Language and Psychoanalysis

Volume 10, Issue 2, 2021

Scope

The journal of *Language and Psychoanalysis* is a fully peer reviewed online journal that publishes twice a year. It is the only interdisciplinary journal with a strong focus on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of language and psychoanalysis. The journal is also inclusive and not narrowly confined to the Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

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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- Manuscripts should follow the style conventions as outlined by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th edition.

Content

Language Choice in Psychotherapy of Multilingual Clients: Perspectives from Multilingual Therapists

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Abstract

Language is an essential part of psychotherapeutic work. In psychotherapy involving more than one language and/or culture, acknowledging the impact of the therapist's and the client's language(s) can facilitate achieving the most beneficial therapeutic process and outcome. The field has witnessed a surge in interdisciplinary work combining research methods from multilingualism and psychotherapy. This research aims to investigate the role of multilingualism in emotion expression and interpretation in psychotherapy offered by multilingual/multicultural therapists. Ten individual semi-structured interviews with therapists in the Netherlands focused on therapists' experience of working as a multilingual/multicultural therapist with culturally and linguistically diverse clients. Thematic analysis of the results showed that language choice influenced the therapeutic process and its outcome in terms of discussing emotional topics, establishing and maintaining rapport with the client, and managing linguistic and cultural differences. Linguistic awareness of therapists allows them to manage the linguistic and cultural issues that inevitably arise in encounters with multilingual/multicultural clients.

Introduction

Language is crucial to psychotherapeutic practice. It is by means of language that good rapport and effective communication are established between therapist and client. Indeed, psychotherapy is often called "talk therapy". However, as Costa (2020) points out, there is insufficient "talking about the talk" in training for psychotherapists, who may end up unprepared when facing clients – and possibly interpreters – with unusual linguistic profiles, which may change the dynamics in the session. The likelihood of psychotherapists encountering such situations is increasing these days, with large numbers of refugees fleeing their home country, often under traumatic conditions, before settling down in host societies.

Addressing language issues in psychotherapy is vital as they can impact patient participation (Schinkel et al., 2018) and the understanding of patient's complaints as well as doctor's advice (Twilt et al., 2019). Since therapy involves emotion communication (i.e., the expressing and interpreting of emotions), it is vital to gain a better understanding on the issue in a wide variety of contexts. However, attention in the profession for linguistic and cultural diversity of therapists and clients is limited. To the best of our knowledge, even if there is a focus on language in psychotherapy research, accounts predominantly examine the role of the *client's* multilingualism, but rarely the *therapist's* multilingualism, which may shape encounters with

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multilingual/multicultural clients. Research has shown that awareness about multilingualism is crucial for therapists working with clients from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Bager-Charleson et al., 2017; Costa & Dewaele, 2019). The current qualitative study adds to this avenue of research by focusing on how multilingual and multicultural therapists in the Netherlands use their languages. Our research focuses on the importance of making explicit the Dutch therapists' implicit, experiential knowledge of allowing multiple languages in the room.

Theoretical Framework

Following Dewaele and Li (2013, p. 231), we define multilinguals as "people with at least partial mastery in a number of languages". It is not uncommon in literature on multilingualism to see the terms "multilingual" and "multicultural" used next to each other. However, being multilingual does not necessarily mean being multicultural. Comparing these notions, Grosjean (2015, p. 575) speaks about multiculturalism as "cultural competence or knowledge" and "interacting in two or more cultures", and we adopt this definition. Therefore, in this paper the term "multilingual/multicultural" means speaking more than one language and identifying with more than one culture. This does not imply that the people involved have equal skill and familiarity with all languages and cultures in their repertoire, but simply that they have had exposure to and interaction in more than one language and culture. Dewaele and Li Wei (2014) pointed out that code-switching, "the alternation and mixing of languages within a conversational utterance" (p. 235) is a common phenomenon in exchanges between bi- or multilinguals. Although code-switching is typically linked to higher levels of linguistic mastery (Dewaele, 2013), is has sometimes been associated with a lack of control or a poor understanding of the languages. Dewaele and Li Wei (2014) found that attitudes toward code-switching were rather mixed, even within bi- and multilingual populations. In their sample of 2070 mono- and multilinguals, they found that participants knowing more languages did not have significantly more positive attitudes toward code-switching. Personality played a role, with participants scoring high on Tolerance of Ambiguity, Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Stability reporting more positive attitudes toward code-switching. Participants' upbringing, experience of living abroad, and working environment also had an effect: early bilinguals, those who had lived abroad, and those working in an ethnically diverse environment reported more positive attitudes towards code-switching. Gender, age, and education levels also played a role, with female participants, older participants, and participants at both the low and the high end of education appreciating code-switching the most. The implication of this finding for the current study is that multilingual therapists might hold different attitudes towards code-switching with their patients, and they might be unaware of the potential therapeutic benefits of tapping into their own and their clients' languages. In addition, different attitudes may be held towards different varieties of the same language. This is particularly important when the client's L1 is a low status variety of the language in question, as such speakers may fear negative judgments because of the way they speak L1.

Communicating Emotions in Multiple Languages

One of the striking findings in multilingualism research is that multilinguals' languages can have different functions and can be used in different discourse domains. Grosjean (2012) named this the "Complementarity principle", the fact that multilinguals' language preferences differ according to situations, interlocutors, and purposes. Somebody who is fluent in two languages may struggle to discuss something in a language that that person does not usually use for that topic. Being forced to talk about emotions in a foreign language (LX), for example, may trigger a sense of constraint, of frustration, and even of alienation (Panicacci & Dewaele,

2017). Multilinguals' languages may also "feel" different because of variation in levels of emotional resonance: LXs typically have less emotional power than first languages (L1s), and LXs are typically dispreferred for communicating emotions (Dewaele, 2013). Even films and news bulletins in the LX have been found to elicit weaker emotional reactions among LX users compared to L1 users (Dewaele, Lorette, Rolland & Mavrou, 2021). The authors discovered that 553 English LX users reported lower frequency of feeling emotional when watching the news or a film, lower frequency of laughter when watching a funny film, and a lower degree of trust in news reports in English compared to 271 L1 users.

The reason is that L1(s) are more strongly embodied, having been acquired from birth and used in childhood through a process of intense affective socialization, when linguistic knowledge develops with social and cultural knowledge, as well as emotion regulation systems and autobiographical memory. In contrast, LXs are acquired later in life, less intensely, and typically in the relatively artificial classroom environment; they are characterized by more restricted linguistic input, less authentic interaction, and resulting in words that are not linked to a complete conceptual representation (Pavlenko, 2008), which makes them feel uncalibrated and "detached". Intense secondary affective LX socialization may change this, but LX users may occasionally struggle with the exact meaning and power of emotion words and emotion-laden words, and may be at a loss on how to fit them in an appropriate script (Pavlenko, 2008).

The detachment effect of the LX can have both negative and positive psychological consequences. The 468 participants in Panicacci and Dewaele (2017) were Italian migrants in English-speaking countries for whom Italian had typically remained the language of the heart, with English typically used in professional environments. As a result, their English LX did not allow them to express their intimate feelings with sufficient detail and sophistication, which created a sense of frustration when they had no choice but expressing their emotions in English, especially with less familiar interlocutors (Panicacci & Dewaele, 2018).

Similarly, Dewaele and Salomidou (2017), in a study involving 429 participants who were in multilingual/multicultural relationships showed that some multilinguals complained about a lack of emotional resonance in their LX. This was rather characteristic of early stages in a relationship, when participants reported feeling inauthentic, more distant, and occasionally unable to express their emotions in the LX. With time, though, partners became more familiar with each other's conceptual understanding of emotions, and found their way in common language(s).

In another study, De Leersnyder et al. (2011) demonstrated how knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the partner's language was no guarantee for smooth emotion communication in multilingual/multicultural families. Their findings on the emotional experiences of Korean immigrants in the USA and Turkish immigrants in Belgium highlight the role of conceptual understanding and the joint effort in meaning-making. The necessity to speak a LX in a newly formed multilingual family could be a challenge, especially at the beginning, when the partners get to know each other and learn to express their own and interpret the other's emotional states, or when children are involved. When such multilingual/multicultural families communicate, their language choice for expressing and interpreting emotions is highly dependent on each member's language proficiency, their emotional relation to the language, and cultural specifics of emotions.

Expressing and perceiving emotion may already be a challenge in a common language, and even more difficult when more than one is involved. In addition, if the partners decide to

undergo therapy in the local language, foreign to the multilingual family setting, it may be an additional problem (Ruiz-Adams, 2019). Since making meaning of the narrative, talking about sensitive topics, and becoming closer to one's emotions are integral parts of psychotherapy, informing therapists of relevant findings about the linguistic aspects of emotion expression in an accessible way, specifically about both the opportunities and the barriers linguistic identities can trigger, may enrich the therapeutic process and facilitate treatment and healing of the client.

Languages and Emotion in Psychotherapy

Establishing adequate rapport and continuously striving for understanding serves as the basis for a mutually beneficial therapeutic process and good outcome (Hill, 2008). Language plays a crucial role in this process; pre-existing linguistic forms used to express emotion may be misunderstood or misinterpreted, conjure up biases and wrong assumptions, and disrupt the process of giving and receiving adequate treatment. For example, if the client's L1 has an emotional concept that is absent in the language of therapy, the therapist may misjudge the true emotion described by a client. For example, Polish has two equivalents for the English word "angry", one with a positive and another with a negative connotation, hence causing potential ambiguity for a Polish person speaking English.

An investigation by Costa and Dewaele (2012) into the beliefs, attitudes and practices of 18 monolingual and 83 multilingual therapists in their interactions with their multilingual patients revealed significant differences between both groups. The multilingual therapists were more attuned to their clients (they felt better able to connect) compared to their monolingual colleagues, who were more likely to collude with them. Next, Dewaele and Costa (2013) focused on 182 multilingual clients. The clients underlined the importance of using L1s and LXs with their therapist, and enjoyed the possibility of code-switching when needed. This typically happened when retelling traumatic episodes, allowing them to zoom in or out of the event depending on the need. This finding confirmed Kokaliari et al.'s (2013) observation that therapists who know their client's languages can allow them to use their L1 to increase, or their LX to decrease the emotional load of a traumatic event being discussed. Their qualitative study suggests that multilingual clients tend to switch to their L1 when talking about highly affective topics, dreams, or trauma.

Following a similar avenue of research, Rolland (2019) and Rolland, Dewaele, and Costa (2017) analysed data collected from 109 multilingual clients from around the world, most of whom reported code-switching linked to emotion regulation and to the need to verbalise language-specific concepts, autobiographical memories, complex social relationships, and perception of the self. Clients reported that the lower emotional resonance of the LX could be an obstacle, a much appreciated analytical 'third' space or a way to express painful emotions (Rolland, 2019). When the language of retelling a traumatic event was congruent with the language of the experience, it allowed participants to express themselves with more detail and clarity. Byford (2015) suggested that the use of an LX may allow clients to detach themselves from the trauma but that this strategy is not purely defensive as it also enables them to access those traumatic memories.

The option to code-switch in therapy is not equally appreciated by all bilinguals. Pérez-Rojas, Gelso, and Bhatia (2014) found that among the 63 Spanish-English bilingual university students who listened to a simulated psychotherapy session with a client and a bilingual Latina therapist who invited the client to switch from English to Spanish when the client had trouble expressing emotions, and a recording with the same therapist who did not invite the client to switch, only "participants who expressed a greater sense of belonging to US culture rated the

therapist who invited the client to switch as being more multiculturally competent" (p. 55). A recent study by Pérez-Rojas et al. (2019) focused on the role of Spanish and English in psychotherapy with bilingual Latinx clients in the US. Phenomenological analysis of eight interviews with such clients demonstrated that it was important for them to have the possibility to use both languages in therapy according to their linguistic and psychological needs, and to foster a sense of agency. Using a similar approach, Cook (2019) analysed data collected through interviews with 15 refugees from around the world who had suffered from rape or torture and who had settled in London in a therapeutic setting. Using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, the author found that the use of the L1 or LX had its unique advantages and limitations. While the use of limited English LX could be draining and could lead to a feeling of frustration at being too blunt and not articulate enough, it could also empower clients and allow them to bypass the pain and the shame engrained in the L1 words and expressions surrounding the events. English LX made it possible to recount the traumatic experience which occurred in their L1 without being overwhelmed by despair. As one participant put it: "The English language enables me to visit my pain" (Cook & Dewaele, 2021). English LX allowed them to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. Dewaele et al. (2020) and Cook and Dewaele (2021) pointed out that the use of an LX may be just one strategy in the healing process, allowing the processing and integration of the trauma at an embodied and cognitive level.

Finally, Bager-Charleson et al.'s study (2017) with 88 therapy trainees and qualified therapists showed the effects of training sessions about multilingualism. A survey showed that they significantly raised awareness about the danger of making assumptions, and interviews revealed an increased awareness about the role and the importance of code-switching in therapy.

In summary, empirical findings suggest that multilingual clients need to be able to use their various languages in therapy according to their needs and that they are thankful of therapists who allow other languages in the room. However, the majority of research has been carried out among clients, rather than therapists, and in English-speaking contexts. It is important to find out whether similar patterns emerge when the language configuration is different in order to establish clearer roles of linguistic, cultural, and psychological factors in multilingual therapy.

Based on ten individual interviews with Dutch multilingual/multicultural therapists, the following research question was formulated: *What role does the therapist's multilingualism play in the therapeutic process with multilingual/multicultural clients, in particular in emotion communication?*

Methodology

In order to investigate the role of the therapist's language(s)in the therapeutic process and its outcome, as well as therapists' views of employing their multilingualism in their practice, a qualitative study was designed. Because we were interested in individual stories and subjective opinions, a qualitative design was the most appropriate. The empirical context of the study was the provision of psychological help and support to multilingual/multicultural clients in the Netherlands.

We opted for semi-structured interviews in order to collect multilingual therapists' stories about their own experience (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), and to follow the uniform format of a prepared questionnaire while still allowing enough room for the conversation to go beyond the

question-answer paradigm, which is crucial when obtaining detailed information about participants' experience (Cohen &Crabtree, 2006). The interview audio files were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Compared to other methods of analysis, thematic analysis is common practice in qualitative studies (e.g., Bager-Charleson et al., 2017; Schweitzer et al., 2015) since it can be applied to a wide range of research questions and allows the researcher to work with the data in a flexible yet consistent way. Before conducting the interviews, ethical clearance was obtained from the first author's research institution (Project #2020/142; obtained on 9th October, 2020).

Participants

In total, ten therapists (9 female, 1 male) participated in this study. Eight participants were recruited via three centres for psychological help in the Netherlands and two individually via the international database of psychologists/psychotherapists. The criteria for choosing the centres were that 1) they offered psychological help to multilingual/multicultural clients, 2) they had multilingual/multicultural therapists available, and 3) they allowed the possibility to hold interviews in English. The inclusion criteria for therapists were that 1) they worked as a recognised psychologist, psychotherapist or counsellor in the Netherlands, 2) they had experience working with multilingual/multicultural clients, 3) they spoke more than one language, and 4) they spoke English as one of their languages. Since the aim was to interview participants from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the sample was heterogeneous.

The average age of the participants was 37.1 years (range 25-50). Seven therapists reported practising an integrative approach, i.e., adapting their therapy to the client's needs. Out of the remaining three, one therapist offers trauma counselling, another one hypnotherapy, and the third one mainly practices EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). Eight different nationalities were reported: Dutch ($n = 2$), Moroccan-Dutch ($n = 1$), Greek ($n = 1$), Ukrainian ($n = 1$), French ($n = 1$), Venezuelan ($n = 1$), Belgian ($n = 1$), Italian ($n = 1$), and Iranian ($n = 1$). The most frequent L1 was Dutch ($n = 4$) and the most frequent LXs were English ($n = 7$), followed by French, Arabic, Berber, Greek, Italian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Spanish.

Procedure

The interviews followed the interview guide, in accordance with the recommendations of Kvale and Brinkmann (2015). The interview guide was designed based on the literature and research aims of this study. In addition to the demographic questions, the topics covered during the interviews included the therapists' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and development, their experiences when working with multilingual/multicultural clients, and the ways they utilize their own and clients' languages in therapy. Before the main questions, each participant was asked to self-assess their frequency of use and their fluency of every language they speak. The assessment form was adapted from Grosjean (2015).

The data obtained in the course of the interviews were transcribed and coded using the software tool Atlas.ti, and then analysed on the basis of reflexive thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2020) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2015). The main aim in choosing this methodology was the need to find patterns in the data within the theoretical commitments staked out by the theoretical framework and the research question. Since thematic analysis helps establishing and organizing patterns in the data, the end result comprised a theory-based

complete narrative, allowing an interpretation in the context of multilingual/multicultural therapists' experience with multilingual/multicultural clients.

Coding

As defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), thematic analysis (TA) is "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data". In particular, the reflexive TA approach was applied in this study, according to the typology given by Braun and Clarke (2020). Since theme development depended on the researcher's analytic and reflexive abilities, and the themes were generated through close engagement with the data, this type of TA was the most suitable. Each interview was transcribed immediately after its completion, adding to the previous one(s), and coded and analysed in order to generate themes. This contributed to revisiting and re-evaluating of themes constantly, which is crucial in this type of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

After conducting the interviews, to further develop and analyse the emerging themes, the following steps of reflexive TA were taken. First, familiarisation with the data was done by reading through the transcripts. Next, the transcripts were coded in order to find all emerging themes, yielding *codes*. These codes from all ten interviews formed the basis of the *code book*. Next, the overarching themes and subthemes were developed. Only the themes and subthemes pertinent to the research question were included. These themes were reviewed across the entire data set to ensure consistency, and the complete code book was compiled. Finally, a complete narrative was composed and a critical analysis was written up.

In order to ensure coding validity, two important steps were undertaken – themes saturation and group review of the overarching themes and subthemes. As some studies demonstrate, sufficient data saturation may increase research validity (e.g., Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2018; Ando et al., 2014). Since this study employed thematic analysis, the goal was saturation of the themes rather than the entire data. This means that data was to be collected until no new themes could be developed. Continuous review of the information from new interviews showed that by the end of the data collection (by interview 8), no new codes or concepts appeared that were pertinent to the research question. In the final step, consensus was reached concerning the main themes and subthemes. The finalized themes and subthemes were consequently interpreted and analysed, and are presented below.

Results

During the interviews, participants referred to several topics as the most important aspects of their work with multilingual/multicultural clients in the context of expressing emotion (e.g., discussing trauma or behavioural issues). In accordance with the research aims, three main themes and six subthemes were distinguished, as illustrated in Table 1. The table also shows how many participants contributed to each theme and subtheme.

The next section includes quotes from the interviews that illustrate the themes and subthemes. To ensure privacy, all quotes were anonymized. In the cases when more than five participants expressed a similar view, the word "most" is used, whereas for an opinion that was voiced by one to five participants, the word "a few" or "some" is used. The L1 is referred to as L1 (acquired before age 3) and a foreign language as LX throughout.

Table 1. Themes, Subthemes, and Participants

Theme	N	Subtheme	n
Availability of languages	10	Language switching can serve various functions	10
		Low proficiency as obstacle or facilitator of the therapeutic process	10
Language and emotion	10	Emotion encoding and decoding	9
		Emotional distance in L1 and LX	10
Language, culture, and therapeutic relationship	10	Cultural differences in making meaning	10
		Tracing one's own assumptions and biases	10

Note. N = 10.

Availability of languages. Each participant talked about the role(s) their own and their clients' languages play in the course of therapy. All therapists inform their clients in advance which languages are available in therapy, either via their website or during the intake, and most of the therapists consider it important to do so. One of the therapists said, "I do so…because that's kind of symbolic of a certain flexibility across cultures that I have and that I offer gladly in therapy" (Participant 2). Therefore, clients can already become aware of the possibility to use their L1 in sessions, should they wish to do so.

