structures which can capture greater richness of experience, while others feel that this language may not access the client's intellectual resources for making sense of experience and that the emotional potency of the L1 can impede cognitive processes.

Code-switching

As previously mentioned, relatively few studies refer to CS of multilingual clients in therapy. Tehrani and Vaughan's (2009) work (referred to later in the section on trauma) advocates the use of CS as a way of helping the client to regain emotional mastery after a traumatic experience and helping with psychic repair.

Szekacs-Weisz (2004) describes how some of her Hungarian clients who had followed her to London from Budapest used CS occasionally in therapy: 'I learned to pay attention to English words suddenly popping up in the verbal environment of the mother tongue. He said the first word in English while recalling a dream about a cockroach. Translating the word in Hungarian: *svabbogar* (Svab being the name of ethnic Germans in Hungary, *bogar* meaning bug), it became obvious that the pun in the dream is hiding painful associations to Germans. Following on this line, he became able to talk for the first time about silenced secrets and painful childhood memories of anti-Semitism'. (p. 26)

Altman, Schrauf and Walters (2013) focused on CS in the autobiographical memories of mature immigrants. They point out that their personal memories include monolingual as well as bilingual events, and that they can be told in either language of their repertoire. Some narratives are monolingual while others are peppered with CS (p. 212). In their study of 12 English-Hebrew bilinguals aged 64-79, the researchers found that 40% of recalled memories where "crossovers", i.e. a different language from the language of the experimental session. These crossover memories had more frequent CS (p. 228). There were more than three times as many crossovers from L2 to L1 than from L1 to L2 (p. 230). The multilingual therapist's position with regard to the language gap can represent the transitional process between the old situation, which has been left, and the new situation in which the patient is living (Kitron, 1992). This type of therapeutic encounter may be a useful tool in helping to detect 'significant aspects of the patient's unconscious motivations' and ways of 'working through the relevant conflicts and resistances.' (p. 10). The language gap was also identified as a creative tension by multilingual therapists. Being able to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity is a key skill for therapists. The gap produced by not-knowing can be a source of therapeutic spontaneity and creativity. Winnicott (1971) referred to this as the "potential space."

Dewaele's (2013) study on language preferences for emotion among 1569 multilinguals revealed that participants reported CS significantly more frequently when topics being discussed were personal or emotional compared to neutral topics. Dewaele argues that when powerful emotions need to be verbalized quickly, and the speaker realizes that it would take too much time to express them in the weaker output language, possibly with unwanted pragmatic effects, CS might seem like an acceptable option (p. 215). One participant, Vally (Greek L1, English L2, French L3, Turkish L4) reported: 'I think when I talk about emotional topics I tend to code-switch to English a lot. I remember when I was seeing a psychologist in Greece for a while I kept code-switching from Greek to English. We never really talked about this (...) To my mind it may have been some distancing strategy because at the time I was trying to figure out what to do with my life' (p. 206). Participants also reported that CS was often linked to a change in emotional tone (p. 205). This could include a change in intonation and prosody, increased volume, and faster speaking rate, conveying "emotional information above and beyond semantic linguistic content" (Nygaard & Queen, 2008, p. 10).

Dewaele & Li Wei (in press, a) found that their 2070 multilinguals had a generally positive attitude towards CS. In a further study on the same database Dewaele & Li Wei (in press, b) argued that CS can be a creative discourse strategy used by multilinguals in real-life interactions in order to achieve effective communication. It allows the insertion of threads in different colours in the exchange and hence insert an element of novelty, uniqueness and surprise. They found a considerable amount of interindividual variation in their study of self-reported CS. The degree of multilingualism in the participants' work

environment was linked to self-reported frequency of CS in a variety of contexts. CS was also linked to higher levels of multilingualism and early bi- and multilingualism. Female participants, extraverts and participants with high levels of Cognitive Empathy also reported to engage more frequently in CS.

One therapist interviewed in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) referred to her ability to play with understanding and lack of comprehension, asking her clients to define and explain what they meant by an idiomatic expression like "fish-wife" (p. 8). She felt that by not sharing a common L1 with the clients she was able to allow herself the freedom to be flexible and curious. There may also be a freedom for the client in the therapy where the client can move, through switching languages, between feelings of closeness and distance, power and powerlessness (Kitron, 1992). Szekacs-Weisz (2004) points out that CS can allow clients to find a way out: 'Patients can feel that therapy in their native language binds them in a position they want to move away from' (p. 27).

Identity

Imberti (2007) proposes that one of the ways in which multilinguals cope is by creating new selves for each of the languages spoken. Imberti migrated from Argentina to New York as a young woman and refers to the new self she had to create: 'When we change languages, both our worldview and our identities get transformed. We need to become new selves to speak a language that does not come from our core self, a language that does not reflect our inner-connectedness with the culture it represents.' (p. 71).

The bilingual therapists interviewed in Verdinelli and Biever (2009) refer to their sense of living in two worlds and that each language establishes and maintains separate cultures. Pavlenko (2005), referring to the data on language preferences for emotion among 1569 multilinguals, noticed that for those who were still in the process of second language socialisation, expressing affect in that language felt a bit fake, like the 'emotions of a different person' (p. 134). However, she does reject the essentialist view of the bilingual as having two languages completely insulated from each other, pointing out that languages and identity are dynamic (p. 189). De Zulueta (2006) pointed out that language is intrinsically linked with our sense of identity. Just as the mother tongue gives us a particular sense of self, a second language learned after puberty can forge a protective identity which can defend us from experiences which are too painful and overwhelming. The therapists in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) mentioned the shared identity with multilingual clients of living between two cultures '(…) a monolingual won't have that experience, of going home or thinking that home is elsewhere, or being bored as I was as a child, being dragged back home and thinking 'Oh but I really would like to go like everyone else (on holiday) to Portugal.' (p. 8).

Trauma and Shame

Research conducted by Tehrani and Vaughan (2009) focused on the way in which language can play a part in psychic repair where a traumatic event has occurred. They demonstrated how bilingual differences and CS in therapy can increase emotional mastery and how exploring past problems in a new light can be aided by a new language: '(...) where an individual is equally fluent in two languages the most significant factor in increasing the quality and emotional content of the recall is the language and context in which the incident was encoded.' (p. 11)

Various commentators on the life of Samuel Beckett have observed that it was by writing in French that Beckett was able to find his creative voice (Casement, 1992). Clare (2004) observes that for some people a foreign tongue 'can give voice to the words that could not be spoken in their own language.' (p. 184.) The emotional potency of the L1 can impede cognitive processes: 'Sometimes the mother tongue is too close to home and is not conducive to thought' (p. 184).

The therapy case reviewed in Pitta et al. (1978) concurs with the therapists in Verdinelli and Biever (2009) who say that clients may use their second language to avoid painful and shameful memories. One therapist commented that she pays attention to this strategy and uses language to help clients to refocus and to stay with a difficult issue. Dewaele (2013) in his study of emotions in multilinguals, relates that several Arab and Asian participants reported that they switch to English to escape the social taboo in their native languages and cultures. We can conjecture that this may occur because the additional language can circumvent the superego (as embedded and encoded in the L1) and so taboo words or emotions can be allowed to be expressed in a way that would not be allowed in the L1.

Early memories and emotions

A review by Altman, Schrauf, and Walters (2013) on research into immigrant autobiographical memory showed that autobiographic memory associations and retrievals for events from childhood and youth (in the country of origin) are more numerous, more detailed and more emotionally marked when remembering is done in the L1 rather than in a subsequent language. Pavlenko (2012) reviewed clinical, introspective, cognitive, psychophysiological, and neuroimaging studies of affective processing in bilingual speakers in order to find out more about firstly, increased automaticity of affective processing in the L1 and heightened electrodermal reactivity to L1 emotion-laden words; and secondly the decreased automaticity of affective processing in the LX, which reduces interference effects and lowers electrodermal reactivity to negative emotional stimuli. Pavlenko concludes that L1 and LX affective processing 'in some bilingual speakers, in particular late bilinguals and foreign language users, respective languages may be differentially embodied, with the later learned language processed semantically but not affectively' (2012, p. 405). However, the strong emotional associations of the L1 are not systematically positive. Pavlenko (2005) talks about Russian, the language of her early years: 'It is also a language that attempted to constrain me and obliterate me as a Jew, to tie me down as a woman, to render me voiceless, a mute slave to a hated regime. To abandon Russian means to embrace freedom. I can talk and write without hearing echoes of things I should not be saying. I can be me. English is a language that offered me that freedom (…)' (p. 22).

Research questions

1) Does CS in interactions with multilingual therapists originate in clients or therapists?
2) Is there a gender difference in self-reported frequency of CS by clients or therapists?
3) Does CS in therapy involve a change of emotional tone?
4) To what extent do the clients agree with 28 statements on linguistic practices with mono- or multilingual therapists, perceptions and attitudes towards mono- and multilingual interactions?

5) How important is it for the therapist to create an environment where issues of multilingualism can be addressed in the therapy?

Methodology

Participants

Former or current multilingual clients of psychotherapists were invited to participate in an online survey on their experiences. The only requirement was that they had to be bi- or multilingual. The authors specifically avoided approaching people known to themselves or to colleagues as clients for ethical reasons. The data was thus collected through non-probability, snowball sampling, i.e. recipients of the call were asked to forward it to friends and colleagues.

Over 200 participants agreed to fill out a short sociobiographical questionnaire and the main instrument. After eliminating those who had not completed all vital parts of the questionnaire, we retained 182 respondents. The sociobiographical questionnaire contained questions about sex, age, nationality, education level, language history and present language use, and the theoretical orientation of their therapist. A majority of participants are women (N = 141). The mean age is 42 yrs (SD = 12), ranging from 21 to 71. Participants are generally highly educated: 8 reported having a Diploma, 24 a Bachelor's degree, 72 a Master's degree, and 77 a PhD[2]. This majority of highly educated, mostly female participants is typical for this kind of data collection (Wilson & Dewaele, 2010).

The participants reported many different nationalities, including many participants with double nationalities. The largest group is British (N = 36), followed by French (N = 15), Americans (N = 14), German (N = 11). Other nationalities include Algerian, Argentinian, Australian, Austrian, Belgian, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Canadian, Chinese, Croatian, Cypriot, Danish, Dutch, Ecuadorian, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Iranian, Irish, Israeli, Italian, Kosovan, Lithuanian, Malaysian, Mexican, Norwegian, Pakistani, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, Taiwanese, and Thai. Many participants are resident in the UK (N = 102). Their professions range from academia (lecturers and professors N = 29, students N = 15, researchers N = 7), to psychologists (N = 34), to bartenders, booksellers, housewives, interpreters, managers, musicians, receptionists, and sales assistants. A large majority had lived abroad (N = 158).

English was the most frequent L1 (N = 50) and 39 other L1s. A little under half of the participants had grown up with two L1s from birth (N = 81). The sample was highly multilingual, with 38 bilinguals, 45 trilinguals, 45 quadrilinguals, 34 pentalinguals, 14 sextalinguals, 4 septalinguals, 1 octalingual and 1 nonalingual. Most frequent L2s were English (N = 69), French (N = 33) and Spanish (N = 14). Other languages (L3, L4, L5) included English, French, German, Spanish and Italian.

The median score on a 5-point Likert scale for ethnic diversity during the participants' childhood was 2. However, the median score for ethnic and linguistic diversity in the participants' workplace was higher (4 and 3 respectively). Most participants had received

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[2] One participant did not supply this information.

therapy in the Psychodynamic approach (*N* = 71), followed by the CBT approach (*N* = 47), the Humanistic Integrative approach (*N* = 21), the Systemic approach (*N* = 10), Gestalt (*N* = 1), the remaining 32 participants were unsure about the approach or did not answer the question. Participants reported having had between 1 and 8 therapists, the largest group reported having had one therapist (*N* = 52), followed by two therapists (*N* = 49), three therapists (*N* = 43) with the remaining 38 clients reporting having had 4 or more therapists. To the question whether any of their therapists were multilingual 84 clients answered "yes", the remaining participants answered either "no" or "unsure". Among the clients who had multilingual therapists, 23 remembered having established this before the start of the therapy, 16 at the beginning and 8 in the middle of the therapy. The statistical analysis will only include the data of the 84 clients (64 women, 19 men) who had had a multilingual therapist.

Instrument

The main questionnaire was exploratory in nature. It contained 28 items in the form of statements with 5-point Likert scales (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree). The items covered linguistic practices with mono- or multilingual therapists, perceptions and attitudes towards mono- and multilingual interactions. Some statements were phrased as personal statements ('I', 'me') while others were statements about 'therapists' in general, the agreement with which, we assumed, would be coloured by clients' personal experience. The questionnaire also contained four open questions inviting participants to recall an instance in therapy where a language switch was significant, to reflect on a therapeutic benefit of a language switch, to remember the feeling of hearing (or not hearing) that the therapist was multilingual. This resulted in a database of around 11000 words. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 10 clients. This led to the deletion of some items and the reformulation of others. The final version of the questionnaire was put on-line on Survey monkey and an open call was also addressed to multilinguals, including those who had participated in previous studies, asking them to forward the call to friends, colleagues or students. The questionnaire was anonymous.
Because the Likert scale data are ordinal rather continuous, we have used non-parametric statistical techniques including Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, Mann Whitney test and Friedman ANOVA tests.

The research design and questionnaire obtained approval from the Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy at Birkbeck College.

Results

A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that CS originated more from the 84 multilingual clients than from their multilingual therapists. The median score of therapists is 1.0 compared to 1.5 for the clients, in other words, the median difference between both groups is 50%, which is a highly significant difference (*Z* = -3.9, *p* < .0001). A Mann Whitney test showed no gender differences in self-reported frequency of CS initiated by the client and the therapist (Mann Whitney *U* = 595, *Z* = -.15, *p* = *ns* and Mann Whitney *U* = 588, *Z* = -.22, *p* = *ns* respectively). About a quarter of participants (*N* = 23) did not answer the question about CS with their therapists and changes in emotional tone. Twenty-four participants (39%) answered "no" to the question. The remaining 37 participants (61%) agreed that their CS was linked to a raised emotional tone. A

Friedman's ANOVA test for related samples revealed significant differences between the level of agreement with the 28 statements ($N = 84$, $Chi^2 = 612$, $df = 27$, $p < .0001$) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Items (as participants saw them) ranked according to degree of agreement

Items	Mean Rank
I consider that my language plays a role in how I behave in therapy.	21.9
I think the ability of a therapist is improved by working with people who speak a different first language (L1) from their own.	20.4
I think it is an advantage for the therapist to be familiar with a client's culture.	19.7
I think the therapist being from the same culture as the client is an advantage.	19.5
It is easier to form a therapeutic relationship with someone who shares a L1.	19.2
It is easier to form a therapeutic relationship with someone who does not share a L1.	18.5
I think that therapists with bilingual skills are able to understand clients in a different way from therapists who are monolingual.	17.6
I use more non-verbal forms of communication with people who do not share my L1.	17.1
I consider that the languages used by the therapists in therapy play a role in how they behave as therapists.	16.8
I think that the L1 of the client is not relevant in therapy.	16.1
I think that therapists' ability to speak more than one language attunes them more to cultural differences.	15.5
I avoid certain topics when talking to a therapist with whom I do not share a L1.	15.4
I feel that being able to work in a non-native language would give me more freedom to express myself.	15.4
I think therapists who speak more than one language are able to communicate more effectively with clients from different linguistic backgrounds.	15.1
I think that therapists who speak more than one language can understand clients whose L1 is not that of the therapist.	14.8
Therapists who speak more than one language can accommodate different languages more easily in therapeutic work with a client.	14.6
I think there are advantages to using a non-native language for the client in therapy.	14.0
Therapists with whom I share a first language relate differently from therapists with whom I do not share a L1.	13.0
I think a therapist feels less able to challenge clients if they share the same culture or language.	13.0
I think clients can use a non-native language as a distancing device in therapy (if the therapist understands that language).	12.7
I think that the L1 of the therapist is not relevant in therapy.	12.6
I think my proficiency in my L1 affects the way a therapist views me.	10.8
I think therapists can use a non-native language as a distancing device in therapy (if the client understands that language).	10.4
I think how the client relates to the therapist and the transferential projections are likely to be affected by the client's choice of languages used in therapy.[3]	9.8
Working with the transference and the therapeutic relationship is easier when the therapist and client share a L1.[4]	8.7
I avoid certain topics when talking to a therapist with whom I share a L1.	8.1
From my experience I believe that levels of empathy between clients and therapists are affected by the language in which the therapy takes place.	8.1
It is easier to express strong feelings and emotions in a non-native language.	7.8

The 17 items from the quantitative study with a mean rank of over 14.0 were distributed into three overarching themes: 1) The multilingualism of the therapist promotes greater empathic understanding; 2) Clients view their multilingualism as an important aspect of their sense of self and of their therapy; 3) Language switches in therapy are more frequent

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[3] This was followed by the following statement: "(Please skip to question 22 if this question is not relevant to your understanding of therapy)"
[4] This was followed by the following statement: "(Please skip to question 22 if this question is not relevant to your understanding of therapy)"

when the emotional tone is raised. With these three themes in mind, we investigated the 182 clients' responses to the open questions.

The multilingualism of the therapist promotes greater empathic understanding

Comments which referred to attunement, connection and the relationship were considered particularly relevant. C38[5] commented that the discovery that his therapist was multilingual increased his sense of connection: 'When I found out that my therapist was multilingual, I felt that I had much more in common with him regardless if we continued our interview in English. I felt that I could relate and reveal certain problems to him rather than being analyzed by a uni-lingual doctor.' (C38, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, English, German)

It is interesting that the previous client does not state that he shared the same language as his therapist. This appreciation of multilingualism in the therapist per se is reiterated by another client: 'Being multilingual myself, I would feel they would understand me better (not even depended on the languages they speak), as I think growing up and living in the society as a multilingual person is very different from monolingual, so I would feel a bit closer to my therapist.' (C75, Polish, English, French, Spanish, Italian, German)

However, a small minority of clients disagreed. This example refers to the level of language ability necessary for effective therapy to take place. The client describes an encounter with a non-native English-speaking therapist whose English skills he judged to be 'lower than my previous therapist'. This was the consequence: 'I didn't feel I could talk freely about my feelings and experiences in whatever words felt best, but I had to choose my words more carefully so that she would understand. I found this very distracting and off-putting…' (C115, English, French)

The majority of clients' statements did concur with the finding from the statistical analysis that the multilingualism of the therapist led to greater empathy and understanding. One client referred to a sense of enhanced appreciation of cultural nuances by multilinguals: '…I believe that multilingualism enriches the mind and makes it easier to understand viewpoints, particularly some that may be very culture dependent.' (C63, Bulgarian, French, English, Russian, Dutch)

Another client referred to her sense of connectedness through sharing a multilingual identity with the therapist: 'It would make me feel a connection with them because being multilingual changes you. It is something in common and can help communication because you have more ways to explain things even if you only share one language because there is an internal system change when one becomes multilingual that is shared even if the languages aren't.' (C14, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French)

For this client, although the shared experience of multilingualism was valued, this was not related to the function of therapy. If therapy was not effective, multilingualism could not add much value: 'I gave up on the therapy after 4 weeks when I realised my Italian

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[5] We identify our participants with "C" (for client) followed by their number in our database.

barber was giving me the same advice, in both Italian and English, and I was getting a free haircut at the same time.' (C93, Finnish, English, German, French, Italian)

For one client, the therapist's multilingualism was an important factor for her to feel that her experience would be understood. She felt that a multilingual therapist would value plurality of language and culture: 'When my therapist told me she was multilingual I felt that I could relate with her better. Part of what I had gone into therapy for was my feeling of loneliness and inability to connect with others in the United States because many people do not value language and culture.' (C73, English, Spanish)

Another client, with a monolingual therapist, ponders that the therapist's monolingualism and monoculturalism might have contributed to the lack of empathy: 'I would perhaps feel more understood by the therapist. If my problem is that I feel misunderstood by the white society; the most important thing for me would be that the therapist understands me along with my culture'. (C140, Urdu, Punjabi, Norwegian, English, Hindi, Swedish)

One client valued the increased empathy and understanding, which she associated with the therapist's multilingualism: 'It means they have an interest in an "otherness" enough to learn the language, or might be multicultural themselves. It also makes aware of the nuances that might be missed and that the patient might have other contextual realities.' (C150, German, English, French, Spanish). However she added that this really should be the case for monolingual therapists too: 'But this should be realised within a single language relationship as well.'

Clients view their multilingualism as an important aspect of their sense of self and of their therapy

This broad theme was divided into 2 sub-themes: 1) Identity 2) Early memories and Emotions.

Identity

One client describes how she experiences herself differently in different languages, and that this had significant implications for therapy: 'I feel like a huge part of me just doesn't go to therapy with me. I have different personas with each language I speak so only speaking in English in therapy isn't helpful... If I have to translate into English… it just isn't the same for me.' (C14, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French)

Identity and language are wrapped up with culture. de Zulueta's (1995, p. 179) observation that 'language is to culture what DNA is to genetics' is particularly relevant here. C114 observes: 'I left Germany as a young girl, running away from my identity which was an imperative detail of my therapy. Having a German speaking therapist helped me a very great deal -something that I only fully understand now.' (C114, German, English)

Clients talked about having to use a particular phrase or term in their own language in order to explain a cultural concept that might have no equivalence in the therapist's language and culture: '… when I worked with a humanistic counsellor I spent time

explaining what "Xiao-Shuen" [filial piety, or being a good daughter] means and how that affects my decisions,' one client explained. (C141, Mandarin, English)

Clients also referred to the liberating effect of accessing different parts of themselves via different languages: 'Living and working in my own therapy in another language forced me to break free from cultural boxes and compartments in my mind.' (C153, Swedish, English, German, French, Spanish)

The choice of language might also reflect the potency of a particular phrase: 'I once used a French phrase, *à voile et à vapeur*, to express someone's sexuality, because there is nothing like it in English.' (C53 English, French, Sotho)
Others provided examples of phrases for which there was no adequate English equivalent, or phrases which described the particular cultural nuances of a phrase they had used in therapy. These included (with translations by the participants):
    in German: C119: *Gratwanderung* – 'the narrow zone that humans inhabit/the precariousness of existence'
    in Portuguese: C176: *Quem me dera?* – 'How I would wish!'
    in Spanish: C183: (recalling a word used about her in childhood): *aburridora* – [literally, bored, tedious, wearisome] – 'and until today, I still can't find the English equivalent'.

'Early memories' and 'Emotions'

Many clients commented on the way in which their early memories were encoded in their L1. They felt it was important to be able to access these memories in therapy: 'My therapist did not understand my [L1]. However she asked me to talk about my childhood, which seemed irrelevant in the therapy in English. However when I mixed in some words from my [L1], it started to make more sense talking about my childhood. As if English language did not let my memories come back efficiently enough, and I just needed some key words in [my first language] to bring memories back.' (C76, Russian, Lithuanian, English, Spanish, French, Italian)

Others commented: 'It [speaking in her L1] was very beneficial for my getting in touch with how I feel and felt in the past about my mother with whom I only spoke my mother tongue, and so I needed to "speak" with her (in my mind) in that language. I could not begin to really feel what I would "say" to her unless I imagined the words in my native tongue.' (C166, Slovenian, English, German, Croatian, Spanish)

'Once, I was describing my stepfather's house and the words for a lot of elements in the building just came out in Spanish. It was a bit like unblocking of visual and emotional memory…the colours of the elements returned to my mind and gave me the emotional resonance of the place.' (C6, Spanish, English)

Code-switches in therapy were common when the emotional tone was raised

Clients gave numerous examples of CS to create greater emotional proximity or distance. Most welcomed this as a resource to deploy in their therapy. Some were less convinced. Most notably those who had had psychoanalytic therapy, found CS served only to further

complicate their struggles to make themselves understood: 'I think there would have been more "misunderstandings" and word (power) games. Actually I felt misunderstood enough in a monolingual setting as it was… I endured it for a year, five times a week.' (C66, Spanish, English, French, Italian, German)

Another client saw no point in CS if the therapist did not share the same languages: 'I suspect that undergoing therapy in a language not your own is like *pisser dans un violon*' [urinate in a violin] (C182, French, English, German, Spanish)

The majority, however, enjoyed CS, providing the therapist was open to the idea: 'The therapist was not necessarily fluent in the language but was simply present as I expressed myself. It felt liberating and allowing. I have applied this sometimes with clients myself. It doesn't matter whether the therapist understands the actual language spoken: there comes a point where I as a client am invited to hear and listen to myself. This is very helpful, in the presence of another benevolent being.' (C168, French, Italian, English, German, Spanish)

One client, however, cautions that as well as being open to the idea, the therapist needs to be skilful in working with the CS. This client explains how she was invited to switch languages in order to increase the emotional resonance of her description. However: 'I didn't find much comfort in confiding this to someone who probably didn't understand its various connotations – I felt more alone than when I explained in English how I felt about the incident.' (C178, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese)

C114's experience was more positive. He describes how the CS changed the emotional tone both for him and for the therapist: 'It was easier to "let myself go" in Spanish and easier for the therapist to notice that I was NOT a stiff upper lip…as long as we were speaking in English both of us were less ready to express emotions. We used more formulaic expressions for conventional small talk phrases, like "I am not at my best" instead of Spanish "me siento como un perro mordido" (I feel like a bitten dog)…Spanish allowed for code switching.' (C113, Polish, German, English, Spanish)

C63 feels that CS is a natural way of expressing herself: '… describing a situation or a sentiment idiomatically in one language provides better approximation to the "real" thing and expresses more subtle nuances. In my experience this happens automatically. If in one of the languages I speak there is an expression like that, it does come to my lips whether I want it, or not. Then it's up to me to let the lips share it, which I usually do.' (C63, Bulgarian, French, English, Russian, Dutch)

Interestingly, although, some therapists expressed concerns about the safety of code switching in Costa & Dewaele (2013), many clients had different views. Some said they found the ability to switch languages helped them feel safer when talking about very difficult topics: 'For me using English when describing something very delicate or important to me is like having a safety net or a parachute. If I cannot say it properly in German, I know I shall be able to say it properly in English.' (C28, French, English, Spanish, German)

A number of clients made reference to the emotional charge in different languages with reference to the transference: 'The mother tongue i.e. the language your mother spoke to you in is highly significant in the transference.' (C126, Guajarati, English, French,

Spanish) Others referred to the languages in which they conducted different relationships: 'It helped to be able to switch languages when talking about things that transpired between me and my ex-boyfriend who was Mexican. It helped to be able to describe some of our interactions using the language (Spanglish) that we interacted in.' (C73, English, Spanish)

Some made reference to the power differentials when different languages are spoken with varying levels of fluency by the therapist and clients in couples/family therapy. One client described a couples' therapy intervention where the therapy was conducted in his wife's first language and his second language. He had tried to switch languages but was not understood and felt he could not express himself: '…so in the end I had to use "next-best" phrase strategies (…) the lack of switching was what was significant for me.' (C42, English, Turkish, French, Spanish, Hausa)

There are two particularly significant areas singled out by clients for code switching in therapy: trauma and shame. In both these areas code switching is employed to achieve an increase or decrease in emotional tone.

Trauma

Being able to access more than one language for the re-telling of a traumatic experience can be a useful resource for therapy. For some it can provide access to a less emotionally charged medium. As C71 said: 'I felt more comfortable speaking about traumatic events in my non-native tongue. I feel that in my particular case I was able to let go of pain easier thus.' (C71, Hungarian, German, English)

For others, the increased intensity of a language can help them to cope with a traumatic event. C168 found that she was better able to process the trauma by describing it in the language in which it occurred: 'I remember being given permission/being asked to express a traumatic incident in the language in which it happened. This I found very liberating.' (C168, French, Italian, English, German, Spanish)

Shame

Clients frequently mentioned the use of CS to avoid cultural constraint associated with using their own language. C81 describes using a second language for: '… speaking about topics which I was ashamed of. It is a way to put facts in the distance' (C81, French, English, Spanish, German)

Another mentions a freedom from taboo in his LX: 'I was not carrying as much cultural baggage when I spoke French in therapy. I felt more at ease talking about "taboo subjects" [sex] in therapy in French than in English. I felt I was more distanced from the "controversial subjective" and probably culture- based aspects of sex. No sex please we're British vs. a freer attitude.' (C50, English, French, Spanish, Swedish)

Sometimes, not sharing a L1 with the therapist can allow the client some distance from the experience of shame while allowing the maximum toleration of feeling. C184 mentions: '…having said a heavy swear word in my mother tongue and felt not as ashamed in thinking my therapist would not understand exactly the heaviness

nevertheless understanding its connected sense of feeling and favouring a cathartic episode.' (C184, German, Sardinian, Italian, English, Spanish)

Alternatively, using a second language may temper the strength of the expression of an emotion: 'I've never switched the languages but, saying this, I can say that I struggled to express my anger on a few occasions. I know I could easily do this by using, for example, swear words in my native language. Swear words in a second language do not have as much strength.' (C92, Polish, English)

Discussion

In response to our first research question, statistical analysis revealed that participants who had had multilingual therapists reported switching language in interactions with their therapists significantly more frequently than therapists. In other words, clients who knew they had that possibility were more likely to switch. Recommendations are made in the literature (Pitta et al., 1978; Verdinelli; 2009) for the therapist to initiate CS in therapy and thus avoid the use of language-switching as a form of resistance. However, clients in this study welcomed the ability to initiate CS themselves as a way to connect them with the intensity or to allow them the distance they needed in a given moment. That is to say that clients valued the potential to manage the emotional flow themselves. This is consistent with the argument put forward by Dewaele (2013) in his study on language preference for expression of emotion. He suggests that people often choose to verbalise strong emotions in a language which allows them speed of expression so that the potency is maintained, illustrated in the current study by the phrase: 'let the lips share it' (C63). Clients also referred to the way in which switching to another language could help them to 'break free from cultural boxes' (C153). Similarly, the therapists in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) regarded the language gap as a source of creativity.

The answer to the second research question is negative as no difference emerged between male and female clients in their self-reported frequency of CS initiated by themselves or by their therapist.

The answer to the third research question is less clear-cut, although it went in the expected direction: 39% of the clients who had had multilingual therapists and answered the question felt that CS was not linked an increased emotional tone, the remaining 61% of clients reported that CS in therapy involved an increased emotional tone.

The answer to the fourth research question was based on an analysis of the Likert scale values for 28 statements on linguistic practices with mono- or multilingual therapists, perceptions and attitudes towards mono- and multilingual interactions. The statistical analysis showed significant differences in levels of agreement with the statements. Three broad themes emerged from the 17 items with the most positive ratings: 1) the therapist's multilingualism promoting empathy; 2) the clients' multilingualism as an important aspect of sense of self and of the therapy; and 3) the increased CS when the emotional tone was raised, especially when dealing with trauma and shame. These themes also appeared spontaneously in the feedback of clients. Unsurprisingly, many of these themes have been observed in earlier studies. Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013) found that the majority of the multilingual therapists believed that their multilingualism increased their ability for attunement and empathic understanding with their client. Amati-Mehler (2004) believes her ability to attune to complexity is enhanced by her ability to hold

multiple meanings as a multilingual. The majority of clients felt that language-matching with a therapist was not necessary but they felt more connected to a therapist if they knew that they were multilingual, an opinion shared by the therapists interviewed in Costa and Dewaele (2012, 2013). Clients also stated that a multilingual therapist would be more aware of 'nuances that might be missed and that the patient might have other contextual realities.' (C140) Many clients also reflected on the importance they attributed to their multilingualism in terms of their sense of self and their identity and a sense of having multiple personas (C14). This is a popular theme in multilingualism research, especially the richness and the freedom that cultural hybridity provides (Dewaele, 2013).

Clients also referred to the way in which their early memories were encoded in their early languages and how it was important to be able to express their feelings in the corresponding language. (C76, C166). This is consistent with the findings from studies on autobiographic memory associations (see the review in Altman et al., 2013) and Pavlenko's (2012) argument that bilingual speakers may process the later learned language semantically but not affectively.

The answer to the final research question, namely the importance for the therapist to create an environment where issues of multilingualism can be addressed in the therapy, was largely affirmative. Clients reported positive experiences and welcomed and valued an environment where multilingualism had a place in the therapy. They appreciated it when a monolingual or multilingual therapist invited them to speak in other languages whether or not the therapist understood and they felt they were able to engage more fully in the therapy (C76, C166, C6, C168).

Antinucci (2004) and Akhtar (2006), both psychoanalytically trained therapists, recommend that the multilingual therapist should be mindful of the potential to collude with the client's mourning or idealisation of a lost culture or language. Antinucci (2004) suggests that the therapist should address the fantasy around the shared "otherness" with the client. Clients of psychoanalysts who took part in this study had different experiences. For example: 'There was no such disclosure and you are not allowing for other kinds of analysis - indeed, I don't think such disclosure would have been permitted, or at least I cannot recall that there was an offer that it was going to be.' (C66, Spanish, English, French, Italian, German).

Conclusion and implications for practice

The present study aimed to focus on the voice of the multilingual client in therapy. Having collected quantitative and qualitative data via an on-line questionnaire from a relatively large sample of multilingual clients (N =182) from all over the world, who had been exposed to a wide variety of therapeutic approaches, we have a database with strong ecological validity (Wilson & Dewaele, 2010). In other words, "local" effects are unlikely to have overly influenced the patterns that we uncovered. However, because our respondents were generally highly educated and only a minority had traumatic experiences of migration, we cannot claim that our findings apply to all multilinguals in therapy. More research is needed on multilinguals who have experienced traumatic migration and for whom language differences are not seen as benign but may have been part of the traumatic experience (for example the languages in which torture or political strife may have been conducted). Another limitation of our research is the fact that not all respondents had had therapy with a multilingual therapist. Respondents left responses

blank if they had not had the experience and made it clear in their Open Box answers if they were writing about real or imagined experiences. Only real experiences were analysed and reported on. Some did report the very real frustration of not having had a multilingual therapist.

The patterns that the current research revealed were that clients report more frequent CS than their therapists, and that CS occurs more frequently when the emotional tone is raised. Further analysis revealed that clients use CS strategically when discussing episodes of trauma and shame. CS allows them both to gain proximity or distance according to the need. Clients reported that being able to switch between languages allowed them to express themselves more fully to the therapist, being heard in "stereo" rather than in "mono". The ability to do so added depth and nuance to the therapy, a view defended in previous research (Espin, 2013; Kokaliari et al., 2013; Verdinelli, 2009). Many of the views of the multilingual clients correspond with the views of multilingual therapists. Unlike the therapists however, the clients did not perceive their language switching as a means of avoiding emotional depth, there was general agreement that the therapist's multilingualism promotes empathy and that a client's multilingualism constitutes an important aspect of the client's sense of self, which has strong implications for the therapy. Multilingual clients benefit from a therapeutic environment where multilingualism is appreciated, and where CS is possible (Martinovic & Altarriba, 2013).

Although clients may not be aware of the lack of training as cited by multilingual therapists (Verdinelli, 2009; Costa & Dewaele, 2012, 2013) some of their comments pointed to this lack. One mentioned the aloneness they felt when invited to speak in their language with a therapist who lacked comprehension (C178). Another alluded to the fact that the qualities she valued in a multilingual therapist: 'should be realised within a single language relationship as well.' (C140)

Three key implications for practice which emerge from this study are: the inclusion of multilingualism and implications for therapy into the curriculum of psychotherapy and supervisor trainings and accreditations; attention to the role that multilingualism can have when working psychotherapeutically with trauma; attention by monolingual and multilingual therapists to the way in which they invite a client's multilingual personas into the therapeutic space. The responses of the multilingual clients in this study remind us of the role languages have in regulating affect, expression of emotion and reflexivity. For all therapists, from all language backgrounds, this is a clear message.

Acknowledgements

Biographies

Beverley Costa is a Psychotherapist and the Founder and Director of Mothertongue multi-ethnic counselling service, which offers culturally and linguistically sensitive counselling to people from black and minority ethnic communities.

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Transience and Lack of Being

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Abstract

The essay aims at reading Freud's essay "On Transience" through the prism of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. The claim of the essay is that transience results from the subject's inability to ensnare the present in its actuality. On account of the unbridgeable gap between the subject's supposed initial perception and its symbolization, the world is present to the subject only insofar as it already belongs to the past. It follows that the subject can neither achieve coalescence with itself nor discover the world around him in a complete fashion. What is lost in the symbolized present is either fantasized in the past or anticipated in the future. In Lacan's perspective, these fantasies are never fulfilled: the actual present is utterly impossible in the discursive reality of the human subject. In this way, the Lacanian thesis that every drive is a death drive is reaffirmed in this essay: since there is nothing outside the symbolic order for Lacan, the present in its actuality can only be associated with the death of the subject. Furthermore, the essay argues that the present as such is nothing other than an impossible event of temporal being which is, however, essential for the constitution of time.

Introduction

Sigmund Freud's (1997) little known essay titled "On Transience (Vergänglichkeit)" records a conversation with a "young but already famous poet" and his "taciturn friend" who may have been the poet Rainer Maria Rilke and his friend Lou Andreas-Salome. An otherwise joyous summer walk in the countryside is shadowed by the young poet's gloomy thoughts on decay. Freud (1997) writes:

> The poet admired the beauty of the scene around us but felt no joy in it. He was
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> disturbed by the thought that all this beauty was fated to extinction, that it would
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> vanish when winter came, like all human beauty and all the beauty and splendor that
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> men have created or may create. All that he would otherwise have loved and admired
>
> seemed to him to be shorn of its worth by the transience which was its doom. (p. 176)

Freud provides a psychoanalytic explanation for the young poet's inability to enjoy the summer blossom. Freud's argument in this respect is largely in tune with the main theses

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of his famous "Mourning and Melancholia." Mourning is the painful process of the detachment of libido from its objects once they are lost or destroyed. The transience of things makes future mourning inevitable. In this sense, the young poet's disturbance by the ineluctable decay of the beautiful is nothing else but simultaneously a preventative mourning and an anticipatory renunciation of what is not destined to last.

