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To Renata + Raquel
with warm regards


J. Silva-García

DREAMS AND TRANSFERENCE

It is with profound appreciation and friendship to my dear friend Gerald Chazanowski, that I write this paper, in the hope that he will find it interesting and that it honors his 70th birthday.

Psychoanalysis is a fascinating field: stimulating and provocative. In this area of continuous learning, of encounter and challenge, the understanding of the transference and its resolution has often been bedeviling, since my student days (1946-48) at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. Throughout 36 years of work and study, my endeavour amongst others, was to find an ever clearer understanding of the transference, its manifestations and its resolution in psychoanalytic practice.

The Freudian concept was bewildering and left many loopholes to a clear understanding, until I met Erich Fromm, teacher and friend, in 1950. Slowly I came to understand how the transference phenomenon is bound to the orientation of the character structure (Fromm: 1962) and how the "breaking of the transference" depends on the positive changes in the character orientation, and this in turn depends on a variety of issues: de-repression; de-mystification; the growing capacity to objectify our individual modes of socialization, our relationships to objects, our family situation (Laing: 1969); and the obstructive influence in our social milieu... all of which means that one learns to confront the anxiety and fear inherent to the process of individuation.

Few people grow up in what Winnicott (1965) so adequately called "a facilitating environment". Unfortunately Winnicott is inclined to neglect the corresponding role of the father and consequently focuses solely on the maternal significance. Anyway, we grow up



in an illusion of what our family situation was and is— we have to if we are to survive as an individual. A whole mystifying masquerade takes over and we slowly mold an alienated, illusory frame of reference (Fromm; 1955) which is difficult to overcome... but not impossible.

In our own psychoanalysis, by our initial empathy with our therapist and the growing rapport, we can little by little come to detach ourselves from our family situation. We become, so-to-speak, alien to it and we can begin to be objective with most of our relationships to significant adults, to people at large and to objects. This is a process which involves many doubts and hesitations; lies; the hiding of feelings and ideas— of fears and trepidation. More and more we learn to rely on the therapist. We feel shame, sorrow and oftentimes a vast relief. We communicate intimate secrets and events, past and present and these become more precise and clarified.

As a therapist in psychoanalysis, we begin to experience how our analysand has socialized with his parents; other significant adults; siblings and peers and how he "transfers" unto others and to us, as analyst, his particular ways of thinking, feeling and acting which are totally unknown to him. We realize we are in a unique situation to perceive this, for by being consulted we become another significant adult, "a participant observer" vitally interested, responsive and concerned. Our subject may seem to be aware of our interest, our concern, our commitment to understand him and to come to meaningful and consensual truths... but for a long time he only seems to and is in truth, distrustful or aloof.

All too often, I find that my students in Mexico and abroad, and even psychoanalysts with a vast experience, confuse the issue of the transference. They often believe that an objective relationship has been established, where in truth the patient is still unaware of our existence, as such... Or as in the case related by



Bonime (1962: Crazy Woman Nightmare p.p. 73*), they jump to the transference instead of trying to first discover who the "crazy woman" is, so that we can then understand why this woman (the dreamer of the "crazy woman") denies or rejects, that night at least, the very existence of men (including her analyst) and only has women present in her dream... In other terms, what we should try to understand is why did she dream, that night, of a narcissistic world of only women. At a much deeper level of course, Bonime is right: he is the "crazy woman" and perhaps he is even Marjorie, but before we can understand why he is depicted as female or females, one needs to know much more

*I am in this house... It's a nice house, by a park. I'm alone in the house with this crazy woman. She's acting wild and unreasonable. I don't know exactly like what, something in an insane asylum. It was a very nice house set in a park that was very nice. She was very hostile and at the same time she wanted to hold me. I felt she wanted to hold me to crush me, to kill me. She hated me very much. I dropped my keys and she wouldn't let me look for them. I found them again and dropped them again, and because I had lost them I had to stay in this house with her. I liked the house and wanted to stay but I was very afraid of her... Then Marjorie came in... She was very different in the dream. In reality she is very meek, but in the dream she was very strong and confident. In the dream she is there because she is supposed to be a tenant in the house. I start to introduce her to the crazy woman but can't remember the crazy woman's name. I'm introducing Marjorie to her, but in my embarrassment... at not being able to remember her name, I introduce the crazy woman as Marjorie. I leave the house without my keys. I'd rather leave without the keys than stay. The situation is too horrible. My feelings were great horror, disgust and fear of this crazy woman". (italics in the text).