Language switching can serve various functions. One recurring subtheme integral to multilingualism in therapy, which all participants experienced in their practice was *language switching* and its various *functions*. For instance, participants described shifts from LX to L1 when clients tried to recall certain memories, to use a more socially acceptable language for the purpose (e.g., for swearing or taboo words), or to use words with a different connotation (e.g., less ambiguous). Participant 3 said that it might seem worse to swear in Russian than in English, possibly because in Russian, swearing is much more personal and therefore considered less socially acceptable. Another participant spoke about how her own language choice depended on the conceptual meaning she wanted to convey to the client:

"…sometimes I too switch when I can't find the concept, which happens mostly when I provide therapy in French, because some concepts, I think, are more…some words have different connotations in French and how some word can have, like, different dynamic meaning to it. And if I don't want my client to understand it this way, I'm going to use the English words" (Participant 6).

In addition, language switching is sometimes used to exclude a third person from the conversation. This function is of particular interest for the dynamics in systemic or family therapy since here language is used as a tool to wield power. While this allows one family member to express something that is important to the client, it also creates an ethical dilemma for the therapist. This dynamic was illustrated by the example from one participant's session with a mother and a daughter, when the daughter switched from L1 to LX in order for her mother not to understand her, thus trying to gain more control of the situation:

"She [daughter] thought, 'Okay, I'll say it in Dutch,' and the mother was 'What? What's going on?' So that was for her [daughter] the thing – to change the language, like we have a secret language in Dutch" (Participant 9).

Another important function that was reported for language switching was to counter the lack of certain words or concepts in one of the languages. For instance, one therapist working with LGBTQI clients remarked that particular words denoting gender categories are sometimes missing in her clients' L1 (Participant 3), while another one talked about her clients' explaining to her concepts that did not have a good translation in the LX (Participant 4). Yet another therapist made the following remark:

"In Dutch, there are no words to express anxiousness. You have fear and you have restlessness, but there's no anxiousness, no specific word for anxiousness. So sometimes you just, you know, you also use your language palette to express even more" (Participant 2).

These instances of language switching are mentioned as part of therapists' experiential knowledge, their unique encounters with multilingual/multicultural clients. Their own multilingualism seems to have provided them with a higher sensitivity towards their clients' language and culture. However, this does not appear to be something they had explicitly known about before they started working as therapists. In the words of one participant, "this whole letting your client say something in their L1 is something that I had to learn throughout my years of work, that I figured out myself" (Participant 1).

Low proficiency can be an obstacle or a facilitator of the therapeutic process.
Sometimes code-switching can occur due to limited *language proficiency*, i.e., when the client's or therapist's LX is not sufficient to be able to express thoughts and feelings. All participants stated their willingness to go above and beyond in case language proficiency was an issue, setting their client's benefit as a priority. Only two participants said that it might not be possible for them to agree to conduct therapy with clients whose language skills were too low: "…talking is key in therapy, so if you're not able to communicate, then you're just not able to work" (Participant 4). Many participants noted the necessity to be patient, to repeat, to take more time with the client, and to ask more questions. Interestingly, having to ask more questions was also referred to as an *advantage* since the therapist's lack of knowledge of the client's L1 seems to "legitimize" posing more questions and on topics that might have been omitted in a monolingual setting. One of the participants explained: "I found that it's an opportunity for me to get to know what *they* particularly mean by the phrases they're using, so yeah, I've turned it into an advantage, in a way" (Participant 4). Another participant added that not speaking the same language provides an opportunity to ask more questions than one could in a monolingual setting:

"…maybe it's also a plus if you don't understand the language very well, because I know Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, but not that well, so I have to ask a lot of questions also: 'What do you mean about it? I don't understand. What do you mean?'" (Participant 10).

Another result of lower proficiency that was seen as an advantage was that clients use simpler words and expressions than native English speakers would. Not having many words at one's disposal and thus expressing oneself in LX in a simplified way can be beneficial in therapy since the person has to get to the point more quickly by means of those words they already know. According to one of the participants, this puts the therapist and the client in the same boat: "I'm not speaking my L1, they're not speaking their L1, so they can connect with that" (Participant 8). Overall, most of the participants consider the client's LX vocabulary or grammar a minor obstacle, which they overcome with the help of dictionaries, drawings, and

toys, and by resorting to professional translators. According to one participant, "language is a tool to connect, and how much more words you have, you have more tools to connect" (Participant 7). While lack of linguistic resources (e.g., grammar or vocabulary) can hardly be viewed as an advantage on its own, in the context of multilingual therapy, the necessity to think out of the box can serve to the benefit of both sides. Therefore, most of the participants think that because it triggers extra creativity and openness, therapist's and client's low language proficiency does not have to be a hindrance and actually opens up new opportunities.

Language and emotion. Nine out of the ten participants remarked on the connection between language and emotion in their practice. Their view of this connection is based on their experience working as a psychotherapist. Therapists are normally highly attuned to their client's emotion expression and the way language may interfere in it. Their professional knowledge, that is, again seems to be mixed with intuitive understanding and learning "from experience, mainly from experience, because I don't know whether there is some kind of education like that" (Participant 8). This is an important finding since the evidence-based information from linguistic studies does not seem to reach psychotherapists, leading to their reliance on primarily intuitive and implicit knowledge.

Emotion encoding and decoding. Most therapists noticed that it is sometimes more difficult for their clients to connect with their feelings when speaking in LX, which can be related to the language in which the initial emotion was *encoded*. For instance, in some past experiences (e.g., childhood events), when only L1 was available or other languages were not sufficiently known yet, an emotion was encoded in L1. Later on, when the emotion is being *decoded*, and other languages are available, it often does not find an immediate way out in LX. As one participant described it:

"…when you're in therapy, you get in contact with emotion of your inner child. The inner child doesn't speak the foreign language that you learnt as an adult. So that's when sometimes people really get stuck – in that child. I had such experience…I had to connect to my inner child and I realized my inner child doesn't understand all this Dutch speaking…I could communicate but the child…speaks Italian" (Participant 2).

Viewing emotion as a concept, not just as a word, was also expressed by many participants. They find it important to look behind the words and make meaning together with the client. Asking questions about the emotion being discussed, and trying to understand what exactly the client means seem to be commonplace among the therapists in the sample. This may also be related to the issues the participants mostly deal with, such as trauma, depression, working with children, etc. One participant gave the following example of conceptual probing from her practice:

"…I had to pause and say, 'Okay, so you're saying that causes you grief. How do you experience that? How is that grief?' And then she [client] would say something completely different. […] Maybe in her native language saying something like that is like grief could refer to what she was explaining, but in English it's different" (Participant 4).

This quote shows how important it is for the therapist to be sensitive to such differences in conceptual understanding of emotion. In a hospital, if a patient uses a certain word to describe their symptoms, and the doctor misunderstands it and underestimates the severity of the patient's state, it may lead to serious mistakes in treatment. If a psychotherapist only focuses on their own understanding of the word "grief", they may also miss some crucial information about the client's emotional state.

In the context of encoding and decoding emotion, some therapists spoke about their client's language switch when trying to resolve a highly traumatic experience. Even when the clients have adequate LX proficiency, speaking about the trauma in LX may not bring any release, as some participants showed in their examples. Only after the therapist had invited the client to say the same things in the client's L1 did the release occur:

"…then she tried to say it first in Dutch [LX] and then she switched to Arabic [L1], and I gave her some words, and then when I gave her *that word,* it was just like [an explosion] breaking out, because it was exactly what it was. […] When I gave it to her, it was just the key" (Participant 7).

Language also became a focus in another participant's practice when treating trauma. Her personal and professional intuition told her how to help the client achieve the emotional release she had longed for – by inviting her to speak in her L1:

"…it was a kind of a cork stopping the expression because she [client] believed if she didn't know the translation, she could not express herself. The moment that she could express herself – and the rest flew" (Participant 2).

This again was not based on explicit knowledge of how language functions in case of intense emotions, but on the participant's experience and her primary focus on helping the client connect with their true feelings. She said that she offered therapy in multiple languages "as a personal development project also" because she had learned nothing about working across cultures and languages in her formal education in the Netherlands.

Emotional distance in L1 and LX. Talking about trauma in L1 may be too emotionally charged, which one of the participants experienced when she had been in therapy herself (a required practice for some types of psychotherapy). She talked about having therapy in her L1 first but not feeling entirely comfortable. Later on, she had therapy in LX and it actually worked much better. Afterwards, she received therapy in her L1 again, feeling more "able to talk about herself in both languages" (Participant 6). The change from L1 to LX in therapy did not seem to be a conscious choice, but it did work. Looking back, the therapist explained this effect by the possibility to put some *emotional distance* between her experiences and her words. Most participants feel emotionally closer to their L1. It has been noted by some participants that the emotional distance of an LX may sometimes guide the client's language choice in therapy. For instance, when their L1 conjures up a strong sense of stigma or rejection, it may be easier for clients to receive therapy in LX. One participant described such cases:

"…when it comes to emotional expression, there's a sort of two kinds of clients, I would say – some for whom emotional expression in their own language is a lot easier because they grew up speaking it and it's pretty straightforward. And then others, for whom it is actually easier to express their emotions in a different language because their own language stigmatizes those emotions or because a certain trauma happened to them in that language" (Participant 3).

Becoming more aware of language and emotional distance may enable the therapist to enhance the process of treatment and healing by, for instance, inviting the use of a client's L1 for emotion expression or the other way around: encouraging the client to speak about the emotionally rich event in LX. Some participants say that the client does not even have to use a word that they know because the emotion expressed may be so strong that it is clear what it is (e.g., it can be derived from non-verbal signals), which is usually confirmed by further probing from the therapist. From one therapist's practice:

"…once they [clients] want to share a feeling, a very deep feeling, they really need to use the word in their own language. And sometimes that word only can show me how heavy, how disgusting or something like that the situation is" (Participant 7).

When the therapist is attuned to clients and their needs, his/her linguistic awareness may contribute to a deeper understanding of emotion communication during sessions than when the process is guided by the therapist's fear of not being able to follow a client's every word. The advantage of giving the client a path to express their emotion fully by inviting them to use their L1can be illustrated by the following quote:

"If I hear also word in a language that I absolutely do not understand, I think I would still feel the energy behind that word, and again, it's more important that the client feels that – oomph, I am in that emotion, that's what's playing here. It's much more relevant to healing than me understanding everything" (Participant 2).

As these quotes show, learning more about emotional distance in L1 and LX may help create a better therapeutic alliance and a safe emotional environment for the client.

Language, culture, and therapeutic relationship. All participants see language as an inseparable part and reflection of culture. It is not always straightforward in their multilingual/multicultural practice whether a difficulty expressing or understanding a concept is due to language or to culture: "the difficulty is different cultural references and the style of communication that comes *through* the language" (Participant 3). These two notions are especially closely intertwined when it comes to making sense of what is being expressed by the client.

Cultural differences in making meaning. When a certain emotion or state has a different conceptual meaning in the client's L1, the therapist may come to a wrong interpretation of the value the client gives to the word. For instance, the word "discipline" may evoke something different in a person from a military family, or, as Participant 7 described, in a person from a very traditional reformed religious background. Such (mis)understanding of the values clients give to certain words may significantly affect the therapeutic relationship between therapist and client. Describing her own experience as a therapist, another participant found it fascinating "to see how the same complaints are experienced sometimes very differently because of the cultural influences" (Participant 4). Which is also true about language: acknowledging that "every culture is different from my culture", another participant spoke about learning gradually what the same words or expressions mean in different cultures (Participant 5). He illustrated it by talking about a Syrian client for whom saying that he "needs" something implicitly puts a time stamp on it, as the need presupposes getting it right now, whereas a Dutch therapist might assume that the client realises that time and effort are required to satisfy that need. Naturally, this does not automatically generalise to all representatives of a certain culture, but it creates the understanding that the same words *can* mean different things. The following quote from another therapist illustrates figuratively how such understanding works:

"If I ask a Turkish guy, 'Go and take a bread for me,' he will bring something fluffy and round. When I ask a Dutch man, 'Go and take a bread for me,' it's something long and brown" (Participant 7).

A telling example of understanding the value of words and putting them in the cultural and linguistic context of the client was given by one participant who had experienced difficulty connecting with the client due to such lack of understanding: "It was a girl who I had in

treatment and she was telling me that she was there because she was stealing a lot" (Participant 10). If one stops right there and looks at the word "stealing", one may come to various conclusions, such as kleptomania (compulsive stealing) or repetitive criminal behaviour. However, examining the rest of the story, the word "stealing" assumes a different cultural dimension:

"And she told me that that was something what was high-seen in the culture, because if you are a good thief, then you find a good partner, then you marry very quickly because everyone wants you in their family. And that was for me then very difficult to understand: so you have to steal to get accepted" (Participant 10).

Tracing one's own assumptions and biases. All accounts mentioned the ways in which linguistic and cultural differences shape therapeutic processes. The participants underscored the special importance of being aware of one's own stereotypes and assumptions in the multilingual/multicultural setting. Unconscious bias and assumptions may become more salient when the therapeutic setting changes from monolingual/monocultural into multilingual/multilingual. Therapists are recommended to stay as impartial as possible and to not "take sides". When not everything in therapy can be translated, various assumptions may be activated. As an example, one participant spoke about the frustration among Dutch people towards other cultures when it comes to presuming that people who came to the Netherlands would automatically conform to all cultural norms. In reality, this process is rather complex, effortful, and time-consuming. Acquiring the local language and following social customs does not automatically entail leaving one's original language and culture behind. This participant emphasized that if a client speaks Dutch, it does not necessarily mean they understand what she means, because "they're listening to you through their own culture" (Participant 7). That is why she strives to understand the culture of the words and the unique meaning her client is conveying through them. This is when understanding goes beyond words, and this is echoed in most interviews.

The value of tracing one's own assumptions and biases and of using linguistic and cultural differences to their advantage is a common thread running through most accounts. The existence of stereotypes and assumptions does not have to mean adhering to them:

"It is very important to question yourself when it comes to thinking about someone's culture or about someone's language, thinking that even though they're part of that culture that they will necessarily subscribe to that reference, for example, or that they would condone the use of a certain word" (Participant 3).

Two participants spoke about the "Dutch way" of their work, which they consider to apply a one-size-fits-all too quickly when it comes to clients who speak different languages and come from different cultures. The Dutch way is a country-specific way of following a clear protocol with a limited amount of time allocated to each step. These two participants are not Dutch by origin, which may be the reason why this way of working was salient for them. One participant said that she "noticed that Dutch people literally work as they teach – you really follow certain steps" (Participant 2). The other gave the following description of the Dutch way and compared it to her own:

"It's about the protocol, it's about the program that you have and you make, and you're going from step one to three, and the main purpose is to bring, to send the person to society as soon as possible. […] My way of working, it's not very Dutch, and I'm not working really through protocols, I really work with people, with the person" (Participant 7).

According to the participants, when treating multilingual/multicultural people, it is not always feasible to stay within these timeframes, so they have to be more flexible and open-minded, focusing on the client's needs. Customizing the pre-designed protocol to every client brings about changes in every therapeutic relationship. As one participant says, "…you walk around, you take the time, but as long as you don't let the inner critic [an internal voice that judges and criticizes us] take over the session as a client or as a therapist, that's not a problem" (Participant 2). Additionally, becoming more aware of language and culture in therapy may also contribute to the therapist's openness and understanding of linguistic and cultural distinctions *within* the same language and culture as theirs. Indeed, every language has dialects and regional peculiarities, and every culture contains various subcultures, and this realisation comes with a better understanding of the role of language and culture in the therapeutic interaction. To quote one participant:

"…with a Dutch person, still there are cultures inside, subcultures, you know, inside the big culture, that I don't know. So when I have to do with that subculture, I really need sometimes to understand, okay, what are you talking about?" (Participant 7).

As most participants said, such cultural adaptations that they make to their approach to multilingual/multicultural clients seem to come not from formal education but from experience and privately sought-out trainings. As the quotes above illustrate, keeping the client's needs a priority the therapists become more alert and attentive, and adapt their protocols to serve the client's benefit.

Being a multilingual/multicultural therapist means having more frequent encounters with the languages and cultures that are often not present in the therapist's social environment. Therefore, being more attentive and alert to what is being said and how it is being said from both linguistic and cultural perspectives is considered to be of utmost importance for a smooth and beneficial therapeutic relationship.

Discussion

The current study investigated the role the therapist's multilingualism plays in emotion communication with multilingual/multicultural clients. The interview data showed that the therapists who practise in the Netherlands see a clear connection between language, emotion, and culture, based on their own work experience. The results revealed therapists' views on the various functions of language switching in therapy, the advantages and disadvantages of not speaking the same language with the client, the connection between language and emotion, and the way multilingualism may shape the therapeutic process and its outcome. The participants spoke about their clients' strategic language switching for particular acts (e.g., swearing), more fitting for talking about past events (e.g., childhood memories), better able to reflect certain concepts in the L1 (e.g., gender pronouns), or useful in temporarily excluding a third person from the conversation. The therapists also talked about their own language switching, for instance, when looking for a word or aiming for a particular connotation. It highlighted its crucial role in shaping the therapeutic process in terms of conceptual understanding and meaning-making (cf. Cook, 2019; Costa & Dewaele, 2012, 2019; Bager-Charleson et al., 2017; Rolland, 2019; Rolland et al. 2017).

One of the key findings was the commonly shared experience that an insufficient level of common language in therapy can be both an advantage and a hindrance to effective therapy. Though having low proficiency is a constraint, in the context of seeking and offering psychological help, it is not always viewed as a major obstacle. Having to ask more questions and to use other tools (e.g., toys, cards, etc.) sometimes offered an opportunity for the

participants to connect more with their client. Karamat Ali (2004) made a similar point in an overview of multilingualism in systemic and family therapy, stating that the "potential gain of being a bilingual therapist" is to sometimes have to ask the obvious (p. 347). Karamat Ali speaks about it in the context of family therapy, and the current study confirms this observation for therapists who practice other approaches (e.g., systemic therapy, schema therapy). That this notion is present in the implicit, experiential knowledge of the participants is encouraging, as it brings up the importance of questioning possibly misguided assumptions, and simply asking clients for more explanation.

The results of the interviews also demonstrated the essential role that therapists' understanding of their own and their clients' languages plays in discussing emotionally sensitive topics (e.g., family relations, memories, etc.). The participants' observations of closer emotional involvement in L1 than in LX confirms earlier work on multilingualism and emotion (Cook & Dewaele, 2021; Dewaele, 2013; Dewaele & Costa, 2013; Kokaliari et al., 2013; Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2017; Panicacci & Dewaele, 2017, 2018). Our study demonstrated that the sensitivity of emotional encoding and decoding to the language in which it is expressed seems to be particularly relevant when discussing traumatic events (Cook, 2019). The findings add to the previous research by showing that the therapist may not have to understand every word the client uses as long as the language use promotes the client's therapeutic benefit. Additionally, according to the participants, the link between language and emotion (especially regarding trauma) is not something they learnt about during their formal training, but rather from private courses they personally sought out, and/or through experience. Another key finding was related to the linguistic and cultural dynamics of the therapeutic relationships with multilingual/multicultural clients (e.g., cultural differences in conceptual understanding of "grief"). Therapists in the sample emphasized the importance of being aware of the value and meaning clients give to certain words and concepts depending on their language and culture. This is especially the case when it comes to emotional concepts which cannot be easily translated from L1 into LX, thus potentially causing misunderstanding and wrong interpretations by the therapist (cf. Costa, 2020; Itzhak et al., 2017; Softas-Nall et al., 2015).

Regarding the therapeutic process, therapists emphasized the importance of tracing and resolving their own biases in communication with their multilingual/multicultural clients. The description of the "Dutch way", of strictly adhering to set protocols and timeframes, echoes findings in some studies on healthcare communication (e.g., Geerlings et al., 2018; Schinkel et al., 2019). Given the therapists' special attention to this topic, their arguments for possible adaptation of the local way of psychological guidance and treatment should be taken seriously. Psychotherapy of multilingual/multicultural clients requires a certain degree of adjustment due to cultural, but also linguistic, differences (cf. Costa, 2020). Therapists need to be aware of their own biases. Unlike in monolingual settings, therapists in multilingual practice face more challenges, and biases may only become salient when two or more languages and cultures are involved (Costa & Dewaele, 2012).