Although the proneness to extinction of all things is undisputable, Freud does not share the poet's pessimistic view on the nature of transience. For Freud (1997), the thought that "the transience of beauty should interfere with our joy in it" (p. 177) is incomprehensible. Since "[l]imitation in the possibility of an enjoyment raises the value of the enjoyment," the impermanence of things should only lend them on that account more charm (Freud, 1997, p. 177). And yet this argument fails to alter the young poet's melancholic state. Toward the end of his essay Freud reduces the poet's mourning to the pre-war malaise. However, another explanation for the poet's distress is also possible.

This essay aims at developing an alternative reading of transience by way of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. The claim of the essay is that transience results from the existence of an infinitesimal yet unbridgeable temporal gap between the moment of the subject's initial perception of the world and the point of its symbolization. At the heart of transience, thus, lies the fact that the world is present to the subject only insofar as the world already belongs to the past. The feeling of transience has its origins in the insistent slippage of the present into the past and, thus, its utter inaccessibility. Furthermore, this essay maintains that the inaccessibility of the present in its actuality is that which initiates the subject's lack-of-being. In this connection, the subject's lack-of-being predicates itself upon the fundamental impossibility of the actual present. However, since there is nothing outside the symbolic order for Lacan, the actual present can only be associated with the death of the subject. The essay concludes with the revindication of the Lacanian thesis that every drive is a death drive.

The Lacking Present

Perhaps, what is most disturbing about things around us, especially, the beautiful objects to which our libido attaches itself, is not that they are destined to become absent, but that we somehow cannot even enjoy them in their presence. That the beauty of the scene around him will inevitably fade away with the coming of winter may not be, in fact, of primary concern for Freud's young companion. After all, as Freud rightfully notes, "each time [nature's beauty] is destroyed by winter it comes again next year, so that in relation to the length of our lives it can in fact be regarded as eternal" (Freud, 1997, p. 177). Rather, the poet feels pain in his inability to appreciate the joyous objects around at the very present moment. More precisely, it is as if each object is not only historically transient but also evanescent at each instant of time. The beautiful escapes Freud's young friend because of the very passage of time. It follows that the permanent evanescence of things precedes their "historical" transience. The past and the future appear on the horizon only insofar as the subject fails to come to terms with his libidinal desires in the present. What Freud's young friend cannot appreciate at this moment due to transience, he hopes to enjoy at a certain point in the future or believes to have enjoyed at a certain point in the past. Initially, the young poet's melancholic state is caused by the mourning over the irremediable transience of each and every instant of time spent at the beautiful summer scene. Then, the anticipatory mourning over the beauty doomed to perish enters the scene.

Freud's approach to temporality in psychoanalysis can be summarized in the word Nachträglichkeit ("afterwardness" or "deferred action"). Since Freud's ambiguous use of Nachträglichkeit results in a possibility of more than one interpretation of this concept, here I insist on the late hermeneutic conception of Nachträglichkeit. Freud is perplexed by the observation that in neurosis a traumatic event occurring before the age of puberty only takes its toll on the subject already in puberty. It follows that it is not the experiences themselves which act traumatically but their resurgence in the memory of the mature individual. One reads in "The Project": "Here we have the case of a memory arousing an affect which it did not arouse as an experience, because in the meantime the change [brought about] in puberty had made possible a different understanding of what was remembered" (Freud, 1966b, p. 356). Hereby the traumatic potential of a childhood trauma can only be actualized once the subject acquires the capacity for reacting to this trauma. What is necessary for a revival of a trauma is a distressing yet mature encounter with sexuality. It is through this encounter that traumatic memories find their deliverance: "no hysterical symptom can arise from a real experience alone, but that in every case the memory of earlier experiences awakened in association to it plays a part in causing the symptom" (Freud, 1966a, p. 197). From this perspective, memory is not impermeable, on the contrary, it is continually reconstructed in the light of present experiences and desires. The subject can project the impressions, ideas, knowledge and fantasies acquired in the course of its life onto its childhood memories and, thus, effectively change their content and meaning. Consequently, traumas are not excavated in a pristine fashion from the hidden depths of the past, but constructed in the present in a retroactive manner. The crucial point not to miss here is that the meaning of each memory trace results solely from the simultaneous presence of other memory traces. A hermeneutic reading of Nachträglichkeit implies exactly this reciprocal relationship between the event in the past and its later signification.

Jacques Lacan (2012a) situates Freudian Nachträglichkeit in relation to language: "Freudian concepts take on their full meaning when oriented in a field of language and ordered in relation to the function of speech" (p. 205). For Lacan, the notion of Nachträglichkeit, or après-coup, captures the logic of signification by highlighting its non-linear temporal character. Each new signifier retroactively alters the meaning of the previous ones. Meaning as such is produced by this very movement backward and forward of signification (Lacan, 2012a, p. 253). As Slavoj Žižek (1989) puts it: "As soon as we enter the symbolic order, the past is always present in the form of historical tradition and the meaning of these traces is not given; it changes continually with the transformation of the signifier's network" (p. 56). Likewise, Dylan Evans (1996) writes: "present events affect past events a posteriori, since the past exists in the psyche only as a set of memories which are constantly being reworked and reinterpreted in the light of present experience" (p. 209). This is precisely the meaning of the phrase Jacques Lacan (1991) utters at the very beginning of his first Seminar: "History is not the past. History is the past in so far as it is historicized in the present" (p. 12).

It follows that the process of signification is structured by the movements of retroaction and anticipation. Each and every signifier is necessarily in the state of anticipation of more signifiers to come. In other words, at no instant of time the signifier is complete and self-sufficient: the signifier always needs a supplement. Accordingly, the incompleteness of the signifier in the present introduces the dimension of temporality proper. What is lacking in the incomplete present is fantasized in the bygone past or anticipated in the oncoming future. Freud argues that the young poet is unable to enjoy the beautiful

summer scene because he is worried about its impermanence. However, Freud's companion is, perhaps, also disturbed by the evanescence of things around him insofar as he fails to enjoy them in the present. It is, once again, the incompleteness of the present that makes the poet desire the absolute duration of the beautiful objects and anticipate the future so vehemently. What renders the present incomplete so as to perpetually defer its enjoyment onto the future? The answer to this question will also reveal the aspect of the young poet's wistfulness at the transience of things unnoticed by Freud.

The Unattainable Instant

In "The Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty: A New Sophism" Lacan (2012b) distinguishes between three evidential moments of the logical time: the instant of the glance, the time for comprehending and the moment for concluding. He (2012b) notes that "each of these moments in its passage to next is resorbed therein" (p. 167). Concerning the instant of the glance and the time for comprehending, Ed Pluth and Dominiek Hoens (2009) write: "The instant of the glance lasts as long as it takes to notice what is given in the situation [...] The time for comprehending lasts as long as it takes to make a line of reasoning" (p. 183). Finally, the moment for concluding is the ascertainment of the previously made inference about the given situation. Apart from the distinction between these three concepts, two relations are assumed: first, the supersession of the initial gaze by the rational assessment of the situation and, second, the suppression of all doubt at the moment of conclusion. The notion of the instant of the gaze, however, proves to be problematic here. Having the status of an inaugural gaze, the instant of the glance is supposed to be that which puts in place an experience for the subject to process. Yet, precisely as an inaugural gaze proper, the instant of the glance necessarily escapes the subject's subjectivity. The subject as a subject of the signifier only emerges with the second evidential moment, the time for understanding. What endows the subject with subjectivity is the moment of understanding, that is to say, the rational digestion of the instant of the glance and its inscription in the synchronous network of the signifiers. Bruce Fink (1995b) writes pertinently: "To come to consciousness a perception must pass through the filter of the symbolic order or Other" (p. 226). The Other installs an infinitesimal yet unbridgeable gap between the moment of the inaugural gaze and its symbolization. To formulate it differently, the Other never assumes present modality. On the contrary, it only appears as stretching into the past or the future. The instant of the glance is an evidential moment unlike others. At each instant of time the inaugural glance is perceived later than its immediate occurrence and posited as having existed earlier than its actual perception. Once again, the phenomenon of the instant's belatedness in relation to itself can be summarized in the term Nachträglichkeit.

Taking place at an interval between the first two evidential moments, namely, the instant of the glance and the time for understanding, the subject of the signifier becomes coterminous with the inaugural glance's non-coincidence with itself. As a signifier, the initial perception becomes perpetually caught up in the state of absence in relation to itself. As Lacan (2012a) puts it: "Through the word – which is already a presence made of absence – absence itself comes to be named..." (p. 228). The symbolized event becomes inaccessible to the subject precisely because it is symbolized and, thus, absent. Essentially, each and every event is for the subject a missed encounter. In other words, the presence of the world takes place in the absence of the subject.

What follows is that the passage of time, the incessant making-past of the present, is the direct result of the inscription of events into the signifying chain. In this connection, time/language bars our access to the the present in its actuality and, thus, assumes the role of the fundamental prohibition. Since every inaugural gaze is necessarily digested by the Other and time never stands still, the subject always fails to get hold of the present. The world is present to the subject only insofar as the world already belongs to the past. Thus, what is conventionally understood as the present is, in effect, already the reproduction of the past. The historically privileged modality of time, the present, hereby becomes displaced leaving the Lacanian subject outside the parameter of the supposed temporal center. In a sense, the present tense becomes the excluded center of Lacanian time. The inaccessibility of the present brings it close to the notion of the Real. Otherwise stated, the impossible inaugural glance becomes, at one and the same time, the moment of impossible jouissance and the Real as a missed encounter. Jacques Lacan (1992) writes in his Seminar VII:

> We are, in fact, led to the point where we accept the formula that without a transgression there is no access to jouissance, and [...] that that is precisely the function of the Law. Transgression in the direction of jouissance only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law. (p. 177)

For the instant of the glance is rendered inaccessible by the Other, the subject necessarily fails to coincide with its own inaugural gaze. Consequently, the subject is prevented from attaining presence with itself. Being nachträglich in relation to itself, the Lacanian subject becomes alienated not only in language but also in time. To use Kant's vocabulary, the gap separating the determining I (the "I think" of transcendental apperception) and the determinable I (the empirical I, the I as object) is a temporal one. That is to say, the only way I can reflect upon myself is through rendering myself temporally other than myself. By the same token, the experience of oneself is always a return to that which is presently otherwise. In this respect, Žižek (1992) suggests: "the self-positing I remains forever a presupposition, something that is never posited as such, present in the transparency of an actual I" (p. 87). Due to its reliance on the Other, the subject is only present in its absence. In other words, the Lacanian subject never appears as such. Fink (1995a) summarizes this in a very fair way: "Lacan never pinpoints the subject's chronological appearance on the scene: he or she is always either about to arrive – is on the verge of arriving – or will have already arrived by some later moment in time" (p. 63). In regard to this "that-has-been" component of the subject, Lacan (2012a) invokes Heidegger: "In Heideggerian language […] remembering constitute[s] the subject as gewesend – that is, as being the one who has thus been" (p. 212). In Heidegger's Being and Time (1962) we find the notion explicated as follows: Dasein (the subject) exists in its insistent coming back to its ownmost "been" (p. 326). At this point, the Lacanian notion of manque à être acquires a new dimension. At the heart of the subject's manque à être lies the fundamental impossibility of the actuality present. By its very nature, the actuality the inaugural glance is impossible for the subject to ensnare. The subject is, thus, barred from the actual present in the most literal sense. In simpler terms, the subject literally never is, rather, it is either that which has been or that which will have been. The present becomes

accessible to the subject only insofar as it is symbolized, that is, incomplete and carrying absence within itself. Necessarily being either too late or too early in relation to itself, the subject never corresponds with its own being, with its own advent into presence.

Time and Desire

As Lacan (1995) formulates it in "The Position of Unconscious": "As an effect of language, in that he is born of this original split, the subject translates a signifying synchrony into this primordial temporal pulsation that is the constitutive fading of his identification" (p. 265). The true position of the Lacanian subject is between its doomed attempts to assume self-presence and its mortification in the Other. What sustains the subject in this impossible pursuit is desire. As Lacan (1988) puts, "the subject manifests himself in his gap, namely, in that which causes his desire" (p. 16). Hereby the instant of the glance represents for the subject the object-cause of its desire, the objet petit a, the moment of inexpressible jouissance. The instant of the glance as objet petit a is an impossible moment of the subject's co-presence with the Real of the event.

In Seminar XI Lacan (1981) formulates objet petit a in the following way:

> The objet a is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that, firstly, separable and, secondly, that has some relation to the lack. (p. 103)

In Seminar VII Lacan (1992) describes das Ding (which is identical to an objet a) as "a lost object, but paradoxically an object that was never there in the first place to be lost" (p. 58). It follows that signification as such is articulated around the illusion of attaining the elusive bits of Real, the elusive inaugural gaze. The transformation of the event into signifiers involves a catastrophic loss of jouissance and, for this reason, renders the event incomplete. In this respect, what the subject desires is a co-presence with the taking place of the world, with its own advent into being. The subject desires a stoppage of time or being outside time.

To come back to Freud's "On Transience," the desire for being outside of time lies at the heart of Freud's young companion's wistfulness at the passing of time and the inevitability of decay. The young poet clearly feels that nothing stays present to him even for a second, that nothing is ever present. As was already said, the transience of each perception predicates itself upon the unceasing making-past of the present by the Other. Time does not let itself be halted. The young poet is confronted with the rapid slippage of the present into the past whereby presence as such is only experienced as absence. For this reason, the Freud's companion is captured by the feelings of nostalgia and mourning at one and the same time. On the one hand, he mourns over the perpetual loss of the present, on the other hand, he is nostalgic about the present insofar as it always already belongs to the past.

The Real jouissance of the scene around the young poet is forever lost at the very moment the poet himself comes into being as a conscious subject. And yet the jouissance of the inaugural gaze is never lost completely. On the contrary, it constitutes a necessary remainder of the functioning of the signifying mechanism, something that makes the subject conscious of the lost jouissance. That is to say, something perpetually escapes the young poet's perceptions simultaneously bruising him and making him crave for more. Maintaining a distinction between reproduction and repetition, Lacan argues that the psyche reproduces what is symbolized and repeats what cannot be symbolized, what it stumbles upon. That is to say, whereas reproduction is a dreary succession of the identical, repetition is always new and different failure of symbolization. In Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, repetition aims at that which "interrupts the consistency of the field of our constructions of reality, of the object of identification, by embodying the repressed jouissance, the destabilizing part of nature excluded from its harmonious symbolization" (Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 56). In the final account, the young poet's hopeless revolt against the evanescence of things comes down to a never-ending attempt to assume that which cannot be symbolized. But every such attempt fails thereby causing the insistence of the attempt to become the subject's very being. The perpetual *aphanisis* of the subject is constitutive of the dialectics of desire: the subject is nothing other but an impossible pursuit of the actuality of the present. The young poet's perpetual failure to enjoy the beautiful summer scene opens up into the future in, as Verhaeghe (2002) puts it, "[a] perpetual opening and closing of a gap in which something fails to be realized" (p. 139). However, paradoxically, the young poet's pursuit of jouissance, of being, only causes the further unfolding of the signifying chain. In turn, the extension of the chain into the future necessarily displaces the present into the past seeming to cause the poet's loss of jouissance in the first place. At this point, the present, the future and the past assume together a relationship of impossible mutual implication whereby the perpetual unwrapping of the signifying chain becomes both the cause of the subject's lack-of-being and the ever-failing solution to it.

In this connection, the young poet's melancholia testifies to the irremediable incompleteness of any symbolization and the intractability of the Lacanian Real. As was already suggested, temporal desire aims at compensating for precisely the self-deficiency of the symbolized and non-actual present. Hereby the impossible jouissance is perpetually postponed and the imperishability of the beautiful is sought. If anticipation is one way for the subject to come to terms with the catastrophic loss of jouissance involved in the symbolization of the inaugural gaze, then nostalgia is another. The incompleteness of the present implicates the past resulting in the feeling of nostalgia. That is to say, through nostalgia the subject simultaneously becomes aware of the experience of the loss and attempts to make up for it. With the aim of clarifying the relationship between nostalgia and jouissance, let us refer to Sean Homer's (2005) discussion of Roland Barthes' Camera Lucida. Concerning photography, Homer (2005) writes: "[P]hotography can never deny its past, that the thing existed and was there in front of the camera, but that real is lost the moment the photograph itself comes into being" (p. 93). In a sense, the lens of the camera becomes a vanishing mediator between the Real and the Symbolic. The camera misses the encounter with the Real of the inaugural gaze at the very moment it captures it. What is sacrificed to the camera is the instant of the glance qua objet petit a. When one looks at a photograph, one senses precisely this recalcitrance of the instant at which it was captured, one feels that something is lacking. As Homer (2005) maintains, "[the photograph is] the encounter with the 'that-has-been' essence of photography, the intractability of the real" (p. 93). Following Barthes, Homer identifies the feeling of the

photograph's failure to coincide with its real referent as the feeling of punctum. A residue of the intractable Real, the punctum becomes the "showing the Real" through its very failure to deliver this Real. The punctum is what is in the photograph more and other than the photograph, namely, the objet petit a. "Barthes' detail [the punctum] that pricks us, bruises us and disrupts the studium (the symbolic) of the photograph," Homer (2005) adds, "is that fleeting glimpse, or encounter with the real as objet petit a" (p. 94). The photograph is a missed encounter with the Real par excellence. And memory-traces are exactly like the images contained by the photographic plate. Once again, the photograph is a missed encounter with the present that, nonetheless, always preserves a certain residue of this encounter, the punctum, thereby inciting the feeling of nostalgia in the subject.

The universally familiar feeling of the supremacy of the past pleasures to the present ones can be, in fact, explicated through the notion of the punctum, as well. More precisely, the punctum accounts for that vague and poetical quality which is only given to things by time. In a sense, the events acquire something more to them once they start belonging to the past. This is the point Søren Kierkegaard (1983) makes in Repetition: every attempt to resuscitate some pleasant past experience necessarily results in a disappointment (p. 227). Essentially being identical to the Lacanian anticipation, every such attempt strives to ensnare the lost poetry of the past in the future. Of course, at the heart of Kierkegaard's pessimistic account of memory lies the desire for the inaccessible actual present.

What endows the past with a special charm is the belief that that which is lacking in the present, namely, jouissance, was acquired back then. The crucial point not to miss, however, is that this enjoyment was not attained during those moments either. The present becomes desirable only through being lost and never prior to the loss. Hereby the very pleasure of nostalgia lies in the displeasure of only being able to access the present as inaccessible. Consequently, the function of the punctum is to render prohibited what is originally impossible. As was mentioned earlier, the condition sine qua non of the object-cause of desire is its inaccessibility: a sufficient attraction in relation to das Ding only emerges whereby an unbridgeable distance is acquired from it. Žižek (1989) describes this in the following way:

The sublime object [das Ding] is an object which cannot be approached too closely: if we get too near it, it loses its sublime features and becomes an ordinary vulgar object – it can persist only in an interspace, in an intermediate state, viewed from a certain perspective, half-seen. (p. 170)

Furthermore, Žižek (1993) writes:

The paradox (and perhaps the very function of the prohibition as such) consists of course in the fact that, as soon as it is conceived as prohibited, the real impossible

changes into something possible, i.e. into something that cannot be reached, not because of its inherent impossibility but simply because access to it is hindered by the external barrier of a prohibition. (p. 116)

In this light, prohibition serves to resolve the deadlock between the Symbolic and the Real. More accurately, it serves to suture the intrinsically aporetic nature of the Symbolic which gives rise to the irruptions of the Real. Since the elimination of the inconsistencies in the Other is impracticable, its fundamentally aporetic nature is concealed by an objet petit a which persuades us that the impossible is really just the prohibited possible and, thus, can hypothetically be captured. The Other is lacking, so we bring the quasi-imaginary Real to the field of our imagination to mitigate this lack. In this regard, Yannis Stavrakakis (1999) contends:

If we speak about the signified it is only because we like to believe in its existence. It is a belief crucial for our construction of reality as a coherent,'objective' whole; a belief in something that guarantees the validity of our knowledge, sustaining the fantasy of an adaequatio between language and the world. (p. 23)

Being in and through the Other is sustained by the illusion of attaining the impalpable Real, but this illusion is itself the effect of the signifying process. The illusory signified that veils the Real lack in the Other as the piece of the "domesticated" Real is, indeed, the objet petit a. Herein lies the Lacanian logic of the veil: covering sustains the sense that there is something substantial being covered, while, in truth, no such thing is present behind the veil. Where one anticipates protruding presence, there is always only disappointing lack.

The Lacanian notion of time assumes here its paradoxical character. Certainly, there would be no time without consciousness to symbolize and conserve its passage. That is to say, the very idea of time is impossible without the preservation of past events in the memory of the subject as signifiers. Yet, the events that necessitate preservation as such are always inapproachable. The Lacanian notion of time is organized around the present as an impossible negative event which grounds and disturbs the Symbolic at one and the same time. Once again, the present tense is the excluded center of the temporal unfolding, something that does not have positive existence.

In the Lacanian perspective, the paradox of Vergänglichkeit is irresolvable. The illusion that there is something beyond the slippage of time, the a-temporal reality of the actual present, is, thus, a purely reflexive one. In the a-temporal reality the subject would coalesce with itself which is a sheer impossibility for Lacan. One reads in Seminar XX:

How is one to return, if not on the basis of a peculiar (special) discourse, to a prediscursive reality? That is the dream […] But it is also what must be considered

mythical. There's no such thing as prediscursive reality. Every reality is founded and

defined by a discourse. (Lacan, 1988, p. 32)

At this point, the Lacanian perspective on time stands in manifest contrast to the Freudian one. For Freud (1991b), the a-temporal thing-in-itself exists positively beyond the field of human representation: "Reference to time is bound up [...] with the work of the system Cs" (p. 191). Similarly, Freud (1991a) suggests that "discontinuous method of functioning of the system Pcpt.-Cs. lies at the bottom of the origin of the concept of time" (p. 434). Freud (1966b) argues that the external world is undifferentiated masses of energy without quality and nothing else (p. 308). For Lacan, on the other hand, the thing-in-itself is only a mythical construction accounting for the distortions in the symbolic order and the aporias of time. Here, the Lacanian discourse is in tune with Hegel's reformulation/critique of Kant's thing-in-itself. Žižek (1989) summarizes Hegel's reproach of Kant in the following way: "Precisely when we determine the Thing as a transcendent surplus beyond what can be represented, we determine it on the basis of the field of representation" (p. 204). He (1989) adds: "Hegel's position is [...] that there is nothing beyond phenomenality, beyond the field of representation" (p. 204). It follows that the actual present is only possible with the signifying chain coming to its ultimate ending. However, since there is nothing beyond the field of representations for Lacan, the a-temporal reality outside the Symbolic only coincides with the reality of the dead subject. At this junction, the Lacanian formula "every drive is a death drive" assumes its full meaning. For the Lacanian split subject there is only actual present after death.

Conclusion

This essay has highlighted how the universally familiar feeling of transience results from the subject's inability to confront the present in its actuality. On account of the infinitesimal delay between the subject's supposed initial perception and its symbolization, the actual present is absolutely inaccessible. As a result, the subject can neither achieve coalescence with itself nor discover the world around him in a complete fashion. The loss felt in the symbolized present is either nostalgized in the past or fantasized as compensated for by the future. In Lacan's perspective, these fantasies are never fulfilled: the actual present is utterly impossible in the discursive reality of the human subject. Since there is nothing outside the field of representation for Lacan, the present is unattainable for the subject except in its death. In this paper, the present as such is presented as the impossible event of temporal unfolding which is, however, essential for the constitution of time. The present instant qua Real is the absent cause of time: something that we only discover through its effects, something that does not precede its effects.

Acknowledgements

Biography

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Signifying Truth: Augustine, Lacan, and a Theory of Language

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Abstract

In this paper, I will show how a retroactive reading of Augustine by Lacan can help us understand more clearly the process of the subject's accession to language and inter-human relations on the path toward understanding. I will distinguish the Lacanian reading from the reductive Wittgensteinian reading, placing Augustine's theory on language and learning in a broader context, particularly with regard to the process of subjectivization. Lacan explicitly read Augustine's scenario of the jealous child in the *Confessions*, and devoted an early seminar to his theory of language and signification; I propose to take these readings seriously while showing that their psychoanalytic relevance extends further into Augustine's theory of language and subjectivity than perhaps is normally recognized. Ultimately, though Lacan can help to clarify the stakes in which the linguistic subject is ontologically limited (and in which 'corporeal', symbolic reality is truth-deficient), this reading will help to show where Augustine's theology has specifically informed his theory of language and its subject, and where its revisions must fail (or set out somewhere on their own).

Introduction

In this essay, I will develop a reading of St. Augustine's theory of language that breaks with Wittgenstein's critique, which reduces Augustine's concern to the mere correlation between meanings and words. First, I will show how the semiotic distinction between natural and conventional signs allows one to conceive of a more complex linguistic structure. Then I will demonstrate how the distinction between the inner and outer word suggests a space in language that provides the structure's support despite its constitutive position outside of it. From there, I will read Jacques Lacan (in particular, aspects of his theory's 'structural' phase) in order to develop this idea according to his concept of the Big Other. In modeling language around a 'lack', and in relation to the social, I further develop an idea of the subject of language, which grants both Lacan and Augustine a system that can support the kind of speech acts that Wittgenstein's picture didn't account for. Finally, I discuss a few of the ontological and methodological differences between Augustine and Lacan, and consider their relevance to this project.[2]

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Augustine against Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein reads Augustine's 'picture' of language as the very oversimplification in theory that a rigorous philosophy of language must overturn. For Wittgenstein, Augustine's language is merely a naming process; signifiers simply correspond with objects in the world. He opens his *Philosophical Investigations* by quoting from *Confessions* Augustine's account of the transformation of sounds into designations:

> I noticed that people would name some object and then turn towards whatever it was that they had named. I watched them and understood that the sound they made when they wanted to indicate that particular thing was the name which they gave to it, and their actions clearly showed what they meant, for there is a kind of universal language, consisting of expressions of the face and eyes, gestures and tones of voice…So, by hearing words arranged in various phrases and constantly repeated, I gradually pieced together what they stood for, and when my tongue had mastered the pronunciation, I began to express my wishes by means of them. In this way I made my wants known to my family and they made theirs known to me, and I took a further step into the stormy life of human society, although I was still subject to the authority of my parents and the will of my elders (Augustine, 1961, p. 29).

Wittgenstein claims that,

> [these] words…give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 2).

But there is more going on here than Wittgenstein is willing to acknowledge. It is not just that the child is able to repeatedly match the signifier to the referent and build a vocabulary based on an extensive collection of those one-to-one relations. There are also external relations (he "hear[s] words arranged in various phrases") that suggest, even on a primitive level, a differential structure. There are wishes being made, a 'human society' being encountered. And, importantly, there is a suggestion here of the performative

speech act: to make one's 'wants known' is, at least in part, to attempt to alter a state of affairs through language (one articulates a desire not just to state that the desire exists, but as a means of fulfilling it).

Consider a distinction made by Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana* between *natural* signs and *conventional* signs. "Natural signs are those which, apart from any intention or desire of using them as signs, do yet lead to the knowledge of something else" (Augustine, 1995, p. 34), as in the common case of smoke betraying fire. But conventional signs "are those which living beings mutually exchange in order to show, as well as they can, the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their thoughts" (Augustine, 1995, p. 34). So Augustine attributes a fundamental epistemic function to the sign, which alone gathers signifier and signified in a parallel relation, but also distinguishes convention (and therefore language) with an added 'intention to signify'. This intention, or the place of the *will* extended to the sphere of communication, must be seen (in its effects) in language and outside of the domain of the semiotic proper at the same time.

The 'intention to signify' is the guarantor of conventional consistency, though it is not what guarantees communication (which is a much more mysterious process). Rather, it guarantees that the signifiers in use are a part of some language's structure, or at least *intend* to be (which covers cases where an enunciation's syntax does not conform to convention but is 'close enough' to fulfill intelligibility). However, it's important to note that convention, for Augustine, entails artificiality in comparison *to something else*. In the 20th century, when social and political processes are so often foundational, artificiality and superficiality are used as positive terms to connote a plane of immanence – structuralist language asserts that there is nothing else but the differential relations themselves, and the arbitrariness of the signifier is language's bedrock. And indeed, Ake Bergvall succinctly describes the general similarities between structuralist linguistics and Augustine's theory of language (and joins Lacan himself in doing so):

Part of Augustine's theory is strikingly modern; only with Ferdinand de Saussure did linguistics and semiology catch up with it. In contrast to earlier simplistic descriptions of a two-way relationship between *res*, the thing, and *verba*, the spoken word that points to the *res*, Augustine introduced a third factor: the human subject. The human mind forms a mental concept of the *res*, which it then translates into *verba*. Augustine's sign, like Saussure's, therefore contained two parts: a signifier that is primarily the *spoken* word, and a signified that is not the thing itself but a mental concept of the thing…Although Augustine does not discuss the arbitrariness of the sign in terms of Saussure's *difference* he is aware of the practical implications of such a view. "In some languages," he concedes, "there are words that cannot be translated

into the idiom of another language" (*OCD* 2.11). Translation, because two different speech communities are involved, is therefore no simple one-to-one equation (Bergvall, 1993, p. 24).

But there is an aspect of Augustine's system that does not translate easily into the structuralist framework. As Richard Glejzer notes, "Unlike structural linguistic models, both scholasticism and psychoanalysis are founded on an imperative to consider a knowledge that resists signification, to bare the signifiers that ground ontology within an epistemology" (Glejzer, 1997, p. 106).[2] For Augustine, that ontological ground involves the relation between logos and the Word, which correlates to a process of the inner word's incarnation in speech. Thought is inner speech, which carries with it an *intention* – inner speech is always turned toward something. Outer speech, likewise, intends towards something, even if it's not limited to constatives (Augustine is well aware of language's performative dimension). Speech, which is the primary form of language, is the inner word made flesh:

> Thus in a certain fashion our word becomes a bodily sound by assuming that in which it is manifested to the senses of men, just as the Word of God became flesh by assuming that in which it too could be manifested to the senses of men. And just as our word becomes sound without being changed into sound, so the Word of God became flesh, but it is unthinkable that it should have been changed into flesh. It is by assuming it, not by being consumed into it, that both our word becomes sound and that Word became flesh (Augustine, 1991, p. 411).

The inner word is not in a language; in order for the linguistic incarnation to take place, the inner word congeals into an image of words the subject intends to speak (in a

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[2] The project of his essay is to find in the scholastic tradition an "ontological radicalism" consonant with psychoanalysis, "where epistemology is itself an effect of an ontological impossibility, an impossibility that the scholastics recognized as real in knowledge and language" (Glejzer, 1997, p. 109). For Glejzer, this is a broad historical project: "It is this ontological radicalism at the basis of medieval epistemology that Descartes will eventually bracket and dismiss, a radicalism that will then similarly serve as the basis of Lacan's return to Freud." Of course, *Augustine is not a scholastic*, and his work clearly preceded the scholastic tradition. Still, Glejzer's insight is helpful here; the "ontological radicalism" he locates in the scholastics is already there in Augustine's philosophy of language, and thus his historical project could easily incorporate Augustine.

particular language) before being fully materialized (Augustine, 1991, p. 410). Thus, thought is not informed by conventionally conditioned linguistic categories. There is a formal transformation that occurs before the signifier-signified relation can be established. But the product of this transformation is one of lack, since we are stuck signifying things with words (as opposed to things, as God is capable of) (Augustine, 1991, p. 418).

For Augustine, a *true* word, beyond the sense of the purely conventional, would be a correlation between its outer and inner meanings (which is something Wittgenstein simply couldn't see). Purely conventional meaning is a meaning of lack, since its signifier names objects outside of the position of enunciation (the subject), thus in some sense *killing* the object. The signifier itself, indeed, only exists insofar as its use aims at the void or lack in the center of the object; we would not need words if we were not in some constitutive way estranged from the wholeness of the object. But "God can be understood to have an everlasting Word co-eternal with himself" (Augustine, 1991, p. 419). This is what our (outer) words intend toward, although they necessarily fail, since the subject cannot be complete in the way the trinity is in its absolute simplicity.

What Wittgenstein ignores is the structural position of the inner word in Augustine's account. That is, signs and the power of speech are an effect of the inner word, which is unconventional and thus exists outside of the word-meaning (and signifier-signified) correlation. In his *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, Wittgenstein appears to turn Augustine's, 'Let me know thee, O my Knower; let me know thee even as I am known', into one of many substanceless "call[s] to God on every page of the *Confessions*" (Wittgenstein, 1979, p. 1). That is, Wittgenstein's worst mistake is to ignore the performative aspect, both of the 'call to God' in providing the bedrock of a theory of language, and the concomitant production of (conventional) truth *by* language. As seen in the previous passage from *De Trinitate*, the relationship between the inner and outer word is analogous to the relationship between the Word of God and Christ incarnate. By emptying Augustine's appeal to God and truth of all theoretical content, he reduces the central authority around which the collection of signifiers circulate (and occupy their positions in language) to a mere gesture or ritual that obscures the edifice of language itself. In order to read Augustine's theory of language in a way that takes seriously his claims about truth and the self, it might be helpful to find a similar, secular account of language to which we can then apply Augustine's role of the inner word in a way that's theoretically significant. Thus, we move to Lacan.

To Lacan (and Back)

For Lacan, reality is structured for the subject according to a system of symbols; it is a seemingly coherent structure of differential relations that apply at a parallel to a set of signifiers. However, there is necessarily a *lack* around which the system circulates. In language there are signifiers without signifieds, and there is an *unreality* in experiential space that covers up its inconsistency. This is a necessary byproduct of the (linguistic) subject, which is nothing but the inconsistency of reality itself. That is, subject (and therefore the enunciation) is a void, not a positive ontological entity; it is nothing but the unrest of the concept, the impossibility of any entity being equal to itself. So the subject

occurs because (symbolic[3]) reality is out of joint, or in some structural sense deficient. This is reconciled by the Big Other, a symbolic authority to which the subject (often unknowingly) appeals.

The Big Other is not just something the subject appeals to, though; it is something it is shaped by:

> Is it with the gifts of Danaoi (the Greeks who laid siege to Troy) or with the passwords that give them their salutary non-sense that language, with the law begins? For these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbol means pact and that they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact that they constitute as signified, as is plainly seen in the fact that the objects of symbolic exchange - pots made to remain empty, shields too heavy to be carried, sheaves of heat that wither, lances stuck into the ground - all are destined to be useless, if not simply superfluous by their very abundance (Lacan, 1977, p. 61).

So it is not just the content of the signifier (which is arbitrary) or its correlation with a signified (and all such interrelated correlations) that's sufficient for language but a sphere of relations between subjects that provides a means for which language can be used, and which the linguistic subject cannot opt out of without losing language itself. It appears most obviously in the case of the 'gesture meant to be refused,'[4] which has no content other than the establishment or maintenance of relations between two subjects.

One of Lacan's early (1954) seminars deals explicitly with Augustine's theory of language; entitled *De locutionis significatione*, and initiated by Father Louis Beirnaert, here Lacan claims that "the linguists, in as much as we are entitled to make up one large family through the ages bearing this name, *linguists*, have taken fifteen centuries to rediscover, like a sun which has risen anew, like a dawn that is breaking, ideas which are already set out in Augustine's text [*De Magistro*], which is one of the most glorious one could read" (Lacan, 1991, p. 249). Indeed, Lacan goes as far as to say that "[everything] I have been telling you about the signifier and signified is there," including the structure of the relationship between signifier and signifier and signifier and signified, and the inconsistencies and asymmetries around which performativity is generated.

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[3] For our purposes it is sufficient to equate the 'symbolic' with conventional language.

[4] It may be good etiquette to offer my bed to a weary traveler, and it may be good etiquette for him to refuse – this exchange, however, is not neutral, and it confirms a particular social arrangement.

Lacan interprets a section of Augustine's dialogue on "the difference between communication by signals and the exchange of interhuman speech" as establishing "the element of intersubjectivity" in language (Lacan, 1991, p. 250). For Augustine, speech is "a teaching," not reducible merely to a play of information but instead tending toward a notion of "truth."[5] When, in the dialogue, Augustine and Adeodatus encounter the word *nihil* in their analysis of a line from the *Aeneid*, they show that "it is impossible to deal with language by referring the sign to the thing term by term" (Lacan, 1991, p. 252). What this 'truth' must ensure is precisely the intersubjectivity beyond the domain of one-to-one correspondences between sign and referent, the bedrock that breaks one out of the "dialectic of pointing," since if "every pointing is a sign, it is an ambiguous sign"[6] (Lacan, 1991, p. 253).

Lacan's reading of the ambiguity of signs in Augustine's theory is not merely a "semantic ambiguity," but also a "subjective ambiguity": "[Augustine] admits that the very subject who is telling something very often does not know what he is telling us, and tells us more or less than he means to" (Lacan, 1991, p. 260). Thus, linking the subject to language through an account of the subject's relation to the linguistic structure becomes imperative here. For instance, in other places, Lacan found the following anecdote of Augustine's to be filled with uncommon significance: "I have myself seen jealousy in a baby and know what it means. He was not old enough to talk, but, whenever he saw his foster-brother at the breast, he would grow pale with envy" (Augustine, 1961, p. 28).