about the patient's relationship to Marjorie and the crazy one. I believe our first level of approach to be the clues of the manifest dream itself, and one way to experience it is to see the overall dream images or whatever, as a self portrait of the dreamer, an—instantaneous snapshot as it were— at that particular moment. All the elements of the manifest dream are the selected props, the particular scenario chosen to reveal her the more and to accentuate her certain traits. Why of all things did she choose to place Marjorie and the crazy woman in that particular site excluding men? If one understood this, one could understand her better and one could comprehend what she is transferring unto Dr. Bonime. One event (amongst others) is certain: she doesn't want any man there and though she may have knowledge of what a man is anatomically, she does not really experience their "otherness" nor does she allow herself to experience this at that time in her life and in that particular place. Why?

Dreams reveal the unique way in which living beings, objects, nature, the macro or microcosmos, are experienced by the dreamer. During psychoanalysis, if beings of the genre of the analyst (different from the sex of the dreamer) are absent from the analysand's dreams, this must lead us to understand that quite powerful reasons for this absence must exist. This must be discovered during the course of the analysis; but be it as it may, it does point to the fact that "otherness" does not exist realistically for the analysand; the "other" is really only an intellectual construct and not a living experience.

Thus, this dreamer we have referred to above, lives in a narcissistic world where only those of her own sex count... and this is actually a significant part of what she transfers. This narcissistic world came to be in early childhood or, the analysand has regressed to it. The motivation to only have a cerebral, intellectualized knowledge of the "other" must be quite powerful, as mentioned above.



The transference, as experienced in psychoanalysis, is not only a repetition of feelings felt towards significant adults in childhood; it represents an overall way of living, a style of responsiveness to our environment learned and structured in our character orientation since early infancy. It is a way of defending our very existence and our means for survival. In our narcissistic defense, we have no realistic awareness of the "other", or of "otherness" and thus we have no consciousness of ourselves as unique beings... We have no true sense of our own identity. Intellectually we may know, of course, that there is male and female, but our dreams reveal that this is not a true inner experience, or they reveal when it is not true. Our manifest dreams may even give us a hint as to why this is so – even more as we gradually understand them better.

A 42 year old married and very successful business man came to analysis because of an intense anxiety due to the fact that his administrative partner had been jailed for tax-evasion. Until then, he said, he had been quite happy and content with his life. He got along well with his wife, was satisfied and gratified with his children, and all seemed to go well. He couldn't understand his intense anxiety, for actually as soon as the fine was appraised and payed, together with the taxes evaded, his partner would be freed, and this would be soon (2 weeks in fact, after I first saw him). Two or three nights after our first session, which lasted two hours, he had the following dream:

"I dreamt I was in my car and the landscape was blurred. It could have been in the countryside for I saw no houses. I was on a tortuous road and there were many curves. I was going downhill and no matter how hard I pressed on the power-brake, I couldn't stop the car... On the contrary it would accelerate even more, despite the fact that I threw all my weight onto the brake. I was all alone,



of course".

No explicit affects were manifested during the telling of the dream nor after. Obviously the dream must refer to the anxiety that brought him to analysis even if there is no overt manifestation of this in his dream. Why so? Why is he all alone in his car "of course", and why is he impelled by some irresistible force? What is this force or fate before which he is impotent and powerless? Why does this not evoke anxiety in his dream? Why this peculiar scenario and in a car? Be it as it may, for the purpose of this paper it is apparent that he related to no-one, that he has learned to live by himself and fend not too successfully for himself... yet he came to me, and came again and again, even if I did not prescribe any anxiolytic medication.

Two and a half years later we have clarified and understood much. We have analysed different levels of his impotence and powerlessness; of the unrelenting forces that move him against his will; his inability to curtail his wife's career and to have her acquiesce to the frequency of his sexual demands and to the added demand that she be naked and wear high heeled shoes (their sexual relations when they occur, and when she complies to his fetish desire, are nevertheless very satisfactory for both of them); he has resigned himself to her social life and has little or none of his own. In his business, he has accepted the role foisted on him by his father and the original founders of the company who are still owners. He has no friends only mere business associates; he has lost or foregone his childhood friends and schoolmates. He has been incapable of seducing a desirable woman (from his point of view) and has made-do with an occasional prostitute and only once carried on an affair with a young woman who worked in the factory, but whom he devaluated and met only for sexual intercourse. He was dissatisfied with his work, but kept at it. He rejected his father and felt rejected by his mother and he lived with this. He held affection for no



one and felt that no one really cared for him or cares for him.