Finally, all participants reported that they were more than willing to go the extra mile in trying to understand and accept their clients, and to use their differences as a way to connect. However, some answers suggested that language was not always on the participants' radar. For instance, Participant 2 mentioned having the most difficulty with the client who spoke her L1, ascribing this to the differences in culture and way of thinking. Based on literature and the current findings, it seems to be the case that multilingual/multicultural psychotherapy in the Netherlands tends to place the main focus on culture, leaving language as an implicit and taken-for-granted part of culture.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study is not without some limitations. First, the therapists who agreed to participate were mainly raised multiculturally with early exposure to foreign languages. Thus, they may have already been inclined to pay special attention to language in their practice and have positive attitudes toward code-switching (Dewaele& Li Wei, 2014). The choice of English for the interviews, a LX for all participants, may have influenced the way certain topics were discussed. It would be interesting to compare the answers to the same questions in participants' L1. It is also important to mention the size and nature of the sample. Even though ten participants overall for a study of this scale is considered to be sufficient (Francis et al., 2010), it means that the language profiles are not necessarily representative of all therapists in the Netherlands.

Finally, we should mention the researchers' interest in the topic under investigation and its potential impact on data analysis. Being a linguist may make one more aware of language patterns and its use. All of us are multilingual and our research interests are focused on human communication in different contexts, which may have impacted our perspective on the data. However, our team was diverse enough to ensure objectivity and a valid analysis of the interview data. We believe that group discussions and reviews of the themes provided us with a maximally objective analysis presented in this article.

Future research could dig deeper into intentional as well as accidental language switching in therapy and how it is related to emotion expression and interpretation. Knowing how, when, and why to invite a client to freely switch between languages may enhance the therapeutic relationship. Finally, we agree with Bager-Charleson et al. (2017) and Costa and Dewaele (2019) that it is crucial to investigate ways of training multilingual/multicultural psychotherapists to raise their awareness about multilingualism so they can transfer it to their practice and become better practitioners.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the importance of multilingualism in psychotherapy, in particular when it comes to emotion expression and interpretation. The interviews demonstrated that language switching occurs when clients try to connect to deeper feelings and when the topic is emotionally intense. Instances when the therapists encouraged such switches in their sessions had a profound and beneficial effect on the therapeutic process and outcome. These findings are in line with previous research in different language environments. It suggests that the status of the language does not alter the mechanisms, challenges and strategies of multilingual psychotherapists and their clients. Whether a Syrian client uses Dutch or English with their psychotherapist, code-switching will occur for the same reasons in The Netherlands as in the UK, and the therapist will be confronted with the same issues in both contexts.

A number of recommendations can be drawn from the present study. Firstly, it is essential that training courses for psychotherapists pay attention to the clients' and the therapists' language profiles and focus on ways to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap. Realizing the fact that speaking the same language does not guarantee a better understanding in therapy is also key to being a more efficient therapist. Trainers could highlight the variety of creative ways to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps which may otherwise endanger the therapeutic relationship.

To conclude, language plays an essential role in psychotherapy, influencing rapport, attunement, needs assessment, and treatment. Working with clients of the same linguistic and

cultural origin can be a challenge but when psychotherapists are dealing with multilingual/multicultural clients, they need to be even more aware of their own and their client's languages in order to serve their clients to the best of their abilities.

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"If Japan was a Person". LX learning in Polly Barton's Language Memoir *50 Sounds*

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Abstract

The language memoir has informed a wealth of research on multilingualism. Polly Barton's book *50 Sounds* (2021), in which she narrates her experience of moving to Japan as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, is another example of autobiographical writing with rich insight into LX learning. The article examines Barton's exploration of relationships in and with an LX and reflects on the importance of transferential phenomena in LX acquisition. Parallels between LX and L1 learning during infancy are also investigated. The findings seem relevant for a psychodynamic understanding of LX learning that takes object relations into account and will hopefully result in more research.

Introduction

Researchers studying multilingualism and LX[1] acquisition have repeatedly found rich sources of information when turning to the autobiographical writing of multilingual authors. In the genre known as language memoir (Kaplan, 1994) (alternatively translingual memoir (Besemeres, 2006) or cross-cultural autobiography (Pavlenko, 2001)), the journey of learning and living in a new language and its impact on identity, relationships and emotional inner life are closely examined through the writers' first-hand experience. Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989) is an often-quoted classic of this tradition, which has generated a wealth of academic writing on the psychological effects of multilingualism (e.g., Burck, 2005; Carrá-Salsberg, 2017; Dewaele, 2010; Grosjean, 2012; Pavlenko, 2014). It has been argued that the analysis of these texts allows for a nuanced understanding that is hard to attain in more controlled studies, which seem unable to capture "what is going on inside the head of the person who suddenly finds herself passionately engaged in new sounds and a new voice" (Kaplan, 1994, p. 59). Looking at metaphors used by bilingual authors regarding their LX experience, Pavlenko (2006) lists a multitude of feelings she could gather from them:

> [G]uilt over linguistic and ethnic disloyalties, insecurity over the legitimacy of a newly
>
> learned language, anxiety about the lack of wholesome oneness, angst over the inability
>
> to bring together one's incommensurable worlds, and sadness and confusion caused by
>
> seeing oneself as divided, a self-in-between, a self in need of translation. (p. 21)

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[1] LX, a term suggested by Dewaele (2018), is defined as any foreign language acquired after the age at which the first language(s) (L1) was acquired to any level of proficiency.

The analysis of autobiographical writings brings to light a wide range of complex feelings and concepts not only with the potential to teach us about multilingualism but more broadly about the relationship between language and emotions (Besemeres, 2006). The findings can serve as a first exploratory investigation leading towards more systematic research.

Polly Barton's *50 Sounds* (2021) is one of the more recent contributions to the genre of language memoir and centres around her experience of moving to a small Japanese island in her early twenties as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching programme. In 50 chapters titled after Japanese onomatopoeias, which build the structure of the autobiographical essay, Barton offers her thoughtful reflections and sensory-rich associations to each of these expressions, creating a highly personal dictionary. She writes about the new relationships she builds in Japan, but most importantly about the passionate love affair she has with the language and her consuming determination to keep improving her Japanese.

Barton (2021) thinks of language as "a collection of people, real and fictional" (p. 341). The way relationships with external and internal figures mediate the acquisition and usage of an LX has not received much attention in psychodynamic research, with object-relational perspectives on the subject being surprisingly new and sparse. Most contributions build on the classic papers by Buxbaum (1949), Greenson (1950) and Krapf (1955), in which the usage of an LX in the clinical context is understood as a defence mechanism (Byford, 2015). Although it is a crucial observation, especially for clinical work, reducing the LX to a language of defence risks ignoring the rich, dynamic possibilities behind a person's decision to learn and speak a new language (if it was a voluntary choice).

To understand the effects LXs can have on a person's psyche, social and cultural power relations also need to be taken into account. Fanon (1986) shows the alienation and splitting that black men from the Antilles suffered upon visiting the "motherland" France. The power structure implemented by colonisation perpetuates in beliefs and attitudes about language, with Creole being considered less sophisticated than French. The decision a black person from the Antilles would see themselves confronted with is to either speak French and "to stand with the white world" or to speak Creole and "to reject Europe" (p. 37). To side with French means to leave behind one's cultural roots; to speak Creole means being perceived as inferior. Fanon reports how alienation, damaged friendships, and strained family relations result as a consequence of the language divide. He emphasises that this conflict is not caused by the dialect per se but that the historical context of colonisation gives it its meaning:

> It would seem, then, that the problem is this: In the Antilles, as in Brittany, there is a dialect and there is the French language. But this is false, for the Bretons do not consider themselves inferior to the French people. The Bretons have not been civilized by the white man. (p. 28)

In the context of colonisation, the rift caused by the languages and dialects of the coloniser and the colonised can cause alienation and feelings of denigration. In comparison, in a study that focuses on adult L1 English speakers based in Britain learning an LX for pleasure, it has been found that discovering new aspects of oneself through the LX can be a source of enjoyment

and self-reinvention (Wilson, 2013). Of course, how the power dynamics behind language learning find its expression in the human psyche is mediated by the individual and their personal history (Stengel, 1939).

In more recent contributions, there has been an effort to understand how object relations and languages interact. Pérez Foster writes that "[w]ords are symbolic, object-relational capsules of the past" (1996, p. 108). She believes that with L1 or LX acquisition, the learner simultaneously internalises the voice of the other at the time, leading to different self-perceptions in different languages. Byford's (2015) focus lies on how the LX serves a psychic function born out of the client's object relations. Working with bilingual clients (English and German), she reports, for example, a client who uses her LX as a distancing device in response to a mother/daughter relationship that sees conflicts around spilling and containment. Her findings indicate that by trying to understand the unconscious reasons why a person learns and lives in an LX, the underlying psychic structures can be laid bare.

In *50 Sounds*, Barton covers many subjects around (the Japanese) language and her experience of living abroad. For the purpose of this essay, I want to focus on extracts of her book, in which she sheds light on the unconscious dynamics of LX acquisition. The possibility that the relationship we have with a language is shaped by object relations and transferential phenomena will be my focus of interest when exploring Barton's text. I discuss how Barton perceives the learning process, her relationships in an LX and with her LX, and her observations on parallels between LX learning and infancy.

LX and Infancy

Disseverment is an inherent element to all language learning, including or especially one's L1. Before infants utter their first words, they need to overcome the developmental task of recognising the (m)other as separate and of giving up the imaginary symbiosis with their environment. For Kristeva (2001), building on the theories of Melanie Klein, "[t]he loss of the mother – which for the imaginary is tantamount to the death of the mother – becomes the organising principle for the subject's symbolic capacity" (pp. 129-130). While for Kristeva, individuation is achieved through imagined matricide, for Lacan (2003), the pre-social child-mother dyad is overcome via a third party, the symbolic father. In either theory, the symbolic order requires a separation from an imagined union with the mother, which for Amir (2014) is both driving motivation as well as an essential condition to speak. The learning process often coincides with the time the infant begins to walk – language becomes a tool to control the distance and detachment within a new spatial ability to join or separate from the object (Amati Mehler et al., 1990).

For the LX learner who has been speaking the language long enough to undergo a second socialisation, a further split takes place. It is a well-documented phenomenon that LX speakers can feel different in their respective languages and that memories, emotions and identities may vary with linguistic frameworks (Deweale & Nakano, 2013; Pavlenko, 2014). Barton moves to Japan aged 21 discovering her passion for Japanese that eventually will lead to a career as a literary translator. The more her Japanese improves, the more her previous monolingual worldview begins to disintegrate. "To imagine a language," Barton (2021) realises, "means to imagine a life-form" (p. 166). That a speaker would be the same person in different languages, considering that norms, rules, social status, domains of experience and proficiencies within these languages are likely to be different, seems "plainly bizarre" (Barton, 2021, p. 166) to her. While for the monolingual, the degree to which language is formative to their identity is mostly

invisible, Barton's idea of her 'me' begins to shift from being shaped from the inside to being constructed from the outside. Barton is puzzled that concepts that make sense in one language feel odd when talked about in the other, making her at times feel like a hypocrite. Entering a new symbolic order through the worldview of the LX gives shape to a new identity that can be at odds with the old one.

During her linguistic journey, Barton notices how learning an LX can bring back the challenges one has to face as a baby. Describing her experience of attempting to communicate with others in Japanese, Barton (2021) draws comparisons with infancy, when the process of language learning occurs for the first time:

> It is the kind of learning that makes you think: this is what I must have experienced in
>
> infancy except I have forgotten it, and at times it occurs to you that you had forgotten
>
> it not just because you were too young when it happened, but because there is something
>
> so utterly destabilising about the experience that we as dignified, shame-fearing humans
>
> are destined to repress it. (p. 19)

Of course, the adult LX learner relies on textbooks and conscious memorising in a way neither possible nor necessary for the infant, but certain aspects of LX acquisition remain similar. In the paper *The Mother Tongue and The Mother* (1950), Greenson writes about his work with bilingual analysands, noting that while learning vocabulary and grammar are mainly cognitive processes, other facets like accent, tone, and rhythm need to be learnt by imitation. It is this part, "so intimately related to the earliest child-mother relationship" (p. 22), which he thinks is hardest for adults to achieve, believing that the early relationship to the mother might be a predictor for the child's ability to learn a new language. Similarly, Barton (2021) describes an encounter with a translator colleague who is taken aback by Barton's efforts to imitate the Japanese accent as closely as possible, but she understands why not everyone would be willing to undergo the process: "I knew full well that my accent had come from undergoing a second infancy, which had been-wracking, full of irritation, and necessitated making myself vulnerable" (p. 90).

Barton also observes a complex set of feelings she names Cultural King Baby syndrome. Encountering English loan words (termed *gairaigo*) in the script katakana, which is used mainly for the imported vocabulary of European languages (for example, *pain jūsu* for pineapple juice), Barton is bewildered at her strong response. The emotions range from initial titillation to feelings of outrage, anger, and exclusion; her Australian friend describes her reaction to hearing *gairaigo* as feeling like "you're not with people who know you anymore" (Barton 2021, p .104). Trying to understand what is so triggering about *gairaigo*, she contemplates whether it is the unpredictability that is hard for her and other L1 Anglophones to accept. Once integrated into Japanese culture, the English words begin a new life under different rules, resulting in T-shirt prints like "The favourite fruits is strawberry!" (Barton, 2021, p. 101). She thinks the response is "the tantrums of a child on whom the rules have changed unannounced" (Barton, 2021, p. 103). Sibling rivalry also plays a role: "It's not a

dissimilar feeling to seeing your siblings getting away with transgressions that you did not. I wanted to lie on the floor, pummel my feet and scream" (Barton, 2021, p. 105).

Feelings of anger, exclusion, mistreatment – Barton shows how seeing an LX incorporate and alter L1 vocabulary can trigger intense feelings that potentially go back to our first language experiences, for example, the fear of not being understood or powerlessness at language rules one does not understand. Japanese *gairaigo* might be a quite specific language phenomenon. Still, Barton's exploration of the emotional intensity shows how understanding feelings prompted by an LX might lead us to transference phenomena reaching back to a time when the learning process occurred for the very first time.

Relationship in and with an LX

When Barton moves to Japan at the age of 21, she soon meets and falls in love with Y, a Japanese man teaching English at the same school on a small island where she is placed via the teaching programme. Although the secret liaison with Y, who is twice Barton's age and separated but married, ends when she decides to move to Tokyo, it is a formative experience for her, with Y continuing to occupy her thoughts for years to come. Barton scrutinises the relationship in her book from many angles, among other things trying to understand what it means for a couple to not share the same native tongue.

Especially at the beginning of a new relationship, couples with different L1s can experience some challenges. Dewaele and Salomidou (2017) have found that lexical and conceptual limitations in the LX and weaker emotional resonance of the LX can lead to a feeling of lack of genuineness at the start of the relationship. For the majority of the 429 participants who took part in the study, however, these initial obstacles faded in months (although couples for whom language differences turn out to be insurmountable might be less likely to participate in this kind of research as it might bring up painful memories). Which language a couple decides to use (e.g. one partner's L1, both partners' L1 or a lingua franca) can be the result of many factors, including the partners' linguistic abilities, power relationships between linguistic and national groups, gender dynamics and the individual ways these are mediated by personal beliefs, with many couples developing their own unique way of communicating (Piller, 2002).

Y and Barton both speak the L1 of the other, although "with limited abilities" (Barton, 2021, p. 153). In the quest to understand each other, Y and Barton's evenings often revolve around her electronic dictionary. She recalls misunderstandings and discomfort (later growing into enjoyable experimentation) regarding Japanese versus British English bedroom talk. To bridge the linguistic gap, they develop their own unique mixture of Japanese grammar and English vocabulary, a language that to her feels highly personal and intimate, "like a house we had built ourselves" (Barton, 2021, p. 153). The language differences inevitably shape the relationship in both uniting and dividing ways and cause dynamics that might be less pronounced in monolingual couples. This becomes particularly evident when Barton describes falling in love with someone in another culture as finding a "language parent" (Barton, 2021, p. 138). Just as the infant relies on their parents to acquire language, she finds herself relying on Y, with, she writes, the same intensity and the same need for approval. However, like the child who eventually transgresses with their parents, she slowly begins to test the waters with Y. Barton narrates how one evening she asks Y about the personal pronoun *kimi,* which, as she had read in a book that day, can be used by older men to address subordinates or younger men, or by men to address women. Although she senses that Y would not appreciate being called *kimi* by her, she tries and, as expected, is told by Y that it is not appropriate. A few days later, she tries

using *kimi* again and receives a strong response: "And I see it in his eyes, the genuine outrage and anger. It takes me back to transgressing in front of my own father as a child […]" (Barton, 2021, p. 138).

Y adopts the paternal role of passing on social rules, representing the father of the past and the social norms of Japan's presence. Provoking Y helps Barton to become an adult member of this society; seeing the outrage and anger in Y's eyes turns the vague suspicion she had about personal pronouns into certainty. Barton (2021) calls her desire to transgress in Japanese her "linguistic adolescence" (p. 140). The romantic relationship becomes a playground in which the linguistic developmental stages of infancy and adolescence are lived out. The partner, the parent and the LX become intermingled in fantasy; Barton (2021) even has the sense that Y is "the symbolic order itself" (p.161).

When Barton (2021), for the first time, becomes aware of her attraction towards Y, she has no doubt that the affection is for him, but:

> [I]t's also inseparably, affection for this language he speaks, this form of life which I
>
> feel through him. […] This is the first time of heavens knows how many to come when
>
> I will notice this inextricable commingling of person and language, this affection which
>
> can't decide which one of the two it's bonded with. (p. 95)

The desire to learn the language and the desire for the person become indistinguishable. Kaplan's language memoir *French Lessons* (2018) offers another example in which the affection for a lover and their L1 are strongly interlaced. Kaplan (L1 English) recollects a turbulent relationship with André (L1 French) who she, although that as a boyfriend he leaves a lot to be desired, is willing to put up with for his French words:

> What I wanted more than anything, more than André even, was to make those sounds,
>
> which were the true sounds of being French, and so even as he was insulting me and
>
> discounting my passion with a vocabulary lesson, I was listening and studying and
>
> recording his response. (p. 86)

Not only does she want to learn from him, she wants to *be* him: "I wanted to crawl into his skin, live in his body, be him. The words he used to talk to me, I wanted to use back. I wanted them to be my words" (Kaplan, 2018, p. 88). Barton (2021) displays a similarly intense desire to become one with the language. When she begins to tackle the alphabetic systems hiragana and katakana, she finds herself in the grip of an obsession: "I wanted those shapes to be a part of me, so much I could scarcely bear it. I wanted to possess them, with a mighty avarice" (p. 121). Barton (2021) asks herself whether she unwittingly, "almost as if through biological reflex" (p. 139), had chosen a partner who would help her to acquire fluency in Japanese. This seems a crucial realisation as should this be the case the Japanese language replaces Y as the

desired object. It also raises the question if, instead of Y, there is a different, an unconscious interlocuter that motivates the laborious process of learning an LX. Indeed, when introduced to attachment theory in personal therapy, Barton (2021) comes to the realisation that she has an attachment to Japan as if it were a person and that the patterns she shows with real people are mirrored in her relationship with the country.