He repeatedly invokes this story as a representation of subject formation in the 'mirror stage' (where the infant first sees his reflection as himself *and* other than himself). The following features that can be drawn from this passage are most significant: a rivalrous encounter with a double that *precedes* language and a desire for a lack (which becomes the *objet petit a*[7]).

There is a fallenness in the case of the child (and ultimately in the case of the 'split' subject of language), desiring forbidden fruits and milk. Where this is allegorized into a conflict between man and God, Lacan transmutes it into a dialectic between subject and *other*. If one cannot explain language without subjectivity (or, at the very least, the subject's constitutive relation to reality and the other through social language), then a theory of language merges with a theory of the subject. Thus, originary social rivalry and recognition is tied to linguistic convention – this link is implicit in Augustine, but rather explicit for Lacan.

But it's important to recognize that it isn't the theme of jealousy that lends the anecdote its Lacanian significance (and accounts for its re-citation throughout his work). The key

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[5] In addition, Lacan notes that, for Augustine, "Prayer here touches on the ineffable. It does not belong in the field of speech" (Lacan, 1991, p. 250). This is a further point missed by Wittgenstein.

[6] "Because if the rampart is pointed out to you, how are you to know that it really is the rampart, and not, for example, its rough quality, or its green, grey, etc?"

[7] Though this term is not important here, it is another way to describe the symbolic's lack (and it's ultimate equivalent with the linguistic subject). "It is precisely *because* the object *a* is removed from the field of reality that it frames it" (Alain-Miller, 1984, p. 28).

observation is indeed that, in the structure of the *Confessions* itself, the tension of early subject formation is followed by an account of language and *social* formation:

Augustine's trajectory from the preverbal to the verbal parallels the odyssey of the mirror-stage child from the specular *I* to the social *I*, from the narcissistic conflict with a fraternal double to the symbolic order where the paternal law ("the will of my elders") prevails. Yet, despite occasional ambiguities in Lacan's own formulations, the mirror stage does not chiefly designate a moment or event in the progress (developmental) narrative of the child. Rather, it involves a psychical structure that is also an existential situation (Barzilai, 1999, p. 149).

It is often difficult to recognize the full ontological implications of a discourse (psychoanalysis) that is so often associated with the mechanics of 'the cure', but the Lacanian reading of Augustine fixates not so much on the anecdote in order to serve those territorial interests but to elucidate the subject's constitution in relation to the synchronic structure of language and the symbolic (or the social *I*).

For both Freud and Lacan, the step from the original pleasure-ego to subjectivity proper (and to the constitution of objective, symbolic reality) is the step of incorporating the difference (the gap) that separates the *I* from the outside, from what is not-*I*. In other words, "the negativity included in the subject at its very affirmative constitution is not this or that negativity (exteriority), but the very form of negation which reveals here its real structure, namely and precisely that of *with-without*" (Zupancic, 2012, n. pag.). The negativity, in fact, *is* the subject, in the sense that it is its constitutive limit, between language and language's *outside* ("and it is this limit that constitutes that peculiar third dimension, which is neither outside nor inside, neither subject nor object, neither something nor absence; rather, it has the precise structure of the '*with-without*'"[8] (Zupancic, 2012, n. pag.)). The structure of the subject, then, as void or limit is intimately related to language itself, the space of which is shaped according to its absence – "the symbol, psychoanalytically speaking, is repressed in the unconscious" (Lacan, 1977, p. 80).

The point is that the *with-without* is what invests the place of the subject with its social/conventional/linguistic 'I'.[9] And further, it is what allows us to understand the

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[8] 'With-without' is used because of its paradoxical suggestion of an ontological category that both *is* and *is not* – it *is* because of its effects and *is not* because of its unrecognizable place outside of symbolic reality.

[9] "It is therefore in the very sacrifice of the certainty and self-presence of the classical subject—in its de-centering, we might say—that Augustine's "I" is born" (Mennel, 1994, p. 322). In her essay, Susan Mennel argues that Augustine's theory of subjectivity, as a deconstruction of the "metaphysics of presence" and the classical

constitution of language itself. Language is artificial, but it is sutured by a Master Signifier that points the way toward the more 'essential' word that belongs to no language. It is no mere coincidence that one of the primary examples of the Master Signifier in Lacan is God, which admits of no temporal, empirical, enfleshed signified to point directly to. Thus it is not just that artificial language is somehow ontologically *less* than its non-linguistic supplement (the inner word, using Augustine's terminology), but that it contains a structural gap that points the subject in the direction of something outside of itself (the logos).

Wittgenstein's conception of language for Augustine only considered the symbolic realm of communication *proper*; Augustine and Lacan demonstrate the relation between the Symbolic and the Real, between language as an edifice of signifier relations and that which precedes language, is not in a language, *cannot ever* be in a language. Of course, the Real for Lacan differs from what it would be for Augustine (ultimately, God and the Word, but purely in relation to language, the inner word). For Lacan, the Real is indeed that which cannot possibly be symbolized, because the subject was separated from it the moment it (the subject) attained language. In fact, it need not be an actual state the subject was ever in, but a *principle*, a structural impossibility *introduced* by language, which is necessarily incomplete.

To fully understand lack in the field of language, it is important to read Lacan as differing in an important sense from the kind of post-structuralist language found in Derrida. In both cases, something in the field prevents there from being a 'metalanguage,' but for Derrida this is because the text is 'framed' by something significant, whether it's the reader's method of interpretation or a more widely construed general (surrounding) discourse. There is no 'pure' text that doesn't contain an element of interpretation, or distance towards the object of interpretation itself. That is, the text that contains *differance* (which is every text) contains a distance from itself *inside of itself*. The truth of a text is nothing more than an *effect*, an effect of the play or style (or pleasure) of its discursive articulation.

One of the implications of this picture is that any canonical significance of a text evaporates with the assumed link between signifier and signified. Brenda Deen Schildgen notes that:

> In Jacques Derrida's version of deconstruction, because the subject (for instance, the creator or writer) of the text is absent, its referent must also be absent…[Because the text] is inscribed and therefore open to a diversity of interpretations, there is nothing fully present in its signs. Rather the trace is not the signified but another signifier

Knowing Subject, leads to a paradoxical affirmation of self in its very destitution. How is this the case? "[The] self here is affirmed instead in the alien Hebraic name of faith. Faith, [Augustine] comes to argue, is an essential mode of knowing in the world of time (which is also the world of *différance*) because faith accepts absence." We might respond here, in proper Lacanian fashion, that the faith that generates the self is faith in the efficiency of the signifier.

inviting the reader to make meaning of it; any intrinsic meaning formerly associated with any text is a fiction created by interpreters of the trace. Because the "voice" of the text is absent once it has been inscribed on a page, any notion of the presence of the word, or the Presence of the Word, is only a creative possibility, for the "logos," the meaning or voice of the text, its revelation, in traditional terms, is absent (Schildgen, 1994, p. 384).

Schildgen locates in *De Doctrina Christiana* an "answer" to the deconstructive assault on meaning in signs; while Augustine would agree that words or signs are ambiguous, first, for Augustine, "words in Sacred Scripture, at least, link back to the originating 'Word,'" and second, and most importantly for us here, "Augustine advances a method for interpreting written 'signs' on the grounds that they are social utilities and are intended to communicate: the meaning of verbal signs can be bridled by the context, tradition, and history with which they are aligned; words belong to communities of linguistic and symbolic signification; as a consequence, words can be interpreted incorrectly" (Schildgen, 1994, p. 388).

To make sense of this, however, while fully retaining one's skepticism towards 'metalanguage,' an entirely different presentation of the relation between signifiers (and between signifiers and signifieds) is needed. And indeed, Derrida's presentation *is* ultimately irreconcilable with the Lacanian picture, which emphasizes metaphor instead of metonymy. That is, if the Derridean approach demonstrates the constant motion, or metonymic sliding of signifiers that have no end or foundation in a stable structure, the Lacanian alternative is the metaphorical 'cut' that *supports* the play of metonymy (Lacan, 1977, p. 141). For Lacan, to even think of language as something at all significant, as conventional and in some constitutive way separate from the reality it attempts to name (though it indeed fails), it must contain a structure that prevents its collapse into *things*. This is the Hegelian point, that there must be an element of negativity that separates representation from the Absolute (Real), or else the subject (of language) would be unnecessary and dissipate as a position that can regard things (or *name* things) as other than itself. Language thus contains a lack at the center of its structure, a Master Signifier that has no signified. It is the *point de capiton*[10] that sutures the field of signifiers, that lends it its consistency and holism while repressing (or merely hiding, covering over) the fact that language is ultimately *in*-consistent.

When metalanguage is 'deconstructed,' it's shown to produce internal gaps where the position of (a speaker's) enunciation is subverted, so that no utterance in language says exactly what it's 'supposed' to say. But the position from which this is recognized, that the process of enunciation always subverts the enunciated content, is the position of metalanguage itself. That is, even the Derridean position, despite itself, recognizes the irreducibility of the subject of language, the void from which the enunciation is offered. This is the same recognition that Augustine makes when he says that we see through a

mirror[11]: we are not looking *at* a reflection of God when we seek Him, we are the *mirror itself*, and thus are always incomplete with regard to Him. The problem with self-awareness is that it is de-centered according to its position, and thus cannot fully appropriate itself or its utterances. To make sense of this we must read Augustine's claim that the mind, in considering *itself,* turns its inner gaze upon itself as something that's bound to fail, since as subject one can't fully wrap oneself around oneself.[12]

For Lacan, truth plays a constitutive role in language because both constatives and performatives aim at the truth laid down by the Big Other (which is public and communal property and recognized socially). The performative attempts to transform a situation in the eyes of the Big Other: saying 'I do' at a marriage ceremony does not transform the situation of the couple in isolation, but succeeds only insofar as it is recognized by the community. The constative names a state of affairs successfully only insofar as another (real or presupposed) linguistically capable gaze is there to confirm the proposition – real or presupposed, because like Foucault's panopticon, the Big Other operates even if there is no actual subject occupying its place.

This is why a Lacanian reading of Wittgenstein's critique would point out that Wittgenstein is inaccurately painting a picture of language that works only for psychotics: the psychotic, as defined by Lacan, is the one who never acceded to the domain of the symbolic law (Lacan, 1977, p. 164). That is, he cannot grasp the performative function of language, and is not 'touched' by the gaze of the Big Other. Language there is simply a one-to-one correlation between signs and meanings; he can utilize the complex structure of language, may be able to speak and write very well indeed, but he is not fully *caught* in language. To complete a full picture of language, one must posit the Big Other in some form, must recognize a gaze or space which grants the power of the performative, or even simply the social gesture. For Augustine, however, this is not just some fantasmatic space, something necessarily posited but that lacks positive being; this is the inner word, mirrored after God's Word, the true source of conventional language and temporal reality itself, respectively.

Here, it is the fictional or conventional which sustains (temporal) reality, though there is an important ontological difference between Lacan and Augustine: beyond convention is pure void for the former, and the *fullness* of God for the latter. This does not pose a problem for a theory of language specifically, since all that matters is *that there is something else*, and that the symbolic (and therefore temporal) subject is incomplete. It does preclude, however, certain extensions of the comparison: for Lacan, were the subject to be in the full presence of the Real, his world would dissolve (thus the Real is the *impossible* for the subject). Lacan's theory of language does not seem to be amenable to a theology, unless it's a Gnostic one (though that is, of course, not the point here). Indeed,

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[11] "[What] we have been trying to do is somehow to see him by whom we were made by means of this image which we ourselves are, as through a mirror" (Augustine, 1991, p. 407).

[12] Though it is outside the scope of this project, we can see here how the incompleteness of the subject (which mirrors the incompleteness of language and indeed of reality itself) leads to a difference between Lacan and Augustine on love. For Augustine, love occupies a harmonious trinity (lover-object-love), whereas with Lacan we must conclude that the object of desire is the missing part of ourselves that would serve to complete us, *except for the fact that he/she doesn't exist.*

this allows us to recognize an important methodological difference. The Master Signifier is an 'incarnation' in symbolic language of the failure of the very possibility of full (complete) signification. Lacan moves from the symbolic structure to the Real (from the failure of signification to the remainder), where Augustine moves from the real of the inner word to outer language. If nothing else, this provides an explanation for any possible application of each 'system': Lacan is ultimately concerned with the psychic effect of, and an explanation for, language, whereas Augustine's real desire is to know God Himself.

What I have *not* attempted to do here is develop a rigorous parallel between the complexities of Lacan's theory of language and Augustine's. There is no doubt that their projects are different: for one, Lacan is not interested in a theory of mind, and Augustine did not have the luxury (or burden) of having Freud or Saussure to work out of. Further, to translate their terms (inner/outer word, Big Other, the Real, etc.) directly into one another would be all too convenient, and would require subordinating the thought of one thinker to the other in the name of strategy. Instead, by showing the similarities between Lacan and Augustine on language (and the subject of language), the structural categories that in some sense transcend the signifier relations, I have traced a path out of the (supposed) deadlock that Wittgenstein attaches to Augustine's theory. And more importantly, if one is predisposed to shrug off Wittgenstein's criticism in the first place, the comparison helps to originate and develop a purely structural (and thus secular) analysis of language that draws on (even if it didn't originate with) Augustine.

Acknowledgments

Biography

Zachary Tavlin is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the University of Washington. He received his M.A. in Philosophy from Louisiana State University, and his B.A. in Philosophy from The George Washington University. His areas of research include phenomenology, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and film. Forthcoming publications include essays and book chapters on Shakespeare and Levinas, and the fiction of Don DeLillo.

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Σύμβολου: An Attempt toward the early Origins, Part 1

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Abstract
This is the first of a two-part paper in which I would like to propose some possible hypotheses on the early origins of symbolic function, which is the most typical feature of human being, based on disavowal mechanism. Briefly recalling the main stages of the history of symbolism, it will be possible to lay out many of its theories within the framework that we wish to outline with this work, this first part of which is mainly concerned with the basic psychodynamic notion of disavowal and its possible applications, above all in regard to fetishism.

Introduction

One of the main aims of this paper is try to clarify the *vexata quæstio* on symbolism, its nature and origins. Our original motivation for this comes from mathematics and its role in the sciences: following Eugene P. Wigner (1960), how does one explain the effectiveness[2] of this formal and abstract language in natural sciences, like physics? The history of mathematics unfortunately comprises many cases of great mathematicians who have had alternating severe psychotic states with moments of normality and that, out of respect of them we do not quote here.[3] Now, mathematics intimately relies on symbolic and segnic function, so that it may shed light on these typical human features. Due to this, we would like to put forward the hypothesis according to which the symbolic function might be the outcome of the dialectic interplay between two concomitant Ego's subagencies always present in every human being which, in turn, would be the outcome of an Ego's splitting mainly according to the Freudian (1938, 1949, 1999) thought based on disavowal mechanism[4] and supported by the thoughts of other authors, above all H. Nunberg, D. Lagache and J. Lacan. Our hypotheses are historiographically supported by a considerable research literature which we have taken into account in drawing up this paper. The theoretical framework here outlined will turn out to be of some usefulness to explain, from a psychodynamics perspective, other already existent ideas on mathematical thought from a more properly cognitive viewpoint, like those based on *embodied mathematics*. Indeed, just this last perspective will be much more coherent with

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[2] On account of the reality.

[3] See Rosen (1954).

[4] This last psychic mechanism has been, wrongly in our view, quite underestimated according to Freudian work, as Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) pointed out, who, inter alia, would want to consider it a general psychic mechanism of the psychic formation and development of every human being.

what herein is established which, among other things, is based on the notion of *bodily image*, with related phenomena, as formed from the psychodynamics viewpoint. In this first part, we retrace the main theories on symbolism from a psychodynamics standpoint as well as outline the main psychodynamics elements underlying the notion of Ego's splitting upon which we will build our framework. In the second part, we will apply what herein is said to mathematical and physical contexts. From our discussion, it will turn out that a primary role is played by the formation of bodily image also as regards the general symbolism theory because, for instance, it may explain the possible origin of syntactic and semantic structures thanks to the possible relations established amongst its component elements together with the possible meanings assigned to them. In short, our main idea around which revolves this two-part paper is as follows. Putting the disavowal mechanism as a general psychic mechanism, its outcomes are some basic subagencies of Ego agency, to be precise the Ideal Ego subagency and the agency system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego, from whose dialectic interaction takes place most of psychic life, including symbolic function as well as degenerative behaviours. In particular, the disavowal is closely involved in the bodily image formation which takes place during the well-determined pregenital phases of human psychosexual development (mainly, from the anal phase to the Œdipus one) in the discovery of the primary sexual gender difference from which the child, when she/he gives pre-eminence to symbolic elaboration, is able to build up her or his personal bodily image, instituting relations (syntax) between its component elements together with the assignment of related meanings (semantics). In such a way, the child acquires her or his own syntactic and semantic tasks and abilities moulded according to her or his strong emotional experience in seeing and discovering the external realities given by the sexual apparatuses of both sexes put in reciprocal comparison. In doing so, it will therefore be possible to account for the inseparable[5] relationships between syntax and semantics (at least, in normality) as well as to explain consequent and fascinating relationships between mathematics and physics. The paper is therefore devoted to debating on this main idea.

First historical outlines on symbolism

According to Eco (1981) and Petocz (2004), to date, it is not entirely clear what the unambiguous origins of the symbolic function of human thought are, although various explanatory theories have been proposed to this purpose. In this regard, Eco claims that the concept of symbol is epitomizable as a kind of "content's nebula", mainly because of its polysemic nature. According to semiotic theory, a symbol falls into the wider class of signs (according to T. Todorov, 1982a, 1982b). From this perspective, then, U. Eco defines a sign as anything that can be taken as "significantly substituting" for something else, or rather, a sign is something (whether a natural or an artificial object) which stands in place of something that is absent. Historically, the semiotic perspective broadly goes from C. S. Peirce to F. de Saussure, K. Bühler and R. Jakobson (see Todorov, 1982a, 1982b). Peirce gave the first, famous tripartite division of the sign in *icon*, *index* and *symbol*, the last being the case in which the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary; thus, the major systematic manifestation of symbols is in language. In contrast, F. de Saussure held that it is the sign which is arbitrary, and the symbol which is not arbitrary or "motivated" and so does not properly belong to the field of semiotics. Therefore, according to de Saussure, the symbol is no longer a kind of sign, the affect starting to be a fundamental element in characterizing it, so making the set of symbols

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[5] According to Lolli (2000), the syntax is always in searching for the semantics.

different from the set of signs; both sets are overlapping one with another, the symbol being sometimes opposed to the sign, other times classified as a sign. This separation of domains, mainly due to the occurrence of the emotional-affective element, gives rise to two main entities, namely those of *conventional symbols* (the signs) and *non-conventional symbols* (those not classified as signs). The continuous slipping back and forth between them is the main feature of that *vexata quæstio* of the dualism between sign and symbol; in turn, the latter often refers to another crucial question, that of the conscious versus the unconscious nature of symbols. There is no doubting the fact that conventional symbols are entirely conscious, whereas strong disputes exist regarding the nature of non-conventional symbols. It is almost a matter of fact that the latter have a double unconscious and conscious nature, so that the critical point relies on the possible relationships between them. With Peirce and de Saussure, a prominent role is played by the relation between signifier and signified, the primary form of symbol being given by metaphor.[6] Later, these last perspectives will be compared with the psychoanalytic ones, above all with Lacan's work. In this paper, we simply want to put forward the possible hypothesis according to which the fundamental Freudian disavowal mechanism, together with the consequent splitting of Ego's agency, might be considered to underlie the possible early origins of this fundamental function which essentially characterizes (according to E. Cassirer) all the normal and pathological human thought functions. A theory of symbol should be considered first from a psychoanalytic perspective, contrarily to a theory of sign which mainly pertains to the cognitive context, all this, in turn, referring to the primary distinction between conventional symbols and non-conventional ones. Only after having given a psychoanalytic basis will it be possible to consider a more cognitive viewpoint built up on the former; these two perspectives are often closely intertwined with each other. In this paper, we want to start just from the first psychoanalytical paradigm, the Freudian one, which epistemologically lies at the heart of every further psychoanthropological trend (according to C.G. Jung, M. Klein, J. Lacan, C. Lévi-Strauss, etc.).

Disavowal, fantasy and phantasy

The primary aim of this work is to put the *disavowal* process, considered as a fundamental universal psychic mechanism (*d'après* Anna Freud and others), at the basis of symbolic function. In pursuing this, as we will see later, the various already existent theories on symbolism could, in turn, get a more coherent and systematic classification if laid out within this framework based on the disavowal mechanism. According to the last Freudian thought, delineated in his last work[7] in 1938 and which starts with the analysis of fetishism, disavowal might be contemplated as a possible universal psychic mechanism which nevertheless, in some cases, might give rise to degenerations in paraphilia. We here follow a suggestion by J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis (1973) according to which disavowal might be considered a general psychic mechanism involved in the formation and development of every human being, although this idea has already been considered by other authors, like Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. To be precise, disavowal has been considered a fundamental mechanism in the formation and structuration of the Ego agency, which is the one that presides in all the secondary psychic processes and relationships with reality. Following Rycroft (1968a), in

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[6] And this will be the central view of symbolism of C.G. Jung and H. Silberer (1971).

[7] See Freud (1938, 1949, 1999), above all its final Part III. This is the main reference, together with Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), herein followed.

psychoanalysis the imagination is included in the realm of fantasy, where it forms a domain in itself, called *phantasy* according to English terminology. Therefore, phantasy is meant to be an imaginative activity which is at the basis of every human thought and sentiment. Each psychoanalytic trend agrees in considering the conscious mental activity as supported, accompanied, maintained, animated and influenced by unconscious fantasy which starts in childhood, has primarily and originally to do with biological relationships and processes, and gives rise to symbolic elaboration (see Rycroft, 1968b). Above all, the Kleinian school assumes unconscious fantasy to be an unavoidable means between instinct and thought (see Segal, 1981, 1991). Likewise, the orthodox Freudian theory locates fantasy into the Id. Furthermore, it is a general statement that (creative) imaginative activity entails the participation of a non-verbal unconscious fantasy (see Beres, 1950, 1957). According to Isaacs (1952), fantasies are the primary content of mental unconscious processes, while unconscious fantasies (understood as the primary content of unconscious mental processes) primarily concern the body and represent the instinctual aims toward the representation of objects. These fantasies are, in the first place, the psychic representatives of libidinal and aggressive instincts. The adaptation to reality and the secondary process require the support of concomitant unconscious fantasies. All that shall justify what will be said later.

On Ego's splitting: first outlines

Through a rapid analysis of the psychoanalytic literature on fetishism (see also Khan Masud, 1970, 1979), it will turn out that in the fetish formation process the first forms of condensation and displacement mechanisms take place, which are the two main psychodynamic processes underlying any symbolic formation. In the following, fetish formation will be compared too with that of the transitional object. Their paths meet frequently, until they become different to each other with psychic maturation, distinguishing between two possible choices, namely normality and pathology (perversions[8]). However, these two entities, fetish and transitional object, have many common points amongst them in the first stages of human psychosexual development. At the same time, according to the last 1938 Freudian thought, an Ego's splitting with the formation of two subagencies takes place, which will be called *Ego's Ideal* and *Ideal Ego* (see Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973; Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1975). Nevertheless, both these names are due to Hermann Nunberg (1932) and Daniel Lagache (1961) and not to Sigmund Freud who explicitly introduced and used only the name Ego's Ideal in his 1914 work *On Narcissism* to denote an autonomous intrapsychic formation to which the Ego refers itself to evaluate its effective realizations or representations (see Galimberti, 2006). Nevertheless, Freud himself, in the *On Narcissism* (of 1914) as well as *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (of 1922) and *The Ego and the Id* (of 1923) speaks too of an Ideal Ego (*Idealich*) but identifies it with the Ego's Ideal (*Ichideal*) and this, in turn, with the Super-Ego, even if in some points of his discussion a certain distinction between them seemed already to be possible. The Ego's Ideal has narcissistic origins going back to the primary identification and which precede all further object relations. Such a narcissistic state is lost thanks to parents criticisms toward the child. The interiorization of such criticisms gives rise to agencies of self-observation. Subsequently, other authors, such as H. Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975), J. Lacan (1961) and D. Lagache (1958), retook two such Ego's agencies as distinct from each other. On the other hand, as already said above, in

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[8] In this regard, it is useful to remember the incisive Freudian expression according to which "perversions are, in a certain sense, the 'negative' of neuroses".

the last period of his work, Freud himself implicitly started to distinguish between these two Ego's subagencies. Their interplay might be the interpretation key to all the following psychic behaviour. We will return later on to these last arguments.

Some epistemological considerations

The general epistemological problematic concerning the psychoanalytic disciplines and their foundations is well known to be complex and intricate, and is included in the wider problematic concerning the long-standing difficult relationships between *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* (*d'après* W. Dilthey). According to Caramelli[9] (1984, 1985) and Carotenuto (1982), every psychological theory is the result of the subjective and individual experience of its author, so that each of these will represent aspects of psychic reality that might elude others (*gnoseological relativism*). Therefore, only the whole composite framework made by all the possible theories of psyche will provide, at a given historical moment, a certain knowledge framework of human psyche. Thus, psychoanalysis also has a deep *historicist*[10] and *pluralistic* dimension as a doctrine's field (which we might call a *historicist gnoseological relativism*), and, hence, we may use different theoretical frameworks to coherently explain a given psychic phenomenon without meeting contradictions. In this sense, we could use in a concomitant manner elements of different authors' theories, provided that the minimal requisites of non-contradiction and coherence are respected. On the other hand, in some respects, this last relativistic and opportunistic epistemological stance is much nearer to the last *epistemological anarchism* ideas of P. Feyerabend (see Abbagnano, 1998) that the author himself would want to consider as related to a general gnoseological method. In this paper, for instance, we will mainly follow the last Freudian thought as exposed in Freud (1938, 1949, 1999), but, at the same time, we will refer to many other thoughts systems which may have relationships (of coherence, analogy, confirmation, support, integration or completion) with the main ideas herein exposed and mainly based on the Freudian disavowal mechanism. However, a beautiful and emblematic example of the validity and application of this epistemological stance is provided by the same Jacques Lacan's theory which is an almost unique systematic and organic framework making harmonic and coherent use of different theories like anthropology, linguistic, literature, arts, etc., as well as the thought system of many other authors.

On symbolism: first considerations

On etymological meaning

According to Abbagnano (1998) and Galimberti (2006), the word *symbol* derives from the Greek noun σ ύ μ β ο λ ο ν (with Latin transliteration *sȳmbolum*), this from σ ύ μ β ᾰ λ λ ω, in turn derived from the verb σ υ μ β ά λ λ ε ι ν (with Latin transliteration *sým bállein*) which, in composition, means "throw together". It is characterized, like the sign, by an a priori *postponement* which, on the one hand, includes

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[9] We have, above all, taken into account the works of this author because they are closest to the methodological aims that we would like to follow here.

[10] Which, in turn, is nearer to the common area given by the non-void intersection between the *evolutionistic epistemology* ideas and the *genetic epistemology* ones.

the symbol in the sign's order as a specific case of it (as a conventional symbol), whereas, on the other hand, it is opposed to the sign itself because the latter has a predetermined relationship with what it denotes or connotes (*aliquid stat pro aliquo*[11]), whereas the symbol, instead, in evoking its corresponding part, refers to a given reality which is not decided by some form of convection but by the recomposition or assembling of a whole (in respect of its original etymological meaning, as a non-conventional symbol). Roughly speaking, there is no rigid link between a symbol and what it symbolizes. Nevertheless, the relationships between sign and symbol are never well delineated in a clear manner. The psychoanalytic perspective might yet provide useful clarifications, above all that of the Kleinian trend and that of the British *middle group* headed by Donald W. Winnicott, if one takes into account the early etymological meaning of the term "symbol" (see also Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973), i.e., the one that refers to the "assembling of a set of things". Following Petocz (2004), which quotes a Lévi-Strauss consideration, the concept of meaning is so difficult to define perhaps because of its intimate reciprocal connection with the notion of symbol. On the other hand, the noun $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\mu\beta o\lambda o\upsilon$, i.e., a "tally", originally referred to each of the two corresponding pieces of some small object which contracting parties broke between them and kept as proof of identity when rejoined together.[12] That meaning subsequently expanded to include a diversity of meaning such as other kinds of tokens, seal, contract, sign, code, etc. In this regard, see also Laplanche and Pontalis (1973).

On interpretation and symbolism: a first sight

For our purposes, it is fundamental to sketchily consider the essence of the conception of symbol from the semiotic stance. Indeed, according to Eco, the symbol is considered as a "decision", since the symbolic world always and everywhere presupposes an invention's process applied to a recognition, i.e., one finds an element which might assume, or has already assumed, segnic function, and decides, then, to see it as the projection of a portion having a sufficiently imprecise content. On the other hand, following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), when one speaks of mathematical or linguistic symbols, any reference to a natural relationship or to an analogical correspondence is excluded, that is to say, the typical segnic denotation or connotation relation (for instance, in the Ferdinand de Saussure meaning) does not hold for them: to show a very elementary algebraic example, the following relation among integers, $(a + b)^p = a^p + b^p$, may have completely different symbolic[13] meanings depending on whether it refers to the set of integers $\mathbb{Z}$ or to the set of congruence classes modulo p, namely $\mathbb{Z}_p$ $(p \geq 2)$. Therefore, its meaning depends on the given contextual interpretation, as we will see later. Following Rycroft (1968a, 1968b), in psychoanalytic theory a sign points out the presence of something more or less directly identifiable, whereas a symbol refers to something different from what it is. The importance of a symbol derives just from that something

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[11] In other words, "something stands for something else".

[12] So that its meaning refers to something, like an object, and, through its fragmentation, to the idea of a link or bond. This will be coherent with what is pursued in this paper about bodily image formation in fetishism, Ego's splitting and their relations with symbolism.

[13] Which must be considered as distinct from the segnic meaning of its components, such as $a, b, p, \mathbb{Z}$ and $\mathbb{Z}_p$, which refer to the conventional symbol class. We will return later to such questions in the second part of this two-part paper.

else in which it puts off, which is reachable only through a suitable interpretation. Signs directly reveal their meaning, whereas symbols require a kind of decoding through a correct interpretation. This is the main difference between sign and symbol, which is emphasized only within the classical psychoanalytic theory while in other contexts (cf. Peirce's theory of sign) such a distinction is more elusive. From our point of view, if one wants, for example, to try to explain why mathematics is a suitable interpretative language for natural sciences, it is not possible to prescind from the psychoanalytic perspective on symbolism. Indeed, whilst the connection between the sign and the thing to which it refers has a conscious nature, the symbol establishes an unconscious replacement, through displacement and condensation, of an image, an idea or an activity with another. This last viewpoint will be clearer later when we discuss C. Rycroft's work. Moreover, for further discussion on mathematical symbolism, see the second part of this paper.

Some linguistic aspects

However, we are not interested here in all the theories on symbolism[14] but only in those which, in a certain sense, might be explained through (or correlated to) the line of thought that we wish to delineate in this paper, i.e., the one centred on the Freudian disavowal mechanism. Namely, we will consider those theories according to which the symbol is considered to be different from the sign, both in the lack of a conventional and rigid order which sets up the possible signifier-signified relationships (according to de Saussure) and in the fact that the symbol is conscious whereas the symbolized is unconscious. Nevertheless, in what will follow, the comparisons between segnic and symbolic functions will be frequent, since their domains are inseparable although distinct from one another, as already said in the previous sections. From our point of view, we consider the symbolic function as preceding the segnic one, and having deep unconscious roots; the latter, then, will start from the former.[15] Our intention, therefore, is to focus on the first, ancestral nucleus of such a symbolic function, whose early origins we would want to bring back to certain crucial aspects of the last 1930s Freudian thought (see Freud, 1938, 1949, 1999) on human psychic evolution. Following Rycroft (1968a, 1968b), E. Jones was one of the first scholars of symbolism from the orthodox viewpoint. According to him, symbolism is always the result of an intrapsychic conflict between the repressing tendencies and the repressed material. Only those repressed objects that cannot be sublimated need to be symbolized, so there is a close relationship between the sublimation processes and the symbolization. Nevertheless, Freud himself wasn't so radical in considering symbolism as exclusively confined to the primary process as Jones was. Indeed, in his last work in 1938, Freud reached the conclusion that the linguistic symbols used in dreams have mainly an unconscious meaning and originate during the earliest language development stages. So, Freud presumed that the symbolic function was in some respects correlated with the formation of the verbal linguistic one.

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[14] However, brief outlines on some of them will be delineated in the following sections.

[15] This is coherent with what is said above about the mainly unconscious nature of symbol and conscious nature of sign. In this regard, then, it will not be possible to prescind from the notable Lacan *œuvre* which, inter alia, is based on the previous work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson.

On psychoanalytic symbolism

According to Segal (1991), it is not possible even minimally to approach the subject of fantasy (hence, of creativity) and of dreaming without considering the unconscious symbolism; this is because both are closely intertwined and interconnected between them. Freud distinguished between a conscious symbolism (such as a metaphor) and an unconscious one. Again following Rycroft (1968a, 1968b)[16] and Segal (1991), within the Ernest Jones framework on symbolism there is a close connection between the sublimation process and symbolic formation, which is the pivotal key to understanding any creative process, the latter being present where the former is missing. According to Jones, there are some main features of symbolism, namely: *(i)* the symbolic process is completely unconscious; *(ii)* each symbol represents ideas of Self and of the own family, as well as birth, love and death phenomena; *(iii)* each symbol has a constant meaning and is the result of an intrapsychic conflict between the repressing tendencies and the repressed material; *(iv)* only the repressed material needs to be symbolized; and, finally, *(v)* the emotional charge which invests the symbolized object has not been able enough to perform that qualitative modification given by sublimation. Therefore, according to Jones, symbols have nothing to do with sublimation. However, many points of Jones's theory of symbolism have been reworked out, amongst others by Melanie Klein, loosening their strong constraining character. As already said in the previous sections, even Freud wasn't as rigid about symbolism as Jones was, for instance allowing many possible meanings for the same symbol. Freud himself, then, was aware that at the basis of dream and artistic activity was unconscious fantasy, hence symbolic thought. Sublimation is a psychic process provided by Freud for trying to explain the higher human thought functions, thereafter counted as a general defence mechanism by his daughter Anna Freud (1937),[17] and yet quite neglected by psychoanalysis which has not still given a coherent theory of it (see Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). Given the close relationships of sublimation with secondary processes, perhaps it would be possible to bring back the segnic function to the sublimation process rather than the symbolic one whose process is quite different from the former, albeit both are intertwined with one another. For instance, according to Rycroft (1968a, 1968b), symbolization and sublimation are two psychic processes which have displacement as a common energetic exchange mechanism. Rycroft (1968a) states that sublimation is considered to be strictly related to scopophilia (roughly speaking, the pleasure of watching, one of the basic childish drives, from which derives the so-called *epistemophilia* (see Rycroft, 1968a), or else, general human intellectual activity is a sublimation of this, which follows from childhood inhibitions of sexual curiosities. Moreover, according to the author, all sublimations depend on symbolization, while all the Ego's development depends on sublimation. In turn, the splitting process (upon which is also based disavowal) has mainly to do with the Ego's development. In short, from what has been said so far, it is evident that there are links between the symbolism and sublimation processes and human psychosexual development. In this paper, on the basis of what has just been said, we would like to point out some possible relationships between the symbolic function and the disavowal mechanism, the latter supposed to be, *d'après* Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), a general psychic formation process (closely related to Ego's structuration) not only relegated to pathology, as already Freud himself had hypothesized in his last notable

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[16] See also Bott Splillius et al. (2011).

[17] She considered sublimation, splitting and disavowal as comprising the set of defence mechanisms of the Ego (see Rycroft, 1968a). According to her, sublimation is concerned with normality.

1938 work, and subsequently accepted by his daughter (and other post-Freudians) as a normal defence psychic mechanism.