> [I]f Japan was a person, it would be a male, and it would be avoidant. Japan would be
>
> a composed, impassive man, inarticulate and secretive about his feelings. […] It came
>
> to me that the rapport Japan and I had could be boiled down to the linear, repetitive
>
> dynamic as attachment theory described it: me returning, time and time again, like a
>
> wave washing up to shore, for comfort that I was barred from receiving. (p. 232)

> And three pages later:
>
> I have failed. I have failed to make them adore me. I say to myself that I will go back,
>
> I will learn Japanese properly. (p. 235)

Barton's drive to learn Japanese seems partly aimed at an unconscious, aloof figure, transferred onto the country Japan, from whom she hopes to receive acceptance and comfort. The effort that goes into language learning is rewarded with conditional love. Kitron (1992) uses the term "language-object" to suggest that language is an emotionally cathected object. Barton's reflections show that language can also be understood as an object that is integrated into unconscious fantasies. In these fantasies, the speaker of a language, like Y, can stand for the whole community of Japanese speakers; vice versa Barton (2021) finds herself in a "pseudo-romantic relationship with Japan" (p. 178). Taking this unconscious dynamic into account provides a possible explanation for what Barton (2021) describes as a "strange determination to keep improving my Japanese, which seemed less a conscious choice and more something that consumed me" (p. 238). It seems that two unattainable men feature in her life, Y (who is separated but married) and an unconscious internal figure, imagined as an unavailable country.

(The fear of) rejection is a recurring theme in Barton's relationships and an ongoing concern regarding the Japanese language. Y is unavailable to her as an older, technically still married man whose position as a teacher would not allow for the relationship with Barton ever to become public. S, a woman Barton dates for a while, is out of touch with her feelings and emotionally unavailable; when Barton shares with her that her mother had been hospitalised, S shows more interest in the workings of the NHS than in the emotional significance of the event. When Barton tries to picture S as a child, she imagines a tomboy who would not have shown the slightest interest in her. Barton (2021) is aware of a pattern: "I'd always known that I'd been attracted to emotionally inarticulate people who lapsed into a kind of distance and coldness that drove me wild" (p. 231).

50 Sounds (2021) covers a decade or so of language learning. Throughout, even when Barton begins to use her Japanese skills professionally, she sees a gap lying between her and the Japanese language. Barton describes her battle with Japanese as an ever-enduring dance between belonging and exclusion, acceptance and rejection. For her, fluency is not a secure achievement but a precarious state in which one is constantly challenged and about to be found out. She feels suspicious eyes on her waiting for her to stumble and to lose her status as a fluent speaker. One mistake means exclusion from the community who she does not feel fully part of. Instead, she pictures her position as being by a gate – sometimes standing on the inside and sometimes on the outside:

> I stand by its posts, passing in and out momentarily, variously welcomed, frowned at, and ousted by its keepers. Even when I'm inside, I'm perpetually aware how quickly I could again be pushed out, that I could find some basic item inexplicably missing from my knowledge. (Barton, 2021, p. 23)

Not knowing, not passing the perpetual test of being a fluent speaker means expulsion. Aiming for LX perfection serves the purpose of gaining acceptance; language learning exposes her "always-bruised but ever-renewing desire to draw close to a person, a territory, a culture, an idea, an indefinable feeling" (Barton, 2021, p. 23). Ironically, the closer to Japanese culture she gets, the less she fulfils the expectations of her environment. As a white, L1 English speaking foreigner, she is simultaneously adored and objectified: "[Japan] needs you to be on the outside. It requires your alienation in order to better admire you (Barton, 2021, p. 183).

The fate of the LX learner is similar to an asymptote never reaching zero – the distance becomes smaller, but it remains. Thus, the feeling of reaching for perfection, yearning for union and acceptance from an idealised object can be stretched out infinitely. Because learning an LX is a process that is never complete, it can become a strategy to remain on the threshold between distance and closeness, in which one can dream about union with the object without this ever being realised. Describing her experience in the third person, she says:

> She feels as though she's perched on the edge of a world, and what she wants more than anything is for that world to take her into itself. This perpetually renewed lack is like being suspended, acrobatic, mid-air, in the act of reaching towards something which lies just beyond grasp. (Barton, 2021, p. 109)

Barton conveys something inherently frustrating and tantalising about the process of language learning – a perpetual never-quite-getting-there. The gap that lies between the student and the LX is not only an inevitable characteristic of the process; being out of reach is also what makes it so beguiling. Reflecting on why she had not used the opportunity to learn Japanese when it was offered at her senior school, Barton realises that the classes which offered fun and accessible activities had no appeal to her. She did not want the Japan that reached out its arms

in welcome: "[T]he Japan I wanted didn't want me" (Barton, 2021, p. 44). To understand the allure of distance, Barton turns to the essay *Eros, the Bittersweet* (1986), in which Anne Carson explores space or distance as a crucial element in erotic relationships. If there is no space that separates the lovers that they wish to overcome, there is no desire. Similarly, the language learning process is fuelled by a yearning to overcome what one separates from perfection. Thus, distance is not a side effect but a crucial ingredient for Barton's passion for LX learning. She believes that if familiarity sets in, one might be rewarded with comfort, but the desire is gone.

50 Sounds (2021) does not discuss many childhood memories, but Barton mentions in a short paragraph the emotional pressure that had followed her parents' divorce when she was young: "[T]hroughout it all, I carried the sense that it was my job to make sure that things didn't fall apart entirely" (p. 314). It is impossible to deduce from that short passage what Barton made of the event and how it has affected her in her later life. What transpires in her memoir is that she perpetually finds herself inhabiting in-between spaces, sometimes with difficulty, but moving from her 20s into her 30s increasingly with pleasure. "Being between cultures", she notices, "does not always mean the happy versatile figure who could switch at will, but the person who felt fundamentally other wherever they were. […] I was someone bobbing helplessly on the sea." (p. 288). Throughout the book, Barton undergoes considerable personal growth. While her younger self is preoccupied to adapt to others' expectations, she begins to take her wishes for safety and emotional connection seriously. As a translator, Barton (2021) chooses a career that places her into the in-between, but she begins to find a groundedness within it. Barton finds a place for herself between languages and cultures: "a big, small, crazy dwelling, in which I don't just work but also live" (p. 347).

Conclusion

In recent years, the importance of integrating the language history of linguistically diverse clients into psychotherapeutic practice has been receiving increasing attention (e.g., Pérez Foster, 1998; Costa, 2020). Like previous language memoirs, 50 Sounds contains many insights that cast light on the psychological effects of multilingualism that can be useful for the clinic. Although the memoir mainly covers Barton's 20s and early 30s and omits childhood memories, through her highly self-aware observations, the book offers a window into the dynamics of LX learning.

Entering the symbolic order, the infant separates from the imagined union with the mother. For the LX learner, new splits and clefts occur, for example, through the emergence of new language identities or between one's actual and ideal LX abilities. The severances are inherent in the process, but how the individual responds to them can help to understand how they relate to other objects. Barton shows varied feelings about the distance that she sees between herself and the Japanese language. Anxieties around exclusion and rejection occur, in a similar way, as in her romantic relationships with Y and S. On the other hand, the gap seems to fuel her desire and make the object more attractive. Being in-between cultures and languages is a place Barton inhabits with varying emotions. Through finding peace with her personal needs, the state changes from causing feelings of helplessness to becoming a place of safety.

Throughout her book, Barton explores the dynamics of relationships in an LX and, conversely, uncovers unconscious internal figures underlying her effort to learn Japanese. In her romantic relationship with Y, she observes how affection for language, land and person can interweave to the degree of becoming indistinguishable and how in entering a linguistic infancy and adolescence, the partner and parent get intermingled in fantasy too. Through personal therapy,

Barton makes the fascinating discovery that her attachment style does not only affect her relationships with people but also her imagined relationship with Japan. Learning an LX and later becoming a translator allows her to remain in a perpetual in-between state, yearning for closeness but maintaining distance, similar to her romantic relationships. While there has been evidence that the assessment of the internal working model of attachment might vary depending on in which language the assessment was conducted (Veneta et al., 2017), Barton's observations indicate that understanding the attachment with the language-object might be able to yield information about unconscious relationship dynamics. Her insightful examination of LX learning seems relevant for everyone working with multilingual clients and will hopefully influence further studies in the future and find application in the clinic.

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The Location of Anxiety

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I'm having a real day of it.
There was
Something I had to do. But what?
There are no alternatives, just
the one something.
Frank O'Hara, "Anxiety" (1995, p. 268)

Abstract

This paper offers an alternative to the Freudian and Lacanian conceptions of anxiety by tracing a middle ground between their accounts of signification and object-attachment. Both psychoanalysts work with a limited understanding of the cognitive complexity which underlies infants' expressive behaviors during the pre-Oedipal stage as well as the dynamics influencing the development of the ability to know other minds. After analyzing anxiety as both a concept and operative affect in Freud and Lacan, this paper turns to the folk psychology notion of the theory of mind and a specific experiment called the false belief task to show how psychoanalysis might rethink the encroachment of the symbolic in view of the more complex cognitive developmental dynamics. Rather than framing the onset of the symbolic order as a swift *entry* into language, this paper proposes rethinking it as a process with a longer temporality and a more complex set of expressive behaviors (language, gesture, embodied expression).

Introduction

Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan place great importance on anxiety as part of the Oedipal drama in their psychoanalytic accounts. Anxiety for both theorists is related to whether objects can preserve their autonomous existence once they are ushered into a discursive framework and entangled as signifiers within representational systems. But there are also critical differences in how they define anxiety and situate it in the developmental process. This paper traces these differences in order to stage a middle ground between their frameworks and to explain how the structure of anxiety as an affect relates to the threshold between object-attachment and symbolic signification. To reveal the incompatibilies between Freud and Lacan's discussions of anxiety, I shall investigate anxiety not only through its conceptual elaboration but also through locating self-conscious moments in their works which reveal anxiety to be an operative rhetorical effect. At the end of the paper, I shall attempt to consolidate this middle ground between the two theoretical frameworks through recourse to studies in modern psychology (e.g., theory of mind, the problem of other minds) since these studies offer more complex accounts of the cognitive and behavioral dynamics that accompany the onset of the Oedipal period.

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Let me begin with a brief comparison of Freud and Lacan's methodology. Freud typically prioritizes the *presentation* of symptoms in order to establish the rules of overdetermination. He also believes in the power of imagery and metaphor to encapsulate certain psychoanalytic ideas. In other words, he characteristically treats images as the presentation or manifestation of underlying issues. By utilizing the laws of energy and entropy to keep track of the investments of the ego, he further maintains faithful alliances to the images and objects that prompt identification with the ego. Freud describes this process (cathexis) as "a synthesis in the course of which free energy is transformed into bound energy" (1949, p. 21). Freud's appeal to the autonomy of these image-complexes is similar to how modernist artists concentrated rhetorical energies on the sensuous presentation of specific objects. Charles Altieri describes this modernist mode of valuation as basing success on the "power to preserve complex intellectual and emotional structures of ordered energy" (1979, p. 49).

Unlike Freud's emphasis on presentation, Lacan, influenced by Saussurean linguistics, emphasizes the arbitrary relations between the linguistic signifier and the signified. Rather than characterizing language as a tool used by subjects to convey ideas, he believes that language constantly resists signification. In "Beyond the 'Reality Principle'", Lacan characterizes Freud's rhetoric of libidinal "energy" as "merely the symbolic notation for the equivalence between the dynamics invested by images in behavior" (2006, p. 73). Freud was using a symbolic instrument to explain the structure of reality, all the while acting as if the artificial instrument must also be a part of reality itself. Thus, in "Metaphor of the Subject", Lacan holds that "enunciation can never be reduced to what is enunciated in any discourse". Speech "signifies nothing" (2006, p. 758) but upholds the symbolic structure which keeps mediating the subject's desires and traps the subject in chains of signification. It is through a "positioning of symptoms" rather than a systematic Freudian explanation of manifestations that the subject is revealed (Grosz, 1990, p. 114). For Lacan, a metaphor is the archetypal exemplar for the evasions of language. It is used "in order to signify something quite other than what it says" (Lacan, 1977, p. 155).

In short, where Freud studies the unconscious like a positivist scientist through its symptomatic manifestations, Lacan eventually characterizes it as a linguistic structure. But Freud's attempts to understand the unconscious foreshadow Lacan's post-structural interventions based on the metaphorical and metonymic axes of semiosis. Let us turn to two examples which establish important differences in their conceptual and rhetorical style. These examples will show Freud and Lacan dealing with concepts or objects which do not fit neatly into a discursive structure. Yet, they will anxiously attempt to work with the object and interpolate it into discourse. In the first example, Freud tries to find a compelling metaphor for the unconscious, while in the second Lacan tries to develop his own original theory of anxiety out of Freud's concepts. These examples not only establish differences in their conceptual approach but also demonstrate the different ways in which anxiety as an affect disturbs their rhetoric.

Halfway through *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud (1961) searches for a metaphor to capture the dynamic mechanisms of the unconscious. (Lacan will applaud Freud for recognizing that the unconscious has a *structure*. Freud, of course, did not talk about this structure in Saussurean terms or as a language. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the *kind* of structure Freud had in mind when he turns to language for possible metaphors.) Freud's first candidate is Rome. His battle with the Rome metaphor would be the perfect demonstration of the operations of the unconscious in the Lacanian sense: Freud painstakingly constructs the city as a metaphor only to realize "how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental

life by representing them in pictorial terms" (1961, p. 19). What is at stake here is not the urban image and its representational limits. Rather, it is Freud's unconscious relationship to the ancient city of Rome as an object of desire that keeps him returning to it. Had Freud thought about Rome and its landmarks as he does in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (2010)*,* "the same space" could indeed have "two different contents" (1961, p. 19). But his desire to construct a sturdy physical image that captures the dynamics of unconscious gets the better of him and he treats Rome as nothing more than a physical entity.

In his handling of the Rome metaphor, Freud constructs an imaginary version of the city in which "nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one" (1961, p. 17). Freud seeks a metonymic image which will comprise all the archeological layers of history. Jane Gallop's distinction between metaphor and metonymy proves informative here: "Whereas a metaphoric interpretation would consist in supplying another signifier which the signifier in the text stands for (a means b; the tie represents a phallus), a metonymic interpretation supplies a whole context of associations" (1985, p. 129). Though Freud turns to Rome as a conceptual metaphor, he wants it to offer a metonymic "context of associations" (1985, p. 129) which can attest to the endurance and coexistence of various psychic processes. This way, he can demonstrate how the unconscious accumulates experience, stores them and reveals their structural force to the psyche in arbitrary combinations.

The image of Rome initially provides a satisfying thought experiment. However, Freud is not entirely comfortable with the way each historical structure retains visual autonomy. Their seeming independence creates the illusion of there being separable representations of things in the unconscious, whereas, Freud holds that the unconscious has a relational structure. Ultimately, Freud decides to abandon the metaphor: "There is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further… if we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot have two different contents" (1961, p. 18). It is hard to agree with Freud's conclusion because, surely, spatial meaning is always a social construct and *has* different "contents" for different subjects. We might turn to Freud's original wording for further clarification: "…derselbe Raum verträgt nicht zweierlei Ausfüllung" (1997, p. 37). What Freud really means here is that the same room cannot tolerate two different fillings or occupants. In other words, he is not talking about associational meaning we might ascribe to a space. He is talking about metonymic arrangement - what happens to be physically occupying or filling up a certain space.

We can make sense of Freud's conceptual impasse and nervous oscillation between metaphor and metonymy with a brief reference to Fredric Jameson's account of "structural antagonism" (1983, p. 97). In *The Political Unconscious,* Jameson characterizes "the task of cultural and social analysis" (1983, p. 97) with an emphasis on the perpetual struggle between different manifestations of insights and truths. "Moments of truth" (1983, p. 97) when a set of intuitions about a cultural or textual object prevail are always only a part of the perpetual struggles which determine their intelligibility. When Freud pulls Rome into his discursive framework as metaphor, he restricts his imagination of the urban space to the physical dimensions of architectural structures. However, ironically, the very mobility of this urban image in Freud's discourse (the dynamic of its presentation and retraction) speaks to the concept of perpetual struggle that Jameson elucidates in *The Political Unconscious*. Ultimately, Rome emerges from this discursive oscillation with a kind of empirical agency which prevents it from being completely interpolated into the realm of the symbolic.

Slavoj Žižek's *Parallax View* offers a similar theoretical apparatus. Žižek describes his notion of the parallax as "the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight" (2006, p. 17). As Žižek explains, the change here cannot simply be restricted to the subjective position of the seer. Rather, both the subject and the object are "mediated" in such a way that the subject's way of seeing or noticing must already be inscribed into the cultural object through "a blind spot, which indicates my inclusion in it" (2006, p. 17). Though the term parallax offers a refreshing conceptual horizon, Žižek's account often recaps the usual lessons of cultural theory and discursive meditation. Of special importance to my account, however, is Žižek's discussions of anxiety where he claims that "anxiety emerges not when this object is lost, but when we get too close to it" (2006, p. 198). It is precisely when Rome turns from being a metaphorical exercise into an agent that claims a spot in Freud's metonymic chain of association that it acquires an empirical valence and escapes his grasp: Rather than deepening the metaphorical import, Freud begins to wonder whether there is enough *space*.

Freud was writing *Civilization and its Discontents* towards the end of the 1920s, when modernist movements such as Cubism, Surrealism, and Expressionism were having tremendous impact on the aesthetic imaginary in Europe. One of modernism's main strategies was the distortion of imagery. In the various modernist movements' shared preference for presentation over representation, dialectical tensions between surface and depth were foregrounded. The Cubist emphasis on geometric relations, the Surrealist obsession with chance interactions to delineate new contexts, and the Expressionist desire for distortion were, in essence, motivated by a goal to turn visualization into a compositional process. By obviating the 'rules' of seeing which make up the surface (through geometry, relational networks, and distortions), modernists turned surface into a set of *a priori* limits on aesthetic judgment. What can and cannot be said about certain relations became more important than any talk of specific images or objects. Modernist artists sacrificed the invitations of the objective for the very force of objectivity. Their insistence on delaying representational unity ended up in a paradoxical fetishization of unity as an imaginary force. The *what* of the represented was replaced by what could be said about its representability.

In Freud's discontent with the urban metaphor, we can see the limitations of a modernist aesthetics and what Altieri calls "modernism's reliance on objectified witnessing" (2006, p. 8). Freud argues that the "the same space cannot have two different contents" (1961, p. 18) because the distorted *surface* of the visual image has an overdetermining force on the imagination. The apparent organization of the surface comes to dictate what can and cannot be said about its manifest relations. In contrast, the unconscious resists the identification of individual forces or a narrativization of its historical process. What is missing from Freud's portrayal of Rome are the subjective processes that frame and inform his choice of individual landmarks. From the outset, he announces a desire to present Rome "not [as] a human habitation but a psychical entity" (1961, p. 18). He disregards the human inhabitants of the city but still catalogues those structures which were historically recognized as bearing cultural and political importance; structures, in other words, which are already imbued with human significance. Had Freud foregrounded the subjective and performative accounts of their significance – and how their contents are already historically proliferated – the ancient city of Rome would have made a successful metaphor for the unconscious. Freud's project is paradoxical because it presents inherently subjective content under the guise of *a priori* necessity: "A city is thus *a priori* unsuited for a comparison of this sort with a mental organism" (Freud, 1961, p. 19).

By introducing the metaphor and then retracting it, Freud turns Rome into an object of desire that refuses to be admitted into the chain of signification. When cut off from Freud's psychoanalytic discourse as unfit for the universal argument, Rome, the object of desire gives rise to anxiety: an anxiety that manifests itself as the feeling of being 'far from mastering' a discourse, which is, according to Lacan, where one always is and has to be. In his lectures on anxiety, Lacan argues that "the universal affirmative is only meaningful in defining the real on the basis of the impossible" (2014, p. 78). In other words, it is only when there is a factor resisting a universalizing argument that we feel the need to invest in preserving the integrity of a universal judgment. When something threatens the totalizing mission of discourse and appears cut off from it, we try preserve the veracity of the discourse.

Lacan summarizes this theory in his account of Little Hans, who initially supposes that all living beings must possess a phallus only to realize that his mother lacks one: "There are living beings. Mum, for instance, who don't have a phallus. So, this means that there are no living beings – anxiety" (2014, p. 78). When a counter-example defies a universalizing belief, there is of course a possibility that the belief itself should fall apart. However, Lacan argues that we simply do not choose this path: "The most convenient thing is to say that even those who don't have one have one. That's why by and large we stick to this solution" (2014, p. 78). After the father, or the Law, intervenes, one has to learn to be satisfied with language as an inherently metaphorical entity. Even if the mother does not have a phallus, well, she must have one because she seems to have one, she acts like she has one, or she strikes me as someone who simply must have a phallus. When the mother is reintegrated into discourse in this metaphorical (as if) fashion, she turns into an associative source for desire and transference. This liminal space where the mother is both cut off from discourse and is being pulled back into the chain of signification is the place of anxiety. As Lacan says, "anxiety is the radical mode by which a relationship to desire is maintained" (2015, p. 365).

Let us now examine the affective constitution of this liminal space, which does not receive adequate elucidation by either psychoanalyst. In Lacan's framework, once the symbolic mediation occurs, things can only exist in language as signifiers among which meaning is arbitrarily transferred. The brief autonomy of an object and its ability to avoid the chain of signification presents an anomaly. Anxiety thus forces him to return to the inescapable legacy of the 'original', the Freudian systematic, which he acknowledges to be an uneasy undertaking. In Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,* Lacan says, "everything is spoken about, thank goodness, except anxiety" (2014, p. 9). Lacan establishes the position of anxiety as somehow unaccounted for, or cut off from Freud's framework. What to do with this object?

Lacan's goal to absorb anxiety back into psychoanalytic discourse is itself a performance of anxiety, since anxiety elicits this very desire to reintegrate the cut-off object back into discourse. The question of where to place anxiety becomes, for Lacan, an anxiety-inducing question of where to place Freud: He even compares himself to a tightrope walker, with the title of Freud's essay, as his "only rope" (2014, p. 9). Lacan's language clearly expresses the Oedipal struggle he experiences with the Freudian legacy: "What provokes anxiety is everything that announces to us, that lets us glimpse, that we're going to be taken back onto the lap" (2014, p. 53). Reproducing Freud's vocabulary unsettles Lacan for his framework is based on a *lack* that motivates desire. The substantial *presence* of a cut-off object threatens his theory.

Therefore, when anxiety proposes objects that are – even if briefly – cut off from the chain of signification, Lacan has to find a way to affirm the integrity of his own universalizing discourse on desire. He turns to double negation to avoid the language of presence and describes anxiety as "not being without an object" (2014, p. 88). Lacan acknowledges that "anxiety isn't about the loss of the object, but its presence. The objects aren't missing" (2014, p. 54). Yet, he also wants to keep this blatantly present object unnamable: "Although anxiety sustains this relationship of not being without an object, it is on the condition that we are not committed to saying, as one would of another object, which object is involved – nor even to being able to say which" (2014, p. 131). If one could talk about the object involved fully, "as one would of another object" (2014, p. 131), that is, as one would of signifiers, we would be back in Lacan's discourse on desire. There is something about the object of anxiety that resists naming. Frank O'Hara captures this resistance brilliantly in his poem titled "Anxiety", where he refers to the object of anxiety as "just / the one something" (1995, p. 268).

Lacan's performative gestures throughout the lecture demonstrate the unease with which he maintains the discourse. He often asks the audience to bear with him as he makes theoretical jumps that will obviate the presence of lack, which is how he characterizes anxiety: "There's another jump to be made now, which I ask you to note, since, as with the others, we're going to have to justify it afterwards" (2014, p. 51). It is worth noting here that Freud interrupts his lecture "Anxiety and Instinctual Life" with similar remarks: "'Stop a moment!' you will exclaim; 'we can't follow you any further there!' You are quite right; I must add a little more before it can seem acceptable to you" (1965, p. 90); "I fear, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you will find this exposition hard to follow, and you will guess that I have not stated it exhaustively. I am sorry to have had to rouse your displeasure" (1965, p. 92); "I feel sure you are rejoicing, Ladies and Gentleman, at not having to listen to any more about anxiety. But you have gained nothing by it: what follows is no better" (1965, p. 95).

Lacan's restless engagement with Freud results from the systematic incompatibility between their frameworks. For Freud, anxiety is an affect that serves the needs of the ego. In *An Outline of Psycho-analysis,* he argues that "[the ego] makes use of the sensations of anxiety as a signal to give warning of dangers that threaten its integrity" (1949, p. 57). Similarly, in his lecture "Anxiety and Instinctual Life", Freud reiterates that "the ego is the sole seat of anxiety – that the ego alone can produce and feel anxiety" (1965, p. 85). This poses a problem for Lacan because the idea of the ego that Freud associates with anxiety has realistic, not narcissistic, undertones.

Elizabeth Grosz (1990) observes a fundamental difference between Freud and Lacan's theories on the ego. Grosz shows that Freud tends to talk about the ego alternately as realistic or narcissistic. In the realistic version, "the ego protects the id by shielding it from harmful or excessively strong stimuli coming from reality – from external criticism, harsh judgements, the absence of desired objects" (1990, p. 25). In the narcissistic version, "the ego has no direct relation to reality and no privileged access to the data of perception. Its primary relations are libidinal" (1990, p. 25). In other words, the narcissistic ego is driven by a continuous dialectic between pleasure and unpleasure. As Grosz shows, the realistic ego responds to the pressures of the reality principle and is capable of taking a perceptual account of physical reality without the symbolic mediation of the narcissistic libido. Lacan posits an entirely narcissistic version of the ego which develops during the mirror phase. He does away with any Freudian emphasis on the ego's reality-testing functions. Since Freud repeatedly associates anxiety with the realistic ego, Lacan's return to Freud has to come to terms with this distinction.

I argue that we should locate anxiety between these two discursive structures: Between a realistic Freud and narcissistic Lacan. This way, we can define the status of objects anew on this intermediary platform. If Freud believes that the ego can take account of objects as such and Lacan rejects this possibility, there may be a middle ground where the object as such is present, though also threatened by the encroachment of the symbolic. Let us think about where and how the ego develops in both frameworks. I shall follow the psychoanalytic methodology of returning to the microcosm of childhood in search of an alternative metaphorical vocabulary to conceptualize the process of linguistic acquisition.

Lacan's mirror phase, which takes place between six to eighteen months of life, is the pre-Oedipal stage during which the infant develops identifications with deceptively complete and autonomous images. These images work, as Lacan claims, to "establish a relationship between an organism and its reality" (2006, p. 78). The infant recognizes the objects around him as merely existing *for* him. Other individuals' intentional activities are not yet a part of his judgmental process. The child desires the mother and the father's feelings are not yet a part of this affective equation. With the onset of the Oedipal stage, the child is hard-pressed to find a way to account for the father's desire as well. How does the child adjust his desires based on this new factor? He cannot desire the same way anymore. There is now another intentional attachment to the same object. After the father's intervention, the mother turns into a metaphorical force, a linguistic signifier through which the child can represent his desires back to himself.

In Freud's terminology, an awareness of others' intentions emerges with the onset of the phallic phase (onset around age three) which succeeds the anal phase. Whereas the phallic phase is characterized by a metonymic relation (part/whole – does the mom have a phallus?), the anal phase is characterized by how things separate from the body. In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Julia Kristeva recognizes the importance of this chronology for the "Freudian topography" (1984, p. 130):

> We would like to stress the importance of anal rejection or anality, which precedes the
>
> establishment of the symbolic and is both its precondition and its repressed element.
>
> (…) the acquisition of language and notably syntactic structure which constitutes its
>
> normativeness, is parallel to the mirror stage. Language acquisition implies the
>
> suppression of anality: in other words, it represents the acquisition of a capacity for
>
> symbolization through the definitive detachment of the rejected object, through its
>
> repression under the sign (1984, pp. 149-152).

As Freud explains, "defecation affords the first occasion on which the child must decide between a narcissistic and an object-loving attitude" (1955, p. 129). Lacan is aware of this Freudian dynamic because he relates this cutting of an object to defecation: "This cut is what gives its value, its accent, to the anal object, with everything that it can come to represent, not simply as they say, on the side of the gift, but on the side of identity" (2014, p. 67). The cut-

off object is not necessarily a signifier within the symbolic (not yet, at least) because it exists for one person, and does not absorb a multiplicity of intentional states. The anal phase enacts an elementary dialectic between object attachment and detachment. As the symbolic order encroaches, the retention of the object becomes the marker of a narcissistic attitude that prevents the child from 'entering the conversation'. Thus, as Kristeva argues, the anal phase gradually comes to involve a decision-making process and becomes the precondition for the Oedipal theater of the phallic phase. Anxiety should therefore be located as the governing affect between the anal and the phallic phases.

Indeed, Kristeva's concept of the semiotic *chora* serves as a corrective to the limited imagination Lacan has granted to the cognitive dynamics governing the pre-Oedipal periods. Both in her own theoretical accounts of poetic language and assessment of Melanie Klein, Kristeva posits an understanding of a subject's responsiveness which synthesizes Lacanian signification with rhythms of embodiment that undergird the experience of an infant in the "pre-verbal functional state" (1984, p. 27). Kristeva proposes that we "restore this motility's gestural and vocal play" (1984, p. 26): "The kinetic functional stage of the *semiotic* precedes the establishment of the sign; it is not, therefore, cognitive in the sense of being assumed by a knowing, already constituted subject" (1984, p. 27). In Kristeva's framework, this kinetic awareness is not superseded with the onset of the Oedipal and the establishment of the symbolic. This rhythmic potentiality continues to manifest in certain types of experience and thus, the dynamics of the pre-Oedipal stage have a way of lingering and informing our responsiveness.

Kristeva's account is pioneering for psychoanalytic thought because it offers a corrective to Lacan's privileging of linguistic signification as establishing the totalizing dynamics of the symbolic after the Oedipal period. Recent false-belief task experiments in modern psychology which try to differentiate between the effects of linguistic, gestural and bodily responsiveness seem to corroborate some of Kristeva's emphasis on the need for offering more complex accounts of the cognitive and pre-cognitive process which do not fold neatly into the category of linguistic signification. In my reading, the root of Kristeva's theory also has to do with anxiety, as shown in her account of Melanie Klein. When Kristeva distinguishes between Freud and Klein, she argues the following: "Whereas for Freud the unconscious foundation of psychic life is centered on desire and on the repression of desire, all of Melanie Klein's work is dominated by an interest in anxiety" (2001, p. 82). This anxiety arises in response to the "fear of annihilation of life" (2001, p. 83). Though objects are internalized during the Oedipal stage and risk losing their independent existence, the child is also often overwhelmed by a "desire to *make reparation to* objects" (2001, p. 79). Surely, the cultivation of this desire depends partly on the manifestation of the *chora* and the various gestural, bodily, and kinetic lines of responsiveness which characterize pre-Oedipal existence.

What is absent, then, from both Freud's and Lacan's frameworks is an account of the behavioral transformations taking place *during* the anal phase, between the ages of one and three. In order to fill this gap, I will turn to the folk psychology notion of the theory of mind, and a specific experiment called the false belief task. As Martin J. Doherty explains in *Theory of Mind* (2009), the first experiment was conducted by Heinz Wimmer and Josef Perner in 1983, which found that children show an ability to predict how others will behave based on their beliefs starting "at around or 4 or 5 years old" (1983, p. 9). The more frequently cited experiment is the famous 1985 Sally-Ann test, conducted by Simon Baron-Cohen, Alan M. Leslie and Uta Frith. This test builds on Wimmer and Perner's experiment but with the added aim to observe whether

there would be a delay in how autistic children "impute beliefs to others and to predict their behaviour" (1985, p. 37).

Let me create my own version of the Sally-Ann experiment for explanatory purposes. There is a box and a bowl. Emma puts a piece of chocolate in the box and leaves the room. While she is gone, somebody takes the chocolate from the box and puts it in a bowl. When Emma comes back, where is she going to look for the chocolate? The right answer, of course, is the box: That's where she left it and she is going to think it is there. This is the answer given by most children older than three. Remarkably, most younger children think that Emma is going to look in the bowl, the last observed location of the object. The younger children do not yet have the ability to factor in other's people's beliefs when they develop judgments.

There are numerous variations of this experiment. For instance, the 2005 experiment by Carlson, Wong, Lemke and Cosser demonstrates that gestures help to enhance children's performance. "Children who are in transition with respect to theory of mind might find transparent representations such as gesture more accessible for reasoning about mind-world relations" (2005, p. 84). Though psychologists have not isolated the specific mechanisms that lead younger children to ignore others' beliefs, Mark Jary argues that these experiments show that after a certain age "what ultimately guides behaviour is a representation of how the world is, rather than the state of the world" (2010, p. 19). Martin J. Doherty offers an informative summary of the numerous variations of this experiment which, since the original experiments in the early 1980s, have tried to complicate our understanding of the cognitive developments and dynamics involved in the process of children acquiring "the ability to predict behaviour based on false beliefs" (2009, p. 33). These different studies show that there are serious categorial ambiguities in these experiments' definitions of certain mental tasks or capabilities (Southgate, 2013), that many factors can indeed accelerate the development or show signs of early abilities to process others' beliefs. However, as Doherty recaps, there is on the whole a notable consistency in the results: "Children start to do all these things at around the age of 4 years. Some procedural alterations can improve performance, but never by very much. Three-year-olds continue to perform at or below chance" (2009, p. 33).

I turn to the false belief task because, given its timing in children's development, it offers a corrective to the psychoanalytic misconceptions of language acquisition. At some point between ages two and three, children learn to absorb other people's beliefs into their own judgments and can better appreciate other people's affective attachments to objects. In the psychoanalytic framework, this ability is necessary for the onset of Oedipus complex when the child begins to recognize that his desires conflict with those of the father's, directed towards the same object. I associate anxiety with this period where the symbolic gradually encroaches on the ego and its imaginary identifications start to turn into signifiers with values constantly mediated by societal pressures. This is also the transitional period whose affective dynamics (i.e., anxiety) have elicited seemingly incompatible descriptions from Freud and Lacan. A fuller understanding of this transition which takes into account differential cognitive capabilities can extend the temporality of an infant's relationship to objects and other minds.

Donald Winnicott's, in particular, offers compelling theoretical models for seeking reproachments between modern cognitive studies and psychoanalysis since Winnicott's account of object relations avoids the linearity Lacan ascribed to the Oedipal turn. Winnicott's framework, in other words, makes space for the retention of the ability to recognize "an entity in its own right" (2005, p. 120). Here, too, anxiety emerges as one of the primary affects. For

example, in "Birth Memories, Birth Trauma, and Anxiety" Winnicott claims that "…the individual has to have reached a certain degree of maturity, with capacity for repression, before the word anxiety can be usefully applied" (1975b, p. 181). Winnicott resists the standard association of birth trauma with anxiety. He holds that for anxiety a sense of independent individuality has to emerge. Relevant self-object relations are simply not present at birth. Interestingly, just as Lacan's "not without" in his lectures on Anxiety (2014, p. 131), Winnicott in "A Note on Normality and Anxiety", also runs into a negation problem while articulating his theory. He remembers haphazardly uttering the line, "there is no such thing as a baby" (1975a, p. 99) while defending his theory at a conference and describes his immediate reaction: "I was alarmed to hear myself utter these words and tried to justify myself by pointing out that if you show me a baby you certainly show me also someone caring for the baby, or at least a pram with someone's eyes and ears glued to it. One sees a 'nursing couple'" (2014, p. 99).

This line of thinking which both dilates the pre-Oedipal stage to reconceptualize the misleading unity assigned to the symbolic and equips post-Oedipal subjects with some recognitional capacity of "an entity in its own right" (Winnicott, 2005, p. 120) feature prominently in other recent psychoanalytic accounts as well. For example, if we trace the evolution of Jessica Benjamin's thought from her discussions of intersubjectivity to the idea of recognition, we can see a consistent and powerful interest in the rhythmic, gestural and, as Kristeva says, "kinetic" (1984, p. 95) elements which undergird the process of acknowledging the reality of the Other. Benjamin theorizes a "nascent, energetic form of the Third" (2018, p. 30) which stems from the relationship between the mother and the child. Benjamin attaches a "rhythmic" element to this concept of the Third to elucidate "the principle of affective attunement and accommodation to share patterning that informs such exchanges" (2018, p. 30). Most important, in Benjamin's account, anxiety also emerges as a central generative affect with the power to establish "meta-communication", where subjects can become aware of the symbolic and "hold two meanings at once" (2018, p. 149).

Finally, Carrie Noland's work on embodiment and gestural communication proves crucial because it consistently demonstrates the way gestures and embodied reactions can provide "access to an interiority that culture cannot entirely control" (2009, p, 205). Recently in an essay titled "Earliest Gestures", Noland asks: "What were my earliest gestures and where, in me, are they now?" (2019, p. 158). She then pursues a middle ground between Daniel Stern and Judith Butler's ideas of corporeal existence. For Stern, corporeality grants us "access to earlier orders of experience. That is, because gesturing offers an experience of kinetic (and, often, tactile) sensation, it can call up an earlier motor memory" (2019, p. 159). For Butler, however, there is something "culturally overdetermined" (2019, p. 160) about gestures, just like the perpetual mediation that takes place in Lacan's post-Oedipal structures of signification. Noland's search for a middle ground between these two positions informs my own thinking about the transitional "period during which we travel from being primarily a bundle of reflexes and dispositions to being more active, expressive, intentional subjects" (2019, p. 161).

Most psychoanalytic accounts, including Lacan's, ignore the cognitive complexity of the developmental process and characterize the encroachment of the symbolic as a sudden *entry* into language. As modern psychology shows, however, this is a steady process where uses of gesture and body language have differential effects on the child's ability to pass the false belief task. The adoption of a representational worldview, therefore, is not a case of being *thrown* into discourse. Different modes of communication (language, gesture, body) play different roles throughout this process. The characterization of all such modes as purely representational,

and therefore equally mediated by the symbolic order, is misleading. This transitional period, where anxiety is the dominant affect, situates the psyche in a mutable relationship to objects. Most objects are available for the child's desire without being entirely endangered or mediated by the intentional attachments of other subjectivities. Depending on the communicative situation and the resources that the child brings to a situation, objects may occupy this intermediary state or slide into the position of a signifier. Anxiety, then, is an affect caught between two modes of object-oriented awareness organized by perceptual autonomy and the proliferation of intentional states.

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Infinite Singletons and the Logic of Freudian Theory

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to advance a formal description of the implicit logic grounding of the psychoanalytic theory. We therefore propose a new interpretation of the logical features of the Freudian unconscious process, starting from the Bi-logic formulation put forward by the Chilean psychoanalyst Matte Blanco. We conceive the universal undifferentiated state of the deep psychoanalytic Unconscious in terms of particular sets named infinite singletons, and we show how they can represent the logical foundations for a formal description of the Primary process. We first disclose some implicit assumptions underlying the common logical language. In doing so, we discover an unexpected presence of symmetry even in the most basic of logical and verbal structures. In the approach derived, we show that infiniteness, not finiteness, is the primary mode of sets, and therefore, of thinking. The pivotal consequence of this model is that the unconscious elements cannot be characterised in the absence of external reality, which produces the collapse of infinite sets and allows for the emergence of linguistic representations. Finally, we discuss how the model could represent a platform to formalise further developments of psychoanalytic theory, in particular with respect to the shift from the First to the Second Topics in Freudian theory.

> "Freud's fundamental discovery is not that of the unconscious…
> but that of a world—which he unfortunately called the unconscious—
> ruled by entirely different laws from those governing conscious thinking".
> (Matte Blanco, 1975, p. 93)

Introduction

In this paper, we offer a detailed account of the development of a logical formalism that sheds light on some aspects of unconscious processes. It is based on an idea by the Chilean psychoanalyst Ignacio Matte Blanco (1908–1995), who understood the intrinsic advantages and values of Freud's original theoretical proposal and put forward the Bi-logic theory (Matte Blanco, 1975, 1988), as a hypothesis to describe the logic systems underlying the unconscious mental functioning.