On the viewpoints of Charles Rycroft and Hanna Segal

Charles Rycroft (1968b) gave a useful and original interpretation of symbolism. This is neither a hereditary[18] nor exclusive prerogative of the unconscious realm. The symbols are the outcomes of a cathexis displacement from the images of the objects of primary interest (like those involved in the primary identification) to the images of objects perceived in the external world. Once formed, a symbol may be used either by primary or secondary processes. When a symbol is used by a primary process, its meaning becomes independent from the object that it originally represented; hence, it will be involved in fantastic processes, like neuroses and dreams. When, instead, a symbol is used by a secondary process, it will continue to represent a suitable object of the external world and will become part of conscious and unconscious imaginative processes that promote the development of a certain sense of reality. Rycroft follows Melanie Klein and Isaacs (1952) in assuming that the sense of reality is supported and favoured by fantasy. Rycroft distinguishes between fantasy that intensifies reality and fantasy that maintains illusory (or neurotic) substitutes for reality. To the first, he gives the specific name of *imagination*, which is a fundamental component to evaluate reality. According to Rycroft (who, in turn, starts from the previous work on symbolism of L. S. Kubie and M. Milner – see Rycroft, 1968b), the words are classified as symbols closely related to consciousness that favour the secondary processes. The words are also closely related to object relations because verbalization is a form of communication between objects. On the other hand, within the Kleinian framework, Hanna Segal (1991) also made further and original contributions to symbolism (see also Bott et al., 2011). On the basis of her clinical material drawn from the analytic treatment of psychotic patients, she identified two main symbolic functions. The first function is called *symbolic equation* and relies on the basis of concrete schizophrenic thought: in it, the symbol is equated with the symbolized object, up to the point where it is lived as identical to the latter. In this regard, Segal refers to a clinical case in which a psychotic patient, at a certain moment in his life, broke off to play the violin; when he was asked why, he curtly replied: "Do you want maybe that I publicly masturbate?" Now, playing a violin has the psychoanalytic meaning of masturbation, so that, for him, a violin *is* a penis, so that playing a violin *is* masturbating and therefore it cannot be done in public. The intuition of the second function, however, came from a clinical case regarding a neurotic. It has been called *symbolic representation* and has to do with the true symbolism of normal thought. Through it, the symbol represents the object but must not be entirely equated to it. If one dreams of playing a violin, then the violin, yes, represents the penis, but distinguished from it, so that one may personify unconscious fantasies of masturbation and, at the same time, remain quite distinguished to use the violin to play in such a manner to separately represent a sexual act. The passage from the first function to the second one is well illustrated by a clinical case treated by Claudine Geissman (see Segal, 1991) and references therein) in regard to a psychotic eight-years-old girl who initially wasn't able even to speak but rather was only interested in everything that had a spherical form, as well as showing aggressiveness and violence toward everybody and everything which resembled a human being (like dolls, etc.). By means of the transfer of the child to an analyst, Geissman stated that such objects were the concrete counterparts of maternal

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[18] Unless one accepts the hypothesis of a collective unconscious, like Jung.

body or analyst, so that all this framework built up by the girl was turned toward a maternal figure and her body. Gradually, through the analysis, the child started to speak in an ever more complex manner and to make drawings which had balls as subjects, the first indications of a slow formation of a symbolic representation of parts of the maternal body. Moreover, the child gradually started to join partial objects or fragments into a whole one, until she was able to put herself into a relationship with other children as well as to read, speak and write. So, after having considered other case studies, Segal was persuaded that the first symbolic function would correspond to the paranoid-schizoid position (*concrete symbolism*) while the second one would correspond to the depressive position (*depressive symbolism*). Segal states that, in the symbolic equation, the symbol substitute is felt *to be* the original object. The properties of the substitute are not recognized or admitted. The symbolic equation is used to deny the absence of an ideal object or to control a persecutory one (like a phallus), and belongs to the first stages of the Ego's development.[19] The real symbol, available for the sublimation and favourable for the development of the Ego, is, instead, felt to be *representing* the object whose characteristics are recognized, respected and used. It develops when the depressive sentiments predominate over the paranoid-schizoid ones and when the separation from the object, the ambivalence, the guilt and the loss may be experienced and tolerated.[20] Once this is done, it will also be possible to come back to symbolic equations. The general symbolic formation will determine the ability to communicate because every internal and external communication is made by symbols, so that when schizoid disorders take place in the object relations, the communication capacity will also be damaged. For instance, in psychotic patients, symbols, being uniquely conceived in a concrete manner, do not have any emotional charge so they cannot be felt by others, making effective interpersonal communication impossible. In regard to the two symbolic functions above, Segal states too that there exists no symbolic function without the remaining one, that is to say, there will be a prevalence of one of these but without fully eliminating the other one. These two symbolic functions operate next to one another, with reciprocal influence and possible regressions to primitive stages. And this last fact might also be related to the indivisible binomial made by the symmetric and asymmetric thought of Matte Blanco's theory (see Iurato, 2013). One of the greatest achievements of a depressive position is having given to the human individual the ability to integrate and to encompass most of the primitive aspects of her or his experience, comprising primitive symbolic equations. This last point is of fundamental importance for a creativity theory according to the Kleinian standpoint (and others). Once the right passage has been made from concrete symbolism to a depressive one, then it will be possible to perform a further step towards abstraction, for instance with verbalization. However, from this, we cannot deduce that pure abstraction thought is necessarily an indication of mental health. Indeed, this capacity might also be the outcome of a splitting (of the Ego) in which abstract thought is fully devoid of emotive meaning or charge, as in psychotic states (see also Matte Blanco's thoughts in this regard). For instance, in schizophrenic patients, very often there is simultaneity between a coarsely concrete symbolization and complete abstractions devoid of emotive (and, in some cases, of intellectual) meaning.

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[19] And this point is of fundamental importance from our point of view based on the disavowal mechanism which is considered by Melanie Klein to be like a normal psychic mechanism.

[20] Within this position will take place the basic psychic function of the separation of opposites. This point has also been stressed by R. Money Kyrle (see Segal, 1991).

On the development of Freudian libido: a brief sketch

Herein, for completeness and for giving a semblance of organic unity to the whole treatment, we briefly outline the main points of Freudian psychosexual development, with slight additions and contributions due to other authors which must be understood according to the above-mentioned epistemological considerations.

On object relationships

The strong instinctual reduction due to homination (that is to say, the passage from primates to the genus *Homo*), gave rise to the human existential problem of managing the consequent instinctual energy content which has supervened as a result of such a drive *deconstrainment*. The human being is characterized, as well as by *needs*, by *desire* which is roughly meant as a sort of incoercible psychic tension which has to be necessarily, internally or externally invested. So, for the human being, it is indispensable to find *objects*[21] upon which to direct, or to invest, such an energy content. The consequent relations established with these objects (animated or not) are generically called *object relationships*. These were explicitly introduced by post-Freudians, first of all by the Melanie Klein school, even if the notion of object relation was already present, *in nuce*, in the Freudian notion of *cathexis* of a drive (or instinct) which characterizes the inescapable human disposition to make interrelationships with something else (which belongs to the external or own internal world), said to be the *cathexis object*, which, in turn, will be represented by the individual in various manners. The Freudian cathexis has a *source*, an *object* and a *drive destination* (or *instinctual aim*) as fundamental constitutive elements. The first one is the (bodily) zone, or the somatic apparatus, in which the related libido excitation takes place and originates. The second one is the means by which or with which the drive may reach its (instinctual) aim. It is the necessary correlative of the drive destination, and is mainly determined by the personal history (above all, infantile) of the individual but constitutionally is quite undetermined since it may be either a person or a partial real or fantasmatic object. Finally, the third one is that particular and necessary activity, or that specific action, due to the push of the drive itself to obtain the given satisfaction, and that often is oriented and sustained by the fantasmatic or imaginative elaboration of the individual herself or himself. Hence, we sketchily have

$$source \xrightarrow{object} drive\ destination.$$

These last notions are the generalization of the correlative ones of sexuality: for instance, the object corresponds to the sexual object, that is to say, the person who exerts the sexual attraction, while the aim corresponds to the sexual satisfaction, that is to say, it is the action due to, or raised by, drive pushes. The first (bodily) Ego formations mainly involve a correct balancing of the primary narcissism, a regulation of primary identifications (through introjection-projection mechanisms), and a beginning of a sense of reality and of a corporal image of Self.

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[21] We could consider the notion of *object* or *thing* in the wider philosophical sense. In psychoanalysis, then, a restricted sense is assumed mainly correlated to the post-Freudian notion of *object relation* (see Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973; Galimberti, 2006).

The psychosexual development

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (of 1905), besides outlining the above notion of object cathexis, Freud worked out the main lines of his celebrated theory on the stadial or phasic development of human sexuality which is meant to be mainly driven by the agency of *Id* (or *Es*), which is understood as the place of all the instincts ruled by the principle of pleasure. According to him, human sexuality[22] starts at birth (if not before, in the prenatal phase) with two main stages, the *pre-Œdipus* stage, from birth to about four years old, and the *Œdipus* stage, from about five years old to about seven years old, to carry on with the *latency* phase, from about eight years old to about twelve years old, hence with *puberty* (or the *genital phase*), from about thirteen years old to about fifteen years old, ending with *adolescence*, from about sixteen years old to about eighteen years old. In turn, the pre-Œdipus stage includes: a first *oral* phase, from birth to about one year old, in which the somatic Ego[23] begins to form with the recognition of the first partial objects together the establishment of the incorporation's instinct; an *anal* phase, from about the first year to about two years old, in which a self-erotic narcissistic attitude prevails – it begins to express the first ambivalence phenomena and to structure the basic tasks of restraining and expelling faeces; a *phallic* phase, from about two years old to

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[22] In what follows, we refer to the basic work of Piscicelli (1994). In it, there is an exposition of Freudian human psychosexual development integrated with post-Freudian thought, above all the Kleinian one and that of its followers. For instance (see Piscicelli, 1994), it should be necessary to distinguish between a first *monadal* phase (mainly prenatal) and subsequent *symbiotic* phase (which includes the oral and anal ones; this term is due to M. S. Mahler) where the essential psychosomatic mother-child relationship prevails and through which begin to form and be structured the first cores of the *Self*, above all by means of a basic dyadic relation (moulding onto the previous mother-child relationship). In these phases, the first differentiations between the *Self* and the *Other* will begin to take place, the first ambivalence and opposition tendencies will appear through the formation of opposite pairs (that is to say, the first germs of philosophical pairs), like love-hate, cohesion-splitting, desire-refusal, approaching-estrangement, and so on. In short, the dialectic thought which plays a primary role for the consciousness begins to form. The transduction of the psychosomatic organization and contents into the elements and functions of thought requires a long procedure made by variously combined experiences mainly driven by a good mother. This is due to the fact that human thought mainly has its origin in the transferring of satisfaction of needs from an initially autarchic system toward relational exchange procedures (including object relations, anaclitic and diaclitic phases of object dependence, etc). These last will reach their highest performance and definition with the advent of paranoid-schizoid and depressive Kleinian positions, which are indispensable for recognizing objects as thinkable entities. In the actuation and in the subsequent overcoming of these positions, the above-mentioned symbiotic mother-child relationship will be essential, which is mainly psychosomatic in its incipient phase and whose dynamics will be explicated through object relations. From what has just been said, the importance played by Kleinian thought with its subsequent evolutions is clear.

[23] Following Vegetti Finzi (1976), the maternal figure, with those deeply ambivalent feelings which she arouses, is the first core around which gradually the child's Ego starts to be organized along with, at the same time, her or his ability to recognize the other.

about three years old, in which, at first, sexual gender differences, in their structural and arrangement order, are noticed (although, since the oral phase, both baby boys and baby girls have already discovered their own genitals), to be then able to recognize the Other together with the coming of some attitudes toward sublimation phenomena; and, finally, a *urethral* phase, from about three years old to about four years old, in which a bladder sexuality prevails, and which is often parallel to the phallic phase. Self-eroticism, which initially characterizes the incipiency of the pre-Œdipus stage, gradually evolves, within the familiar triangulation, toward hetero-directed sexual forms which will lead to the next Œdipus stage. In it, castration anxieties, penis envy phenomena and first formations of Super-Ego agency will prevail; it will finish with the crucial apical advent of the so-called *Œdipus complex*. In the next latency phase, after the relevant Œdipus complex, a general sexual quiescence phase takes over in which the major part of libidinal activities and fantasies are repressed or sublimated[24] but not fully eliminated. Thereafter, the fast increase of pubertal neurophysioendocrine activity leads to a libido re-emersion with a new and fast phase of sexual development, corresponding to puberty. During this, a kind of recapitulation of the previous phallic and anal phases takes place, along with a revival of sexual interest with related conflictual recrudescence at first toward the parents (as in the previous Œdipus complex), then oriented (unless there were previous pathological fixations) toward other cathexis objects (in general, extra-familiar) with the coming of adolescence. So, in a certain sense, a definitive disposition will be reached, at first sexual then characterial, of the human personality, through the overcoming of late adolescence. These are, very briefly, the main points of the Freudian framework of human psychosexual development, in which we will lay out most of the considerations of this paper. We want to highlight this as the first five to six years of life are very decisive in the formation of human personality, as is now almost unanimously recognized (see Mastrangelo, 1975).

On phallic phase

For our aims, it is important to further highlight other aspects of the phallic phase. As already said above, in the phallic phase the organization of genital pleasure prevails and there are predominant interests in the sensitivity of those organs whose functionality is particularly present from about three years old to about five years old. From this period hereafter, no matter what their possible origins, this excitation is focused and invested on the genitals, the sexuality being lived only in a self-erotic manner. In this phase, the drives revolve around the crucial question of having or not having the *phallus* (in its highest symbolic meaning) which is the main reference point and drive orientation line for both sexes. It is the central executive organ of the whole libido: for instance, it will be the high unit of the genital function which melts in itself all the partial drives coming from the various erogenous zones[25]. This last phenomenon has been called *erotic anfimix* by S. Ferenczi (see Nunberg, 1932, 1955, 1975). But, in this period, ithe first notions of

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[24] During this period of sexual development, there is little clarity about the possible relationships between repression and sublimation mechanisms. Moreover, as already said, little attention has been paid to the general sublimation mechanism, from the work of Freud until now (see Gay, 1992).

[25] This will play a fundamental role in the formation of bodily image as we will see later when discussing fetishism.

space and time also begin to form,[26] which also assist the formation of the corporal scheme, notwithstanding their categories are still not well defined from the logical viewpoint. Furthermore, in this phase, not all children are able to identify gender genital differences, although this phase is mainly focused on seeing and hearing in order to identify the possible cathexis objects of desire, remembering these through their symbolic meanings. In this phase, children develop the narcissistic conviction that there exists a unique genital organ,[27] the phallus, which they attribute, *erga omnes*, to every human being, no matter their sex, and even to inanimate objects (see Nunberg, 1932, 1955, 1975). Children are unable to imagine human beings as devoid of a phallus, which is understood as a mere narcissistic pleasure organ. Such a prevalence of the image of the phallus as a symbolic representation of the potential of pleasure is also interpretable as a *chiasma effect*[28] between psychosomatic-emotive experiences and psychomental ones ruled by logical thought. Therefore, the psychosomatic aspects, which manage the emotions, act too as a support for the subsequent logical thought functions and for the exchange of affects.[29] As already said, in this phase children are persuaded that only one genital organ exists, the phallus, noting too that there exist only the castrated and the not castrated, so coming on to configure the *castration fantasy* which has an archetypical

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[26] According to K. Lorentz (see Oliverio, 1982), the abstraction's capacity for human thought has a phylogenetic origin during that particular homination period in which the advent of prehensility and the development of visual capacities – which have taken place thanks to the conquered bipedalism (or standing position) – allow the first manual exploratory activities (like the analysis of internal cavities, and so on). Nevertheless, to the formation and structuration of bodily Ego, a primary role is played by sensorial developments linked to the cephalic-caudal maturation which precedes the neural-muscular one. So, olfaction, vision and hearing are the first corporal physiological determinants contributing to the formation of bodily Ego (see also Greenacre, 1971).

[27] This explains why this phase is often mentioned as well as the *unique genital phase.*

[28] With this term, one refers to those particular situations in which certain different, and often opposed, aspects or dimensions of a given phenomenon undergo a kind of intimate union into an indissoluble interlacement where they will configure almost in a reciprocal interrelation of mutual exchange and biunivocal influence, until reaching symbiotic forms of mirror equivalence. This meaning is due to an extension of that related to the *chiasmus* of rhetoric figures. On the other hand, Freud himself claimed, in his 1927 paper on fetishism, that traumatic amnesia (which leads to screen memories, in turn closely related to these chiasma effects) could be considered to be a paradigm of fetish formation. To be precise, the fetish, as a screen memory, would be the outcome of the awareness of a traumatic real experience whose related cathexis' energetic charge gives the distance between such a screen and the real event. Its amount provides an estimate for the severity of the impact of the conflict related to the given perturbative situation. In this regard, see Greenacre, 1971), where, inter alia, the author paid much attention to screen memories, believing them to be the main path by which early preverbal experiences could be traced.

[29] And, often, inversions of these relationships (that is to say, psychosomatic reifications of thoughts) are at the interpretative basis of the perversions.

source and a universal character.[30] In this phase of the unique genital organ, sexuality is put into a crossroad of confusion because both parents are indistinguishable from each other and both are fantastically thought to have a penis. This confusion will flow on into the latency phase, to be then elaborated according to those different meanings that the male and female genitals will assume. The lack of a female penis induces a catastrophic fear due to the great importance assigned, in this phase, to the penis; the vagina could then be the result of a punishment. So, we are at the culmination of the Œdipus complex, with the prevalence of the castration one. The unity of the castration complex in both sexes is conceivable only on the basis of a common and primary assumption, precisely the one that states the equal and notable importance played by the castration's object (namely, the phallus) both for baby girls and baby boys. The posed problem is the same for both, that is to say, have or do not have the phallus. Following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), this castration complex is met in every (psychoanalytic) analysis, and every human being experiments with it. Greenacre carried out notable studies on this universal character of castration anxiety and human predisposition to anxiety (see Greenacre, 1971). Furthermore, following Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975), it is possible to distinguish between a *passive* and an *active* castration complex in relation respectively to the desire to lose or to the fear of losing the unique genital. The manner in which the child copes with her or his infantile sexuality and solves the castration complex will determine her or his character and psychic health. Such a complex is present, in more or less severe forms, in almost all psychic disorders. Finally, following Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975), in this phase takes place the first separation of opposite pairs which, in the previous phases, were characterized by a full ambivalence: for instance, in the oral phase, the ambivalence appears joined into a unique act, becomes particularly strong in the next anal phase in which each libidinal desire must be meant as its opposite, while in the phallic one the two opposite tendencies hold next to one another. This last dialectic dynamic tension between opposites will be of fundamental importance for symbolic formation.

The Freudian disavowal mechanism and fetishism: brief outlines

First historical outlines on disavowal

Following Roudinesco (1995), Freud, for the first time, used the term *negation* or *denegation*[31] (*Verneinung*) in 1917 after a personal re-elaboration of the term *negative hallucination* due to H. Bernheim following his 1914 reclassification of psychoses, neuroses and perversions based on castration theory made in *On Narcissism: An Introduction*. The term was then explicitly used by Freud in 1925. By *Verneinung* Freud meant a verbal mechanism through which the repressed material is recognized in a negative manner by the subject, but without being accepted. Together with this mechanism, Freud also used the term *disavowal* (*Verleugnung*) to indicate the refusal, by the subject, to recognize the reality of a negative perception, like the lack of a female penis. The *Verneinung* is connected to a mechanism typical of neuroses, whereas the *Verleugnung* is connected to a mechanism typical of perversions. Finally, according to Freud, the *Verdrängung* is a term which indicates a mechanism related to *repression*. Thereafter, in the *Wolf Man* (of 1914), Freud also used the term *Verwerfung* to indicate

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[30] R. C. Bak has also pointed out a possible universal character of female genital organs (see also Greenacre, 1971).

[31] This denomination was due to J. Hyppolite in the 1950s.

the *rejection* of a reality presented as non-existent, and to be meant as distinct from the previous ones. In France, there were some heated debates about the relations of the term *scotomization*, first proposed by E. Pichon-Rivière in 1928 to indicate an unconscious mechanism through which a subject makes disappear from the consciousness those facts which are unpleasant, with the previous terms. For instance, R. Laforgue proposed consideration of scotomization as comprising either the *Verleugnung* and another repression mechanism typical of psychoses, whilst Freud considered it as distinct both from *Verleugnung* and *Verdrängung*. Laforgue wanted to indicate an annulment of a perception whilst Freud wished to keep the perception within a framework supported by negation, that is to say, not complete closure of a perception in front of a misunderstanding of reality, but rather activation of a perception put between a denegation and a repression. In a nutshell, the real problem consisted in the lack of a specific term to indicate the rejection mechanism typical of psychoses. In short, even Freud had a certain moment of uncertainty between all these terms, *Verleugnung* (disavowal), *Verdrängung* (repression) and *Verneinung* (negation), in relation to psychosis mechanisms. Finally, as we will see later, Freud opted for denegation or disavowal. *Disavowal* (or *denial*, of the reality), is a term that Sigmund Freud began to explicitly use, in a specific sense, after the paper entitled *The Negation* (of 1925), until it attained a more general sense in the last of his works, namely *Abriß der Psychoanalyse*[32] (see Freud, 1938), even if such a primary notion did not have a definitive characterization, for which reason it will be retaken by his followers to be studied more deeply. According to Octave Mannoni,[33] Freud began to implicitly use the notion of disavowal after the 1890s in discussing the concept of splitting the Ego, both these notions being closely related to one another. As stated above, disavowal (*Verleugnung*) is different both from negation (*Verneinung*) and from repression (*Verdrängung*), as will become clear later. Following the last Freudian ideas exposed in Freud (1938, 1949, 1999), we may consider disavowal as a fundamental psychic mechanism which relies on the primary basis of any other possible relation with the external reality. Indeed, in this last work of his, Freud fully re-examined all his previous ideas about the Ego agency and its functions in the light of the fundamental psychic process of Ego's splitting. Freud (1938, 1949, 1999) also states that a certain degree of fetishism is part of normality, particularly during romantic love.[34] The above-mentioned Freudian work *The Negation* (of 1925) has played a primary role in subsequent studies on consciousness. Following De Mijolla (2005), negation dramatizes a situation of interpretative conflict and is related to a dialogical situation. Negation, unknown at the level of the unconscious, needs to be situated on a secondary level, and we can gain access to it only by way of the symbol. The study of the interrelation between oral instinctual motions and the establishment of negative and affirmative behaviour has been further investigated in the works of R. A. Spitz (1957). Then, following Akhtar and O'Neil (2011), any elementary content,

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[32] This last (partially unfinished) work may be considered as Freud's spiritual testament of his (orthodox) doctrine, in which he almost axiomatically tried to delineate the main lines of his theory as it historically evolved from its first ideas to the final form together with some of its unsolved questions to which the author was not able to give a relevant answer.

[33] See the Introduction to the Italian translation of Freud (1938), that is to say, Freud (1999).

[34] As we will see later, this psychic phenomenon is almost ubiquitous in childhood if laid out in the Winnicott's framework of transitional objects and their relations with fetish.

according to Freud, becomes conscious only in its inverted and negated forms. Subsequent epistemological analysis (see Chemama & Vandermersch, 1998) have shown that 1925 Freud's work *On Negation* dwells above all on the disavowal mechanism and not only on the negation one, so that his main theses were much more related to the former rather than to the latter. On the other hand, with his notion of splitting of the Ego, Freud showed his 1938 last thoughts especially concerning fetishism and psychosis. It also enlightens his ideas on the basically non-unified structure of the ego. He moreover focused on the question of the possible relationships between the Ego agency and the reality, introducing another model different from that of repression and of the re-emersion of the repressed content, by establishing the notion of disavowal as a specific psychic mechanism regarding Ego agency (see Bokanowski & Lewkowicz, 2009). The initial motivations for the introduction of the disavowal mechanism were mainly due to attempts to give a satisfactory explanation of the psychoses which remained until then out of the psychoanalytic theoretical framework which was mainly turned to explain the neuroses. Roughly speaking, disavowal is a defence mechanism through which the individual denies the recognition of painful experiences, impulses, reality data or aspects of herself or himself. Such a notion should be understood as a first generalization of a particular initial denial, precisely the one experienced by the individual in recognizing that traumatic perception which consists in the occurred awareness of the lack of a female penis, with consequent supervention of the related castration anxiety. According to the initial 1924 Freudian conception, at the first impressions of this lack of a penis, the baby boy disavows this absence and *imagines* to see, in an equal manner, a penis which formerly there was but that afterwards has been cut off (castration). According to Freud (1938, 1949, 1999), this process seems to be quite normal and widespread in children, but it might become dangerous in adult age giving rise either to a psychosis or a paraphilia, even if, in these last cases, it is quite unclear in what specific manner these take place. Girls, instead, reject the acceptance of the *facto datum* of their own castration, persisting in the conviction of having a penis, being therefore forced, later, to behave as if they were males (penis envy[35]). Subsequently, this first disavowal conception was extended to all the painful perceptions which, contrasting with the pleasure principle, lead to not recognizing the reality and to transforming it, through hallucinatory modalities, to fulfill the desire. Fetishism, besides homosexuality, is the most frequent amongst the paraphilias (see Greenacre, 1971) even if it is the most difficult one to diagnose due to the fact that it is asymptomatic.

Towards the Ego's splitting

The 1927 Freudian paradigm of fetishism, which was initially laid down to explain the formation of fetishes by means of castration anxiety due to the observation of the lack of a female penis, has gone beyond the context of sexuality, due to the rigour with which it was formulated by Freud himself. Subsequently, such a paradigm underwent further improvements until a definitive 1938 model centred around the basic notion of Ego's splitting (see Freud, 1938, 1949, 1999). According to the latter, most people overcome such a castration complex through *symbolic elaboration*,[36] accepting the gender sexual differences, whereas those who do not overcome such a complex will have neurotic developments with possible paraphilic degeneration (see also Piscicelli, 1994). In

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[35] On this, Lacan will speak of the child as a prolongation of the mother penis.
[36] The degree of this is directly correlated with (and proportional to) the emotive content associated with it.

fetishism, the perception that disproves the infant's belief in a female penis is not rejected but is, as some say, displaced upon an object, the *fetish*. It therefore does not imply a hallucination or an alteration of the representation of reality (like in psychoses), but simply it repudiates the reality. After having detected the lack of a female penis, the child has, in a certain sense, modified its initial belief about the female penis, retaining it and, at the same time, abandoning it (*Aufgegeben*). He or she believes that, despite everything, the female has a penis, even if this is no longer that of before, because something has taken its place or replaced it, that is to say, it has been named a "symbolic substitute" for it upon which it will be possible to cathexis the desire to avoid the strong anxiety's pressures due to the castration principle. But, in doing so, the child inevitably goes into a conflict created by the load of the real undesired perception of a penis lack against the force of a counter-desire opposed to this, thereby reaching a basic ambivalence whose resolutive compromise will be possible only thanks to the action of the unconscious thought which dialectically operates through its own primary processes.[37] In short, the fetish is, yes, a symbolic substitute for the phallus, but it is not always an iconic reproduction of it. Such a fetish reflects, at the same time, the denial and the affirmation of the female castration, this also corresponding to the coexistence of two opposite attitudes in respect of the fetish, which Freud tries to explain by means of a particular psychic mechanism, called *Ego's splitting* (*Ichspaltung*). This splitting takes place when the child undergoes a conflict between the initial instinct's claim (*Anspruch*) and the objection made by reality (*Einsprunch*), but does not choose either one or the other, or else chooses both. In such a manner, the formation of the Ego's synthetic function is perturbed. Thus, to sum up, a fundamental characteristic of fetishism is that it allows reality to be recognized and, at the same time, disclaimed. It gives rise to the fundamental creation of opposites whose separation, thanks to this splitting mechanism (if correctly operating), is at the basis of first consciousness formation.[38] Such a mechanism, however, is different from the psychotic one because the latter is a mere and simple repudiation of the reality[39] which is never recognized. Nevertheless, the (paraphilic) fetishist cannot avoid a degenerative Ego splitting when this splitting does not give rise to that compensative symbolic elaboration recalled above.

From fetishism to Ego's splitting

On Ego's splitting, fetishism and transitional phenomena

By means of the disavowal mechanism, Freud glimpses the origins of an intrasystemic Ego's splitting[40] (*Ichspaltung*) through which, within the Ego agency, two distinct and conflictual psychic attitudes take place of which one takes into account the reality denied by the other, and substitutes it with the content of a desire. Or else, following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), through this intrapsychic division, an Ego's splitting takes place both

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[37] See Smirnov (1970) and Khan Masud (1970, 1979).

[38] The constitution and separation of opposite pairs, as already said, is a fundamental and characterizing task for consciousness (see also Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). Here, we have discussed such psychodynamic processes from the Freudian perspective, but they also play a fundamental role in the Jungian theory of consciousness (in this regard, see also Iurato, 2012).

[39] Which has mainly external sources.

[40] Which should be kept distinct from the analogous notion related to schizophrenia in which it is preferable to use the term *dissociation*.

into a part which observes and into a part which is observed. This last perspective is widely but implicitly used by Freud in his final works, above all to denote a certain dichotomic or separated nature of human psyche. Throughout this paper, when we refer to the notion of Ego's splitting, we mean this last perspective, coherently with the Freudian work in which such a notion starts to be used with the celebrated works *Fetishism* (of 1927), *Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence* (of 1938) and in *Abriß der Psychoanalyse* (see Freud, 1938). Above all, we will follow the Freudian thought of this last work. According to Freud, disavowal would allow us to explain the typical features of psychoses and fetishism. Following Galimberti (2006), as stated above, the original 1925 Freudian concept of disavowal was extended to all the painful perceptions that, being in contrast with the pleasure principle, lead to not recognizing the reality, transforming it in a hallucinatory manner to satisfy the desire. Hence, disavowal is a very fundamental psychic mechanism which has to do with the external reality, and whose main result is this Ego's splitting. It is the first psychic agency to form for detecting reality. The Ego's splitting is a basic psychic mechanism preliminary to others, like introjective and projective identification, etc. Following Greenacre (1971), in the formation of Ego's agency, a remarkable role is played by pre-Œdipus phases. In the 1930s, there was a considerable need for a deeper knowledge of Ego. In this regard, the author, thanks to her professional psychiatrist activity, had the opportunity to examine many clinical cases of psychosis which turned out to be of great usefulness just to study the Ego's function. After the studies of W. Hoffer, P. Schilder, M. Ribble, M. E. Fries, R. A. Spitz and M. S. Mahler, it had been possible to ascertain that the first formations of this agency are of a corporal or somatic nature (bodily Ego). Greenacre herself (and B. Lantos) pointed out a certain primitive predisposition to anxiety, mainly related to the elaboration of primal scenes, which will play a notable role in the Ego's formation, if properly cathexed, together its next splitting. According to Greenacre, the classical 1927 and 1938 Freudian works on fetishism were the best ones on fetishism and perversions. In these works, Freud foregrounds the Ego's splitting which takes place in consequence of the strong castration anxiety when a child has recognized the gender sexual differences. Above all, the kid refuses to recognize the reality of this painful situation. Nevertheless, he assigns a penis to his mother, symbolically represented by the fetish (material[41] or merely symbolic) whose specific form is largely due to the displacement of that energetic amount which has been determined in concomitance with the appearance of castration anguish. The fetish formation must therefore provide these incongruities in the corporal image formation through suitable surrogates. These may be physical parts of the body (material fetish) or may be abstract formations like more or less complex fantasies (see Greenacre, 1971). The pathological cases mainly take place during the passage from the normal childish fetish of three- to four-year-olds to the latency phase, characterized by the deterioration of the capacity to establish object relations. In Greenacre (1971), the author contributed further interesting considerations on fetishism. According to her, the fetish has mainly a phallic meaning, but also a bisexual one. Fetishism is a disorder which is mainly due to an imperfect development of corporal image and of the bodily Ego, from which derive disorders of reality sense, of identity sense and of object relations. The adult's fetish has something in common with the Winnicott childhood's *transitional object* which, usually, has a certain role in the constitution and development of the reality and of the object relation, and concerns both sexes. The formation of a transitional object takes place within the so-called (Winnicott-Spitz) *transitional space*, which is the space

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[41] In this case, the (material) fetish may be considered as a materialized screen memory which is related to implicit memory (see Mancia, 2007) or cover memory.

around which the mother-child relationship and related *transitional* phenomenology take place (see Vegetti & Finzi, 1976). The persistence in adult age of the fetish reveals a chronic defect of psychosomatic structure, while the transitional object is usually abandoned with the dawning of genitality, at least in normal cases. In most cases, the fetish itself is something of a secret to the fetishist himself (or herself), which is strictly related to the primary meaning of the Œdipus complex, that is to say, the uncovering of the enigma sphinx, to confirm the basic relationships existing between fetish formation and pregenital phases. Following Greenacre (1971), in the phallic phase a consolidation of the recognition of genital organs takes place and, in the case of disorders and failures in the formation of corporal Ego, the fetish formation may cope with this, with a narcissistic reinforcement of Ego itself through it.

On Ego's Ideal and Ideal Ego

Following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), Freud, as mentioned above, put disavowal as the main psychic mechanism involved in the Ego's splitting. He started from the previous notion of *Spaltung* due to J. Breuer and P. Janet, but gradually reached his original generically oriented conception to indicate an intrapsychic division, above all in the last part of his life, in reference to a splitting of the Ego into an *observing part* and into an *observed part*. Later, from his above-mentioned 1927 works on fetishism, gradually Freud posed the disavowal mechanism at the basis of this splitting phenomenon that he wanted, in turn, to put at the basis of psychoses and perversions. Freud pointed out that in psychoses a full separation from reality never takes place; in every psychosis, even the deeper ones, two antithetic psychic attitudes always exist: the one that takes into account the reality in the normal attitude, and the other that, under the drive influence, detaches the Ego from reality, giving rise to delirious thoughts. The outcomes of this Ego's splitting are therefore two opposite psychic settings,[42] of which each subsists, throughout life, alongside the other and never singly of each other, but with the prevalence, from time to time, of only one of these two, to the detriment of the other. Out of these, there is a normal self-observing component which takes into account the external reality (and is prodromic to the formation of the system *Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego*) mainly through opposition to the next subagency (the Ideal Ego), while the other, under the Es' instinct influence, tears out the Ego from the reality (and is prodromic to the unconscious formation of the *Ideal Ego*) assuming a prevalent narcissistic formation on the basis of primary identifications as a result of the mother-child relation. According to Nunberg and Lagache, the Ideal Ego, genetically prior to the Super-Ego, is the first Ego's component to be formed from the symbiotic mother-child state, upon which the subject will build up her or his further psychic development, and to which he or she comes back in psychotic states (and not only in these). According to Lagache, the Ideal Ego has sadomasochistic implications: in particular, hand in hand with Ideal Ego starting its formation, the negation of the Other, by the pair Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego, is correlative to the affirmation of Self, thus giving rise to opposite pair formation and to the next separation of their elements (consciousness process). Thus, following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), we have two basic Ego's psychic components, the one that observes (Ego's Ideal

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[42] Which might be considered as forming the first precursor of an opposite pair (or else the source of any other possible philosophical pair), which will play a fundamental role in the dialectic reasoning, as already stated above.

– Super-Ego) and the other that is observed (Ideal Ego[43]). Human psychic behaviour will be the dialectic result of the concomitant action of these two opposite and inseparable, but independent from each other, Ego's (sub)agencies, hence by the prevalence of one of these two upon the remaining one. There is, however, always dialectic interaction[44] between them. Freud put this splitting mechanism at the psychodynamic basis of psychoses and other disorders (including neuroses), justifying the assumption of such a mechanism as one of the main dynamic processes of psychic formation, which basically allows us to relate ourselves to reality. In short, the basic opposition between the (narcissistic) Ideal Ego and the (social) Ego's Ideal is the early source of any further dialectic process. Furthermore, within the Lacanian work, disavowal has been the first psychic mechanism involved in a complex epistemological evolution that reached the composite notion of *forclusion* which lies at the basis of the celebrated binomial *O/o* (that is, *discourse of the Other* versus *discourse of the other*) that Lacan derives from the previous binomial Ideal Ego/Ego's Ideal. As mentioned above, these two Ego's components are not present in the Freudian thought, which introduced only the notion of Ego's Ideal and to which was brought back then the notion of Super-Ego. The history of the pair Ideal Ego-Ego's Ideal has undergone quite a hard-working evolutionary history. Following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), Freud introduced the notion of Ego's Ideal in *On Narcissism. An Introduction* (of 1914) to indicate an agency as resulting from the convergence of infantile narcissism and omnipotence (which will form the idealizations of the Ego) and the parental (hence social) agencies and identifications; later, first in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (of 1921), then in *The Id and the Ego* (of 1923), the Ego's Ideal was identified with the Super-Ego agency, whose function is put in the foreground in the formation of critical sense, of prohibition and self-observation agencies and of interpersonal relations. Nevertheless, the psychoanalytic literature identifies a certain difference between the Super-Ego agency and the Ego's Ideal one even if they overlap one another somewhat. The system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego is, however, related to social and prohibition agencies as well as to self-observation, moral and critical functions, even if there is no unanimous consensus in the respective attribution of these. As early as *On Narcissism. An Introduction* (of 1914) Freud used the term *Ideal Ego* but substantially as synonymous with Ego's Ideal. These subagencies would be retaken by H. Nunberg in 1932 (of which we will outline some related ideas in the next subsection) and, in 1958, by D. Lagache, who indentifies a main opposition between the Ideal Ego and the system Ego's Ideal-Super-Ego. According to Lagache, the Ideal Ego has a narcissistic character of omnipotence which is mainly due to a primary

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[43] These two Ego's agencies, as the results of an intrasystemic agency separation (the Ego's splitting), play a fundamental role in Lacan's theoretical framework. We would also want to suggest the hypothesis according to which the first bodily Ego formations (the first ones that have external reality's preconscious apprehension), and from which will form the Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego agency system, might have their neurobiological counterpart in the *mirror neuron* systems or however related with them. For instance, the latter are compromised in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) (see Perkins, et al., 2010). Following Ritvo and Provence (1954), children with ASDs show disturbances in the area of human-object relations, relations with toys and playthings, mobility patterns and language, and all this will turn out to be coherent with what we will say later about the bodily image formation and its impairments. In any case, these systems will surely play a basic role in the formation of Ideal Ego agency as it has been defined above.

[44] Which is not present in psychoses.

identification with the mother; it is irreducible to the Ego's Ideal agency, and its formation has sadomasochistic implications, including the negation of the Other in correlation to the affirmation of Self, on the basis of the main opposition between the Ideal Ego and the Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego system. But, following Roudinesco (1995), it was Jacques Lacan that, in 1954, without quoting Nunberg, in his own way considered these two Ego subagencies as distinct from each other, putting them at the foundation of his theoretical framework, highlighting their relevant nature and function. The Ideal Ego is a narcissistic formation belonging to the imaginary register and formed during the *mirror stage* (theorized by Lacan in 1936), whereas the Ego's Ideal refers to a symbolic function that is able to organize the set of the relationships of the subject with others. The institution of the dualism *O/o* is therefore a consequence of the establishment of the dualism *Ego's Ideal/Ideal Ego*. In this system, Lacan laid out the celebrated Lévi-Straussian splitting from nature to culture operated by universal incest prohibition because this allowed Lacan to conceive a basic opposition between the *symbolic function* of the *Father* (corresponding to the Ego's Ideal or to the Other), representing the culture and incarnation of the law, and the *imaginary position* of the *Mother* (from whom derives the Ideal Ego or the other), depending on the order of Nature and destined to merge with the child meant as the phallic object of a missing penis. It is thanks to the mirror stage that the Œdipus phase starts, in such a manner that, through the paternal metaphor (*name-of-the-father*), the child is separated from the mother, giving rise to the Ego's Ideal formation. Therefore, it is just by *naming* the missing mother penis – that is to say, the child – by means of the paternal metaphor (the *phallus*) that the *symbolic register* takes place (Ego's Ideal or Other or signifier), which is related to a secondary process, through disengaging from the *imaginary register* (the Ideal Ego or other or signified), which is strictly related to the primary process. The consequent *lack of being*, due to this disengaging from the mother womb,[45] creates, amongst other things, the unsatisfiable *desire* of the *other* of the imaginary order which will try to be satisfied with other maternal substitutes that she or he will find in the symbolic order of the *Other*. The symbolic register will allow her or himself to be perceived and recognized from the Ideal Ego to the Ego's Ideal, that is to say, through the symbol, whose notion starts from C. Lévi-Strauss and F. de Saussure's structuralistic theories. However, for Lacan, what is fundamentally important is the signifier structure of the symbolic order and not the link of symbol with the symbolized (or signified), which concerns with the imaginary order, as in Freud.

An outline of Hermann Nunberg's Ego's psychology

The little-known work of Hermann Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975) contains a great number of new ideas and insights on psychoanalysis besides being one of the most important

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[45] Just at this point occurs the *forclusion*, a specific Lacanian splitting mechanism based on reality's *rejection* (*Verwerfung*) and derived both from the Freudian *spaltung* and from Laforgue and Pichon-Rivière's *scotomization*. This mechanism roughly consists in the primordial rejection of a fundamental signifier (the name-of-the-father, hence the symbolic phallus) out of the symbolic register of the subject, so giving rise to a psychotic state. Therefore, the (symbolic) phallus is a cornerstone of Lacanian theory basically because it is the primordial symbol to enter into the symbolic order. Hence, also in the Lacan theory of the symbolic, the phallus, with related castration phenomena, plays a fundamental role (see Recalcati, 2003).

treatises[46] on orthodox psychoanalytic theory, as remembered by Freud himself in his preface to this work. For our purposes, we only recall here some points of his work which may have some usefulness for what is expounded here. For instance, in Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975), a clear and complete discussion of Ego psychology is presented, of which we here outline those main points that are useful for our studies. In it, the primary role of bodily Ego is highlighted, understood as the first central core around which will revolve and build up all the following representations. The perception is the first and basic element for establishing the *reality exam* which develops with great slowness but on which will depend all the following psychic formation. The Ego will accomplish both internal and external requests, with a suitable right energy distribution. According to Nunberg, the Ego initially is in an unorganized phase within the Id, whose delimitation identifies a subagency called *Ideal Ego*, which has a full narcissistic and omnipotent character turned only toward the satisfaction of the own needs.[47] During the psychic development, this subagency gradually leaves its role in place of the other rising subagency called the *Ego's Ideal*, even if, particularly in psychotic states, the individual intends to come back to the Ideal Ego when fantasies of "coming back to the maternal womb" predominate. Children and schizophrenics have great difficulty in disengaging from their strong narcissistic and omnipotent Ideal Ego which has an unconscious nature and is ruled by the principle of pleasure, trying to satisfy every need also in a hallucinatory manner in case of non-immediate satisfaction. Hence, the main defence mechanisms of Ideal Ego are negation, projection and hallucination to avoid any unpleasantness. Nevertheless, in normality, it is not always possible to disregard the reality, thus giving rise to the formation of the reality principle, which is often mediated by the thought. Between the perception of reality and the action adapted to the perceived reality gradually the thought is inserted, which prepares the action, eventually substituting it. The judgment function of *negation*, according to Freud, is the first transition step from ignorance to recognition. To be precise, recognition takes place thanks to a state of spiritual protection which seeks stimuli from the external world which, in turn, will be apperceived and accepted by the Ego. Therefore, recognition undergoes the influx of impulses which are aimed at establishing a link with the external world and its objects, drawing its energy from life instincts. Ignorance, instead, comes from a state which feels the stimuli of the external world as unpleasant, so perturbing the ever desiderated quite. Thus, the Ego definitively closes the perceptive system against them. Negation, instead, takes a further step, in the sense that it recognizes what is unpleasant, and, at the same time, eliminates, expels and annihilates (in the unconscious) all that. Ignorance and negation are energetically supported by death instincts. Therefore, the relationships between the external and internal world are ruled by the interplay between life and death instincts by means of the own bodily image and its borders. The gradual adaptation to reality takes place to inhibit the aggressiveness (Thanatos) through life instincts (Eros) which provide energy for libidinal investments of the first object relationships. In this regard, Nunberg considers the depersonalization states and schizophrenia as patterns to infer as a reality sense starts to form. In pursuing this, as we will see, the last 1938 Freudian thought seems to be re-evoked. In both cases, there is a retirement of libido from the lost-love object to which are also associated the world's destruction feelings with related aggressiveness tendencies that Nunberg attributes to the anxieties of

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[46] Together the well-known treatise of O. Fenichel (1945).

[47] Subsequently, D. Lagache will bring back this subagency to the maternal predominance or to the phallic mother. He brings back to it possible delinquent behaviours.

castration. Furthermore, in these pathological cases, Nunberg detected a certain increase of narcissistic components that he would want to bring back to an identification of the Ego with the phallus due to the retirement of the libidinal cathexis from objects to the Ego, with consequent loss of the reality sense. Therefore, Nunberg deduces two main consequences: first, that the recognition of reality takes place thanks to a certain capacity of the Ego to turn the libido toward external objects; second, that there is a component of the Ego that does not want to recognize the perceived reality, notwithstanding this is just perceived. It seems that this part of the Ego does not want to know of the perceptions, notwithstanding these are rightly perceived. And the remaining perceiving part of the Ego seems as well to be suffering from this denial. Therefore, there are two subagencies of the Ego, one that perceives and acts, the other that judges the Ego's experiences which need to be approved in order that these may have a sense of reality. This might explain why it is immoral to deny the reality and not instead say the truth. Thus, Nunberg deepens this self-observing and critical agency of Ego which is located in the preconscious system. The first bodily Ego's percepts will be undergone to the critical and observational modalities of the Ego. They will be recognized or denied according to modalities which have no sensorial character and are absent in schizophrenic patients where a deep self-observation prevails, but not over percepts of the external world. In normality, the perceiving and self-observing Ego's subagencies harmonically and constructively co-operate with the critical one; often, these two Ego's subagencies are not easily distinguishable inasmuch as they overlap with one another, becoming quite differentiated or separated only when a conflict arises between them. These critical and self-observing agencies will form the substrate to the next merely psychic *Super-Ego* agency, which will reach its most complete formation with the end of the Œdipus complex. The Super-Ego will begin to intervene between the Id and the narcissistic Ideal Ego agencies, making itself bearer of the social and reality agencies; it will be the result of successive identifications but, in turn, it is also susceptible to influences from the first ones. Nevertheless, this mediation role is often failed by the Super-Ego because of its extreme difficulty in conciliating the Id and Ideal Ego agencies. Nevertheless, Nunberg highlights that both life and death instincts contribute to determining the structure of the Super-Ego. To be precise, its structure mainly stems from the inhibition of immediate instinctual satisfaction to account for reality needs, and this may take place both from death and life instincts. The death instincts concur to determine such an inhibition of the rigid, prohibitive and authoritarian structure of the Super-Ego, whereas the life instincts concur to determine another particular structure classified as *Ego's Ideal*, which is carried out as follows. When, for love,[48] one gives in to an instinctual satisfaction for fear of losing a loved object, the latter will be taken on into the Ego domain and cathexed by the libido, so becoming a part of Ego which will be called *Ego's Ideal*. It is for love of her or his own ideal that the individual remains emotionally bound to it and undergoes to its requests. So, the Ego obeys both the Super-Ego for fear of a punishment and Ego's Ideal for love. This last love is not sexual because it is the outcome of a transformation of an object libido into an Ego's libido, so that a desexualization takes place, that is to say, a sublimation,[49] so that the narcissism of Ego's Ideal has a *secondary* nature (because it is linked to a secondary process), while that of the Ideal Ego is a narcissism having a primary nature. According to Nunberg, the system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego provides the

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[48]   Here, when one speaks of love, we refer to the wider general sense of this term, not only to the sensual one.

[49] Subsequently, J. Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985) identified various possible outcomes for the Ego's Ideal, perverse as well as creative.

representation of the external world to the Ego. Therefore, instinctual renunciations may take place either for hate or for fear of a punishment and for love, so that the dual system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego is characterized by an ambiguous or ambivalent nature moulded on the fundamentally opposite love-hate pair. Nunberg puts in evidences the historical evolution of these notions since the Freudian work: indeed, as stated above, Freud mainly conceived the Ego's Ideal as being synonymous with Super-Ego, hence pointing out its prohibitive agencies and not the loving aspects. Instead, Nunberg retook the system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego and deepened the distinction between these two agencies, although it is very difficult to descry a net distinction between them. According to Nunberg, the Ego's Ideal has mainly a maternal libido, while the Super-Ego has mainly a paternal libido, even if there is a certain merger of both. The Ego's Ideal, due to its mainly maternal nature, starts to form from pregenital phases, while the Super-Ego, due to its mainly paternal nature, starts to form during the genital phase because of the castration fear which puts at risk the whole Ego due to its genital identification. The Super-Ego is responsible for the sense of guilt, while the Ego's Ideal is responsible for the sense of inferiority. Nunberg stresses the complexity of the system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego, the first subagency being provided by life instincts and characterized by a prevalence of love while the second subagency is underpinned by death instincts and mainly ruled by severity, austerity and by a general asceticism just to stem these destructive instincts. The internal structure of this system is quite complex and variously subdivided into itself, with continuous oscillations from one component to another: for agency, in certain cases the more severe Super-Ego may prevail, in others the rather milder Ego's Ideal may prevail. The Ego will therefore accomplish control, mediation and synthetic functions in regard to the various requests coming from all these agencies, namely the Id, Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego and Ideal Ego, which are mostly in opposition with each other.

On fetishism: first outlines

From the epistemological viewpoint, Freud reached the conception of an Ego's splitting by studying a particular psychopathological model, that of fetishism. This is mainly meant to be a male perversion in which there is no recognition of the female penile lack since this is a fact that, if it were denied, would turn out to be potentially anxiogenic because of the castration complex which is experienced by most people (due to its universal character, as recalled above). He (or she[50]) therefore recuses his (or her) own sensorial perception[51] which has shown to him (or her) that the female genital apparatus lacks a penis, firmly keeping to the opposite conviction. Nevertheless, this denied perception does not remain without any psychic consequence since he (or she) does not have the courage, or the dishonesty, to affirm seeing a penis, unless he (or she) stays in a psychotic state. Thus, to compensate for this, he (or she) either turns towards a further general *symbolic elaboration*[52] (as in most normal cases) or clings to something more material, like a part of the body or an object to which he (or she) ascribes the penis role or

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[50] We have intentionally given precedence to males over females because these phenomena mainly concern the former, although not exclusively. Only for this reason have we put the female third person individual pronoun "she" within brackets.

[51] Which still turns out to be not compromised.

[52] Considering this in the general framework describing the crucial passage from nature to culture, that is to say, we regard the symbolic function as the main landmark of this. Sublimation therefore has to be meant as a consequence of it.

considers it to be acting as a material symbolic replacement for this. All that (*fetish creation*) is due to the fact that he (or she) does not admit this lack of a penis, notwithstanding the evidence thereof. However, Freud (1938, 1949, 1999) himself pointed out that this fetish creation does not provide the exact paradigm of the Ego's splitting mechanism, since the former belongs to the proper psychopathological context whereas the castration complex, with its possible effects (including this Ego splitting), basically concerns normality – that is to say, it concerns every human being, as we shall see later – but without excluding possible pathological degenerations (just like in fetishism). Subsequently, Freud was led to consider disavowal (as already seen, essentially based on castration anxiety) as concerning, in pathological cases, the full recusation of external reality by the psychotic, as opposed to the repression carried out by the neurotic. Indeed, the former completely recuses the external reality (due to a structural deficit of the pair Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego), whereas the latter removes the (internal) Es' needs. In the first case, as already said, we have an Ego splitting (with a complete prevalence of the narcissistic Ideal Ego) that is different from other splitting phenomena due to the neurotic repression, because the latter concerns an internal conflict between two distinct agencies, the Ego against the Es, in regard to an internal (and not external) reality. Hence, only the former has some relationship with the external world, and Freud put it at the source of every other form of disavowal of reality that yet may be symbolically reconceived or rebuilt up. Thus, disavowal mainly has to do with primary relationships between these two Ego's subagencies, the Ideal Ego and the Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego, due to the above-mentioned Ego splitting.[53]

On negation, fetishism and linguistics

First linguistic implications

Following Galimberti (2006), negation (*Verneinung*) has to do with the conscious emersion of repressed material in a negative form in respect of that presented at the moment in which such a content was repressed. Hence, through negation, which is a mechanism laying out into the class of repression phenomena, it will be possible to make conscious a repressed content. Freud introduced such a notion in 1925, distinguishing it from that of disavowal but with which it has close relations. Indeed, according to Thass-Thienemann (1967), a strict correlation exists between grammatical negations and the Freudian concept of disavowal discussed above. After a detailed historic-epistemological comparative analysis of various grammatical negation terms, according to Thass-Thienemann, their negativistic character subtends an anal aggressive element, in which it is possible to descry the verbal expression of one of the greatest events of the child emotive-affective development, namely that concerning the discovery of sexual differences,[54] with all the correlated intense anxious emotive charges which will be at the energetic basis for the incipiency of other basic psychodynamic mechanisms, like that of repression and disavowal.[55] The author, in this regard, quotes the almost universally

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[53] Which is a mechanism in some respects quite similar to the above-mentioned *scotomization* of E. Pichon-Rivière and R. Laforgue (see Rycroft, 1968a).

[54] It's not by chance that the common language of children (and not only them) is full of references to genital organs.

[55] Which will become operative in the subsequent phallic phase. In this regard, therefore, it is noteworthy to highlight this strict and fundamental link between the

known stories and tales whose *leitmotiv* are goblins, or little spirits, which often disappear in such a way that it is impossible to establish whether they are present or not. Since a little goblin is clearly a phallic symbol, all that means that sometimes the little penis is missing and at other times it is present, reflecting the primeval infantile observation experienced by a child in noting gender anatomical differences. We are at the border between the anal phase and the phallic one. Therefore, this *being-there* and *not-being-there* (and that, in part, recalls M. Heidegger's thought) correspond to the first child fantasies in observing this, which thereafter will unconsciously mould the fantasies of verbal negation. This duality between 'being-there' and 'not-being-there' has also been one of the main themes of Soren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger's philosophies, whose ontological theories of *nothing* are at the basis of *existential anguish* as a human response to *nothing*. Again according to Thass-Thienemann, there is not much difference between the metaphysical interpretation of anguish and the metapsychological one. But the latter is but the castration anxiety due, as already said, to the ascertainment of the female penile lack, so that, in conclusion, the *philosophical nothing* is but the abstract elaboration of the "nothing" perceived during the childhood in the moment of seeing the related gender anatomical differences, that is to say, the bewilderment, the astonishment and the disbelief of a child before the "nothing" of a woman (in seeing her genital setting); however, this appreciable, even if little known, work of Thass-Thienemann on negation will receive further confirmation later. On the other hand, following Nunberg (1975), the language originates from sexual instincts (as stated by H. Sperber) as well as being a substitute for actions having a desexualized meaning, so that it is the result of a sublimation process which has taken place in the first phases of psychosexual development. Nunberg recalls a fact drawn from the autobiography of the Russian writer and dramatist Maksim Gor'kij (1868-1936) who wrote that, after having taught a farmer to read, the latter exclaimed that he was astonished by the possibility that a thing, while not being there, it is as if was there.

Other linguistic implications

Taking into account what has been said above, the Freudian psychosexual development may play a central role in the foundation and behaviour of a certain primary *psychic grammar* on the basis of the above oppositions which seem to develop during the passage from the anal phase to the phallic one, thanks to the action of the disavowal mechanism. The linguistic function is one of the main symbolic systems of communication amongst human beings. It takes place during and parallel to the specific phases of Freudian psychosexual development herein considered. In this framework, two main basic rules can be identified, namely:

a) Separation of opposites. As we know, in the unconscious domain prevails a *symmetric principle* (see the work of I. Matte Blanco, briefly recalled in Iurato (2013) through which a statement with its negation may be valid. Within it, it is not possible to have a distinction between the elements of an opposite pair, so that, for example, there is no distinction between "I" and "not-I" (or Me and not-Me). Following Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), Freud, for the first time, spoke of opposites in regard to perversions in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (of 1905), stating that some of these take place through pairs of opposites, and this fact has a great importance from the theoretical

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anal phase and the subsequent one, the phallic phase, in which a unification of the previous partial instincts will take place under the control of genital organs.

viewpoint. From here on, the notion will be present almost everywhere in all of Freud's work. The opposite elements of such a pair are irreducible each to the other, thus giving rise to a psychic conflict which will be overcome only through a dialectic process. With the separation of the primary opposite elements (I, not-I), through the Ego's splitting (from the disavowal mechanism), it will then be possible to attain the first rudiments of otherness, with the formation of "you", "he" and "she". These are the first steps towards the formation of the own identity in respect to the otherness. In doing so, the *identity* and *symmetric principles* take place, which are two elementary principles of Aristotelian logic. To be precise, the main elementary Boolean logic operators, upon which relies elementary logic, are conjugation, negation, disjunction, material implication and biconditional implication. Nevertheless, C.S. Peirce proved that all five of these operators can be derived from only two primitives, namely conjugation and negation (see Akhtar and O'Neil, 2011; and references therein).

b) Symbolic formation. After the separation of opposites, in the unconscious realm, a dialectic synthesis of their dynamic opposition can be attained through symbolic elaboration. For instance, from the previous opposition process, it is possible to have identifications[56] of the type "not-penis = vagina" and "vagina = castration" (the vagina's emptiness being the result of a castration and therefore inducing a consequent castration anxiety), from which it follows the very crucial painful identification "not-penis = castration", which is what is effectively observed during the passage from the anal to the phallic phase, until the Œdipus complex. Hence, if this last concatenation process takes place, then the achievement of the *transitivity principle* is possible. On the other hand, that the penis and the vagina might form a primordial opposite pair is simply due to the opposed anatomic-geometrical constitution. Then, within Lacan's framework, the phallus, as the main signifier which will distribute the various signified, institutes a first difference between have or not have, which will constitute the first primordial step from the imaginary order to the symbolic one.

In particular, from the conclusion given by the last pivotal identification "not-penis = castration", a certain more or less strong anxiety follows (of castration, stronger in males for obvious reasons) whose consequent affective-emotive energetic charge must be cathexed to avoid such an anguish. From here, the disavowal mechanism starts to operate in its stronger action. Therefore, the possible solutions are mainly twofold: a fetishistic (material) degeneration or a symbolic elaboration, both of which are oriented to desperately find such a penis lacking in females. In normal cases, the symbolic elaboration is the first step towards the institution of every other following human symbolic process. *En passant*, we observe that the above *a)* and *b)* processes are at the early origins of the elementary logical thought (in its Aristotelian form): indeed, from them follow the *identity*, *symmetry* and *transitivity principles* by which, in turn, follows dialectic reasoning,[57] through the building up of the *naïve set theory* in its Boolean form, thus obtaining the elementary *propositional algebra* of Aristotelian logic (see Iurato, 2013). On the other hand, following Greenacre (1971), the fetish represents the substitute for the maternal phallus in which the child had first believed and which he (or she) does not want to renounce, keeping, therefore, his (or her) initial idea thanks to the fetish, at

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[56] Such identifications are now possible through the action of the previous separation process thanks to which an identity principle is available. From it, the identification and discrimination processes are functional to their aims.

[57] See Lombardo Radice (1965).

the cost of a violent denial of reality. The fetish is the symbol of triumph at the threat of castration and a protection from it. According to Freud, fetishists have a sort of double image of female castration, that is to say, the fetish, at the same time, denies and affirms the existence of castration, thus giving rise to opposite attitudes. Therefore, the symbol (that is to say, the fetish) is usually what may reunite in itself (or put together) the opposites, in line with the original etymological meaning of symbol and with what has been said at points *a)* and *b)*. This is what Freud himself claims, to confirm what we have said above. Subsequently Freud focused his attention on fetishism in relation to the reality sense and to the Ego's splitting, as we have outlined above. Indeed, the castration anxiety gives rise to a conflict between the instinctual demand (due to the pleasure principle) and the reality domain, in which the child does not want to renounce the gratification but at the same time he (or she) does not deny the reality, inducing two opposite reactions which will be at the centre of the next Ego's splitting. This is the early origin of dialectic reasoning. According to R. C. Bak, the symbolic meaning of fetish is due to condensation processes put in place during pregental phases (namely, the phallic and Œdipus ones). Again according to Greenacre (1971), the fetish is the key to a hesitant genitality. It should satisfy stability, visibility and tangibility requirements, as well as be able to symbolize the penis and its opposite (whence *a)*). Then in Greenacre (1971), the reverential fear reactions in childhood mainly start at the end of the Œdipus phase as a result of the previous strong penis reverential awe during the phallic phase which implies, at the same time, fear and admiration of the penis itself. These contrasting phallic images often remain in adult life, and might be put into relation with what is said in the above point *a)*. These last discussions are also linkable with creative attitudes, as we will see later. Hermann[58] (1989) gives a psychoanalytic explanation of the above-mentioned basic logic principles on the basis of the Œdipus complex. But, on the basis of his clinical case, Hermann also introduced another psychic mechanism, called *dual procedure*, that he wanted to bring back to the castration anxiety and that will provide every dualistic feature of thought. Hermann puts it at the basis of his framework, even trying to explain the Œdipus complex through it. On the other hand, Hermann himself states that the logical thought comes from a pre-existent primitive thought that he calls *totemic mentality*, that is to say, he wants to consider a totemic origin of logical thought, so that the latter has a substantial fetishistic nature.

On embodied linguistics

On the basis of the previous work of I. Matte Blanco on the inextricable relationships between symmetric and asymmetric thought (which comprise those related to emotion and rational thought), the analysis of the relationships between primordial thought language (like those experienced in altered states of consciousness) and cognitive linguistic features (like syntactic structures and creativity), as discussed in Cariola (2012), show what primary role the body boundary awareness elements have in primary conscious acts, like the right perception and usage of space-time categories and those regarding the right separation between Me and not-Me, the latter playing a fundamental role in consciousness development, as Freud himself stated. As regards, then, what is said at point *a)*, a further confirmation that separation of opposites takes place during the passage from the phallic phase to the Œdipus one comes from Cuccio (2011, 2012) and references therein, where, essentially, it is said that the first forms of linguistic negation are acquired between two and a half years old and three years old, and that these play a

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[58] The original paper dates back to 1924.

very basic role in human cognitive development. We textually report what is said in Cuccio (2011, p. 48), namely:

By looking at first-language learning in infancy, we can see […] three steps in the acquisition of linguistic negation: 1) rejection/refusal; 2) disappearance/non-existence/unfulfilled expectation; 3) denial. According to many studies, […] rejection is the first category of negation to be acquired. Children use "no" to express refusal of something existing in their present context. However, we can find examples of rejection in human pre-linguistic gestures and even in animal behaviour. In fact, before the time children start to produce the single word "no" to express rejection, they have already expressed rejection non-linguistically. Rejection […] does not require abstract mental representations, while non-existence and denial do require them. The second category of linguistic negation to arise is non-existence/unfulfilled expectation. At this point, children are able to signal the absence or disappearance of an expected referent in the context of speech or indicate something that violates their expectations, based on previous experience (for instance, malfunctioning toys). Lastly, the third category to be acquired is denial. Denial implies negation of a predication. The referent is usually symbolically expressed. […] To deny, children must have the ability to discern between their own knowledge of the world and the knowledge of their listener. In order to deny a sentence, children have to manage with two propositions, one affirming and one negating the same predication; and they have to ascribe one of them to the person they are speaking to. "To deny the truth of another person's statement entails the understanding that the other person may hold different beliefs, or that language is itself a representation of reality, not reality itself" [...]. Denial is usually acquired by the age of two and a half years. […] Categories of negation are acquired according to the complexity of the inferences that they entail. At the beginning,

children are only able to make inferences about the present perceptual situation. Thus, at first, children can only negate (rejecting, prohibiting or expressing non-existence) something currently present in the perceptual context of speech or something that just before was present in the speech context. Later on, as children start to express denial, they become able to read their listener presuppositions. At this time, children rely both on perceptual and pragmatic context.

It is clearly possible to establish parallels between the non-existence and denial processes of the above and the disavowal mechanism which we have considered. According to Cuccio (2011), negation is a typical universal future of human language and there is no known animal communication system that has negation. The acquisition of linguistic negation is a fundamental step in human cognitive development. Following Cuccio (2011, p. 47):

Many studies carried out during these last decades have been looking at the acquisition of negation in first-language learning […]. All of them seem to agree on the opinion that the acquisition of linguistic negation is a fundamental step in cognitive development. According to Spitz (1957), the ability "to say no" is the most important achievement of first infancy. In fact, by saying "no" children, for the first time, are symbolically expressing an abstract concept (see D'Aniello, 1989; Spitz, 1957). The use of negation requires complex cognitive abilities. As psycholinguistic research has shown, in order to use negation children need to know the difference between their own mental representations and the external world; they need to know the difference between their own mental representations and the mental representations of the person they are speaking to; moreover, in complex forms of negation, children cannot entirely rely on a present perceptual scene but instead they need to manage their listeners' beliefs and other epistemic states. Thus, although the expression of negation is acquired very early in infancy (before children learn to talk, in fact prelinguistic infants can reject something by using gestures or by shaking their

head), negation is all but cognitively simple. Of course, linguistic negation is far more complex than its non-linguistic expression; still "no" is acquired very early on, being one of the first words in language acquisition. Psycholinguists have been identifying the different semantic categories of negation that emerge during cognitive and linguistic development. The number of these categories increases or decreases depending on the criteria of classification adopted in each study. However, although there is not a general agreement, we will see that the functions and the order of appearance in these studies are roughly the same.

On the other hand, linguistic negation is a metalinguistic operator because it cannot be referentially used, and this is a remarkable fact for the development of consciousness because, amongst other things, this operator entails a second-order mental representation. Finally, following Cuccio (2011), it has been observed that ASD subjects are unable to use a correct linguistic negation, coherently with what will be said in the following Part 2. Thereafter, in Cuccio (2012), interesting relations between embodiment and linguistic functions are highlighted on the basis of the prominent discovery of the mirror neuron system which has given scientific proof that language and cognition are embodied. We now follow Cuccio (2012, p. 2) (who, in part, revisits what is said in her previous 2011 work):

According to many studies [...] rejection is the first category of negation to be acquired. Children use "no" to express refusal of something existing in their present context. Before the time children start to produce the single word "no" to express rejection, they have already expressed rejection non-linguistically. Rejection [...] does not require abstract mental representations, while non-existence and denial do require them. The second category of linguistic negation to arise is non-existence/unfulfilled expectation. At this point, children are able to signal the absence or disappearance of an expected referent in the context of speech or to indicate something that violates their expectations, based on previous experience (for instance, malfunctioning toys). Lastly, the third category to be acquired is denial. Denial implies negation of a predication. The referent is usually symbolically expressed. [...] To deny children

must have the ability to discern between their own knowledge of the world and the

knowledge of their listener. In order to deny a sentence, children have to deal with two

propositions, one affirming and one negating the same predication; and they have to

ascribe one of these to the person they are speaking to. To deny the truth of another

person's statement entails the understanding that the other person may hold different

beliefs, or that language is itself a representation of reality, not reality itself […].

Denial is usually acquired by the age of two and a half years.

Clearly, there are many interesting points which lend themselves to being explained by means of what is proposed in this paper and that might be the aim of a further in-depth study. The importance of negation in logic and in all scientific inquiry is also reconfirmed by B.E. Litowitz in Akhtar and O'Neil (2011), where a complete and in-depth review of the already made psycholinguistic researches on rejection, refusal and denial[59] is presented in the light of psychoanalytic perspectives. To these last linguistic arguments, namely of the possible explanatory potential which might have the theoretical pattern here considered and based on the disavowal mechanism (considered to be a general psychodynamic mechanism), it will therefore be necessary to return later.

Other post-Freudian perspectives on fetishism

A general historical account

According to Resnik (1979), at the basis of symbolization lies the aware depressive[60] elaboration of *absence* as a model of the expression of a lack, or loss, due to a traumatic separation (like the mother-child one), where the symbol phenomenologically arises as a new and indirect presence to fill up the *not-being* of the absence, taking the original object's place. According to Fenichel (1945), fetishism necessarily implies some form of Ego's splitting because of the attempt to unconsciously disavow (by Ego's Ideal) a (painful) truth at the same time recognized by the conscious part of the individual's personality (by the Ideal Ego). Furthermore, we agree with the statement of Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) according to whom, due to its basic characteristics of having fundamental relationships with the external reality, it is assumed that disavowal is a primary founding dynamic process of the human psychic reality rather than a simple defence mechanism related to a specific perceptive fact (A. Freud). Moreover, this last claim is based on the the Jacques Lacan *symbolic* register (whose valuable work will deserve further consideration), as already said. In particular, the theoretical framework of this author takes into consideration the general linguistic structure in the form given by R. Jakobson, in which, roughly speaking, the language is articulated on the two axes of the *presence* (syntagmatic level) and of the *absence* (paradigmatic level), that is to say, according to the rhetorical figures respectively of the *metaphor* (by condensation) and

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[59] Which are the three main negation operators of linguistics.
[60] In the Melanie Klein sense.

metonymy (by displacement). And the fetish[61] formation, in its symbolic and material nature, just accomplishes to these. As we shall see, the above evaluations of Resnik will be in full agreement with the notions which will be later exposed. According to Alexander (1948), the origins of the notion of fetishism are particularly intricate. The first interpretations of fetishism date back to Alfred Binet and Richard von Krafft-Ebing in the 1870s, which were retaken later by Freud himself who pointed out, above all, the symbolic meaning of the fetish object, and according to whom this symbolically represents a sort of female penis that the child fantastically imagines to be owned by the woman too, to avoid the Œdipus castration anxiety. Then, according to Giberti and Rossi (1996), Ellenberger (1970) and Greenacre (1971), the fetish is but the symbolic representation of the phallus. Furthermore, Giberti and Rossi (1996) and Greenacre (1971) briefly recall the related ideas of some authors, including E. Glover, O. Fenichel, P. Bergman, J. Harnik, E. Kronold, E. Vencovsky, S. Bonnett, S. Payne, M. Balint, W. H. Gillespie, R. C. Bak, P. Weissmann, M. Sperling, M. Wulff, E. Sterba, J. K. Friedjung, A. Z. Idelsohn, S. Lorand, P. Greenacre and others, according to whom the fetish (in its degenerate meaning) is a symbol of parts of the maternal body, used for the purpose of avoiding separation anxiety or to restore the integrity of the maternal body considered to be impaired or fragmented. Afterwards, J. Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985) made a deeper historic-epistemological recognition of the most important contributions to this argument, reaching the conclusion that the fetish, as a depository for all the partial object loss during human development, allows both the separation from the mother and the castration complex with its anxious implications to be avoided. The fetish shows displacement and condensation properties. The former are related to attempts to shift the strong energetic charge associated with castration anxieties and fears (as well as frustrations) in such a manner as to minimize them. The latter, on the other hand, are mainly correlated to attempts to reorganize that lost unity of a fragmented corporal image that characterizes fetishism (see later). In this regard, for instance, Wulff[62] reports some 1946 clinical cases of infantile fetishism in which the created fetish joined together in itself the various partial objects, again in accordance with the original meaning of the term "symbol". However, on general perversions and their history, see above all Khan Masud (1979) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985).

Some clinical data

As already mentioned above, Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) stressed the fact that the disavowal mechanism could be a fundamental and common psychic mechanism. This might find further clinical confirmation in what follows. First, Freud himself pointed out the polymorphously perverse nature of the child, a feature which potentially persists until the advent of the Œdipus complex (see Rycroft, 1968a) and roughly consisting in the interchange of various erotogenic zones amongst them. It is not clear at what point of childhood psychosexual development takes place such as a set of disorganized and polymorphic perverse states (from which will depart neuroses and perversions). But then, according to Giberti and Rossi (1996, p. 332), higher or lower degrees of fetishism are present at every age and in every person, as well as in certain life circumstances like in

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[61] It would be better to speak of a transitional object-infantile fetish entity (see later) instead of simple fetish.

[62] See also Greenacre (1971).

mourning and its elaboration (Kleinian depressive position[63]). Nunberg (1932, 1955, 1975), in discussing perversions, states that within certain limits, the deviation of the object from the final sexual aim is quite normal. Raphling (1989), in discussing a case of female fetishism, states that the clinical example analysed by him confirms the existence of fetishism in women and suggests that subtle forms of perversion may go unnoticed and be more prevalent than previously realized. Greenacre (1971) states that forms of sexual perversions are far from being rare. Furthermore, in Greenacre (1971), the author states that there exists a ubiquitous and not worrying childish fetishism, mainly based on the need for contact with the maternal body (D. W. Winnicott), which will be spontaneously rejected around three or four years old, but that might degenerate in pathological cases. Therefore, according to studies made by O. Stevenson, D. W. Winnicott and M. Wulff (see Greenacre, 1971) fetishistic phenomena are almost always normally present through the phenomenology of *transitional objects* which play a fundamental role in the constitution of reality and of object relations. In Greenacre (1971), the author discusses on some researches about the normal presence of a fetish phenomenology in childhood which will be spontaneously abandoned after the phallic-Œdipus period. In this regard, see Spiegel (1967), in which the author states that this fact is very frequent in baby boys and baby girls. Freud gives a great deal to the ascertainment of the lack of a penis in the mother which is almost ubiquitous in childhood (see Greenacre (1971) because it is related to the almost equally ubiquitous anatomic sexual difference awareness. According to Garzotto (1985), fetishism represents the psychopathological degeneration (paraphilia) of a normal psychic modality in a child, during whose development he (or she) replaces the above-mentioned primitive (body) fragments with their symbolic substitutes like, for example, games, dolls, teddies, Lego, and so on (according to Winnicott). This tendency, known by Solomon and Patch (1971) as *partialism*, to privilege portions of object, or fragments (*partial objects*), in place of the global or entire one (*total object*), is just the essence of fetishism. In regard to the set of these fragments, the adult fetishist develops a drive which has the modalities of adult sexuality even if he (or she) is not able to cathexis his (or her) drives on the sexual object considered in its totality since this would re-evoke an anxious situation related to his (or her) incapacity to experience an adult love. Hence, he (or she) is unable to develop a global or unified sense. Following Greenacre (1971), the bodily Ego starts to develop from the first four months of life hereafter, where fundamental integration processes of the various sensorial (above all visual and tactile) explorations take place to give rise to a corporal Self as separate from the external world. In this period, the presymbolic formation of a *transitional object* and related phenomena according to the 1953 D. W. Winnicott seminal work take place, thanks to which the transition from the oral phase relation with the mother to the first real object relations with the external world is possible, and that will form the so-called *transitional space*. Winnicott proves that the *childish fetish*, which is almost ubiquitous, is usually formed by a preferred transitional object like a toy or any other object which has to do with the external world. This is both a Me-object and a not-Me-object until the not-being-Me is fully accepted, thus allowing the separation of opposites (see above point *a)*). According to R. Löwenstein, the transitional object may start from the genitals as well as the breasts. It will be put, by the child, into relationships with the body to give rise to his (or her) corporal image which, in fetishists, is the arena where those fantasies and memories are represented as corporal images instead of thought images. These corporal representations are often cathexed by strong aggressive and libidinal charges. As a result of this,

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[63] In this regard, see Zetzel and Meissner (1977). Furthermore, bear this in mind when we later talk about the known Freudian work on the so-called *fort-da* game.

fetishistic behaviour is often followed by strong guilt (see Kaplan & Sadock, 1997), mostly due to threats of castration. Finally, Thomä and Kächele (1989, 1992) claim that in fetishism is manifested the higher human imagination, whose subsequent (fetishistic) symptom formation may depend on pre-Œdipus or Œdipus conflicts in which the fetish object is chosen. In its pathological form, it frequently starts in adolescence and mainly concerns the male sex, but also with cases related to the female sex in which it speaks of a *fetishist female* according to Solomon and Patch (1971) and Lalli (1999). In the end, according to Sarteschi and Maggini (1982), the fetish sometimes represents the phallus, at other times not, albeit, in these latter cases, the illusion of its presence is maintained. The fetishist's Ego, in accordance with the reality, admits that the female has no penis, but, notwithstanding this, he (or she) is deceived that she has at least one penis, the illusion being furnished by the fetish, which is the material substitute or surrogate of it. The fetish maintains the illusion of the phallus's presence, so that it can be both a mere symbol (as in normal cases) and a material surrogate (in degenerations). On the basis of clinical observations made on subjects who underwent psychoanalytic treatment, the fear of castration is brought back either to violent experiences (whick took place between two and four years of age) that the child has been a witness to or victim of, or to severe organic disorders, which, in any case, will determine a disharmonic structuration of the image of the own body. From this, strong anxiety follows due to the view of that "unexplainable otherwise" of the female. Finally, following Piscicelli (1994), a certain degree of "fetishistic overvaluation" is usually also present in every normal love relation. The pathological case takes place when the desire for the fetish replaces the drive destination and becomes the unique interesting sexual object for the individual.