In our view of Bi-logic, the pivotal element of the unconscious mode is the absence of characterisation, namely the impossibility of distinguishing elements of a set in the absence of a link to an external reality. We show that "without characterisation, every set is infinite, namely: *infiniteness, not finiteness, is the primary mode of sets*". The indefiniteness in our

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model is therefore linked to infiniteness. Technically, our view is achieved analysing some implicit assumptions and shortcuts underlying the usual logical thinking. To start, we consider logical duality, that is the algebraic counterpart of the bivalent (true/false) setting of logic, to create a negationless environment that is symmetric and can contain elements with an infinite character, i.e., infinite singletons (see below). In a recently published paper, Saad (2020) puts forward the hypothesis that unconscious thinking is carried out based on intuitionistic negationless logic and relates it to different defence mechanisms such as projection and reactive formation (for a wider discussion of this issue see Matte Blanco's (1988) last work on Bi-logic called "Thinking, Feeling and Being". In our model infinite singletons can grasp the positive elements describing the primary process, namely condensation and displacement.

The psychoanalytic theory proposed by Freud in his work on dreaming (Freud, 1953), is an apparatus based on the idea of psychic determinism and a fundamental insight about the nucleus of human experience not being phenomenological. In the process of theory-genesis Freud introduced constructs such as dreamwork, primary and secondary process, condensation and displacement – all examples of the building of the objects of scientific study from within the discipline itself rather than from the everyday, commonsensical experience, exactly as happens in natural and some social sciences.[2] However, the development of the psychoanalytic movement and the preeminent role assumed by the clinical practice within it led to a progressive marginalisation of such a scientific attitude. This in turn determined a major decrease in the inherent capacity of psychoanalysis, insofar as scientific discipline, to generate new, durable insights. Our work goes, therefore, in the direction of abstraction and formalization of the psychoanalytic theory. We are convinced that psychoanalysis as a discipline can benefit from the formal clarification of the theory, which implies a validation in terms of internal coherence, from which both theoretical and clinical research can take advantage. Our proposal, therefore, is not pointing to new phenomena that could enrich the basis of empirical data which have inspired Matte Blanco, but directly to his theory.

In psychology, this type of modelling efforts follows Salvatore's (2016) quest for a return to the Theory-driven psychology – "a psychology which gives up those concepts defined in terms of phenomenical experience and models from within itself objects and categories it assumes as target and means of investigation". (2016, p. 7) In our view, the notion of *stylized facts* can be useful in the quest to restore the explanatory power of a theory. Introduced by Kaldor (Kaldor, 1961, quoted in Arroyo Abad & Khalifa, 2016) in his discussion on economic growth, stylized facts are to be considered an essential building block in the process of theory-construction. Facts *determined by* and not *inferred from* data are stylized facts[3]. By ignoring individual

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[2] For example, in economics there are concepts of market forces, elasticity and so on which are not objects of direct experience rather conceptual tools for a better understanding of the phenomena themselves.

[3] To further define the stylized facts, we can contrast them to so-called bare facts, which are the facts as we usually intend them, "well-confirmed statements about empirical regularities that are typical of economic explanation" (Arroyo Abad and Khalifa, 2016, p. 145). Thus, we can say that there is a direct inferential link between bare facts and the data. However, bare facts are considered inadequate for the process of theory building – they are too limiting, too qualifying and "unable to be properly summarized" (Arroyo Abad and Khalifa, 2016, p. 145). Therefore, in working with bare facts theorists find themselves in such a situation where for further progress to be achieved it is necessary to relax some of the aforementioned qualifications.

details and historical noise, stylized facts address the underlying mechanisms and processes thus setting the foundation for the theory-genesis. In order to connect the dots (Ellemers, 2013) proper models must be developed.

This interdisciplinary paper is based on constructs that require an effort from the part of the reader. Such effort will hopefully be justified since it can allow for a clearer comprehension of the functioning of the unconscious processes. The paper is structured as follows, section 1 introduces the theoretical background, including elements of both Freudian and Matte Blanco's theories, section 2 offers the necessary logical tools for the comprehension of our argument, section 3 introduces the concept of infinite singleton, section 4 describes a model of the symmetric unconscious based on the infinite singleton and proposes some considerations on different types of the infinite (namely the asymmetric and symmetric infinite) and section 5 offers a formal representation of the model. Finally, we discuss some of the possible implications and developments for the formalisation of the psychoanalytic theory.

Theoretical Background

Freud and thinking. The psychoanalytic work – ever since Freud's days – has been focused on associative chains and thought sequences, which analysis has enabled him to grasp the idea of existence of the unconscious mind. Accessing unconscious processes through conscious elaboration has opened the path to a radically different vision of the human being. Freud's description of the characteristics of the unconscious mind was based on a meticulous comparison of the manifestations of unconscious processes and classical logic. The analysis revealed the inherent illogicality of the unconscious – "the fundamental rules of logic have no weight in the unconscious, it could be called the Realm of the Illogical" (Freud, 1964b, p. 168). He considered the unconscious to be a structure, a system, essentially independent from the ego and uniqueness of individual mental content: "to sum up: *exemption from mutual contradiction*, *primary process* (mobility of cathexes), *timelessness*, and *replacement of external by psychical reality* – these are the characteristics which we may expect to find in processes belonging to the system Ucs[4]" (Freud, 1964, p. 187).

Freud's description of this new world was nevertheless characterised by a certain degree of intrinsic ambiguity. He tackled the problem from various points of view – dynamic, energetic and topological – and the theoretical prism he built was influenced by such an approach. These considerations represent the nucleus of the early psychoanalytic contribution to the study of thinking and remain crucial for the understanding of the mental elaboration present in instances such as dreams, psychotic and some neurotic symptoms.

Matte Blanco: Origins of Bi-logic. Difficulties in the development of this model subsequently led to the gradual abandonment of the structural unconscious and its replacement with two new constructs – the Id and the repressed unconscious, which nevertheless did not possess the elegance and the explanatory potential of the old *Ucs*. It wasn't until the 1950s and the works of the Chilean psychoanalyst Ignacio Matte Blanco that any significant development was made in this vital area of psychoanalytic knowledge. Matte Blanco aspired to sew a new "set of clothes for psychoanalysis, which finds itself in a situation comparable to that of an adolescent who has outgrown his clothes and feels restricted, hampered in his movements and

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[4] Following Freud, we will use the abbreviations *Ucs* for the system unconscious and *Cs* for the consciousness.

uncomfortable" (1975, p. 3). His ideas are systematically represented for the first time in his magnum opus "The Unconscious as Infinite Sets" of 1975.

Starting from the Freudian works and the ideas of M. Klein, he laid out a new theoretical framework, based on the awareness that none of the cases of the aforementioned illogicality of the mind resulted from a chaotic or randomly operating process. On the contrary, it was clear that they were subject to rules which, although distant from ordinary, classical logic, still produced an order of some kind. His research led to a conception of the human mind essentially as an interplay of two distinct, polarised modalities. He reformulated the Freudian conscious-unconscious duality in terms of the underlying logics of these processes and this is why his theory is known as Bi-logic. Matte Blanco's conception of mental activity is represented by a dichotomous model of "sameness registration and difference discrimination" (Iurato, 2018, p. 124), as two main aspects of thinking. According to him, any psychic act is essentially a combination of these two modalities, at various degrees. The intertwining of these two fundamental modalities gives rise to all mental structures, however complex they may be.

The two principles of Bi-logic. For Matte Blanco, thinking is essentially a process of establishing relations between elements of both external and internal reality: "thinking is actually propositional activity which may lead to simple propositions, to rules, relations, etc. (uni-, bi-, tri-, etc. -positional propositional functions). As relations usually constitute the most frequent aspect of propositional activity, for the sake of brevity I shall, in future, designate thinking (propositional activity) simply as establishment of relations" (Matte Blanco, 1975, p. 225).

Conscious thinking predominately entails relations of analysis and discrimination. This is vital as the first task of consciousness is to locate the self in the world of other objects. From a logical standpoint, these relations are to be considered asymmetric, since they establish differences between elements. The process of ordinary thinking can be conceptualised as following mainly the rules of classical, Aristotelian logic. Consciousness is segmenting and categorizing reality into its constitutive elements to know it. This classificatory activity is present on all levels of thought. However, while the *Cs* is engaged with individual elements, the *Ucs* generalises, treating every individual thing as a member of a class, which in turn belongs to a wider class and so on. Matte Blanco formalised this observation as the generalization principle, the first law of the logic of *Ucs*. The choice of the term *principle* reflects its deep, fundamental character and its importance in mental life.

The next Matte Blanco's discovery is a crucial one, because it represents the core mechanism of the functioning of *Ucs*. As soon as we move towards less conscious processes, the aspect of sameness and likeness starts to become more and more prominent. Matte Blanco states that the *Ucs* processes work by seeking similarities between elements. According to him, the aforementioned sameness registration can be usefully represented by the principle of symmetry, that is, *Ucs* "treats the asymmetrical relations as if they were symmetrical" (Matte Blanco, 2975, p. 38). The word symmetry refers to the sameness, identity between two things and their fundamental indistinguishability. Thus, since the relation of contradiction is nevertheless a relation, the *Ucs* treats opposites as identical.

The *Ucs* activity is hence synthetic, or *condensative* as Freud (1900) would say: it homogenises the experience. Each element is indistinguishable from any other member of the same class. The *Ucs* does not deal with individual elements, only with classes to which they belong. To

provide an example, for the child the mother is not a single, individual person, it is rather a summum of all of the attributes of all members of its defining class – the class of mothers. Therefore, the individual thing is identified by the class it belongs to. Based on Dedekind's observation that if a set[5] is equivalent to its part, the set itself is necessarily infinite (Dedekind, 1901, p. 64), Matte Blanco's formal explanation accounts for the infinite, all-or-nothing character of *Ucs* processes.

Building on the explanatory capabilities of both principles of generalization and symmetry, the functioning of *Ucs* is seen as a creation of a hierarchy of ever-growing classes, structured as "bags of symmetry": "as the mind and the unconscious deal with various classes, we can say that there are as many 'bags' of symmetry surrounded by films of asymmetry as there are classes in our unconscious" (Matte Blanco, 1975, p. 302). Thus, we can conceptually encompass the totality of thinking processes on the basis of their underlying logic – the *Cs* activity is essentially asymmetric, it heterogenises and separates, whereas the *Ucs* activity is symmetric, homogenizing and relies on sameness and identity. As already mentioned, these two modalities are inseparable and ubiquitous, as the pure form of either is more of a theoretical extreme than an observable clinical fact. Complete asymmetry would implicate the paralysis of the thought process and total symmetry would mean a collapse of psychic coherence and the loss of self (Matte Blanco, 1988). This inextricable interplay of asymmetric and symmetric logic in all mental activity has lead Matte Blanco to conceive the human mind as a stratified structure where the consciousness, most sensitive to differences and individualities, represents the highest level, and the lower levels are characterised by increasing levels of symmetry and preference for similarities (for a discussion of some very relevant genetic and clinical implications of the theory see Rayner, 1981; Grotstein, 1995; Fink, 1989; Matte Blanco, 1989; Charles, 2003; Bria & Lombardi, 2008; Saad, 2020).

The Bi-logic dilemma. Speaking of the *Ucs*, we are confronted with processes whose knowable aspects can be described by something that, although described in logical terms, is alien to any type of ordinary logic, i.e., the principle of symmetry. However, for an accurate description of the *Ucs* phenomena, both the principle of symmetry and the classical logic are needed: neither would suffice if taken separately. Matte Blanco stressed this point, along with his desire to abandon this hybrid, twofold approach and return to a singular, "unitary super-logic", which must be able to contain symmetry (Matte Blanco, 1988, p. 66). His desire remained unaccomplished, and the problem lives on as the "Bi-logic dilemma" (Matte Blanco, 1988, p. 66).

Revisiting Some Logical Tools in View of Bi-Logic

In the following, we shall see the re-interpretation of Matte Blanco's proposal in a suited logical language, that can enable us to better analyse some of the key points of the logic of the unconscious and its relations with conscious thinking.

Formal logic, dating back to Aristotle, abstracts the form from the content and treats the concrete only through abstraction. To determine if something is true or false, formal logic begins by ascertaining its logical form and Aristotle distinguishes three orders of forms—the inference, the proposition, and the term. At the first level, that of inferences, he is almost exclusively concerned with syllogisms, which are schemes of reasoning, consisting of exactly three propositions, two premises (minor and major) and the conclusion. The proposition, which

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[5] Terms set, class, category, group are used as synonyms in this regard.

can be defined as any declarative statement, which in the given context has a meaning and can be true or false, represents second order in formal logic. The third and final order concerns the internal structure of propositions and deals with subjects and predicates. The formal language introduced in the XIX century and still in use nowadays, comprises propositional logic (dealing with propositions) and predicate or first-order logic (dealing with predicates).

Observations on the use of logical connectives. The propositions can be atomic (their truth value does not depend on the truth or falsity of any other proposition) or compound. The compound propositions are built using atomic propositions and a set of propositional connectives: conjunction, disjunction, negation, and implication. In addition to the propositional connectives, the first-order language includes quantifiers, which represent the formal equivalent of terms like "all of" and "some of". Quantifiers regard sets of elements and aim to establish a truth about some or every element of the set. Before exploring some of these notions in greater detail, we must remark that this classification is based on our conscious experience, since it depends on the idea of verification of truth, which in turn implies a contact with the external reality.

Let us start with a very simple example: George, who is making a sandwich, adds some ham first and then he adds some cheese. Based on the two previous items of information and without any further verification, he can assert the following: "some ham is in my sandwich AND some cheese is in my sandwich", or simply "ham AND cheese are in my sandwich". This is the truth he expects to verify when eating the sandwich. Our example describes the logical conjunction "AND", which forms a true proposition when both conjuncts (there is ham in the sandwich *and* there is cheese in the sandwich) are true.

With respect to finding a correspondence with the elements of reality, the example of conjunction is the simplest one. As we will see, the correspondence issue, in other cases, may be considered controversial. For instance, the logical connective "NOT" subsumes linguistic particles and expressions that describe the negation of a proposition. Since classical logic is bivalent (something can be either true or false and not both at the same time) the negation of a proposition is true if and only if the proposition is false, and the double negation of a proposition is equivalent to the proposition itself. Going on with the previous example, if George makes a sandwich just with ham, then he can assert "there is NOT cheese in my sandwich" without tasting it. However, we notice that tasting the sandwich carries a piece of positive information about the presence of ham and no positive information about cheese, that is, negation seems to be a pure logical artifact.

Furthermore, logical disjunction, described by the connective "OR", is true when either of the disjuncts is true. As an example of how a disjunction is formed, we could imagine George making two distinct sandwiches—one with ham and the other with cheese—and putting them in a bag. Then, if he were to pick up one of them randomly from the bag, he could assert "there is ham OR cheese in my sandwich". However, after tasting the sandwich, George could be more precise, thus making the disjunction irrelevant. As a matter of fact, the truth contained in the disjunction is more about the bag than about the sandwiches!

Finally, we consider the implication connective, describing logical consequence "IF … THEN …". The implication is true when the conclusions are true, given that the assumptions are true. We notice that the implication requires a certain level of abstraction. It is located at the level of rules, and it concerns the truth about the rule itself, regardless of the subject involved. Let

us consider, as an example, the following rule: "if you earn money, then you have to pay taxes". The meaning of the rule is general, and it applies to everyone.

Logical connectives can link and modify logical propositions and allow us to infer what the true elements in the external reality are. However, we must add that the semantics of logical connectives also carries an idea of truth that goes beyond the mere verification, and hence hides components of thinking independent of the reality itself. As we have noticed in the disjunction and implication examples, even at this level, there is an impelling need for some amount of abstraction. Namely, it seems to us that a certain degree of symmetry is implied in the construction of the logical connectives as well.

The language of predicate logic. Predicates, in the first-order language, are propositions which express properties or relations about certain objects. For example, in the statement "red is a beautiful colour", the "[…] is a beautiful colour" part is a unary predicate. There are also binary, ternary and n-ary predicates – in the proposition "3 is greater than 6", the "[…] is greater than […]" part is a binary predicate. In the cases just considered the object is defined, that is, the predicate is applied to a *closed* term (a constant), and the corresponding predicate is closed as well. On the other side, the language also needs *open* terms to describe properties of objects that are not univocally defined. Open terms consist of variables or contain variables. Subsequently, open predicates are predicates that contain open terms. They do not have a definite truth value: for example, the sentences "x is a positive number", or "a person has got a degree" cannot be judged as true or false. This is possible only when the variables ("x" or "a person") are substituted by a closed term, for example "3 is a positive number", or "George has got a degree".

As already mentioned, first-order language adopts quantifiers, which are usually classified in two kinds: the universal one "FOR ALL" and the existential one "THERE EXISTS". If we re-use once again the gastronomic example, we can imagine George with a bag full of sandwiches, making some general assertions about them: "all sandwiches in the bag have cheese", "no sandwich in the bag has cheese", "at least one sandwich in the bag has ham", and so on. Therefore, quantifiers are necessary to *close* open predicates and hence assign a truth value to them, by specifying the range of the variable (in George's case, his bag).

First-order language revealed its weaknesses very soon after its introduction. In the first decades of the XX century, the results proved by Gödel and by Löwenheim–Skolem discovered a gap between the formal, *object* level and the informal, *meta-level*. That is, in logic, one needs to distinguish between the object level, which is the study of logic in a specific logic system (i.a., intuitionist logic, fuzzy logic) and the meta-level, which is the study of logic systems themselves. The limitative results were proved in model theory (Löwenheim–Skolem theorems) and in proof theory (i.e., Gödel theorems, for an in-depth review see Mangione & Bozzi, 1993). It was shown that, in the formal logical systems, the notion of truth is not in accordance with the notion of derivability, namely there are true and underivable sentences. A gap is created between semantics and syntax, between the informal, metalinguistic level, and the formal one. In particular, it became clear that the formal notion of term, the key element of first-order language, is insufficient and misleading. This is easily understandable considering the difference between variable and parameter, that everyone that solved equations in high school is familiar with. Solving an equation means finding the values of x for which the equality is true. This means that the letter x must be conceived as a variable that gives different values to the expressions involved in the equation. On the other side, when solving the equation, one

applies some uniform rules, independent of the constants contained in the equation itself. This can be performed informally, or it can be formalised by describing the rules themselves, and adopting other letters (i.e., the parameters) to represent the constant part of the equation. Then the status of a parameter is that of … a variable constant! Therefore, we can say that the parameter is a variable at the metalevel. The point is that this difference is lost in the first-order language.

Nevertheless, since human beings can…flee to the metalevel when they need, and hence abandon the cage given by the formalism to understand what they are doing, the formal apparatus has been maintained essentially for its convenience. However, this solution is not always convenient nor reasonable. It is not convenient, for example, in developing artificial intelligence, where one viable solution was proposed by the introduction of different kinds of probabilistic reasoning or different formalisms derived from mathematics (Wang, 2012). On the other hand, it is certainly not reasonable when we need to treat the roots of our thinking. In this case, it is necessary to perform the analysis of the role of the formalism with respect to the implicit assumptions and shortcuts underlying our usual thinking.[6]

Duality, Symmetry, and Infinite Singletons

Duality in logic. De Morgan laws state that conjunction and disjunction are *dual* connectives, that is: the negation of the conjunction of two propositions is the disjunction of their negation, and the negation of the disjunction of two propositions is the conjunction of their negation (Mangione and Bozzi, 1993). Going back to our informal example, the negation of "a sandwich with ham and cheese" is "a sandwich without ham or without cheese", the negation of "a sandwich with ham or cheese" is "a sandwich without ham and without cheese". Consequently, in propositional classical logic, it is possible to avoid the introduction of a primitive connective for negation and to define negation by adopting duality: we just need pairs of opposite elementary propositions. Then, by De Morgan laws, the negation of a conjunction of two elementary propositions is given by the disjunction of its opposites and the negation of a disjunction by the conjunction of its opposites, and so on. This means that there is a formalisation of classical logic that only includes the negation implicitly. Namely, bivalence is given by duality. So, the analysis of duality can be considered a natural formal platform that allows to avoid negation and approach symmetry.[7]

In classical logic, De Morgan's laws are extended to quantifiers as well, namely the negation of a universal proposition is equivalent to the existential quantification on the negation of its predicate and the negation of an existential proposition is equivalent to the universal quantification on the negation of its predicate (idem). For example, to express the negation of the sentence "every day of last week was sunny" one says, "there was a day of last week which

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[6] We must recognise that these considerations, especially the concept of symmetry, refer to aspects of thinking so deeply embedded in the very structure of it, that sometimes they seem either nonsensical or trivial. As the young fish who asked, "What is water?" in the famous speech by David Foster Wallace, we believe that the apparently obvious and trivial aspects of reality are seldom such, exceptionally less so when they concern our inner realities.