Other perspectives on fetishism

According to Glover (1933, 1949), at the foundations of fetishism, it relies on the basic unconscious mechanism of displacement[64] through which genital interests and incestuous desires are degenerately displaced toward the upper or lower body parts. Above all he stressed the symbolic meaning of the fetish which may be various but with a prevalence for the phallic one, the latter being related to the presence of a female penis which, in a certain sense, is considered mysteriously hidden within the mother's body. This last fantasy has a universal character in infancy,[65] above all in male children, sometimes degenerating into paraphilia in adults, and with a regressive degeneration of genital Œdipus desires. According to Rosolato (1967, 1969) and Etchegoyen (1991), the fetish is the "counterpart of the subject's splitting", in the sense that the fetishist recognizes the castration but, because of his (or her) presentification of the *imago*[66] of the female penis, he (or she) imagines the one that does not exist. *D'après* Lacan, *presentification* is the other face of what is disowned. The fetish, according to Lacan, presentificates (or embodies) and, at the same time, veils the female penis. According to Rosolato, the fetish manifests itself as separated from its corporeal support but, at the same time, is also in metonymic continuity with the body[67] (*object fetish* in degenerate cases, or *symbol* in normal cases), and this is a fundamental consideration for our purposes because it is

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[64] According to Glover (1953,), the displacement mechanism is an unconscious process with great applicative potentialities, above all for the symbolic function.
[65] See Glover (1953).
[66] According to Freud, the *imago* is an unconscious object representation (see Rycroft, 1968).
[67] Through clothes, shoes, etc. in degenerate cases.

directly connected with the symbolic function when the degeneration into paraphilia does not take place. Due to this continuity, if the fetish is a metonymy, then it is also a metaphor for the mother's lack of a penis because the former represents (*presentificates*) the latter. Thus, the fetish's creation accomplishes both a metonymic function and a metaphoric one, with a prevalence of the former in degenerate cases and of the latter in normal cases. With this, we are at the beginnings of the *Lacanian symbolic* register which is based upon these last notions, as already said. In the Lacanian symbolic register, the two tropes[68] *metonymy* and *metaphor* are put, following Roman Jakobson, in correspondence respectively with *displacement* and *condensation*, which are the two main unconscious dynamic mechanisms of the primary process.[69] According to Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), human desire is primarily structured by an unconscious dynamic, being mainly expressed through metonymic processes. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the metonymic process is based, according to Jakobson, on displacement which can also be interpreted as a shift of unpleasant or painful sentiments from the distressing object (e.g. the female penis) to another (e.g. the fetish), thereby establishing a typical symbolic link. Furthermore, as we have repeatedly said above, the fetish (symbolic or material) is the result of a displacement of the strong castration anxiety, which D. W. Winnicott puts in close relationship with the transitional object to establish the first forms of object relations. Finally, we outline R. M. Khan Masud's (1979) ideas on perversions. According to him, perversions are the result of an *idolization* of an external real object which is characterized by an overcathexis. This idolization occurs in place of any form of symbolization or imagination which are the normal alternatives to degeneration when the transitional object-infantile fetish phase (see later) is declining. Khan Masud noted an absence of transitional objects and toys in the childhood of perverts, which is also typified by the absence of any form of initiative. In every pervert, Khan Masud also detected a deficiency of elaboration of corporal experiences in psychic fantasies. Their fantastic elaborations are trivial and repetitive, so that their creative abilities are very poor. In perversions, there is a bad and incomplete separation of the opposite elements of Me and not-Me, so that there is not a complete separation between the external and internal reality sense. Khan Masud then identifies an intrinsic deficiency of the pervert to focalize and tune their emotions during the institution of any object relationship both intrapsychic and external. It is a typical feature of the pervert's object relation which Anna Freud (1937) brings back to a pervert's incapacity to love and to a great fear of emotions. On this Ego's disability to support a suitable cathexis of an external object or of its internal representatives (internal objects as outcomes of symbolization or imagination) relies the main feature of the pervert's object relations. Khan Masud brings back these inabilities to an early defect of the ability of the (bodily) Ego to perform integration processes, in turn due to a bad mother-child relation. And this will be confirmed many times by other authors (above all, by P. Greenacre), as we will see later.

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[68] *En passant*, we recall that metonymy and metaphor belong to the subcategory of tropes, this being included in the category of grammatical figures, in turn falling into the wider one of discourse (or rhetoric) figures. According to Roman Jakobson, such tropes are the two fundamental poles around which all languages revolve.

[69] See Part 2 of this paper.

Fetishism in the culture

Other paradigms on fetishism besides the Freudian one have been formulated, like those of Charles de Brosses, August Comte, Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx: in this regard, for a brief account of these, see, for instance, Valeri (1979), Màdera (1977) and Galimberti (2006). Taking these into account, together with the Freudian one, it is possible to identify a common point amongst them. To be precise, the one according to which the fetish[70] is conceived as an object[71] formed by a contradictory relationship with the reality, or rather that gives, yes, a fictitious representation of reality but that makes a true representation of it also possible. The fetish thus realizes a sort of synthesis (*fetishistic synthesis*) between these two opposite tendencies which, although it is false in itself, nevertheless anticipates a true relation between the human being and nature, thereby constituting a first conceptual framework which makes the collection and classification of positive observations possible. Fetishism is based on a kind of confusion between "natural" and "supernatural", between something having human nature and something having superhuman nature, or something having animated nature and something having inanimate nature. In Freud, then, such a position becomes more complex because it implies an initial *object splitting* (*Was-spaltung*) which will be correlative to a subsequent *subject splitting* (*Ich-spaltung*) that, in turn, turns out to be correlated with the former in normal cases, but not in pathological ones. Finally, both in Freud and Marx, the fetish's genesis lies in the fictitious separation of the "part" from the "whole" (even if this is meant to be related to different total objects, namely the person in Freud and the work in Marx). And the latter is just a first form of the principle of inductive reasoning. On the other hand, bearing in mind that mysterious meaning of the fetish (and its relationship with the origins of religion and mythology), according to Greenacre (1971) and Freud himself, attempts to give explanations to the consequent basic secrets provided by the fetish itself lead to intellectual activity, first through sorcery, religion and mythology, then through science. An emblematic example of this is provided by Freud himself in the essay *The Theme of the Three Caskets* (of 1913), where, inter alia, he states that the fundamental secrets are those on the origins of life and of destiny which are, in turn, implicit in the impenetrable enigma of the riddle of the sphinx that Œdipus solved, thereby obtaining the opportunity to live. From this, A. Gross stated that the secret of the symbolism of mythology is, at the primitive level, in close relation with the processes and organs of the body and whose meaning is connected both with the fear of death and life relations. On the other hand, the secret is strictly related to the anal phase and its features, first of all the faeces,[72] and the anus, this last place of secrecy and fortress of defence.

The Phyllis Greenacre viewpoint

According to Greenacre[73] (1971), fetishism should be treated from the point of view of corporal image. During the changeover from the phallic to the Œdipus stage, a great

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[70] Which clearly has, as already said, a phallic meaning from the Freudian symbolic viewpoint.

[71] This last term might be understood in the wider general philosophical meaning.

[72] With its ambiguous meaning which is also closely linked to the ambiguity of the fetish itself, to its dual nature (like bisexuality), in coherence with its symbolic function.

[73] The work (Greenacre 1971) is a collectanea of some of the main works of Phyllis Greenacre (1894-1989), amongst which those on fetishism and creativity.

castration problem subsists. This lies at the basis of every next Ego's splitting acting on an already instable, insecure and little structured bodily image formed during pregential phases. In this moment of psychosexual development, the first forms of displacement and condensation processes take place in relation to the formation of a corporal image from its component parts, and in delineating its borders which, in turn, induce variations in the subjective perception of dimensions. The choice of fetish is quite undetermined, even if its nature will be determined by the outcomes of previous destabilizing prephallic castration anxieties. In Greenacre (1971), the author presents further considerations on fetishism, highlighting the mainly psychosomatic nature of it. To be precise, it is the result of a defect of the corporal image which the subject will remedy through a fetish creation in the absence of symbolic elaboration. In pregenital phases, there is a particular corporal sensibility which reaches its highest value during the phallic stage. In the same period, the formation of the corporal sense of Self takes place, crossed by strong aggressive and libidinal energies which, if not suitably managed, may lead to dissolution sentiments, hence to degenerative phenomena. In Greenacre (1971), the author confirms the primary role played by the formation of the bodily image of Self which presents both an internal and external aspect. Thanks to this, the child starts to be aware of his (or her) own genitals and of the visage. The core of this sense of identity is strongly structured and influenced, from the anal stage until the phallic-Œdipus period, by many factors concerning the external world. In this phase, the child is aware of herself or himself as existing in a world of external objects. He or she hears have memories and thoughts, learns to evaluate her or his own dimensions, has knowledge of sexual differences and of many parts of her or his own body. In creative subjects, this image of Self is quite unstable and susceptible to possible diversifications. In Greenacre (1971), the author expresses the idea that bodily Ego's disorders (at the root of fetishism) are mainly due to the inadequacy of relationships with parents during the first two years of existence which will be at the basis of a primary emphasis given to castration anxieties and to complementary narcissistic defences. In Greenacre (1971), the author summarizes perversions and their dynamic aspects. In particular, for our purposes, it is important to outline some points of her study, particularly those examining material fetish and its comparison with imagination. The fetish, as stated, develops from an imperfect formation of the own corporal image during the related libidinal phases, above all connected to genital organization, with more or less severe repercussions on reality sense. The main feature of fetishism is first an excellent degree of primary identification, which is a normal characteristic of every human being, but which, in pathological degeneration, is distinguished by a prolongation of the introjective-projective phase (typical preconscious mechanism of primary identification), in which there is an incomplete separation between the own Ego and the Other, that is to say, a poor separation of the elements of the opposite pair (I, not-I) or (Me, not-Me), as outlined above. This is mainly due to the fact that a fetishist is unable to make a clear distinction between opposite images that he (or she) has of female genital organs, as Freud himself claimed in 1938, notwithstanding he (or she) is able to distinguish between males and females as mental categories, but not to compare their genital apparatuses. All this, according to Freud (and as confirmed later by other psychoanalysts like K. Abraham and S. Payne), will be at the basis of a weakness of the Ego. In 1965, R. A. Spitz pointed out that visual abilities are focalized quite early, so that the recognition of anatomic gender differences (above all in genitals) is available quite early for the child. This is a notable fact for organizing and structuring own corporal image which starts from the previous recognition of the bodily image of genital settings. All this takes place from before four years old, in fact from about two years old, when the child is also able to roughly recognize her or his mirror image. Nevertheless, the

recognition of genital settings, in both our and other organization, starts before the corporal one. The child takes this as a system of comparison to be used for the formation of a sense of reality. In Glover (1933), the author states that perversions help in taking together the various partialities and objects (like the many external perceptions) which come from the development of a sense of reality, also through symbolic formation processes. According to Glover, the formation of a sense of reality depends on the emancipation of a system of bodily and environmental perception from excessive interference through introjection and projection mechanisms. According to M.S. Mahler and P. Greenacre, the second and fourth years of existence are crucial for human psychic development in which there is a high corporal sensitivity and confusion about the bodily organization, especially the genital one. The question of the lack of a female penis strongly requires a solution. The emotional shock involved in it may compromise the reality sense formation. The aggressiveness, usually present in these periods, together with other defence mechanisms, may hinder a degeneration of this trauma toward paraphilic disorders. In any case, the strong castration anxiety anguish requires a displacement to be cathexed. According to Greenacre (1971), the genetic bases for fetishism are mainly twofold, and take place between two and four years old. The first concerns the frequent and careful view of the genitals of the opposite sex. The second may concern the occasional sight of a severe bleeding wound on one's own body or of another person. The vision, in this period, plays a very fundamental role, even before the development of other senses. In the first and more common case, the child focalizes other genitals, comparing them with their own. In such a manner, when one sees other genitals, the not-Me (or not-I) is much clearer than the Me (or I), and if the emotional involvement of this comparison is not sufficiently controlled, a confusion about own genital setting will be possible, giving rise to paraphilic degenerations. Analogously, in the second case, the damage undergone by the not-Me might give rise to veiled fantasies which, in turn, may contribute to increased confusional images of one's own body. If not adequately controlled and assisted by (good) motherly cares (see Winnicott's *holding*[74] notion), these traumatic experiences may induce great anxiety and guilt feelings, also thanks to the fact that, in this period (from about two to four years old), there is a major sensorial susceptibility in concomitance with the beginnings of the formation of own corporal image. Around two years old, the first steps and words start to appear, while the genital (phallic and vaginal) physiological pressures will appear around four years old. During this period, all the above-mentioned influences may flow out in intense fears of castration which may also assume a certain aspect of reality that will lead to paraphilic disorders, including (material) fetish formation. The material fetish must be so real to avoid such strong and unbearable fears of castration. Nevertheless, as already stated several times, this fetish creation may be accomplished too by means of symbolic elaboration, most of the time originally due to the simple search for a missing mother penis.

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[74] Also known as *holding environment.*

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Σύμβολου: An attempt toward the early Origins: Part 2

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Abstract

In continuation of what has been said in the first part of this two-part paper, herein we present further considerations on symbolism, reconsider some related psychodynamic case reports with some possible variants about their interpretations, and will apply what is said to some further speculations on mathematical symbolism and thought. In this second part, we continue with the numeration of the first part Σύμβολου, 1.

Introduction

On symbolism: further considerations

On sign and symbol. Following Harré, Lamb and Mecacci (1983), in psychology, a *sign* is considered to have a symbolic nature when we are not interested in its referential meaning but, rather, in the content borne by it, whose communicative aim, being a psychological factor, could be unconscious. In the psychological context, the *symbol* should be considered in a different manner to the *sign*, and the *content* should be considered in a different way to the *referent*, the latter being correlated to the sign through the reference relationship, whereas the content is correlated to the symbol through the unconscious component of the former. All that is in agreement with the Jungian theory of symbolism according to which reference and use of signs of direct thought should be ascribed to the action of conscious thought, whereas symbols should be attributed to the joint and inseparable action of conscious and unconscious thought. Moreover, according to these authors, there is a strict connection between the symbolic usage of signs and altered states of consciousness, the latter being seen as more desirable because they allow us to bypass the ordinary vigil (often unpleasant and anxiogenic organization of the Ego. These are often identified, in early adolescence (puberty), as initial psychotic events,[2] in alternation with the first normal phases of reasoning, abstraction and hypothesis-making abilities, together with the formation of first feelings of empathy and Ego's decentralization. And all this is in accordance with what has been said above about Ego's splitting. Following Galimberti (2006), Freud himself distinguished between sign and symbol, the former being understood as indicating a more or less direct presence of something, while the latter refers to something which, in turn, may refer to another something achieved only by means of an interpretation. As stated above, *displacement* and *condensation* are the main mechanisms through which the

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[2] According to Mastrangelo (1975), the presence of psychoses in childhood is nowadays a matter of fact.

primary process acts. In the first of these,[3] the part represents the whole or vice versa, or rather a given idea, object or image is instinctually replaced by another effectively associated with it, even if with modalities that are often not logical. On the other hand, in the second one,[4] there is convergence and merging of the drive's cathexes related to different objects or aims. According to Lalli (1993), metaphor and metonymy are the main mechanisms of symbolic activity; at the basis of metaphor, then, lie associations by similitude and analogy. Further, metaphor denotes a thing which is different from the named one, transferring the concept that this thing means out of its usual or normal meaning. Instead, metonymy, in naming a thing or a concept, makes a displacement on the basis of a conceptual relationship. In doing so, the effect is named for the cause, the possessor for the possessed thing, the producer for the product, and, above all, the abstract for the concrete.[5] Finally, due to the replacement of a total object with a partial one, in fetishism there is the tendency to replace a part with the whole, albeit the inter-individual relationship is kept, and this principle of the method, as already said, might be, in some respects, compared with the inductive method. On the other hand, following Piscicelli (1994), the displacement of a desire upon a generic image is one of the main semantic mechanisms of signification widely involved in symbolic formation. Through fetish formation, the transfer of the Ego upon the object fetish takes place in degenerative cases, or upon symbolic formations in normal cases (see also above Khan Masud's ideas on perversions).

Again on symbolism

Following Rogers (1978), the consideration of language in relation to primary and secondary psychic processes requires a rethinking of the theory of symbolism. For instance, to rectify that sort of one-sidedness of symbolism (as in the 1916 Ernest Jones work on the theory of symbolism), Rycroft (1968b) argues against this unilateral view that sexual symbolism belongs solely to the primary process and occurs only by virtue of repression, in dreams. Rycroft (1968a, 1968b) and Beres (1950) instead assume symbolism to be a general ability of mind which is based on perception and which may be used both by the primary process and by the secondary process. According to Rogers (1978), a literary symbol or a piece of symbolic behaviour can, and often will, reflect both primary and secondary processes functioning simultaneously, analogously to the action of a bi-logical process as formulated by I. Matte Blanco (see Iurato, 2013). Symbolism is a ubiquitous process present in all human activity. Following Petocz (2004), amongst the diversity of meanings of symbol, Whitehead (1927, p. 60) highlighted the mystical character that it had, commenting on "a certain unstable mixture of attraction and repulsion" in our attitude towards symbolism. He states that symbolism, from sense presentation to physical bodies, is the most natural and widespread of all symbolic modes. Langer (1942) states that symbolization is the essential act of thought: the symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities, like eating, looking, or moving about. It is the fundamental process of mind, and goes on all the time. The human brain function is constantly carrying out a process of symbolic transformation of experimental data that have come to it. The symbolization is the most natural outcome of how the human mind has transformed that primary need to express oneself.

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[3] See Solomon & Patch (1971).
[4] See Arieti (1969), especially Volume III as regards creativity.
[5] This last displacement is of fundamental importance for symbolic function.

A comparison with autism and a phylogenetic view

The relationships between creative thought and the spectrum of psychotic disorders have been known since Freud's work. For instance, many valuable studies have been pursued in this direction and, in this regard, the communication of Carapezza and Cuccio (2010) is a good essay on the chief studies (see references therein[6]) concerning some aspects of the creative abilities of individuals who are shown to have Autistic Spectrum Disorders[7] (ASDs). For instance, it turns out that many subjects with ASDs have a peculiar characteristic, called *weak central coherence*, which means that such subjects have a preference for details without being able to lay out them into a coherent and unitary frame.[8] It seems that such a strong preference for and attention to details are also typical characteristics of creative thought, which, in turn, would derive both from a sensorial hypersensibility and from a certain tendency towards a *hypersystematization* thanks to which they are able to identify structural regularities and symmetries. On the other hand, these last considerations might have certain common points with what we have already said above if one considers the disavowal mechanism as strictly correlated with a sort of search for a penis where it is missing, seen therefore as a tendency towards an anatomic detail as well as the result of a lack of regularity which stems from a comparative examination of sexual gender differences. What is said above regarding non-adult subjects with *ASDs*, who also have an uncommonly high intellectual level,[9] could be interpreted as the extreme outcome of a drastic and emotively poorly managed splitting of the Ego which, nevertheless, does not degenerate into paraphilia because of a hypersymbolization as compensation for fetishistic tendencies. From a phylogenetic viewpoint, symbolism embeds its roots in the mists of time. Indeed, symbols seem to be a psychic legacy dating back to the archaic origins of human beings. The history of religions, folklores and mythologies provides interesting sources connected to the first primitive initiation rites: in this regard, see Ferrero (1995), Marchesini (1901), Valeri (1979), Màdera (1977) and Eliade (1976). In particular, very close relationships exist between *totemism* and fetishism; in this regard see Eliade (1976), Abraham (1978) and Casonato (1992). Furthermore, fetishism also has deep historical roots in ethnic-social-anthropological and linguistic contexts, from which it has gradually earned its pre-

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[6] See, above all, the main researches made by Baron-Cohen, Ashwin, Tavassoli and Chakrabati (2009), Frith (1989) and Happé and Vital (2009).

[7] This spectrum has a non-empty intersection with the spectrum of psychotic disorders (*PSDs* as Psychotic Spectrum Disorders): for instance, introversion and deficiency of social relationships are elements of *ASDs* ∩ *PSDs* (≠ Ø).

[8] And this seems analogous to the fragmentary and disjointed corporal image which fetishists have.

[9] Following Mastrangelo (1975), this is one of the features of infantile schizophrenia, together with a phobic symptomatology and a loss of relations with the environment. From the psychodynamic viewpoint, the transitional (Winnicott) and persecutory (Klein) object phenomenologies are also invoked to explain certain damages to the object relationships involved in these disorders. Furthermore, until six years old, subjects with *ASDs* are unable to distinguish the meanings of personal pronouns in relation to others, because he or she has a severe impairment of the own identity perception in respect to the otherness. The only means thanks to which they establish relations are exclusively toys and not words. Hence, they do not develop an albeit minimal separation between I and not-I, that is to say, they do not recognize the otherness.

eminent symbolic function during the course of history. However, the sources of fetishism confirm the essential intermediary nature of the fetish (hence, of the phallus) between humans and (divine) nature. Furthermore, according to the ethnoanthropological research, fetishism is not venerated because it is considered to be the place or the abode of the divinity but rather for the protection that one expects to have (hence to avoid an anxiety feeling). The symbol draws its origins from religious symbolism[10] as a prolongation of the dialectic of the so-called *hierophanies* (or *theophanies*). A *hierophany* is something which manifests the sacred like myths, rites, cults and so on, through which heterogeneous plans and apparently irreducible realities are identified, assimilated and unified. Just from these historical bases come the origins of symbolism according to C.G. Jung, in which the concept of *psychoid* (which is a particular psychotic attributive dimension that should be meant from a well-defined phylo-ontogenetic sense[11]) plays a fundamental role.[12] The fetish is then represented as one of the first coarse forms of religion, according to Musatti (1977), hence an intermediary between the human being and the otherness. In this last sense, taking into account what was just said about fetishism, religion, mythology and initiation rites,[13] it is not possible to leave aside the work of Thomas Mann and his *Moon-grammar* (see Sweet, 1982; McDonald, 1999). This author, starting from the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Assyric-Babylonian mythologies to Revealed Sacredness, in his 1943 four-part novel *Joseph and His Brothers*, amongst other things argues on the possible origins of the common conscious language of ancient Near East people from initiation rites of a fetishistic nature, which have then been acquired by other religious doctrines. Mann distinguishes between a *Daylight-grammar* and a *Moon-grammar*, through which the spirits communicate with human beings, coherently with that intermediary role played by fetish mentioned above. The first has an exoteric character and is quite familiar to us in the form of Scriptures, traditions, events, worships, and so on. The second has instead an esoteric nature and regards small groups, prayer, silence, meditation, even dreams, and is called by E. Fromm "God's forgotten language" (see Fromm, 1951). Some have argued that the first special gift of the Holy Spirit in the Bible was Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, so that we have a very coarse precursor of the next Freudian dream interpretation. Finally, an interesting study on the influences of religious-mystical and psychotic experiences (like those of altered consciousness states) on the primary process of language, emotion and body boundary imagery, in the wake of what was just said above in relation to phylogenetic aspects of fetishism (and other aspects, like those related to transitional phenomena), has been made by Cariola (2012).

On mathematical symbolism, creativity and other

On mathematical symbolism. There have been several authors who have treated the relationships between exact and natural sciences and psychoanalysis: amongst them,[14] C. G. Jung, C. A. Meier, W. Pauli, I. Matte Blanco, E. Von Domarus, S. Ferenczi, I. Hermann, J. Lacan, M. Klein and W. R. Bion. According to Canestri and Oliva (1991),

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[10] See Ferrero (1895) and Eliade (1976).

[11] For the notions of phylogeny and ontogeny and their possible relationships from a psychological viewpoint, see, for example, Gould (1977), Fossi (1983, 1984), Piscicelli (1994) and Petocz (2004).

[12] See La Forgia (1991).

[13] For these, see Piscicelli (1994).

[14] See also Rosen (1954, p. 139) for further references.

who analysed the inhibitions in second degree school mathematics, it is possible to speak of a certain "mathematical anxiety" felt by those who use mathematical formulas, like $(a+b)^p = \sum_{i=0}^{p} a^i b^{p-i}$ for every $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $p \in \mathbb{N}$, which refers to a kind of trauma due to the emotive impact with something whose existence, that is the *meaning* of the formula, is misunderstood; and this, notwithstanding the fact that they showed a certain desire towards mathematics. To find such a meaning, the student is forced to compare herself or himself with an "exterior", that is the mathematical reality, which has its specific meaningful organizations. For her or him, such a meaning hasn't been symbolically included into the formulas but rather it has fully and defensively taken the place of the formula itself. Thus, we descry certain analogies with aspects of disavowal. In their important paper, Canestri and Oliva (1991) also analysed some youngsters suffering from disorders belonging to $ASDs \cap PSDs\,(\neq \emptyset)$, detecting a common feature, that is to say, their inability to make suitable links and connections, as well as to integrate the various senses, the latter being a characteristic identified by D. Meltzer in his studies on autism. The authors, in analysing their case studies, observed as the usual processes followed in solving more or less correctly certain mathematical questions were characterized by sequentiality and continuity laws in turn inferred by perceptive rules. If one asks them the rationale behind these procedures, they are unable to give a correct answer: simply, for them, an algebraic equation is true or false depending on whether they consider a mathematical formula as a *concrete indivisible object* (we say, the missing female penis). Canestri and Oliva hence observe that this fact seems to refer to the H. Segal *symbolic equation* of psychotic thought that has been recalled in the first part of this paper. Canestri and Oliva repeatedly refer toof cases in which the students feel inadequacy, shame and guilt senses in front of the question of establishing the truth or falsity of an algebraic equation. It is as if the notion of "equation with its resolution" was deposited or stored in some part of the mind (unconscious) and is re-evocable only by means of well-determined perceptive stimuli. In learning mathematics, it is necessary to refrain from the sensual gratification provided by sensorial perception. The mental operations of abstraction and formalization impose the abandonment of the known and concrete for the unknown and abstract, thus entailing a certain tolerance of the *lack of the object* (we again say, of the female penis). The authors refer to having the impression that many students do not endure such a sensorial deprivation, trying immediately to rebuild up the lost concrete object but not according to a right mental elaboration as above recalled. They immediately follow the known and well-established rules and institutionalized practices, without being able to autonomously and originally create new connections, possible analogies, comparisons and relationships, above all in the face of a new and complex problem. In conclusion, at the basis of these learning mathematics problems, Canestri and Oliva hypothesize a disorder of the symbolic function very similar to that involved in psychotic disorders: in coping with a mathematical task requiring a high symbolic performance, many students feel an unmanageable mental pain that triggers a specific defence mechanism (we say, the disavowal one) that avoids the pain with the construction of a new surrogating reality which is plausible at the perceptive level but misunderstands the true reality, that is to say, the existence of the meaning of mathematical formulas. What was said by these authors is clearly coherently placeable within the framework here outlined and based on the disavowal mechanism. Again, the authors affirm that the various possible solutions and strategies adopted by students to overcome this *mathematical pain* sometimes have a "psychotic" nature, other times a " neurotic" nature. According to them, this "mental pain", felt in the face of an abstract reasoning, seems to be quite widespread. Canestri and Oliva try to explain these facts through different psychodynamic models, including the Freudian one based on

Mourning and Melancholia (of 1917) related to the loss of a loved object and the consequent pain. Nevertheless, in reference to Freud's work, they do not make any allusion to disavowal. Thereafter, they quote the fundamental work of Melanie Klein, who considered symbolism to be at the root of every creative process. She brings back symbolization disorders to persecutory anxieties regarding sexual fantasies related to primary scenes. Connected with the Kleinian thought is that of H. Segal, the main traits of which we have outlined in the first part. Then, W. R. Bion (1962, 1963, 1967) brings back learning obstacles to difficulties of the relationship between mother and child. In Bion (1967), the author states that the mathematical objects arise from certain *duplicity* relations: for instance, the number two of breasts, the two eyes, the two feet, etc., and this is coherent with the anthropomorphic origins of certain elementary mathematical notions. On the other hand, the above-mentioned Bion's notion of duplicity relation is, in many respects, similar to that of Hermann[15] (1989) and named *dual procedure*, about which we shall briefly speak in the next sections. According to Bion, the right mental predisposition for doing mathematics is the result of an overcoming of the state of frustration (for the object's loss) ruled by the sufferance and endurance which will lead to psychic modification and elaboration of secondary thought, whereas its intolerance will bring to a rapid behaviour of escape marked by the destructivity of reality data and impossibility of reflection. Bion (1962, 1967) makes interesting comparisons between the psychoanalytic interpretation and the insights that take place in science following what Poincaré said in this regard in his famous 1914 *Science and Method*. Bion makes frequent use of epistemological and mathematical considerations in his work, for instance, in relation to a notable epistemological consideration of Poincaré about the origins of a new mathematical result. To be precise, according to Poincaré, a mathematical result must join together already known elements which were previously disjoined and apparently unrelated amongst them; this combination will be made in such a manner as to establish order where was there apparent disorder. So, we are suddenly aware of the right place that every single piece must be within their complex set. Like our senses, so our mind would be frail and astray if wasn't there harmony in such a set; as in myopia, similarly our mind would see only the near details which would be at once forgotten as soon as it turned towards the farthest if there weren't ordering capacity. The only facts which deserve attention are therefore those bringing order to this complex set, thus making it approachable. This is what Poincaré says and that it can hardly be contested. Furthermore, if one briefly looks at the foundations of Gestalt psychology, it is easy to descry, in the above Poincaré considerations, the bases of a paradigmatic shift as occurs in the Kuhnian scientific revolution theory. On the other hand, from what will be said in what follows, this Poincaré frame might also be brought back to the complex formation of bodily image, while Bion, instead, tries to put an analogy between this Poincaré synthesis and the Kleinian transition from a paranoid-schizoid position to a depressive one. Bion moreover states that the possible relations which will link together the elements of the above-mentioned complex set quoted by Poincaré are mainly carried out through unconscious processes which, in turn, operate by means of the so-called *alpha functions* whose main role is to organize the various sensorial and emotive elements of the perceptive field, providing relations and connections amongst them in such a manner as to structurate this field (the Gestalt). Thanks to this alpha function, when normally

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[15] The original notion dates back to 1924. Imre Hermann (1899-1984) was one of the main Hungarian psychoanalysts, a pupil of S. Ferenczi and M. Klein, who carried out remarkable studies on the psychoanalytic foundations of rational thought. The thought of this author has still been little considered by the history of psychology.

operating, it will be possible to establish relationships between external and internal reality. The mother will be the first *primary object* whose mature alpha function will mould that of the child and that will allow the unpleasant feelings, including the absence of the primary object, to be overcome. When this alpha function fails, a thought disturbance takes place with the presence of an "object that misunderstands" which belongs to the wider class of the so-called *beta elements*. According to Bion, the primary object would be the breast which, when it is absent, will be considered as a separated and deanimated partial object. This Bionian *deanimation*, meant to be a defence mechanism in coping with the unpleasantness of the absence of the animated object (that is, the animated breast joined to the mother body), would give rise to abstract and formal thought. According to Canestri and Oliva (1991), this deanimation might be meant as an unaware splitting between the meaning (semantics) and the abstract formula (syntax) that represent it. Therefore, the *epistemophilic instinct*,[16] which is, roughly speaking, curiosity about the object, will be suppressed and replaced by a simple mechanical manipulation of the forms and relations considered as things in themselves, used as such and split from their meaning. The normality is mainly ruled by a correct inter-relationship between semantics and syntax through pragmatics: for instance, in schizophrenia, the fundamental action of the latter fails to integrate the first two (see Falzone, 2004) which remain unrelated. Following Bionian thought, Canestri and Oliva (1991) state that a bad outcome of this splitting as well as a defective functioning of the alpha function are at the root of many errors and much misunderstanding in mathematics. On the basis of this, we add what follows, namely that the Freudian epistemophilic drive performs a primary splitting between semantics and syntax in the following sense: when the primary object is perceptively absent, then, to avoid the consequent loss anxiety, the individual ontologically tries to re-evoke it. To do so, there are two possible ways, one consisting in immediately finding some material surrogate of it (with possible degenerations into paraphilia), and the other consisting in symbolically thinking about it. This last way will lead to the *ontic* identification[17] (or definition) of that entity which will replace such an object with the formation of the related semantic and syntactic components of it. Further relationships between the syntactic and the semantic structures, ruled by pragmatics, will turn out to be of fundamental importance above all for the reality test. Canestri and Oliva (1991) pointed out that concrete and perceptive elements prevail in symbolic thought. They say that often there is an increase of physical exuberance and restlessness used as a primitive muscular defence toward mental stimuli lived as concrete objects. Mathematical corrections and attempts to establish connections or relationships are associated with

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[16] Following Bott Spillius, Milton, Garvey, Couve and Steiner (2011) and Galimberti (2006), the *epistemophilic instinct* is, for Freud, a part-instinct, which is a part of libido concerning voyeurism and exhibitionism, as a prolongation of sexual curiosity or meant as sublimation of oral drive. It becomes a central instinct in Kleinian thought where it is seen as exploratory and necessary but also inevitably aggressive, involving phantasies of getting inside the mother to find and often to take over or destroy the riches within – notably mother's babies and father's penis. The inevitable fear of retaliation may then inhibit curiosity and the capacity for learning. Within Kleinian work, such an epistemophilic instinct plays a fundamental role in symbol formation and in general learning, thanks to the sexual curiosity upon which they rely. See Bott Spillius et al. (2011) for further interesting information on symbolism from S. Freud to M. Klein and H. Segal.

[17] In the sense of Heidegger's *ontological difference* between *ontological* truth and *ontic* truth. Every definition of each entity is always at the ontic level.

unpleasant sensations of a persecutory type. Each student lives this as he or she had generically made "something evil" whose bad sensations hinder every improvement. Following Bion, the learning seems hindered by the presence of beta elements instead of alpha elements. We remember that, according to Bion, mathematical objects are the outcomes of the action of alpha function upon sensorial and perceptive impressions, while the action of beta function provides reality elements charged by persecutory and unpleasant features. In such a manner, the Bionian thought on mathematics is, in many respects, a forerunner of embodied mathematics. The concrete, imitative and greatly repetitive aspects of the wrong procedures adopted in solving mathematical questions often have the hallucinatory function of reproducing the lost object without taking into account its absence, that is, there is an incomplete elaboration of the object lack. According to Canestri and Oliva, these mathematical errors and misunderstandings are mainly due to a bad formation of the Gestalt as, for example, provided by the Meltzerian notion of "disassembly of senses" whose main result would be just this lack of Gestalt. These authors say too that this last state is not only typical of subjects having *ASDs* or *PSDs* but is the outcome of a mechanism susceptible to being active also in the absence of a specific pathology but when the performance of high abstraction tasks is required, and this corroborates what is expected by us in considering disavowal a general psychic mechanism according to Laplanche and Pontalis (1973). Again according to Canestri and Oliva, the great number of mathematical rules for signs, brackets, operations and so on needed for a correct development and resolution of a mathematical expression, if not well organized according to a form semantically and syntactically correct, will act on the mind like a disorganized realm of undifferentiated, undistinguishable and meaningless stimuli. On the other hand, the epistemological structure of physics just relies on a particular and complex relational net between syntactic and semantic structures linked together through certain correspondence rules having an operational character (see (Morgan & Morrison, 1999)) which we would like to hypothesize is moulded on the basis of the above pattern of formation of the syntax and semantic primary structures.

Further notes on mathematical symbolism

Later on, Canestri and Oliva (1991) re-present their considerations in the light of H. Segal's work on symbolism whose main lines were outlined in the first part of this paper. In discussing his thought, we have referred to a meaningful clinical case in which a schizophrenic patient identified a violin with his penis. This means that he found some element common both to the violin and the penis which has obscured all the others that made these two entities distinct, thus passing to an identification of the whole only on the basis of this primary common element. For instance, such a common element might be the geometric or material – hence perceptive – analogy of form between them, which prevails over all the other possible discriminating elements.[18] Therefore, from a perceptive element of equality, the schizophrenic patient has passed to an identification of meaning of the two actions, namely playing a violin and masturbation, thus ignoring every minimal pragmatic contextuality. There is, in short, a substantial lack of abstract elaboration. This is the main feature that identifies, in a given social-cultural context, a

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[18] This is also coherent with what reported in (Iurato 2013) where has been discussed the basilar fact that a schizophrenic patient mainly use symmetric and generalized principles in her or his reasoning, this implying, in turn, an impossibility to conceive the notion of power set.

psychotic disorder that, nevertheless, may be considered with a certain degree of acceptability in some social-cultural contexts and, above all, in children. In fact, the latter often identify the *name* with the (named) *thing*: for instance, for the child, the name "father" coincides only with her or his physical personal father, i.e. the child is unable to consider the name "father" as having something to do with the relational structure of human society, hence of interpersonal nature.[19] In this regard, Canestri and Oliva refer to an analogous case which takes place in consideration of the formula $(a + b)^2$ which is directly equated with $a^2 + 2ab + b^2$ instead to give rise to the latter through detailed calculations starting from the former,[20] thereby ignoring the deep relational structure existing between these two entities. These modes of reasoning are coming back to slight forms of a psychotic mechanism that these authors would consider to be present in every human being but not in a psychopathological manner;[21] and this is also in line with I. Matte Blanco's bi-logical process theory. Canestri and Oliva say that such types of mathematical errors are mainly due to wrong thought modalities which resemble psychotic ones. And this is a further confirmation of our main hypothesis of this paper, i.e. to put the disavowal mechanism at the primary basis of abstract thought as well as a general psychic mechanism. Furthermore, the basic work of Canestri and Oliva (1991), besides confirming many points raised in this paper, makes a comparison with other psychological perspectives, such as the cognitive one, highlighting many common points with the psychoanalytic standpoint. In particular, the cognitive perspective also points out the action of certain defence mechanisms to avoid painful stimuli, including the so-called *cognitive avoidance* proposed by M. H. Erdelyi (1985). Retaking into account what is said above, the paper of Canestri and Oliva above all stresses a possible similar psychotic mechanism implying a lost object-induced splitting thanks to which it will be possible to give rise to semantic and syntactic structures of abstract thought. Their line of thought is very similar to the one followed in this paper and is based on disavowal mechanisms as well as being coherent with what will be said later about the relations with the bodily image formation. As further confirmation of this pursued line of thought, we report the main points delineated in the very interesting paper by V. H. Rosen (1954). First of all, he states that the concept of number normally arises in connection with certain stages of the maturation of the perception apparatus during the Œdipal period, and this, as well as what will be said, is of fundamental importance for the main arguments that we want to claim here. Indeed, the author goes on to say that in those with a special mathematical gift, it is probable that this maturational sequence takes place at an earlier period in Ego development so that along with the precocious concepts of number and quantity there remain certain archaic Ego defence mechanisms (amongst which we would want to include disavowal) which are later utilized in creative aspects of the (mathematical) process. A large part of the ordinary process of mathematical thought in these gifted individuals is preconscious and utilizes a capacity for decathexis of the conscious perceptual system. The "illumination" experience is a creative act, as is inspiration in other fields, and utilizes the Ego's capacity for controlled regression to unformalized infantile modes of perceiving space and number. It is a highly overdetermined psychic

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[19] In this sense, a connection with C. Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology theory is possible, above all with his assumption according to which the Œdipus complex is the cornerstone of the passage from nature to culture, providing the notion of relational structure. This is in coherence with what said in this paper.

[20] In this regard, see also what is said in Iurato (2013).

[21] Which requires a certain repeated and systematic presence in the time to be defined as such (see DSM-V options).

event which involves all three structural systems as well as the subject's historical individuality. Rosen reports the clinical data of a case study relating to a mathematician with suspected latent psychosis. This is a patient who has been a very sensitive child since early infancy, showing an extreme intolerance of loud noise and brightness (photophobia). Rosen (1954) also reports a series of dreams of the patient. In the first one, he says: "I am lying on a bed in a darkened room with a window at one end of it which is lit as if from the street. I am considering whether I should masturbate. Suddenly from behind the drape next to the window, I see a silhouette against the light, the figure of my father" (p. 130).

The patient refers to having suffered *pavor nocturnus* around the age of four of five. On many occasions, when he was about five years of age, he was suddenly no longer allowed to stay in his mother's bed and the night terrors disappeared shortly after this. Rosen interprets all this by bringing back it to scoptophilic primal scene interests with special reference to his father's erection (the silhouette); hence, the light from the street and the window to direct primal scene curiosity and its replacement by curiosity in the intellectual sphere. This latter is suggested in the reference to the delay in instinctual gratification: "I am considering whether I should masturbate" (p. 130). The dream appears to refer therefore to the process of sublimation and the turning of the night light of the *pavor nocturnus* into intellectual light. Thereafter, the following two dreams were recounted (p. 134):

I am sitting on the floor and see a snapping turtle through a crack in the door of a

room. It is my job to keep the turtle in the room, but it seemed to force its way out

despite my vigilance" and "I see a small "e" to the "x" power times an equation. I

realize that I should factor it out and that 'e' to the "x" power is a psychoanalyst

which must be taken into account in each factor (p. 134).

These dreams occurred shortly after the episode of sudden illumination of a complex Riemannian geometry problem which employed the mind of the patient. For this purpose, he needed a mathematical book that he wasn't able to find easily where he stayed. A sample copy was available in his hometown so he asked his father to send it as soon as possible. But when he got it he suddenly had an insight into finding a short-cut method of reaching the same result by an original method without even removing the wrapping containing the book. The patient also says that as a child he had thought that all turtles were snapping turtles but was fascinated by them and liked to keep one in a pail. The turtle also reminded him of an individual who retires into his own shell and shuts out the world (like his father). He had noticed that turtles blink in the sun and had associated this with the darkness within their shells and to his own photophobia on exposure to bright light. Turtles can see the outside world while they themselves remain unseen. The crack in the door referred to early experiences of peeping at his sisters. The room recalled his own bedroom at home, and his mother's practice of watching him through a crack in the door when he first went to kindergarten, because of his terror at being left by her. This is what Rosen says about possible interpretations of these dreams. We instead would like to consider a possible alternative interpretative hypothesis according to which a turtle, with

the pulling in and out of his head, might represent a female penis disappearing within the mother body[22] like in the Freudian cotton reel game that we will consider later. Then, Rosen also makes a certain interpretation of the second dream, bringing back the e^x to an X-ray examination that the patient has undergone. We would like to propose other possible additional variants. Rosen states that this second dream is presented to indicate the relationship of the illumination experience to the primal scene problem. Later, Rosen says that two themes are referred to which are of importance for the development of the theoretical formulation which will follow: the first refers to the selective use of perception in the service of drive and defence in scoptophilic fantasies, and the second to the narcissistic withdrawal from the real darkness and light surrounding the functional relationships of parental objects and their investment in the neutral symbols and relationships of mathematical invention. We add what follows. If one looks at the geometrical form of the graph of the real function e^x (which was surely known to the patient, given that he was a valid mathematician), it is not possible not to recognize an in-erection phallic symbol.[23] Then, the dream also compares this function with the psychoanalyst who, clearly by transference, corresponds to a father figure, so that this second dream should be more referred to the father's phallus rather than an X-ray examination. Afterwards, Rosen continues to interpret these and other dreams of this patient substantially revolving around the Œdipus complex questions concerning the patient of this interesting case report, to finish with a discussion on mathematical thought on the basis of the previous studies made in this regard. Amongst them, we report both a quotation by E. Kris (an exponent of Ego psychology), namely "that hypercathexis of preconscious mental activity with some quantity of energy withdrawn from the object world to the Ego – from the perceptive system to preconscious thinking – accounts for some of the extraordinary achievements of mentation", and a hypothesis, related to creative thought and also confirmed by clinical data, according to which there are suggestive borderline features as far as psychosis is concerned; a prominent sensory-motor hypersensitivity is also a predisposing feature. Rosen also noticed the concomitant presence of certain disorders in writing and reading in mathematically gifted subjects, which have their origins during the early latency period with the still unresolved Œdipal conflicts. Thereafter, in discussing the role played by the primary process in creative thought, Rosen reviews many interesting case studies and testimonies amongst which we recall only those relating to N. Lobachevsky's work on non-Euclidean geometry and A. Cayley's work on algebra. Indeed, the former was built on a negation of a sensory reality testing, namely that parallel lines can meet, while the latter is concerned with a particular algebra of matrices which was seen, for many years, as a kind of bizarre algebraic oddity. Such an algebra starts from a postulate, in "paranoiac" fashion, which appears to be an absurd negation of the self-evident, namely that the products of two entities (the matrices) are different depending upon the order in which the multiplication is performed. In both cases, we have a *negation* of a fact considered to be evident and, notwithstanding these

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[22] In addition, one of the possible psychoanalytic meanings of the turtle is that of a mother with her values.

[23] Following this interpretation line, maybe it would be possible to extend these considerations related to the real exponential function e^x to the complex case in order to account for the celebrated *Lacan equation* $\sqrt{-1}\,(=i) = phallus$ as well as to give a psychodynamic explanation to the famous conceptual metaphor $e^{i\varphi} = \cos\varphi + i\sin\varphi$ which is at the basis of the framework of Lakoff and Núñez (2000). Elsewhere this possibility will be taken into account.

appeared to be a direct negation of reality, they would have notable applications in physics. As is well known, Freud himself gave great importance to negation for consciousness development in his remarkable 1925 paper *Negation*, and, what has been just said above is placeable within our framework based on disavowal because, as Chemama and Vandermersch (1998) claim, this paper had really to do more with disavowal than negation. Finally, as regards the main case study of his paper, Rosen stresses the occurrence of primary scene fantasies, the consequent scoptophilic and epistemophilic drives with related defence reactions (like *pavor nocturnus*, eye redness, etc.) and certain perplexities in gender roles, considering them to be at the root of the mathematical insight possessed by the patient. In addition and in relation to this, since Rosen also stresses the psychoanalytic meaning of the bringing of the book by his father in clarifying, inter alia, his doubts on gender roles, it is likely that this gender ambivalence worrying the patient might also be related to sex or genital differences which, as is well known, plays a fundamental role in the disavowal mechanism. So, we say, in searching a missing mother penis (the book, as surrogate of the missing primary object) in respect to the existent father's one, which maybe will arrive (the sent book), the patient carries out a symbolic elaboration upon this lack, whose insight will resolve his anguish once he has found (in concomitance with the received but unwrapped book) it. Finally, Rosen points out a possible origin of mathematical rules by means of reaction formation to the primal scenes which, amongst other things, are closely related to a castration complex because they furnish support to the consequent castration anxiety, this being, in turn, strictly involved in disavowal.

On mathematical symbolism - thirdly

The history of mathematics comprises numerous examples and case studies regarding concepts as well as notions having anthropomorphic sources. On the other hand, as remembered by Piaget (1968), anthropomorphism has its roots deep in the history of religions and mythologies, as also briefly recalled above (see also Rosen, 1954; Canestri & Oliva, 1991). Many other studies on the history of mathematics, like those made in Ifrah (1985), confirm the primary role that the human body has played in the origins of the main elementary mathematical concepts, like those of number and order, up to the latest results and examples achieved and outlined by the cognitive science of mathematics as exposed by Lakoff and Núñez (2000). For instance, Georges Ifrah speaks of the "bodily techniques of the number" as regards the archaic origins of human awareness of numeric and ordinal notions, so confirming the anthropological assumptions mentioned above. Furthermore, following Loria (1950), in the history of mathematics, the scholar shouldn't only stop at that epoch in which the human being hadn't yet consciously conceived of abstract numbers. In this period, the individual indicated numbers in a phonetic manner, like, for example, in denoting two sheep, three goats, four oxen and so on, or using proper names for certain objects to denote their parts or their components, like, for instance, in associating the *idea* (or the function) of one, two, three and five respectively to the word "I",[24] to the wings, to the trefoil, and to the hand. Hence, according to Gino Loria, it would also be interesting to go further back, if one would really like to have some form of protohistoric knowledge on the early origins of numbers. According to Ifrah (1985), the numbers one and two were phylogenetically the first numerical intelligible notions conceived by human beings. These are also the first two numerical notions which are ontogenetically acquired by human beings, so that, in this

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[24] As a personal pronoun.

case, the well-known 19th century scientists E. Haeckel and F. M. Müller's fundamental biogenetic law according to which ontogenesis is, in a certain sense, a recapitulation of phylogenesis (at least, from a psychological viewpoint[25]) seems valid. The number one, indeed, symbolizes the active man who is associated with creative work. It also denotes herself or himself within the related social group, her or his own loneliness in the face of life and death, and it also symbolizes both human bipedalism (or else, her or his standing position) and the erect phallus which distinguishes man from woman. On the other hand, the number two refers to the fundamental duality between male and female, the contraposition, the complementarity and any other oppositions. Finally, since the mists of time, the number three has been synonymous with plurality, with multitude, with cluster, hence an unthinkable and unpredictable limit, so that this means that, in the human soul or mind, the invention of numbers has marked a first stoppage beat at number two. In short, the number three has a very fundamental meaning from the psychoanalytic viewpoint. All this is also quite coherent with what Piaget said about the development of number sense in children. Indeed, more or less between six and 12 months old, a child acquires a certain global ability to recognize the space filled by things or persons which are familiar to her or him, so that she or he is able to roughly conceive of a totality (*subitization*[26]) from some of its parts. Thereafter, approximately between 12 and 18 months of age, she or he is capable of distinguishing between one, two and many other objects as well as discerning and discriminating between two distinct groups of entities of no more than four elements. But, at this stage, her or his numerical attitudes are still so primitive as to be impossible for her or him to make a clear distinction between numbers and clusters whose elements represent the former. Afterwards, a remarkable fact takes place between two years and three years old, once the child has acquired the use of speech and has learned to name the first numbers. To be precise, it has been noted that often, for a certain time, the child has great difficulty in conceiving and saying just the number three, starting with correctly counting from one and two but then forgetting the number three, hence articulating one, two, four. In the light of what has been said above, this might be explained by reconnecting the strong emotive-affective involvement present at this age with the Œdipal phase of this period and related anxieties, if one takes into account the genital psychoanalytical meaning of number three. In fact, according to Paneth (1953) and Musatti (1977), one of the main psychoanalytical meanings of number three is that of phallus[27] (erectus) which, together with the two gonads, means capacity for synthesis, perfection and creativity, whence the triadicity,[28] closely correlated to

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[25] See previous footnote [11]. As is well known, this law is ruled out from a proper biological perspective; in this regard, see Carlson (1981). However, certain of its forms are assumed to be more or less valid in human sciences (see Lorenz, 1977), including psychology (see, for instance, Greenacre, 1971, p. 370).

[26] See Lakoff and Núñez (2000).

[27] This is the main meaning given by Freud to the number three in Chapter X of his work *Symbolism in the Dream* (Freud, 1915-17).

[28] This plays an important role not only from the larger philosophical stance (see, for instance, the theological notions of *trinity*) but also from a mathematical standpoint. Indeed, many elementary formal entities are based on ternary properties, like, for example, a *function*, defined by a tern of the type $(A, B, f(x))$, where A and B are arbitrary theoretical sets and $f(x)$ is a (functional) law, or role, which connects the former in the following manner $f : A \rightarrow B$. See Christopherson and Johnstone Jr (1981). For triadic reality and its role in Ego's development, see Akhtar (2009) as well as Rosen (1954).

Œdipus triangulation which takes place in the phallic phase. Furthermore, according to Dehaene (1997), the number "three" seems to be the most frequent number, coherently with the known fact that the word "phallus" (or one of its numerous synonyms) seems to be the most frequently pronounced term at every age. On the other hand, according to Weich (1989), although fetishism most often employs concrete objects for the related defensive purposes involved, there are other instances in which abstract words and speech can be concretely used in place of, or in addition to, the more familiar material fetish, discussing as well certain aspects of language's development that are pertinent just in this regard. Hence, the language functions are also inherent to the psychosexual phases here involved. Finally, following studies made by S. Dehaene and quoted in Lakoff and Núñez (2000), it has been ascertained that the main cerebral area involved in numerical questions is the lower parietal cortex (one of the most associative) where the association of many cerebral functions takes place, above all the sensory-motor ones (sight, hearing, touch, etc.), hence where the formation of corporal image will take place during own psychosexual development. There, the primary role that visual-spatial abilities play in mathematical thought is also confirmed (in this regard, see also Kreger Silverman, 2002), also in relation to gender differences (see Contreras et al., 2007).

Two further report cases and a Freudian case study

Herein (and in the next subsection), we report some significant clinical cases drawn from psychoanalytic literature, which partially bear out what is suggested in this paper. Following Dieckmann (1993), it is meaningful to report a clinical case treated by Dieckmann himself[29] concerning an eternal student in mathematics who suffers from a form of borderline syndrome. This individual refers to having dreamed that Hitler wasn't dead and that he had retaken power in Germany. He says that the SS had identified him as a Jew due to the fact that he had dark hair and a crooked nose. Some days later, an SS official pulled out a revolver to shoot him in the back of the neck. The consequent strong anxiety woke him. Furthermore, when he described this dream to Dieckmann, he was still full of anxiety, insinuating that he (that is, Dieckmann) was that SS official of the dream, disguised as an analyst, who would have pulled out the revolver to kill him. Clearly, the patient had transferred to him (i.e. Dieckmann), by projective identification, his heavy male aggressiveness (which is a possible symptom of his latent homosexuality which, in turn, is strictly related to the Œdipus complex and to the castration anxiety – see Solomon and Patch (1971). In doing so, the patient hoped that the analyst would free him, with his death, from his strong feelings of anxiety. Dieckmann was quite bewildered by that, but immediately had the strong sensation of being the mother of the patient. With the upper part of his body, Dieckmann started to do some slow movements like dandle himself, uttering some calming sounds without speaking. Therefore, through this projective counteridentification by Dieckmann, the patient became the son of the mother (Dieckmann), and thanks to this process the patient was reassured, and at the end he was able to say: it was just a dream! Now, in this regard, it is clear that the dark hair refers to fetish objects and the crooked nose and the revolver clearly refer to a phallic symbol. Moreover, it is not by chance that the patient was attracted by mathematics. Finally, to further validate what we have covered in this paper, we simply quote two important Freudian works, namely *The Schreber Case* of 1911, and the 1910 *Leonardo da Vinci: A*

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[29] This clinical case is mentioned in the chapter entitled "The formation of symbols in the complexual nuclei". In interpreting this case, Dieckmann himself, at first, made use of Freudian theory, then compared it with the Jungian one.

Memory of His Childhood. In the former, Freud tries to explain the psychosis mechanism through the paradigmatic instance given by the paranoia, bringing this back to projections of repressed strong homosexual tendencies toward his own father, which were re-enacted by his personal doctor. In this essay, for the first time, Freud outlined the possible mechanisms underlying psychoses, including disavowal. But it is, above all, the second Freudian study that is of fundamental importance to our purposes. Indeed, there Freud made a careful analysis of the following childhood memory described by Leonardo da Vinci. Namely, Leonardo da Vinci wrote the celebrated 1505 codex entitled *Treatise on the Flight of Birds*, and during the description of the flight of vultures, he strangely quoted his childhood memory (see Freud, 1989, p. 143) as follows:

This detailed writing on kites seems to be my destiny, the one that is so deeply

concerned with vultures – for I recall as one of my very earliest memories that while I

was in my cradle, a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and

struck me many times with its tail against my lip'.

After various possible (some obvious) interpretations, Freud finished by agreeing with the following one (see Freud, 1989, pp. 152-157, pp. 184-188). First, the curiosity for birds may easily be brought back to the childhood curiosity of Leonardo for childhood sexual explorations. Then, the vulture's tail is, of course, a male genital organ, while the vulture itself is a mythological symbol of maternity. The repeated tail knockings on his mouth mean a strong maternal care to Leonardo, so that he was fascinated and seduced by his mother in childhood. According to Freud, all this firmly engraved on Leonardo curiosity toward genital setting differences, above all in detecting the lack of a female penis, which is at the basis of the strong (sublimated) observational curiosity, also towards nature (mother). The precocious sexual excitation, etched in Leonardo by his mother, has been sublimated in symbolic elaboration which, in turn, was the result of his great childhood curiosity arising from gender sexual differences, *in primis* by the lack of a female penis (the vulture's tail). Thus, the early sexual researches by Leonardo had a decisive role in his creative attitude. Finally, the possible homosexual tendencies of Leonardo may be explained by the lack of an admonishing paternal figure. On the other hand, this absence leads to not recognizing the order of law, this being also decisive in creatively achieving new results beyond the preconstituted order that determines the borders of the knowledge field of every discipline. All this clearly confirms what is said in this paper, since Leonardo was one of the greatest artists and scientists of all the times.

A possible reinterpretation of another Freudian case study

As a further case, we also consider, following Vegetti Finzi (1976, pp. 29-32), Freud's second chapter, entitled *The Child's Game of Fort-Da*, of the well-known 1920 paper *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In it, observing his one and a half-year-old grandson Ernst, Freud tries to interpret the cotton reel game by relating this to the absence of the mother and to fill up the emptiness left by the lost love's object. Whilst the child must undergo the turning away of the mother, with such a game he or she may retaliate against this, becoming an active part of such a relation. It is an essentially verbal game, the words *fort* [forth] and *da* [here] symbolically filling up such an object's absence, replacing and

representing it in such a way as to develop the symbolic space, hence the culture. In the cotton reel game, it is possible to identify the three main dimensions of the own lived experience: the *real* one (the mother[30]), the *imaginary* one (the reel) and the *symbolic* one (the word), overlooking the next Lacanian theory. According to Freud, the throwing out of the object, in such a manner as to disappear, might to be a (symbolic) way to satisfy a repressed drive, consisting in avenging the mother's abandonment, taking the meaning of defiance: namely, the child says, "Fine, begone as well, I do not need you, because I myself am to go away you!" The child himself, one year later, when he was angry with a toy, threw it out, roughly exclaiming: "Go to war!" At that time, indeed, it was told to him that his father was at war. Nevertheless, the child did not feel the father's absence at all, showing that he did not want to be disturbed from his own and exclusive possession of the mother. This is a general way of doing of the children when they desire to express similar aggressive and hostile impulses, hurling out objects instead of persons. As is well known, *d'après* Melanie Klein, play is the best way to analyse a child's unconscious, and Freud himself started to agree with this perspective with this 1920 work. However, given the age of the child herein considered, this discourse is properly inherent to the passage from the anal to the phallic phase until the Œdipus one, when genitality reaches its apex to guide the whole human personality.[31] To this purpose, we would want to add that the above Freudian interpretation of the cotton reel game, especially that regarding the last part involving the father, is perhaps a little too rational (also in consideration of the child's age). Instead, we would want to propose a little modification to this last interpretative part, in accordance with what is done in this paper. To be precise, we wish instead to suggest that this cotton reel game could be related to the lack of a female penis instead of the lack of a mother, also on the basis of what Freud says about the second statement, made around the age of two and a half, by his grandson as regards his own father (who was at war). Maybe, the child's feeling of lack might refer just to this lack of a penis rather than that of a father, given also the simple fact that a reel has a phallic meaning: to be exact, the reel's wire (the phallus) that appears and disappears into the reel (the mother) stands respectively for this penis's presence and absence (or retirement into the mother's body) which, as already said, has strong emotional charges in this period of life. The throwing of an object has the psychoanalytic meaning of a phallic erection;[32] numerous phenomena of this type take place during the transition from the anal to the phallic phase, with an apex in the latter. Nevertheless, the psychoanalytic community has forever been concordant in assuming already existent precocious forms of castration anxiety in males and penis envy in females from two years old (see Greenacre, 1971) which, however, will change during psychosexual development. As stated above, around two years old, the first steps and words begin, together the incipient formation of own bodily image. Moreover, as we will recall in the next subsections, the first communicative and linguistic functions take place as means and tools to symbolically explain corporal movements or to expressively imitate other external phenomena observed by the child. At this stage, the infant's thought begins to form in concomitance with the first verbal and preverbal representations in turn based on and supported by corporal image formation. The child, at this age, is unable to carry out such complete thought, that is to say, that of the absence of the mother as a real person. Freud himself

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[30] Or rather, the mother's phallus, according to our interpretation.

[31] See Vegetti Finzi (1976), according to whom genitality represents the main *regulative leitmotiv* of psychoanalysis, due to its role in the formation and structuration of human personality.

[32] See Greenacre (1979, p. 253).

dealt with this argument in discussing *mourning elaboration* (afterwards included into the 1924 Kleinian depressive position) in his *Mourning and Melancholia* (of 1917). On the other hand, even if it were this, that is to say, if one took into account the above Freudian interpretation based on the mother absence, this mourning elaboration wouldn't be related to the loss of a real person (the mother, in this case) but rather to that of an internal object generally cathexed by ambivalence (see Rycroft, 1968a), just like the mother phallus. Even in doing so, we would fall again into the realm of disavowal because this mechanism is just that invoked by Freud himself (for the first time) as a unique way to overcome this mourning and related anxiety through a psychic elaboration that contemplates disavowal as the first step toward this.[33] According to E. Kris, then, a certain castration anxiety is quite intrinsic to the same bodily human structure. Furthermore, according to Greenacre, the (anal) castration anxiety is operative since two years old, and, in the anal phase, it is due to a fear of losing too the penis (in males) in addition to the faeces. In this period, faeces and phallus are located in the same area, and roughly have the same form, but in the subsequent phallic phase, the penis will assume an ever more predominant role, while the faeces become something to get rid of. All this holds as regards Freud's grandson. Then, the fact that the child showed a certain intolerance towards his father has to be led back more than anything else to his entrance into the Œdipus phase with the end of the phallic phase. The cotton reel might then also have a fetishist meaning if considered as a transitional object in the Winnicott sense. Finally, the exclamation o-o-o (which, according to Freud, stands for "fort") could also stand[34] for a vocalization of *wohin* (or also *wo*), that is, "where is", or simply "where", the missing penis, whereas the other exclamation a-a-a, as above, might stand for a vocalization of "da", that is, "there is" or "is here" the penis. On the other hand, following Bulle and Rigutini (1902, 1907), in a German dictionary drawn up in the 1890s by a professional German philologist Oskar Bulle (1857-1917) with the support of his father-in-law, the Italian philologist Giuseppe Rigutini (1829-1903), the German term that properly stands for "go away" is *wegschicken* (as first term) or *fortscheiden* (as second term), or also *weggehen*, which is the adverb "forth" translated into *weg* as first term and into *fort* as second term. Then, the expression "hunt away" is translated as *wegjagen* in the first way, and into *aus dem Dienst jagen* in the second way. Furthermore, the adverb "there" is also translated into *dort*, so that the exclamation o-o-o could also stand for the vocalization of *dort*, that is to say, the missing female penis "stays there", where the reel has been thrown, in such a manner as to be hidden under the bed, while when he pulls back the reel out of the bed, he merrily says "is here" (*da*). In short, since the dictionary of Bulle and Rigutini is of the period in which Freud wrote that paper, it follows that the adverb *fort* wasn't the first term to be frequently and commonly used to mean "go away" which, in German, had a more complex terminology. Hence, it is also likewise presumable that the exclamation o-o-o stood for *fort* or *wo* or else *wohin*, in reference to the possible localization of a missing object, the female penis in this case. What Freud himself says about the emotional tone with which the child expressed such exclamations leads us to be inclined towards this alternative interpretation of this game of appearing/disappearing. In fact, his grandson was much more joyful when the reel (female penis) reappeared rather than when it disappeared (missing penis), the former event being less distressing than the latter (anxiogenous). It would therefore be the castration anxiety at the basis of another possible interpretation of this game reported by Freud in his 1920 paper which, amongst others, also wanted to explain a possible origin

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[33] See also Galimberti (2006).

[34] Which, in any case, is easier to pronounce by a child than "fort".

of symbolic function, hence of culture. If one instead considers our interpretation, then this Freudian work would result in being another confirmation of what is herein suggested about the possible origins of symbolic function. All this, on the other hand, would turn out to be more coherent with the fact that the Lacanian theory of the psychoanalytic field (which, inter alia, is known to have its deep roots in the two cornerstones of human psychic development, namely penis envy for females and castration anxiety for males (see Dell'Io, 1994) – starts from the Ego's splitting based on disavowal, as briefly recalled above. On the other hand, Lacan stressed the symbolic meaning and its possible relationships with language, the absence and presence phenomena described in this Freudian paper; the absence-presence pair provides the first opposition to introduce the symbolic order. Lacan himself, in one of his celebrated seminaries, alludes to the possible relations between Winnicott's transitional object and this reel.

From fetishism to mathematics and physics

Now, according to what has been said in a previous section, between two and three years old the phallic phase takes place, in which, as we have seen, the castration complex prevails with related phenomena, in concomitance with the Œdipus complex. As we have seen, in this phase the disavowal mechanism (which starts, in its incipient form, in the preceding anal phase) acts with its consequences, so that the above-mentioned psychic phenomena related to counting and to the evanescence of number three might be correlated with it, or brought back to it, given the Freudian (phallic) psychoanalytic meaning of number three. So, we would want to focus attention just on these last remarks: that is to say, we wish to identify the formation of human symbolic function in concomitance with this Freudian psychosexual evolution phase (namely, the phallic one, but with a view too to the previous anal phase) by means of the disavowal mechanism intended as a fundamental psychic formation mechanism which acts in every human being, but which might have degenerative variants (for instance, toward psychotic disorders or paraphilias). In our view, this basic Freudian mechanism (initially considered as a simple Ego defence mechanism but later hypothesized to be also a normal psychic formation mechanism[35] by Freud himself in his last 1938 work) has been quite neglected after Freud, except for some notable exceptions. Furthermore, from what has been said so far, it will be possible to put forward the hypothesis that symbolic thought (including the abstract one) is formed according to this mechanism during this psychic phase (the phallic one). In such a manner, it would also be possible to give some explanation as to what the famous physicist and mathematician Eugene Paul Wigner affirmed (Wigner, 1960) upon the close relationships between mathematics and physics, speaking of an "unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences" about the efficacy of mathematics to symbolically explain the external phenomenic reality; indeed, according to what has been said in this paper, this could be explained simply by the fact that the

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[35] It will play, amongst others, a very basic role in the later pioneering works of Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan. It will be necessary therefore to go on beyond this paper with another one which should take into account the Lacan perspective according to which, to access to symbolic order (hence, the linguistic one), a primary role is just played by disavowal, as already envisaged by Freud himself in his 1925 seminal paper *The Negation*, a work which nowadays is known to have to do with the disavowal mechanism rather than the negation one (see Chemama & Vandermersch, 1998).

human being starts to symbolically represent a really perceived object (the phallus, which is missing in the female) in a fetishistic manner, by means of a precise psychic mechanism (the Freudian disavowal) that takes place, as already stated, during a well-defined phase (the phallic one) of her or his psychic evolution. Indeed, as stated above, this fetish formation has a strict correlation with symbolic function, putting the human being into a close (symbolic) relationship with the external reality, at least in those cases in which it does not degenerate. On the other hand, following Carnap (1966), the very basic principle which lies at the foundation of every measurement process – hence, of the experimental scientific method (which, roughly speaking, combines mathematical analysis and experimentation[36]) – is the *comparison* one: if there exists an arbitrary comparison method, then a (related) measurement principle is always possible through the subsequent assignment of quantitative rules whose results are numbers (measures). And, what deeper psychodynamic mechanism of comparison can there be if not the identification of gender sexual differences by the child, hence of the lack of a female penis? Furthermore, as we have seen above, there is a close connection between numbers and their Freudian psychoanalytic meaning contextualized within the psychosexual stadial development of the human being which should also explain the natural human tendency to assign numbers to natural phenomena. On the other hand, following D'Amore (2009), whenever we try to evoke a mathematical object, like a line, we must necessarily represent it through a *semiotic register*, that is to say, geometrically with a sketch, or algebraically with an equation ($ax + by + c = 0$), or denoting it with the index finger (clearly, a phallic symbol), or evoking it with written or spoken words. All these representations are not the line (as a mathematical object) but its evocations, its semiotic pictures, its images. The mathematical line, in its own simplest realistic meaning, does not exist. Algebra is the highest expression of a decathected process while geometry deals with spatial relationships in their most attenuated form but still in a guise which is capable of visual representation (see Rosen, 1954).

On conceptual metaphors

What has been said in this paper about the primary role played by bodily image formation may be also laid out into the general cognitive context of *embodied knowledge* which, as said above, seems to find experimental confirmation by neuroscience studies on mirror neurons. Within this context the important work of George Lakoff and Rafael E. Núñez on embodied mathematics is therefore laid out. Their celebrated work (Lakoff & Núñez, 2000) is based above all on the general linguistic notion of *conceptual metaphor* according to which, roughly speaking, abstract human ideas make use of cognitive mechanisms to bring back to sensory-motor experiences; that is to say, the abstract is understood through the concrete. This viewpoint has already been philosophically proposed (see Cuccio, 2012), while a more scientific perspective to this idea will be given by the Greenacre researches. As the authors themselves recall, most of our thoughts and conceptual systems are sources from the *cognitive unconscious*, which is a construct wider than the psychoanalytic one; indeed, it comprises not only the repressed content but, in general, every sort of non-conscious thought, just to use a simple negation. According to Lakoff and Núñez, perhaps the main and most surprising result achieved by cognitive science is that most of our thoughts are unconscious. And mathematics does not make an exception. All our own ideas start from our corporal experiences, including the mathematical ones. Nevertheless, these authors point out that a deep explanation of the

[36] See Segrè (1964, p. 1).

implicit origins of these ideas is missing. For them, conceptual metaphors are mostly part of the cognitive unconscious. They say that these mainly originate from our childhood experience, invoking a sort of *fusion* of embodied experiences as sources of them. Such a process is analogous with the formation of corporal image during childhood as we will see later, above all with the notable work of Phyllis Greenacre who conducted fundamental studies on the possible relationships between creativity and perversions. In such a fusion, contemporaneous (or synchronic) active involvement takes place, with emotive attendance, of different parts of the body. But mathematical creativity has nothing to do with elementary arithmetic, but rather with abstraction, which is mainly symbolic in its deep nature. In this regard, the psychoanalytic perspective might accomplish this, as we have tried to do with this paper. Indeed, the disavowal mechanism is basically centred on a corporal insight whose outcomes will then be unconsciously elaborated with repercussions on the Ego structure, hence on cognitive tasks. Therefore, what is here proposed might answer this demand for clarification of these *implicit* questions that Lakoff and Núñez (whose viewpoint is that of the cognitive science of mathematics) claim. They state that there is an unavoidable unconscious conceptual system underlying the whole mathematical framework. In this regard, the psychoanalytic paradigm may lend a valid model to explain the primary sources of conceptual metaphors. Lakoff and Núñez again make proposal about why mathematical knowledge has not been extended to the unconscious realm.[37] This is not completely true: indeed, the important work of Ignacio Matte Blanco tried to successfully move in this direction, as we have briefly outlined in Iurato (2013). It seems that there is a certain reluctance to use the psychoanalytic pattern where it is needed. We instead assume a certain *democratic* epistemological viewpoint in the general context of psychological sciences. Indeed, extending an epistemological principle due to the physicist Richard P. Feynman,[38] it is possible to consider each of the various psychological trends as a model describing a part or aspect of the complex psychic reality. Only all together will they give a more unitary and complete view of this entity which is shown to have a multiple and varied nature.[39] So, the psychoanalytic paradigm might shed light upon those unconscious aspects that are not very clear to the cognitive sciences, without demanding full authority. From the point of view outlined in this paper, we have tried to descry a possible origin of symbolic function by action of the disavowal mechanism. This might turn out to be useful to explain many not properly cognitive aspects of mathematical thought, for instance, to (epistemological) integrate the Lakoff and Núñez perspective on the cognitive science of

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[37] Even if they do not quote Freud at all or, in general, psychoanalysis, in their work.

[38] According to Feynman (1965) (see also Baženov, 1977), in physics there exist many models which can equivalently describe the same physical entity but from different viewpoints. He takes into consideration the *Babylonian perspective* on physics according to which there exist various different theories, including many to reciprocal relationship, but there does not exist a unique axiomatic system within which they are laid out. So, Feynman speaks of a *principle of multiplicity and variety of equivalent descriptions*, briefly known as *Feynman's epistemological principle*, which might be extended, in some respects, to the case of the variety of psychological theories.

[39] A similar perspective is provided by Carotenuto (1982) in the case of the many psychoanalytic paradigms, but that may be easily extended to the general setting of the various psychological trends as confirmed by Caramelli (1984, 1985). Nevertheless, K. Bühler had already hoped for a unitary view of psychic processes that overcame the divergences of the various psychological schools.

mathematics. On the other hand, following Hopkins (2000), there are close relationships between psychoanalysis and the source-target domain structure of a conceptual metaphor as understood by Lakoff and co-workers, again underlying the central role played by corporal image. Following Hopkins (2000, p. 4):

> Where the source domain is A and the target B, so that in mapping the domains we think of B in terms of A, we can speak of B as metaphor of A. Thus we seem to make use of a metaphor of a relationship as a journey. In this we use concepts of objects, properties, and relations from the domain of travel or journeys in order to conceptualize objects, properties, and relations in the domain of co-operative personal relationships, such as love. In doing this we systematically take persons in such relations to correspond to travellers, their particular relationship to the vehicle in which they are travelling, and their goals in the relationship to their destinations in travelling. Thus we may speak of such a relationship as going along well, slowing down, going nowhere, getting stuck, at a crossroads, at a dead end, and so on.

The reference to the triadic structure[40] by such a metaphor notion as well as to its essential meaning to replace or represent an *absent* object (the female penis in the source domain) with another symbol (in the target domain) is clear. Nevertheless, Hopkins does not make the allusion to the disavowal mechanism and related phenomena either explicit or implicit, even if many interesting points discussed by him might be laid out in this explanatory framework considered in this paper.