[7] A more careful analysis of duality is possible by adopting more specific logical tools such as *sequent calculus* (Gentzen, 1969; Sambin, Battilotti & Faggian, 2000). We are confident this could allow to develop technical results for a deeper comprehension of the border of the symmetric mode.

was not sunny". However, a different perspective is proposed by intuitionistic logic, where the truth of an existential statement is established only based on the actual construction of the object witnessing the truth of the predicate. Then the truth cannot be established simply by proving the negation of a universal quantifier, as duality would allow.

In addition, in intuitionistic logic the negation of a proposition is true when assuming that proposition as true would yield false conclusions[8]. As an example, let us consider the sentence "every day of last week was sunny". John, an intuitionistic logician, was away on holiday last week and wants to discover if the sentence is true or not. John adopts the intuitionistic approach to negation: he starts from the assumption that, if the whole week was indeed sunny, the ground in his garden would be dry. However, when he came back, he found the garden was wet and therefore he can conclude that the week was not completely sunny, even without knowing when exactly it had rained. Then he can assert the negation of the sentence. It is important to notice that, to conclude the negation of "every day of last week was sunny", John is exploiting the ability to see the week *as a whole thing*, not partitioned into different moments of time, even if the week is described adopting a quantification on the days of the week. This possibility is crucial for symmetry.

At the beginning of the XX century, the intuitionistic logic was developed based on the constructive notion of truth. Intuitionism did not criticise the formalisation of the language based on couples of dual connectives. However, the above example hints that there can be a way to overcome duality even inside first-order language, that is based on a *shift* in the approach to the domain of quantifiers.

Symmetry and infinite singletons. When defining the unconscious mode, Matte Blanco adopted two logical tools: the analysis of binary relations and the definition of infinite set. Actually, there is a third basic element in logic: connectives. Here we aim to explore the conditions under which the logical connectives are reduced to a unique, symmetric connective. To start, we do have a symmetric connective in first-order language: any quantifier applied to a domain of one element only (singleton). In such a case, the existential and universal quantifier coincide. For example, the father of an only child, who is good in maths, could say "all my children are good in maths" or "there exists a child of mine who is good in maths", equivalently. However, quantifying on a singleton is usually avoided. From our usual, conscious point of view, it is more informative to use the predicate attributing the considered property to the element, as in "my daughter/son is good in maths", where the element itself is univocally characterised.

Let us see this point in general. We assume that u is the unique element of the set U, and A is any property. Then the universal proposition
"FOR ALL x belonging to U x has the property A"
is equivalent to the existential proposition
"THERE EXISTS x belonging to U such that x has the property A;
since they are both equivalent to the property A applied to the element u, represented by a closed term of the language. To recognise the equivalence between the universal and existential quantifier by reducing of the quantification to a predicate with a closed term, hence, depends on the characterisation of the element u. That is, the domain U coincides with the singleton

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[8] This approach to negation is possible in classical logic as well, even if in this case it coincides with the result of duality.

$\{u\}$[9]since, if x is any element of U, then x is identified with u. As a matter of fact, *the characterisation* of the element eliminates the action of the quantifier. By *characterising* we mean isolating well-defined individual entities. This happens when we admit and recognise something as an *external reality*, that is, when we refer to objects of the external reality that do not depend on ourselves and our descriptions. However, to develop the idea of an effective symmetric connective, let us exclude the possibility of referring to an external reality. In other words, let us suppose that we cannot characterise. This would mean that there are conditions where it is not possible to describe an element of a set by simply assigning it an identity (as if a description of the set was to be produced in the absence of an *external reality)*. In that case, to describe a set, we can consider a domain, where for every property A, there is equivalence between existential quantification ("THERE EXISTS x belonging to U such that x has the property A") and its corresponding universal quantification ("FOR ALL x belonging to U x has the property A"). Every nonempty set for which such an equivalence is assumed is provably a singleton.[10] This means that U has a unique element, even if it is not specified.

We are accustomed to the extensional notion of set: the set is characterised by its elements and two sets with the same elements are indistinguishable. Therefore, it seems impossible to characterise something as a set without specifying its elements. However, as already mentioned, in logic one needs to distinguish between the meta-level and the object level. The point is that the notion of finite/infinite is level-sensitive: one can consider a set which is finite at the meta-level and cannot be proved as such at the formal, object level. This happens because the characterisation of the elements of a set may occur at the meta-level and not at the object level. Indeed, to judge a given set $V = \{u_1, \dots, u_n\}$ as finite, we need to count its elements, and hence to separate two parts: the part that has already been counted from the part that has not been counted yet. If characterising the elements is not possible, the counting process is not possible as well, and hence the very notion of finiteness is not available[11]. Even in the case of a set U with a unique element u, if we cannot characterise, we cannot count it as 1, as strange as it is! The invisible man described by Wells (1897) was *there.* Yet, he did not become visible until he was covered in some opaque fabric: so, even when we *see him,* we are actually only seeing the clothes that are covering him.

At this point, we have all the elements to introduce the notion of *infinite singleton.* It is a set positively described by the equivalence between the universal and existential quantification for every predicate, regardless of the possibility to denote the element of its domain by a closed term. In this way, *normal* singletons are a particular case of the infinite ones. In other terms, without characterisation, every set is infinite, namely: infiniteness, not finiteness, is the primary mode of sets. We recall that a set is infinite when there exists a proper part of its which is idempotent to the set itself. Therefore, this mathematical definition of infinite set can emerge once we can separate the existential from the universal quantifier, on one side, and distinguish the part from the whole, on the other. In singletons, every non-empty part is idempotent to the whole set. As mentioned earlier, for a set to represent the symmetric mode, it *must have only symmetric relations*—therefore such a set is necessarily a singleton (since, as soon as one can

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[9] The standard mathematical notation for a set is the so-called listing one, where the elements are placed between a pair of curly braces and separated by commas. In the case of singleton, there is a single element between braces.

[10] That is, any two of its elements are provably equal. See section 5 for a proof.

[11]A similar situation is found in quantum mechanics: indistinguishable particles form Bose condensates (Ancona, 1992, p. 132).

distinguish two different elements in a set, one can put order between them, and hence define a non-symmetric relation). The infinite singleton satisfies this condition and, paradoxically, we find that it represents a stronger notion of infinite. A *symmetric infinite*, indeed.

Infinite singletons and the logic of the symmetric mode. Infinite singletons are defined as those sets U which make the universal and existential quantification coincide. As we have seen, this yields two possibilities:

1) when one cannot characterise (in absence of the correspondence with an *external reality*), a generic infinite singleton emerges;
2) when one can characterise (provide an identity u for the element of U) the result is a finite singleton $\{u\}$.

We note that, in the first case, the set is described only by the membership relation while, in the second case, it is described also by an identification: "x belongs to U" becomes "$x = u$". As we have seen, any singleton, by definition, satisfies the symmetry principle. Then, to describe the symmetric mode, we need to exclude the finite singletons. To do so, it is enough to add the generalisation principle. Indeed, the generalisation process cannot be applied to a finite singleton $\{u\}$, because its identification with its unique element u yields that all elements different from u are excluded.

By exploiting the gap between the object level–meta level in logic, on one side, and gap between the asymmetry–symmetry in psychology on the other, we can now show that infinite singletons, together with the generalisation principle, produce the logical features of the primary process. Given that the symmetry cannot distinguish between elements (otherwise it would create a non-symmetric relation), we first notice that any two infinite singletons U and V cannot be distinguished in the symmetric mode. To distinguish two sets means to find an element that belongs to one and not to the other. This is impossible in the symmetric mode since the generalisation principle can establish a membership, but it cannot exclude one. Then, as observed by Matte Blanco (1988), when symmetry finds no obstacle at all, one gets to one object only. Therefore, any two infinite singletons are forced to *condense together*.

More so, infinite singletons do not have a complement, since considering "the set of the elements excluded from U" does not have any meaning in a system in which exclusion is not conceived. In addition, let us see that conceiving exclusion is equivalent to conceiving negation. For, let us consider the set U of elements satisfying the property A. Then, the set of elements excluded from U, that is the complement of U, is the set of elements that do not satisfy A, namely they satisfy its negation. Then, if a system is capable of excluding membership, the complement of U is available, and hence the negation of A is available. Conversely, if a system is capable of negation, then the set of elements satisfying the negation of A, that is the complement of U, is available. We conclude that infinite singletons, in presence of generalisation, do not allow negation.

Furthermore, as a corollary of the definition of infinite singleton, we see that the displacement of a property from an element to "another", inside the infinite singleton, is necessary. For, if an element of U has a certain property A, then "THERE EXISTS x in U which has the property A", but then "FOR ALL x in U x has the property A", by the definition of infinite singleton itself.

Matte Blanco (1975) considered the symmetric mode as the primary mode of experience. Rayner (1981) referred it to pre-object, symbiotic states of mind and, more recently, it was recognised—quite paradoxically—as "the source of any possible determination or predication" (Bria & Lombardi, 2008, p. 712).

Following our model, we claim that this primary mode corresponds to an absence of characterisation, which, by the way, could be reminiscent of the fetal condition (Grotstein, 1978; Fink, 1989). Let us explore what happens when external reality comes in. The system, besides structuring the world in terms of classes of indistinguishable elements, becomes capable of characterizing and identifying individual entities. Therefore, when characterization becomes possible, the system becomes capable of recognising that the membership relationship "x belongs to U" is equal to the identity relationship "$x = u$". Then the complement of U becomes conceivable as a separate entity.

This resembles the Kleinian conceptualisation in which the first representation of experience is a bivalent one (good breast vs. bad breast) (Klein, 1946). A similar idea is found for the spin observable in the quantum model (Battilotti, 2014a,b), where the set of elements not belonging to U is characterised as having the *opposite* value with respect to U. In this view, bivalence is interpreted as a sort of *natural collapse* of symmetry, hence it is close to symmetry, but it represents *the end of the infinite mode*.

Finally, we mention another view of the collapse of symmetry, which can preserve some aspects of the infinite mode. As we have mentioned, Matte Blanco conceives mental activity as an inextricable interplay of asymmetric and symmetric logic; in particular, he considers the mathematical infinite as an asymmetric infinite, namely a way for the infinite to survive out of the symmetric mode. This clearly hints at the possibility that, in our rational reasoning, we can partially preserve the symmetric mode under the form of infinite mode. While Matte Blanco does not refer to different specific logic systems, we suggest that intuitionistic logic contains a way to preserve an infinite mode out of symmetry and without bivalence. As Kurt Gödel (Gödel, 1986a) proved, intuitionistic logic is infinite valued, since its semantics cannot be characterised by a finite number of truth values. In particular, as mentioned in section 3, intuitionistic logic is not bivalent and, therefore, its negation is not definable in terms of duality. Reconsidering the example "every day of last week was sunny", its negation in the realm of intuitionistic logic requires the ability to see the week as a whole thing and not partitioned into different items of time. This is true even if the week is described by adopting the universal quantification on the domain of the days of the week. The example reveals traces of the symmetric infinite in our conscious thinking, *where negation is formulated.*

Our approach leaves open a very relevant issue, that must be included in the modeling effort, and that is related to the emergence of bivalence from the fundamental symmetric mode (a solution to a structurally similar issue was explored within a quantum formalism in Battilotti, 2014). There is an ongoing research effort to envisage a pathway leading from the logic of infinite singletons to the intuitionistic definition of negation, and therefore to bi-logic: in brief, the proposal assumes that reconciliation between infinite and finite is possible considering a further abstraction of the definition of infinite singleton within a modal logic, in which a predicate is introduced to be interpreted as "it is necessary that", "it must be", namely *a prescription*. We are therefore proposing to develop a modal approach in which prescription should 'contain' the infinite element, inherited from infinite singletons. The modal logic approach under study (Battilotti, *in preparation*) is consistent with the evolution of the

Freudian theory, which in moving from the First to the Second Topics, as expressed in The Ego and the Id (Freud, 1923), introduces a normative instance moderating the encounter of the psychic dimension with the external reality. However, going back to the present goal, in the following section, we will provide the formal presentation of the statements introduced in the paper; this section can be skipped without any loss of comprehension or generality by the reader who is not interested in it.

Formal representation of duality, infinite singletons and their properties. The language of propositional logic consists of elementary propositions, represented by small letters (literals): $p_1, p_2, p_3, \ldots, p_n, \ldots$ and propositional connectives, negation ($\neg$), conjunction ($\wedge$), disjunction ($\vee$)[12]. Compound propositions $\neg A$, $A \wedge B$, $A \vee B$ are formed by applying connectives to simpler propositions, A and B, in turn originated from literals.

Two propositions A and B are equivalent when by assuming A one can derive B and conversely. In the following, we shall denote logical consequence by $\vdash$ and logical equivalence by $\equiv$. De Morgan laws state that
$$\neg(A \wedge B) \equiv \neg A \vee \neg B \text{ and } \neg(A \vee B) \equiv \neg A \wedge \neg B;$$
and we say that conjunction and disjunction are dual connectives. Negation is formally avoided by adopting a wider set of literals, containing, for each literal p, its negation $p^\perp$. Indeed, compound propositions are formed by using conjunction and disjunction only: initially $\neg(p_1 \wedge p_2)$ is given by $p_1^\perp \vee p_2^\perp$ and $\neg(p_1 \vee p_2)$ is given by $p_1^\perp \wedge p_2^\perp$, and so on. This language confines negation to literals and shows that bivalence can be read as duality.

We now see the formal description of the elements of predicate logic used in the paper. A term denotes an object, that may be characterised or not. In the first case, it is a constant denoted by $c, k, u, \ldots$ and is *closed*, otherwise, it is a variable, and is *open*. A predicate P applied to some terms: $P(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ represents a relation applied to some objects. In particular, the equality $=$ is a binary predicate and properties A are unary predicates. In the following, we refer to equality, membership relation and properties only. As we said, open predicates cannot be given a truth value unless the quantification on a given domain is specified. The universal proposition "for all elements of the domain D, the property A holds" is written formally $(\forall x \in D)A(x)$, where $\forall$ is the universal quantifier and $x \in D$ (x belongs to D) denotes the membership relation between x and D. The existential proposition "there exists some element of the domain D, such that the property A holds" is written formally $(\exists x \in D)A(x)$, where $\exists$ is the existential quantifier. Then, the definition of infinite singleton is the following: the domain V is an infinite singleton if and only if, for every property A:
$$(\exists x \in V)A(x) \equiv (\forall x \in V)A(x).$$

We see that any two elements of an infinite singleton V are equal. Let us assume $z \in V$ for some element z even if not specified. One can see that $z \in V$ is equivalent to $(\exists x \in V)x = z$, which in turn is equivalent to $(\forall x \in V)x = z$, by the definition of infinite singleton applied to the property $x = z$ "to be equal to z". The last says that any element x is equal to the generic element z.

Requiring that the singleton V is recognised as finite by a system, namely that there is a constant element u such that the equality $V = \{u\}$ is proved in the system itself, amounts to the acceptance of the consequence $x \in V \vdash x = u$. Then we can have two different levels: in one V is finite since the consequence is asserted, in the other it is infinite since the consequence is not asserted. Finally, we would like to note that a formal analysis would show that the equivalence $(\exists x \in V)A(x) \equiv (\forall x \in V)A(x)$ is rewritten as the consequence:
$(z \in V) \wedge A(y) \vdash A(z) \vee (y \notin V)$

As we have seen, in the symmetric mode the disjunct $y \notin V$ is not the case, then one is forced to conclude the disjunct $A(z)$, providing a formal derivation of displacement in the symmetric mode. On the contrary, if the singleton is finite: $V = \{u\}$, the above consequence is rewritten as $z = u \wedge A(y) \vdash A(z) \vee y \neq u$ where $\neq$ is the negation of equality. This means that, when z is equal to u and a property A is true for y, then the same property is not necessarily true for y, unless y itself coincides with z and u. This is reasonably true and excludes any significant form of displacement in the finite case.

Concluding Remarks and Forthcoming Research

In this paper, we have shown that the implicit assumptions concerning the *extensionality of sets* and *the duality of logical language* hide an important distinction, which leads to the discovery of the symmetric mode. In the formal approach just derived, we have shown that infiniteness, not finiteness, is the primary mode of sets, and therefore, of thinking. This statement is reminiscent of some positions about the nature of thinking that have been expressed by different authors at different points in the development of psychoanalytic theory. Lou Andreas-Salomé (1921) proposed a theory of Primary Narcissism as an original state in which identity has not yet emerged from an undifferentiated state, grounded in pre-natal and infantile experience, in which we perceive ourselves as the whole and the whole as ourselves. She depicts the human being as a plant that longs for the Sun (i.e., the differentiated state) while being, in the meantime, grounded in the soil of this universal undifferentiated state. In his essay "The Ego and Thinking" (1929) Imre Hermann, a Ferenczian scholar, proposed the idea that the pure form of thinking would correspond to the deep Unconscious, sheltered from perception, that can only be described in logical terms. Finally, we would like to mention the Jungian concept of the psychoid nature of the Archetype as discussed in the essay "On the nature of the psyche" (Jung, 2001).

Notice that by describing an infinite singleton as *a set for which the language has no term to denote the unique object it contains*, we are actually saying, in formal terms, that no word is available for the thing we have in mind. As a matter of fact, we are finding a way to keep separate what Freud, already in his pre-analytical work "On Aphasia" (2002), had recognised as *different levels of representation,* namely *word presentation* and *thing presentation.* In his own words "that's why the idea of the object does not appear to us as closed, and indeed hardly as closable, while the word concept appears to us as something that is closed though capable of extension" (Freud, 2002, p. 80). As well known, this was the basis for Freud's subsequent theoretical and clinical work. We plan to further develop the analysis of the links between Matte Blanco and Freud's representation theory by referring to the formal approach just introduced (Battilotti, Borozan & Lauro Grotto, *in preparation*).

In general, developing a further analysis of the logical role of infinite singletons could allow reaching the formalisation of other aspects of the Freudian theory. In fact, the overwhelming

power of symmetry in the model should be somehow limited (Saad, 2020; Lauro Grotto, 2021) to reproduce the mixture of conscious and unconscious processes that is typical of human thinking, as described by Matte Blanco in the Bi-logic approach. In the genetic development of thinking the normative dimension plays a crucial role in this respect: as postulated by Freud, the development of the Oedipal dynamics assumes a structural status with the introduction of the Super-Ego in the Second Topic (Freud, 1961). In abstract terms, the notion of infinite singleton can be tackled from the point of view of criticism of the notion of term, as we have seen above. In this sense, two possible paths worth considering are Gödel's modal system S4 (Gödel, 1986b) and Girard's linear logic (Girard, 1987) both introduced to overcome the problem of incompleteness determined by first-order language. The modality of S4 could offer the opportunity to include an abstract and subsequently a normative element in the formalization. On the other side, the features of the unconscious thinking deriving from the quantitative aspects of the theory, namely the ones related to the economic point of view and the degree of investment could be described by developing infinite singletons in the modalities of linear logic. In fact, linear logic was the original proposal in a project to realise the aforementioned *unity of logic*. As already noticed, a similar idea was in Matte Blanco (1988): for, more than once he said that the solution of the "Bi-logical dilemma" was in the proposal of a "unitary super-logic" (Matte Blanco, 1988, p. 66). We hope that a formal approach rooted in the analysis of elementary elements allows for new developments in this sense. Finally, topological models of unconscious thinking have been widely explored in the last two decades (Iurato, 2018; Iurato et al. 2016; Khrennikov, 1998, 2002; Lauro Grotto, 2007, 2017; Murtagh, 2012a, 2012b, 2014) and since one of the most productive research methods in logic consists in establishing a correspondence between logical systems and topological structures, we hope such a correspondence can be found for our models.

Acknowledgments

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Book Review

Review of *Understanding Consciousness (Second Edition)* by Max Velmans. New York, NY: Routledge, New York, NY, 2009. xiii + 393 pages. ISBN 978-0415425162.

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Understanding Consciousness can almost be said to have a plot/narrative, or a dramatic structure similar to the 'three-act structure' model used by numerous screenwriters. In Part I—the Setup—Velmans surveys "mind-body theories and their problems", in part II—the Confrontation—he reconstructs "a new analysis: how to marry science with experience", and in part III—the Resolution—he shares with us "a new synthesis: reflexive monism" (v-vi). Velmans starts off in the first chapter with perhaps one of the most basic, nevertheless hard, questions in the field of consciousness studies: "what is consciousness?" In his attempt to answer this question, he introduces three themes which are explored later on in the book in details and which serve as the unifying logic behind the entire text as it build-up towards his original concept, 'reflexive monism': 1) "one can understand consciousness without reducing it [to a brain function, property or state]", 2) "we have to take stock of these ancient debates [monism vs. dualism, realism vs. idealism, and 'public' & 'objective' vs. 'private' & 'subjective'], but we do not have to be bound by the polarized choices that they offer", and 3) "it is possible to [study the experiencer and the experience] in a way that is consistent both with science *and* with 'common sense'" (p. 3). The "what is consciousness?" question is only half a problem when it comes to the consciousness-brain dilemma, for Velmans approximates that there are at least five major problems or groups of problems. The most famous of which is the 'hard problem', which is philosopher David Chalmers's ironic label—since the 'easy problems' are very hard but possibly solvable over time—for the question: "why should [and how does] physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all?" (p. 4). Velmans overviews the confusion resulting from the disagreement among scholars regarding the definition of consciousness, which in most cases is a result of some form of theoretical bias—the lens through which we view consciousness based on our presuppositions. For instance, the majority of Western scientists take on a physicalist approach when it comes to the mind-body problem so they either deny consciousness or ignore its phenomenology altogether, for the most part. Instead, Velmans takes on a commonsense approach to minimize this confusion by equating consciousness with 'awareness'. For him:

> the 'contents of consciousness' encompass all that we are we are conscious of, aware of, or experience. These include not only experiences that we commonly associate with ourselves, such as thoughts, feeling, images, dreams, body sensations, and so on, but also the experienced three-dimensional world (the phenomenal world) beyond the body surface. (p. 8)

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Velmans's project is ambitious, for he surveys with deep scrutiny some of the most important arguments or problems surrounding consciousness, and finally he offers us his take on the issue through his unified theory of consciousness: 'reflexive monism'.

Velmans is critical of classical dualism because its 'explanations' require explanation and because it 'splits' the world. According to him, "Descartes [with his *res cogitans* and *res extensa*] is often thought to be responsible for the mind-body problem in its modern form [i.e., neurophysiologic or quantum dualist-interactionism as well as emergentism]" (p. 14). Velmans examines the different forms of monism highlighting their strengths and weaknesses; he is especially critical of—radical/eliminativist, reductive, and emergent/property dualist—materialism/physicalism as a consequence of the logical argument that causation and correlation do not establish ontological identity—a point that he returns to repeatedly throughout the text. Velmans views Berkeley's idealism to be absurd and concludes that neutral monism is unsatisfactory or incomplete as a theory because it leaves many neurophysiological questions unanswered. He finds solace, however, in Spinoza's dual-aspect theory, which Chalmers and he interpret in quite different ways. Velmans's ontological monism/epistemological dualism gives us a useful analogy by which we can better understand consciousness; he compares the relationship between the brain and the mind, especially consciousness, to electromagnetism or wave-particle duality—which he calls "psychological complementarity". Velmans then challenges behaviorism's and cognitive psychology's functionalist theories of consciousness as an 'epiphenomenon' with the following dilemma: "is it possible for consciousness to do something to or about something it is not conscious of?" Whether we answer yes or no, "we are not aware of the activity of our own brains" and "so we conclude that consciousness as such does influence brain activity" even though "without it our existence would be like nothing" (p. 79).

Regarding computational functionalism, whether robots could be conscious or not, Velmans agrees with Searle that the approach of the 'Strong AI' project is flawed from the start because simulating human behavior or our functions is not a duplication of our biological structure, such as would be the case hypothetically at least with an artefact or surrogate human being/clone. It is for this reason that computers are excellent with syntax (arrangement according to rules) vs. semantics (meaning). Human beings are not only complex structurally, but also historically. What is the ontological identity of a robot that 'becomes conscious' out of the blue? Also, if robots excel at probabilistic tasks such as chess yet cannot accurately handle something as contextual as linguistic translation, how would they handle trans-linguistic or non-verbal communication (e.g., intuition)? I agree with Velmans's basic yet clever conclusion that "we are not just human *doings*, we are also human *beings*" (p. 113). Velmans contrasts his reflexive model with how dualists and reductionists deal with conscious phenomenology. In a diagram set up by Velmans of a CAT perceived by an external observer (E) and a subject (S) looking at the CAT (see figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 on pp. 125-128), he exposes the inherent flaws of dualism and reductionism by drawing our attention to the added 'perceived cat' in the mind of (S) in the case of the former and the added 'perceived cat' in the mind of (S), which is nothing more than a conscious state or function of the brain, in the case of the latter. In both scenarios, there is an added 'perceived cat' in addition to both the 'phenomenal cat' and the 'noumenal cat.' The reflexive model takes a psychophysical approach with the realization that the noumenal cat will never be truly experienced given our limited five senses and our 3D experience of reality; however, Velmans argues that our consciousness has evolved over time, and became sophisticated, to the extent that our phenomenal experience is a very good approximation of the noumenal that the two can almost be reflexively equal. Nevertheless, he maintains a Neo-Kantian critical realist viewpoint regarding the nature of

Reality, which is interestingly not too different from the Hindu notion of Maya that the perceived world is nothing but an illusion. This is also supported by modern physics, for as we zoom in deeper and deeper into the quantum world, we find out that all matter is energy and that we can influence sub-atomic particles through our observation, which is known as 'the observer effect'.

Velmans shares with us the 'pinprick thought experiment' to simply prove that not all conscious experiences take place in the brain, or that one can think of the brain *qua* body as a holistic or integrated system. How we project our phenomenal experience is a mystery but the 'neural projection hologram' analogy is useful when it comes to think of "perceptual projection" as "a psychological effect" (p. 134). Velmans's critical realist reflexive monist model then does not offer an explanation but rather a description of "perceptual projection" which is "an empirically observable effect [of consciousness]" (p. 162). Even though it is a form of 'indirect realism', it is a more accurate model than direct realism as in 'Transparency Theory', which the modern form of 'Naïve Realism' because, as he argues, "If our experiences simply 'mirrored' the world, we would expect the relationships between properties described by physics to be more faithfully preserved in the way such relationships are experienced" (p. 158). To Velmans, Biological Naturalism, which shares some assumptions with reflexive monism, is "absurd" because the psychological, or phenomenal, world cannot simply be reduced to the real brain or to put it differently, the 'real skull' cannot extend "beyond the dome of the experienced sky" (p. 176). Although the implication of the latter implies some panpsychic form of Cosmic Consciousness, Velmans did not fully explore these mystical grounds in 2009, but in a recent chapter he raises the ontological question regarding the consciousness of the universe in an attempt to compare reflexive monism with the Eastern philosophies of Vedanta and Samkhya as well as the form of panpsychism known as Cosmopsychism (Velmans, 2021). Nevertheless, it is curious that, in 2009, he concludes his book with enigmatic quotes from Carl Jung and '*The revelation of the Soul of Shu*' (Velmans, 2009, pp. 350-51). So even though he never really explores any transpersonal subject matter, he sort of flirts with it from time to time through his footnotes by referencing Hinduism or other such spiritual traditions.

Perhaps the strongest contribution of reflexive monism, in my opinion, is 'intersubjectivity' which Velmans champions over 'objectivity' because after all "third-person experimenters have first-person experiences" according to Michel Bitbol (as cited in Velmans, 2009, p. 231). Intersubjectivity transcends objectivity because it equally validates the accounts of a subject/experiencer and an observer. The premise is that those two roles can ultimately be interchangeable since both experiences are in essence phenomenological, but the interests of the subject and the observer differ. Following from this, intersubjectivity, which is supported by the 'changing places' thought experiment, becomes the Middle Way of studying consciousness because it is both the shared experience/observation of a materialistic/scientific/objective extreme (the 3rd person perspective) and another psychological/philosophical/subjective extreme (the 1st person perspective). In other words, reflexive monism substantiates the evolution of 'natural science' into 'consciousness science' through 'critical phenomenology' since consciousness is the core of human experience (p. 221).

Since I thought of the 'Causal Paradox' in terms of binary probabilities: physical causes of physical states (11), physical cause of mental states (10), mental causes of mental states (00), and mental causes of physical states (01). Does this make me a psychofunctionalist? No. It is just an analogy suggesting that perhaps a more holistic approach to what consciousness does

slightly alleviates its paradoxical nature. As is the case with these things, our wording affects our understanding; and the essence of language is dualistic, for when we speak of something it is as a subject split from an object. Velmans's analogy of 'the filmed version of Hamlet' in response to the fact that "experiences and their physical correlates encode identical information" (p. 305) is useful, for a TV and a videotape contain the "same sequential information structure", yet their ontological identities are not the same because the information exists on the tape whether it is played or not, but it appears on the TV screen only when it is played. Perhaps then the brain is the tape and the mind is the TV? Once again, this is the basis for the "psychological complementarity principle" (p. 312) or intersubjectivity. It is not the answer to the 'hard problem' but it is possibly the most accurate framework within which one can study consciousness using an upgraded version of science, a more holistic one like reflexive monism.

In conclusion, reflexive monism is a more holistic framework that scientists and philosophers can use to study consciousness, it works well in describing the external phenomenal 3D world as translated by our five senses; however, Velmans failed to include inner experiences such thoughts, memories, and feelings—let alone "extraordinary experiences"—into such a framework, possibly because such experiences would possibly suggest a classical body-mind (substance) dualism in addition to Velmans's epistemological dualism of noumenal vs. phenomenal. Or perhaps such inner experiences, along with their qualia, are beyond our scientific understanding at the moment, that it becomes more practical to focus on 'enactive' theories of perception and cognition instead of 'endogenous' systems. Maybe this is the limitation of the overarching psychophysical framework under which Velmans's reflexive monism operates? Velmans is too optimistic to presuppose that science might eventually help us know 'the thing-itself' vs. our representations of it. I question the role of human consciousness in the context of Velmans's panpsychic remark that "in so far as we are parts of the universe that, in turn, experience the larger universe, we participate in a reflexive process whereby the universe experiences itself" (p. 298). Does the universe think through us? If it does have a mind, does it have consciousness? And if it is conscious, is it Collective Consciousness—à la Sheldrake's (1987) "morphic resonance" theory, which is the inverse of Jung's Collective Unconscious? Here, Velmans seems to be implicitly flirting with the metaphysical--and perhaps even the mystical—dimensions of consciousness. Unlike most Western scientists, he does give credit to India and Egypt (p. 329) for providing the roots of his reflexive monism theory.

In sum, I recommend this book to anyone who wants to be exposed to a concise summary of the history of consciousness studies and some of its most challenging issues. It is designed for scholars and students interested in the mind/body problem. Velmans does not only scrutinize the most prominent arguments on consciousness, he offers his personal take on each argument based on a critical phenomenological perspective, which relies on both empiricism and common sense. Reflexive monism is indeed a more holistic alternative to the current dominant reductionist view espoused by postpositivists. The theory of reflexive monism inspires a human scientific paradigm shift in our ontological understanding of consciousness, especially with regards to the misguided methodologies used by most postpositivist scientists today in their attempts to study what Husserl called the wonder of all wonders.

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Book Review

Review of *Freud and Said: Contrapuntal Psychoanalysis as Liberation Praxis* by Robert K. Beshara. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. xvii + 208 pages. ISBN 978-303056742.

Reviewed by Mohammed Rawwas[•]

If Said repressed Freud in his seminal 1978 text *Orientalism* (as *Freud and Said* argues), then this very repression (and Freud's enduring influence on Said in general) has been repressed in the academic literature since, to the point that psychoanalysis and de-/post-colonialism are not only not seen as complementary fields, but analyzing their intersection is even deemed suspect. It is this (repressed) relation that Robert K. Beshara seeks to emphasize in *Freud and Said: Contrapuntal Psychoanalysis as Liberation Praxis* (2020), through a close reading of Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), *Orientalism* (1978), and *Freud and the Non-European* (2003). Yet this is not merely an intellectual exercise, as exploring the connection between Freud and Said, and therefore between psychoanalysis and de-/post-colonialism, has immediate ramifications for our current political and theoretical situation. As Beshara writes, the goal of this project is "to decolonize Freud… and… to psychoanalyze Said", or, alternatively, to "decolonize psychoanalysis [and] psychoanalyze coloniality" (Beshara, 2020, pp. 14, 42). It is thus this properly ethical motivation that animates this book, and what gives it its force and vitality. This can be seen in the constant return to the present-day political reality of ongoing oppression of minority groups interwoven throughout the text, as its theoretical interventions are directly connected to their political and ethical ramifications.

In fact, the book begins with a brief outline of the history of colonialism and racism, before offering an overview on the history of the development of de-/post-colonialism, especially as it intersects with psychoanalysis, with summaries of the works of Wilhelm Reich, Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Paulo Freire, Joel Kovel, Ashis Nandy, Hussein A. Bulhan, Homi K. Bhabha, and others. It thus serves as a resource for tracing the lineage of a decolonial psychoanalysis. And yet, for all this, what does decolonial psychoanalysis entail?

According to Beshara, it is "an effort to theorize oppressor/oppressed subjectivities" (Beshara, 2020, p. 2). This has both theoretical and clinical implications, meaning that injecting a view of how colonialism produces subjectivities of both oppressors and oppressed can be used to analyze colonialism as a historical reality, and that this analysis itself can then inform psychoanalytic practices in the clinic. The theoretical import of this stance is perhaps most clear in Beshara's discussion of *Orientalism*, where the Orientalist (ideological) fantasy is psychoanalyzed as "a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (Said, 1978, p. 8; Beshara, 2020, pp. 114-115). As Said himself notes, Orientalism "has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (Said, 1978, p. 12). Thus, psychoanalysis can be used to analyze the unconscious investments that undergird the oppressor's worldview, in this case the "wish to dominate the Orient and Orientals sexually and politically" (Beshara, 2020, p. 124). But psychoanalysis can also be mobilized in order to analyze how colonialism and colonialist ideology affects the psyche of the colonized, and it is here that the novelty of Beshara's line of thought is made most clear, in the development of the notion of the "double-unconsciousness" (Beshara, 2020, p. 178). If, as Lacan maintains in *Seminar XI*, that "the unconscious is the

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discourse of the Other", then, Beshara contends, the colonial subject, following Du Bois' notion of the "double-consciousness", also contains a "double-unconsciousness", the result of the two Others, coloniality and decoloniality (Lacan, 1978, p. 131). Furthermore, following Lacan in connecting the unconscious to language, this sense of double-unconsciousness is perhaps made most explicit in the colonial subject caught between a native and a colonially-imposed language, which preoccupied Fanon, Césaire, and Memmi (Lacan, 1978, p. 20). In fact, does Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* not perfectly signify this tension occurring in the colonized subject's conscious and unconscious? Beshara emphasizes that modern language is never neutral, but is rather the site and result of colonial contestation, as he makes clear by way of reference to the erasure of indigenous culture and language through the imposition of boarding schools, and the modern-day criminalization of Arabic within the context of the War on Terror (Beshara, 2020, pp. 167, 177, 49).

This connection between Islamophobia and anti-indigenous sentiment and repression is made more explicit through another association, the use of the Apache warrior name "Geronimo" as the codename for Bin Laden, linking indigeneity to terrorism (Beshara, 2020, p. 118). This follows from the attempt to link Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, exemplified in the term *Muselmann* used to refer to starving concentration camp victims (Beshara, 2020, p. 144). It is through uniting in our shared struggles that we can truly enact a liberation praxis, and these theoretical connections offer just such a bridge for doing so. As Beshara argues, if "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, this Other must be liberated", and this will require solidaric political action (Beshara, 2020, p. 11). This brings us to Beshara's politics of determinate negation, which he theorizes in connection to anti-racism and humanism, but that can also be applied to psychoanalysis itself (Beshara, 2020, pp. 21, 48, 161).

If Freud and Said, in *Moses and Monotheism* and *Freud and the Non-European*, respectively, insist that Jewish identity, and therefore every identity, can only be founded on its otherness, on non-identity, on a kernel of ex-timacy, then the same holds true for psychoanalysis, which is that it can only live up to its founding spirit, it can only become itself, from outside of itself, from its encounter with other disciplines, including de-/post-colonialism. If an insistence on a self-identical, coherent Jewish identity purged of any trace of otherness can only lead to the terror of present Zionism and the Israeli state, with the physical repression of Palestinians accompanying a psychical repression of Jewish identity as anything other-than-European (also embodied in the forced sterilization of Ethiopian Jews), then the insistence on a self-standing psychoanalysis shorn of interface with any other discipline can only lead to abuses both within the clinic and the theoretical space, an inadequacy to live up to the political realities of colonialism, racism, patriarchy, hetero- and cis-normativity, ableism, and all other modes of oppression today. Psychoanalysis is thus founded outside of itself, within the political domain, as a liberatory practice, and contrapuntal psychoanalysis as liberation praxis gives back to psychoanalysis its own extimate kernel. If, as Said and Jacqueline Rose maintain, Freud is a non-European (his Jewish identity meaning he was otherized in an anti-Semitic Austria), then psychoanalysis is non-Eurocentric, born within Europe yet only from a point of alterity, but only if we make it so (Said, 2003, p. 70). It is only by betraying psychoanalysis that we can stay true to it, and only by insisting on maintaining fidelity to psychoanalysis in its beleaguered current state can we truly betray it. This is the "non-identity politics" championed by Beshara, and if al-Andalus stands for the non-identity of Europe, then so does psychoanalysis as part of the "radical Jewish tradition", as Stephen Frosh maintains (Beshara, 2020, pp. 145, 173, 141). This insistence on betraying psychoanalysis (as it is currently constituted) in order to maintain fidelity to it (in its liberatory spirit or potential) is perhaps the most significant implication of this work, and de-/post-colonialism is a central component in allowing us to do so. Thus,

Beshara's work is pivotal to the future of both disciplines, which has ramifications for our political future as well. In this sense, its importance cannot be overstated. As Beshara contends, antihumanism is a "theoretical privilege [that] seems absurd for those of us who were never considered human to begin with", and it is this injection of (Fanon's new) humanism into the psychoanalytic discourse that provides a much-needed respite from the often stultifying and even hostile environment engendered within certain psychoanalytic and even leftist circles (Beshara, 2020, p. 157). Thus, *Freud and Said* is a must-read for anyone engaged in the psychoanalytic or de-/post-colonial fields, as well as for anyone invested in a liberatory practice through engagement with leftist politics, for its theoretical, political, and ethical imports alike.

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