On transitional objects and fetishism: I

In Greenacre (1971), the author argues about an important study conducted by her on the nature of inspiration in relation to the phallic phase. At the end of this phase, the child should be able to distinguish herself or himself from the external world. The faeces assume the role of objects which are no longer so strictly correlated to own body but belong to the external world and have the double quality of being good or nasty. In this sense, we are much nearer to the Winnicott notion of *transitional object* as well as to the notions of *good* and *bad* object of Melanie Klein. Thanks to her or his conquered standing position as well as to the sensory-motor refinement, the child is able to distinguish between substance and appearance (or form). The obscurity arouses contrasting sentiments, fascinating or scaring. The faeces have the meaning both of birth

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[40] Which also seems to recall the triadic *structural model* (with its communication functions) provided by K. Bühler which will exert a great influence on the final work of R. Jakobson that in turn will play a basic role in Lacan's work.

(from the anus) and death. According to Greenacre, in this period, that is around four years old, it seems that there is a correspondence between the first forms of consciousness, good or bad hygienic behaviour and the awareness that dreams are just that and not real events that occurred during the night. The control and usage of physiological needs in this period are closely connected with the internalization and comparison of external inputs with imagination and conscious thought. These control functions are mainly located in the genital area which is highly sensitive to external stimuli. Thereafter, castration anxiety (anal castration) starts to appear, even if it is qualitatively different from the one present in the Œdipal phase (phallic castration). The related modalities of explication are different for males and females. In Greenacre (1971), the author discusses fetish and transitional object from a comparative stance. There exist many common points between fetish and transitional object, the latter practically ubiquitous and not necessarily entailing a degeneration. The latter is usually abandoned after infancy but may be extended to accomplish fetishist functions. The transitional object, as meant by Winnicott, is usually the first object recognized as belonging to the not-Me (or not-I; see above point *a)* of previous section) but not in a full manner. It is created around one year old from the symbiotic mother-child pair, when verbal capacities are uncertain. Greenacre alludes to a basic role played by the choice and formation of this transitional object in creativity. The fetish is above all a bisexual symbol that allows sexual differences to be refused and affirmed. The fetish is almost never spontaneously abandoned because it is the only one thanks to which a sexual satisfaction is possible. Following Greenacre (1971), by comparing the Winnicott notion of transitional object with that of fetish, it is possible to identify some main common aspects. First, there is a kind of symbolic magic in both. In particular, the symbolic nature of a transitional object is quite primitive, through which the infant starts to cast bridges with the external world even if it initially has a multiform, nebulous, evanescent and changeable nature (like the symbol, as recalled in Part 1) but inspires a sense of confidence and assurance to the possible frustrations and anxieties due to a still weak sense of reality. It is the first object created by the child with the help of the mother, which will assume a meaning assigned to it by the child herself or himself. Through its institution, he or she will be able to establish further object relations. It is ubiquitous, although the period of its usage is variable. Nevertheless, the initial emotional charge cathexed into the transitional object gradually vanishes (often towards games), whereas that of fetish is persistent and continuous also in adult age, without doubts about its nature and existence. In the latter, which should represent the mother phallus, material elements and magic essences (mainly due to enchantments and self-hypnotic procedures) are intimately mixed, in a persistent manner. Second, the relationships with aggressiveness are quite different in both cases. The transitional object rather has supportive, intimate and fond relationships with the mother (from which it arises, as the fetish), not marked by an aggressiveness so intense as to become hostile as in fetishism, which has a coagulated anger sprung out of the fear of castration, mainly due to primal scene traumas. The transitional object undergoes a gradual separation from the mother with a certain amount of aggressiveness, but incomparable with the one that fetish has. It is the cross point between the non-hostile aggressiveness of growth and the object of love. The transitional object usually arises when a good enough *mother* is present, otherwise hostile aggressiveness or frustrations will be the predominant features. The fetish has its source from the mother's body, from her genital zone to be precise, hence is characterized by an aggressiveness turned toward an own narcissistic satisfaction and not as a means of love like the transitional object. It takes place in its material and noticeable form through a latency phase to adolescence. Sadomasochistic fantasies and practices are common features of fetishists. The

transitional object has a fundamental role in building up the own individuality and sense of reality, and may diversify if necessary to the various next purposes. Instead, the fetish is a surrogate of the genital zone of the corporal image. It has a narrow action area and is never used for other purposes if not for a sexual one.

On transitional objects and fetishism: II

We now discuss the role played by fetish and transitional object in imaginative function, following the careful analysis made by Greenacre (1971). Taking into account what was said in the previous section, the overlapping between transitional object and fetish phenomenologies are non-void, in which their common aspects fall. From this, just when the transitional object gradually starts to vanish, the fetish formation begins almost like a continuation of the former, at least in degeneration cases. According to M. Sperling, Winnicott's transitional object is considered as a kind of *infantile fetish*, further pointing out the comparison between these entities. At this point, in relation to the non-empty area given by common aspects between fetish (infantile fetish) and transitional object, we might rightly call *transitional-fetishist objects* the entities falling in this area. Now, we debate on the close relationships existing between transitional-fetishist objects and symbolism, imagination and creativity, also taking into account the fact that during the period of formation of these objects, that is to say from two to four years old, the first language properties start to form. According to Greenacre, the capacity to develop illusion and imagination is the main useful (but also potentially dangerous) feature of a transitional object. In general, the formation of illusion is a general and natural phenomenon that exists throughout life, which may be defined as the consequences of a wrong interpretation of one or more stimuli. When we have a sensorial stimulation, the consequent perception of related data is normally performed. Nevertheless, this sensorial experience is apperceived by the observer according to the emotional state of that moment. The various changes that take place are possible only thanks to rapidity of free associations. In adult age, the illusions are often created in those situations in which there is some obstacle to the usual and normal clearness of sensorial consciousness or apperception, also due to inhibiting or hindering external conditions. Then, the collective situations increase such perturbations and deviations which favour the illusion, above all when a common ideology exists that makes the possible choices biased. In this case, the doubtful or dissenting individual may have a general *Weltanschauung* that is much more exact or valid than the collective one. In these general terms, it is clear that the child is more inclined to create illusions. The only available means of acquisition for children are those provided by sensorial experiences which are mainly promoted, developed and managed by the mother from pregnancy, where a considerable role is played by the introjection-projection mechanisms of primary identification which are already very active during the prenatal phase (see Sasso, 2007). The ability to distinguish between Me and not-Me, the animate and the inanimate, the mobile and the immobile, and so on, is quite uncertain in the child. The ability to determine and to distinguish between the form and contour of external objects develops with the increasing awareness of the own body acquired thanks to sensations due to endogenous experiences as well as to explorations of the own body. In this precocious period the transitional object appears as a means of comparison between already acquired knowledge and further experimentations, hence as a first object for establishing subsequent non-aggressive and sympathetic object relations in the wake of the previous relationships with the mother and her body of which the transitional object will be the natural continuation beyond the restricted bodily confines towards the wider external world. Gradually, the transitional object will be replaced by a

toy or various other objects, parallel to the development of imaginative skills, in non-degenerative cases, while in cases in which aggressiveness tendencies prevail it gradually becomes an infantile fetish which will further evolve towards an adult fetish in degenerative cases. Therefore, the emotional components of aggressiveness involved in this period will play a crucial role in choosing one way or the other. The possible shift from a transitional object to an infantile fetish is shown by a clinical case reported in Roiphe and Galenson (1975) where a separation experience was able to lead to a serious pre-Œdipal castration reaction, by which the transitional object was no longer capable of serving its ordinary function and was replaced by a fetishistic object (infantile fetish).

Fetishism and bodily image: I

Thanks to its great plasticity,[41] the transitional object will allow further multidimensional connections to be instituted through associations with many other external objects which may be represented by means of a spontaneous playful activity. This activity, which was initially free, spontaneous and casual, gradually becomes constrictive and more organized under the internal pressure of maturational tendencies to give a sense of reality and security in the wake of the good mother aspects, if there are any. The transitional object is the first creative object made by the child, an indispensable help for her or his psychic growth. With her or his own imagination and creativity, the child gives a form to this object, instituting with it various possible relations with other objects of her or his imagination or of the external world. The transitional object is moulded on her or his previous (if any) relationships with the good mother of whom it will constitute her symbolic representative. Instead, it will degenerate into an infantile fetish when the bad mother has instituted a perturbative relation with her child, giving rise to a damaged corporal image which he or she tries to remediate by means of narcissistic satisfactions in the latency phase or puberty, during which the adult fetish starts to form in concomitance with strong castration fears. Starting from these notable Winnicott ideas, in particular considering the transitional object as the first object created by the child, Greenacre was naturally led to consider the obvious links existing between the transitional object formation and creative as well as imaginative abilities. According to the official biographies of the most important scientists in history, there are numerous cases (see, for example, Isaac Newton) in which childish play has played an important role in developing their creative and imaginative abilities. According to Greenacre, illusion is a fundamental human capacity which can be improved by means of the correction of wrong perceptions with the own lived experience that gradually every human being acquires through her or his comparison with the external world. To this end, the transitional object plays a fundamental role in the conformation of the perception with reality, trying to avoid the delirium (or hallucinations) which may arise in the case of inadequacy of the related involved emotional control. In some respects, the relationship between (correct or real) illusion and delirium might be roughly compared to the relationship between transitional object and fetish. However, this situation is rather more complex in early infancy in which a primary role is played by the set of perceptive experiences undergone by the child during her or his development, which take place from the first one-year-old abilities to distinguish the Self from the Other. Nevertheless, in childhood, the child has a sensitivity that is so high that he may perform discriminations between objects that the adult may consider to be equal, this being due to a different higher perception of *Gestalt*

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[41] In what follows, we refer to Greenacre (1971), which includes the contents of the basic Greenacre papers (1953, 1955, 1957).

by a child than by an adult. In childhood, the perception field of a child is so susceptible and highly reactive thanks to the concomitant development of her or his bodily kinaesthetic formation and sensorial-somatic experience enrichment,[42] whose outcomes will contribute to the parallel carrying out of the phenomenology of introjective-projective relationships with the external world. The repetitive comparison between the outcomes of the former processes with the external objects will form the central core of the own stabilized knowledge through which it will be possible to recognize the various objects already examined. All that will only be possible for the child if the mother is present as support to this protective activity and explorative knowledge. A prominent role will also be played by all the various emotive reactions with which she will assist such a primary child development. Although the maternal figure might be replaced by other so-called *carers* (even if not in a perfectly equivalent manner), the basic introjective-projective mechanism system between the Self and the Other will never be abandoned throughout life.[43] It will play a basic role in emphatic and emotional growth. Thereafter, the various sensory-motor outputs coming from all the sensitive organs will be organized[44] to give rise to symbolic vocal forms of language, which are one of the main creative features of human beings. Greenacre then supposes that the extreme complexity of perceptivity due to the multiple combinatorial characteristics of the set of the first two-year-old elementary sensory-motor stimuli lie at the source of as many multiple illusions which have the main function to stabilize the evaluation of the object of the various object relationships. At the same time, this infinite possibility of different combinations of the perceptive elements, in turn, allows shades, shadows and ambiguities which are the source of symbolic function, which is a considerable component of originality. The creative person is able to play with analogies and resemblances which, suitably (unconsciously) managed, may lead to a new, useful and harmonious combination which might give rise to her or his original contribution. According to Greenacre, illusion plays a very fundamental role in creativity because it may furnish the stimulus for a further primitive invention. Creativity is a prominent ability in those individuals who show they have a very great and unusual sensitivity for every sensorial-kinaesthetic stimulation that,

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[42] The gastrointestinal system and the genital zones are the main (but not unique) bodily areas involved in such a childish sensorial consciousness of the first two years of life.

[43] The maternal cares (only of a good mother) are of fundamental importance in developing and in bringing about the somatic experience field. In this regard, it is enough to recall that Freud, in the 1910 *Leonardo da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood*, was able to recognize a great somatic relation between Leonardo da Vinci and his mother: indeed, Freud told of many childish experiences of Leonardo in which his mother numerous times covered him with many kisses, so increasing and enriching his somatic perception with these very close maternal touches (see Freud, 1989). As we know, then, the deep somatic and sensitive exchanges are of primary importance for the child (see Greenacre, 1971). They originate from the initial mother-child symbiotic relation, to which the child will respond with a suitable *reflecting reaction* (see Greenacre, 1971) after having almost subliminally (Stern's transubstantiation) absorbed the mother stimuli. In this regard, see the basic studies of Daniel N. Stern (1985), in which the primary role played by the mother in the first two years of the child's life is further highlighted. Stern speaks of a *transubstantiation* which takes place between child and mother during this initial symbiotic phase (see also Piscicelli, 1994).

[44] According to almost universal structures and roles.

together with the correspondent introjective-projective reactivity, leads to a clearer consciousness of *Gestalt*. Just these last introjective-projective reactions, above all in the periods in which the capacity of autonomous movements increases, may contribute to the illusory animation of inanimate objects as well as to the deanimation of parts of the own corporal image. According to Greenacre, this stage of perception of the external world in terms of the own body may be considered as a precursor of the next ability to transform games and other objects in a projective extension of parts of the own body. In this, the author invokes the analogy with the prolonged use of the transitional object by the child which nevertheless may degenerate into infantile fetish in cases of insufficient good mother behaviours, thereby transforming the potentially creative illusions into possible deliria. In any case, the transitional object, whatever function it has, is a tangible symbol of a relation which is undergoing a change (whence its name) toward different possible alternatives. Amongst the normal ones (and not degenerating into fetishism), there is the one in which this object will be abandoned as an obsolescent and without any more sense thing; or the one in which it will be creatively converted into a material toy or into a coherent and realizable fantasy, thus developing the higher forms of creative imagination. These last changes may take place only when the own Ego's development has reached a point of self-awareness, that is to say, the child is conscious about having and controlling a form of thought which belongs to her or him. This favourable change is allowed only when the aggressive drives are managed by herself or himself on the basis of what is made by her or his good or bad mother in developing the proper corporal image; otherwise, the fetishistic drifts are unavoidable, as surrogates to these latter deficiencies. As stated above on perversions, Khan Masud agrees with what is said in this subsection and the next.

Fetishism and bodily image: II

In Greenacre (1971), an interesting discussion on a 1969 work by E. Galenson about possible sources of symbolic thought and its influences on sublimation processes is conducted (see also Gay, 1992). Galenson discusses on the verbal, non-verbal processes and their relationships as well as their possible role in creative thought. She stresses verbalized and non-verbalized games and their role in creativity. In this regard, a careful analysis of language function was needed. Play comprises movement, imitation and action and generally it is a spontaneous expression of pleasure and spontaneity. According to K. Groos, play will anticipate the subsequent kinds of adult activity. Play has been a fundamental analysis and research tool upon which the work of Melanie Klein, in psychoanalysis, and of Maria Montessori,[45] in pedagogy, has been successfully built up. The various toys and objects involved in play basically have the meaning and the function of prolongation of body parts. They are the result of a kind of cathexis of a surplus of bodily energy whose excess needs to be released during bodily growth, while also taking into account environmental opportunities. The modalities of these energetic investments are multiples, and the plasticity with which they will be satisfied are at the sources of secondary thought processes. It seems that thought is the ability to retain and

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[45] This is well known as the appreciated *Montessori method* is, amongst other things, based on a full development of all the sensor-perceptive abilities of a child as well as on the coherent and harmonic integration of their outcomes. On the other hand, a further confirmation of the primary importance of play in the symbolic formation in concomitance with the primary and fundamental relation mother-child is due to M. Milner (1955).

to use interior images sprung out from sensory-motor and somatic experiences which are acquired with modalities very similar to those of play, although experimented in different conditions and opportunities. This retention, then, is closely related to the sense of time, which is a valuable support to the forms of representation given to these images. During this period, between the end of the first year and the beginning of the second, communication abilities and language functions begin to develop coherently and parallel to the main formation processes of corporal image, as stated above. The first linguistic phenomena are mainly imitative, like exclamations and preverbal vocalizations to symbolically denote corporal movements. The fact is that language also starts during the period of sphincter development and it is clinically known as well that child language may be greatly influenced by the control of sphincters. Therefore, according to Greenacre, there is a great plasticity in the bodily organization which is the basis for the image of Self, characterized by synchronic or parallel developments of various and different parts of the body which therefore will turn out to influence each other by means of simple energetic displacements. In short, Greenacre thinks that there exists a sort of *somatic background* for symbolism. Furthermore, starting from the above-mentioned discussion on sphincter development, Greenacre points out that the phallic phase plays a fundamental role in the further establishment of object relationships. Finally, Greenacre comes back again to creativity compared with secondary process thought and play. Greenacre points out that certain creative predispositions are innate.[46] Out of these, there is a great running of sensory-motor apparatus which will contribute to a better formation both of the perception field and of the set of possible responses to external stimuli. All this will then be developed and assisted by the symbiotic child-mother relation. The mother at first will constitute the *primary object* of the child's interests, around whom subsequently other peripheral objects might represent or summarize her body or parts of it, which she will promote in dependence on the degree to which she is a good mother. Greenacre calls these *collective alternatives* or *substitutes*, and these are variously invested by libidinal energy as well as non-hostile aggressive manifestations. Besides being crucial points in the perceptive consciousness field, these substitutes will form the seeds of the subsequent affective relations with the external world of which the mother body is an unavoidable intermediary. These objects will be the first steps through which relationships are interwoven with the external world, toward an increasing own autonomy and independence from the mother. They are also the necessary precursors of play as well as of other creative interests. In conclusion, in the predisposed child, the appearance of multiple symbolic functions is based on the institution of these collective alternatives which are mainly the result of external preverbal or partially verbal impressions entrusted to replace the primary intimate contacts with the mother.

On algebraic symbolism and other

This paper has sprung out of a discussion, exclusively performed within the cognitive psychology context, enjoined with Professor Antonella D'Amico, a valid cognitive psychologist from the Department of Psychology of the University of Palermo, about some gender differences in certain mathematical attitudes observed in children and adolescents.[47] To be precise, Lipari and D'Amico (2009) observed major abstraction

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[46] And, following Sasso (2007), we would want to bring them back to the introjective-projective process system formation of the prenatal phase.

[47] For a general review on gender differences in creativity, see the recent essay article by Hill and Rogers (2012).

ability in boys compared to girls, above all as regards algebraic attitudes in which, as is well known, the symbolic function plays a very crucial role.[48] Clearly, from their point of view (that is to say, the cognitive science one), these authors have not given any possible psychoanalytic motivation to this detected fact. The outcomes of Lipari and D'Amico (2009) are also confirmed, again within the cognitive viewpoint, by Real Ortega and Ursini (2010), who detected, however, a certain general difficulty in symbolizing and interpreting algebraic variables, even if males are favoured compared to females. Their following conclusions will be easily laid out into a framework based on the disavowal mechanism. To be precise, their conclusions reported the following:

All the students had more difficulties with the variable as a general number and with related variables than with the variable as a specific unknown. In particular, they had difficulties with the symbolization and interpretation of these two uses of variable. We found gender differences between male and female students in 31 of 33 questions. Males obtained higher scores than females, but these differences were significant only for 12 items. The percentage of unanswered problems was higher for females than males. Significant differences favouring boys were found in the interpretation of a variable as a general number and as a specific unknown, when interpretation, manipulation and symbolization of a variable as a general number were required. Considering the interpretation of a variable in a functional relationship, focusing on the variation of variables and on the range of variation, girls had more difficulties than boys in flexibly moving between different uses of variables. This finding allows us to establish that gender differences exist when students work with two or three uses of variables in the solution procedure. The differences were related to the interpretation of a variable in these three different uses and aspects. Clearly, the gender differences were more significant in those exercises in which students need to shift between different uses of variables as facets of the same mathematical object and when they are required to integrate these different uses. Male and female students tended to interpret

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[48] This, however, does not imply any notable difference in logical reasoning, which seems to be equal in both sexes.

the variable incorrectly. Frequently, they interpreted the variable as an unknown when the interpretation of the variable as a general number was required. For tautological expressions, female students interpreted the variable as unknown. The incorrect interpretation of the variable in a specific mathematical context may lead to errors such as the concatenation of algebraic terms. Students, in general, had difficulties in accepting a negative number or fraction as a valid solution to an algebraic equation. […] Our findings have shown that these are gender differences when working with variables. More research is needed in this direction, nationally and internationally (pp. 196-197).

All the above-mentioned authors, then, adduce mainly some social-cultural motivations for trying to explain these differences. In contrast, with this paper, we would like to suggest a first possible psychodynamic explanation for this fact. Indeed, it is clear that the disavowal mechanism has certain substantial different implications in respect of gender differences, due to their intrinsic nature as has been defined and considered above all by Freud but also by post-Freudian authors. Boys have a greater propensity to a symbolic and abstract function than girls because of the different approach with which they emotively experience this female lack of a penis. Hereupon, the action of this general psychic mechanism as well as its outcomes will take place with different modalities. On the other hand, it is now known that many mathematical attitudes get their primary sources mainly from visual-spatial abilities[49] as well as from bodily sensations

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[49] Which phylogenetically may be explained by the major male curiosity in looking at and finding the female genital organs which were occulted to his vision by the conquered standing position of the genus Homo (see Piscicelli, 1994). Then, as further confirmation of what is said in this paper, according to Hadamard (1996), it seems that mathematical thought has its deep roots mainly in visual-spatial properties and abilities, while its creativity force substantially comes from the unconscious. According to this eminent author, then, linguistic and verbal properties play a minor role in the mathematical creativity field, while he assigns a predominant role to visual and imaginative abilities. On the other hand, the history of mathematics comprises celebrated cases of important mathematical discoveries or inventions coming from insights in turn stimulated or motivated by real situations or images: for instance, H. Lebesgue, in working out his famous theory on integration, had an important insight during the building of a brick wall (see Hoare & Lord, 2002). Likewise, J. Leray, in brooding upon a mathematical question on turbulence, had a sudden insight by observing the eddies of the Seine (see Ruelle (1991). Therefore, an imaginative or visual or geometrical mind is a basic requirement also in mathematical intuition. Following Rosen (1954), Hadamard himself refers to his own subjective observations. In repeating the proof of the classic proposition that the sequel of prime numbers is unlimited, he says that "a

(*embodiment*[50]). However, the primary aim of this paper has been above all to try to explain a possible origin of human symbolic function from a psychodynamic stance, by means of the last Freudian thought of Freud (1938), starting from a case study drawn from mathematics. Nevertheless, this simple line of research deserves further attention, for instance by orienting the attention towards a general study of symbolic function, which has started with this paper to move toward other knowledge fields, including the linguistic one, where such a function also plays a fundamental role besides the mathematical one, as briefly recalled in Part 1. Furthermore, it would be of a certain interest to deeply study the metonymic and metaphoric properties of the fetish which were briefly recalled in Part 1, as well as to compare what is proposed here with the emergence of human linguistic functions which take place during the passage from the anal to the phallic phase. Indeed, on the basis also of the many sources consulted, we are strongly inclined to think that the characteristic relationships between the semantic and syntactic features of the fetish are, in a certain sense, homologous to those related to physics and its formal language, that is to say, between its semantic and syntactic aspects. In other words, the formation of bodily image, as described above, is of fundamental importance in establishing the possible and right relationships (syntax) between its

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group of vague unstructured spots of different cluster qualities stand out at each decisive stage of the proof before the stage (itself) comes clearly to mind". Also, concerning the problem of considering a sum of infinite numbers of terms intending to evaluate its order of magnitude, he states that "when I think of that question, I see not the formula itself, but the space it would take if written; a kind of ribbon which is thicker or darker at the place corresponding to the possible important terms ... or as I should see it, being strongly far-sighted, if I had no glasses on". Could it be perhaps that this ribbon stands for, or is in place of, the missing female penis? Hadamard also confides that he makes many errors in writing. Hadamard himself then quotes H.J. Poincaré's *œuvre* as confirmation of what has been said, which, amongst other things, is mainly centred on visual representations. In any case, all the Poincaré philosophical thought is a confirmation of what here has been discussed about symbolization and creativity. Also, psychological anthropology confirms a certain influence of visual perception on culture (see Bourguignon, 1979; and references therein). Finally, the latest neuroscience researches (see Mancia, 2007) say that the first memory, from neonatal to about the first three-four years old, is the implicit one, roughly localized in the subcortical areas, which is not of a repressive nature. Indeed, the repressive contents are due to the action of explicit memory, which takes place when the cortical areas are well developed, since its neural circuits are mostly localized there. The implicit memory has, then, essentially somatic-emotive origins and accomplishes to the presymbolic and preverbal attitudes. It will play a very fundamental role in the next psychic evolution of the individual. Finally, take into account the cerebral localization both of the visual stimuli and of the sensory-motor ones.

[50] In this regard, we have the above-mentioned *embodied* mathematics (see Lakoff & Núñez, 2000) conception, which receives further validation by the recent experimental work by the neuroscientist A. R. Damasio, according to whom somatic experiences play a fundamental role in the formation of human thought and its developments. On the other hand, all that is coherent with the slow maturation of the nervous reticular system which inextricably links together the peripheral and the central nervous systems (see Oliverio, 1982).

component elements together with their meaning (semantics) in dependence on the reality test (pragmatics). As is widely described above, during this corporal image formation the agency Ideal Ego and the agency system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego are mainly involved together with their psychodynamic mechanisms.

Further considerations on creativity and all that

On creativity: I.

According to Carotenuto (1991), creativity is mainly an Ego's function. Such a creative Ego's function does not exclusively have a concrete character, that is to say, it does not consist uniquely in the production of concrete objects, but instead it may act in various other ways. The aims and objectives of libidinal drives are also shifted toward non-personal objects which Phyllis Greenacre generically called *collective alternatives* (see above section). Fossi (1983), starting from the previous work of Greenacre[51] (1953, 1957, 1971), states that at the basis of creative thought lies the experience of childhood dismay felt by a creative individual, during her or his own infancy, with a very special emotional intensity.[52] Such an experience would be related to the vision of a penis and with the features of the Œdipus phase, so that we have another confirmation of what is suggested in this paper. According to Greenacre, the psychosexual development of a creative person is quite different from that of any other normal person, so that the contact points between creative talent and neurotic or psychotic behaviour may exist, that is to say, such an incomplete psychic development cannot exclude predispositions to dissociation phenomena. In creative individuals, certain tendencies toward a precocious mysticism or religious experiences have also been detected, sometimes with identifications with divine figures, and this can again be explained by means of the disavowal mechanism because of the mystic meaning that the fetish may have. The gifted child sublimates strong erotic and aggressive instincts into a "loving affair with the world" of which he or she has an exalted vision, so that the creative thing is meant to be like a loving gift. Creativity expresses an endeavour to harmonize the external world (to which the individual responds in a hypersensitive manner) with the internal one, to gratify the own narcissistic needs and to overcome loneliness. According to Greenacre, the creative process does not use neutralized energy and it does not represent a function of the Ego agency (as stated above) free from conflicts. Instead, the creative mind often undergoes reactive formations which may promote symbolization phenomena. The adult creative individual is subjected

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[51] Already widely mentioned above. *En passant*, following Harley and Weil (1990) and Scull and Schulkin (2009), we recall that Phyllis Greenacre (1894-1989) was a notable American psychiatrist (with A. Meyer as advisor) and a psychoanalyst (with F. Wittels and E. Jacobson as supervisors), in friendship with E. Kris and H. Hartmann, who made important clinical and theoretical contributions to and insights into human development, to psychoanalytic training and therapy, and to creativity and fetishism. In particular, in the early 1950s Greenacre began to write on fetishism, observing that fetishists had an especially mutable bodily image. The notable fact that descriptions of bodily changes were central to the works both of the writer, mathematician and logician Lewis Carroll and of the writer Jonathan Swift led to the psychoanalytic-biographical study (Greenacre, 1955) in which she made a psychodynamic study of the creative thought of these authors on the basis of her ideas on creativity and fetishism.

[52] See also Rycroft (1968a).

to a continuous conflict, to an incomplete repression, to an unusual re-entry to childhood fantasies, to great availability of non-neutralized libidinal and aggressive energetic quantity. The latter continuously oscillates between primary and secondary processes, although the creative activity is mainly the result of the primary process whose instinctual energy is displaced as a cathexis object and aim through elaboration by secondary process. Greenacre distinguishes between two possible main creative inspirations, the oral one and the Œdipus one, the latter being related to the resolution modalities of the Œdipus complex. Thus, also due to these last conclusions as well as to the different available sets of collective alternates and to the greater or lesser degree of conscious or preconscious attachment to the original object of libidinal drive, we have enough elements for a possible explanation of the detected minor degree of creativity in women compared to men. In Greenacre (1971), the author argues on some important studies made by her on the nature of inspiration in relation to the phallic phase, which we have already discussed in the previous section. In particular, she points out the importance played by some significant screen memories and particular events that occurred during the transition from the phallic to the Œdipus phase. In short, she reports some clinical cases treated by her and related to gifted persons with a great imaginative component, all joined by some recurrent common themes mainly linked to primary scenes, recounted as screen memories, above all related to penis envy for females and to a general reverential awe for penis, prodromal to later castration feelings. All the examined subjects showed a great imagination, a sensual sensitivity to light, colours and nature, hence a deep interest in and curiosity for the external world in which they look for the reflection of their sentiments. According to Greenacre, the inspiration experiences of childhood (named *phallic experiences*) are the prototype of any other inspiration. In any case, human thought ever recalls the somatic or corporal experience which has created it, whose physical sensations will be imaginatively projected in symbolic forms according to modalities which are predisposed during the phallic and Œdipus phases. Furthermore, Phyllis Greenacre detected a particular predisposition, above all amongst scientists, to a sort of mystic relationship toward a God, mostly not related to that of religion, representing that mysterious impulse that gives the creative force who they have. Greenacre would want to bring back such a God to the father of the familiar romance (of the Œdipus phase) as lived by the individual. All that, from the point of view of the present paper, could also be linked to the symbolic role played by fetish in mythology and religion, as briefly recalled in the previous section. In this regard, it is noteworthy to recall the 1928 work *Dostoevsky and Parricide* in which Freud proposed interpreting the hysteroepilepsy of the writer as being due to the strong anguish of his father's threats. According to Greenacre (1971), certain perverse characterical profiles are present above all in creative personalities, often hidden behind forms of isolation.

On creativity: II

Creative thought, with the symbolic function as a result of the disavowal mechanism, has strong instinctive needs that the external reality is not able to satisfy, differently from the fetishist who instead finds, in a partial material object (fetish), a rough satisfaction with them. So, the creative person turns her or his attention towards the fantasy world where he or she finds a surrogate to the satisfaction of her or his own desires. Likewise to neurotics and psychotics, the creative mind is cut out from the reality, but is different from it because he or she may come back to the reality since this is not precluded from him or her. This is explainable through the disavowal mechanism because this is mainly based on the chief fact that a real fact (the awareness of gender sexual difference, namely

the detected lack of a female penis) is, however, always perceived but disavowed, displacing such real but painful perception to the symbolic realm in normal cases, whereas, in degenerate cases, it is displaced to a material fetish object. Again, following Carotenuto (1991), the well-known writer Joseph Conrad seemed to have strong fetishist problems according to a psychoanalytic biography written by Meyer (1967). According to Eissler (1962; 1967), who made some interesting psychoanalytical remarks on Leonardo da Vinci and his work in Meyer (1967), psychopathology is an indispensable element for certain types of higher mental conquests; in this regard, see also Andreasen (2008) and Janka (2004). Finally, as stated above, the remarkable work of Greenacre (1955) is on two creative persons, the writer Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and the mathematician and writer Lewis Carroll (1832-1898). At the basis of their creative thought, Greenacre identifies a disorder of bodily image, hence forms of fetishism. The whole Part II of the fundamental treatise by Carotenuto (1991) is fully devoted to the creative dimension of human thought, and most of what is reported there is easily explainable through the simple psychodynamic model considered here and mainly based on the disavowal mechanism. All this might turn out to be of a certain usefulness to confirm what we suggest. In particular, we have widely made reference to the remarkable work of Phyllis Greenacre. She began to be interested in perversions and creativity from the 1950s. Her main idea is that fetishism is chiefly the outcome of an imperfect development of the corporal image. She deepened fetishism in relation to Winnicott's transitional object theory, whereupon, Greenacre was naturally led towards creativity: as she herself said, this interest in creativity was due to the influence of Ernst Kris and to her previous work on fetishism. In that period, Greenacre was engaged in studying the celebrated Lewis Carroll work *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, under the strong and stimulating advice of Kris. To be precise, in studying fetishism and similar disorders, she noticed the recurrent presence of sentiments of change of corporal image together with tendencies to identify and personalize different parts of the body. At the same time, Greenacre was also studying the above work of Carroll as well as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, finding confirmation of what she had noticed, namely that in fairy tales and popular stories there were descriptions similar to the features of fetishism of above, so that she began to study the biographies of these authors, which led her to the basic work (Greenacre, 1955). In this way, fetishism and creativity met during the fruitful and notable work of Phyllis Greenacre, a route also followed successfully by Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985).

Conclusions

Finally, we summarize what points of this paper, from our point of view, deserve major attention. On the basis of the fetishism pattern as explained by the last 1938 Freudian thought, and taking into account the disavowal mechanism considered to be, *d'après* Anna Freud and Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), a general psychic mechanism involved in a basic Ego's splitting which gives rise to two main subagencies (Ideal Ego and Ego's Ideal according to H. Numberg and D. Lagache), it is possible to reach the basis of the first very basic symbolic functions by means of the separation of opposites operated by the dialectic interaction between the above Ego's subagencies.[53] To be precise, it is the

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[53] These two Ego's subagencies related to the Ego's idealization are also closely connected with the formation of primary and secondary narcissism, the first being related to Ideal Ego, the second to the system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego. Therefore, the dialectic relation between all these Ego's subagencies is connected with narcissism.

dualistic interaction between the Ideal Ego subagency, mainly related to primary narcissism, and the subagency system Ego's Ideal – Super-Ego, mainly related to secondary narcissism, that gives rise to that complex, interrelated and variegated realm of non-conventional and conventional symbols. At the same time, starting from the Freudian assumption of the polymorphous nature of a child (which might justify a kind of ubiquitous nature of childish fetishism in infancy), this Ego's splitting gives rise as well both to symbolic and imaginative elaborations (as in normal cases, marking the passage from nature to culture, including the language) or to degenerations (as in pathological cases of paraphilia). These two alternatives are not completely disjunctive of each other, but always in dialectic interaction between them, with a prevalence of one on the other. It is also possible to understand symbolic or imaginative elaborations in a wider sense, including too neuroses and psychoses, but whose relations with reality are quite different from those related to the remaining normal forms of symbolic elaborations like those involved in natural sciences. As recalled by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), and as widely mentioned above, the two different psychic attitudes resulting from the Ego's splitting, contrary and independent of each other, are at the foundation of the person's psychoanalytic theory itself. Furthermore, having to do with an intrasystemic Ego's splitting rather than with an agency splitting (for instance between Ego and Id), Freud wished to stress a new psychic mechanism different from repression and negation. Indeed, the main feature of this division process is just that it does not reach the formation of a (synthetic) compromise between these opposite attitudes, but rather it keeps or maintains both simultaneously without establishing between them any dialectic relationships. In doing so, that is to say, in contemporaneously maintaining, at the same level, opposite or contrasting tendencies or attitudes, it will be possible to have that *syncretic* character,[54] unifying and globalizing, that will allow a symbolic function, in accordance with its original etymological meaning. As stated in Part 1, during the passage from the anal phase to the phallic one, *ambivalence* gradually reaches its higher value in the sense that, in it, the opposite tendencies lie at the same level, that is, they hold next to one another, this being a characterizing element for symbolic formation. In any case, the symbolic function would be closely related to the outcomes of the disavowal mechanism and then ruled by the various qualitative and quantitative dialectic relationships between these two Ego's sub-agencies,[55] established bit by bit during psychosexual development. In particular, in doing so, it would be possible to provide some psychodynamic motivation to mathematical symbolism in relation to natural science in the cognitive model of G. Lakoff and R.E. Núñez, based on the notion of conceptual metaphor. Furthermore, from what has been said in the paper, it is possible to put forward the hypothesis according to which there may be a gender difference in the formation of bodily image during the first four years of age, which, in turn, reflect different abilities in visual-spatial skills that, as said, are of fundamental importance for mathematical

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On the other hand, in relation to what has been pursued in this paper, the narcissistic character of mathematicians is well known, since K. Weierstrass and Novalis's semi-philosophical considerations on mathematics (see Dyck, 1960; Jahnke, 1991) according to which "*a real mathematician is an enthusiast per se; without enthusiasm, there is no mathematics*", as was well testified by Fine and Fine (1977).

[54] See Iurato (2012) and also Iurato (2013).

[55] Most human psychic functioning will be ruled by the basically dualistic interplay between the system Ego's Ideal-Super-Ego subagencies and the Ideal Ego subagency with their relations with Id.

attitudes, above all the algebraic-geometrical ones. On the other hand, for every creative artist, no one moment of her or his life is more happy and rewarding than the one leading to a discovery or invention thanks to which the artist may finally appease her or his original castration anguish by means of this symbolic satisfaction, thereby refinding the female penis lack. Finally, as we have said at the beginning of the first part of this paper, the above-mentioned Ego's splitting is also at the basis of the bodily image formation with related phenomena (like transitional object phenomena, etc.) on which, in turn, the first syntactic and semantic formations of human thought rely, prodromal patterns upon which further relations between mathematics and physics will be moulded.

Acknowledgements

Biography

Giuseppe Iurato was born in Ragusa, Italy, and studied Mathematics and Physics at Bologna, Pisa and Catania, Italy. Presently, he is a PhD student in History and Science Education at Palermo, Italy. His interests mainly regard general history and philosophy of sciences, with particular attention to their foundations and possible relationships.

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