With me he is courteous, thoughtful, helpful and even warm,.. yet he is still distant. In his dreams we have yet to see him visualize a man as a brother or a friend. And we have yet to see some evidence of interest, of his concern for men.

Some months ago they (?) decided to remodel their house and while this was occurring he dreamt:

"I was standing with my wife and children on the roof of our ground floor which was finished, and construction was going on top of the first floor. The pillars and the roof were already up and as we stood there these collapsed but fortunately we were standing in a clearing, so we were unharmed, though shaken".

As we see, there is some concern for his family in evidence, and this holds true in his waking life: he now sometimes engages in active conversation with his wife and children and participates with them in some activities, yet he is still distant. In remodeling the house, he manifested a desire for a study, which he has furnished to his liking and to which his wife added a window that looks out into their garden and he enjoys it very much. The range of his reading interests have increased considerably and he has dropped pocket-book detective stories. At the factory he has taken over production, which he enjoys and his advice is sought by his father and relatives. His relationship with his wife is closer and freer in all spheres and he has understood why he needed her to wear high-heeled shoes during intercourse. Much has been clarified with his feelings and the need for his mother's love and her total unconcern.

But,.. man has yet to come forth in his dreams as friend, as comrade or foe.



He gives no outward evidence of any criticism against me, though there are certainly grounds for this; nor does he express rage against anyone... he is always nice, calm and well behaved.

As a child he had to learn to be alone and not cry out for help; he must have felt there was no one he could cry out to. We have come to understand this element in his first dream. There is, as yet, no recollection of ever having been in an automobile going downhill and without brakes; but he does believe it is an adequate symbol of a helplessness and hopelessness he had always repressed. He is now aware that throwing his weight about had not helped him, because his efforts were undermined by his repressed hopelessness. Now he begins to experience, in his place of work, that he has a real moral "weight", that his efforts are efficient; that he is competent and that his advice is both sought for and oftentimes followed... he is now important there.

All of this has strengthened the therapeutic relationship and his last dream is quite different from the first. The overall symbol we have come to understand is that a beneficent fate saves him and his family. No longer is he doomed, nor is he alone. Seemingly he is "grateful" for our therapeutic results, but it is a kind fate, not his efforts nor mine, that saves them. Why disown his gains? Because there are not as visible within the intrafamily relation as they are at work? Probably, but from the transference point of view, he is still far from being a friend and a brother to man and thus, he is still far from accepting himself as a man.

He is still basically dependent and fearful of any close and affective relationship with anyone, but at least he has now felt "shaken" in his dream,

He came to recall that his mother was a beautiful woman.



When he was 8 years old he went into the common bathroom, the door was unlocked, and as he stepped inside he saw his mother standing naked. She stood upright and facing him. She seemed only to stare at him, she didn't move. He stood stock still and then he walked out. Nothing was ever said about this episode, but from then on he masturbated and always this image lured up. He states he never imagined intercourse with her, nor did he even fantasize carrying her, which seemed rather strange. Why not? At around the age of his Bar-mitz-va he once thought: "If there is a God and this masturbation is forbidden then let him strike me down"... and nothing happened, so he then concluded, seemingly, that there was no God. He broke off from his friends and isolated himself, reducing his relationships to school requirements. For a time we thought he felt cursed.

His shoe fetishism during intercourse became apparent when he communicated his inability to see a woman's body front or back, even in the street or on a beach, etc. He always focused on their feet and shoes. The link to his aforementioned childhood experience became very clear and now he can see them in toto, and he can forego the high-heeled shoes.

We have come to understand that in the bathroom scene, his mother saw through him, as if he didn't exist; she cared naught for him... and when he invited God's punishment — he has now come to realize that it was not that there was no God, but that he understood that God, also, took no notice of him. This overall insight, with all its affective and cognitive impact has been quite de-repressing and important. He can now chat with men he usually disregarded, and though friendlier with me, he still keeps a distance. He has not reported any recent dream.

More and more the psychoanalysis of dreams stands forth in my clinical practice, beginning with the initial understanding of the manifest dream, furthered by the knowledge of the "dream day" and



continued through to an even deeper awareness of the waking life of the dreamer. As I know more about the dreamer I understand all his dreams better and vice versa. As Fromm (1951 p. 28) stated: "Sleep and waking are the two poles of human existence".

The manifest dream already hints at the unconscious latent content of the dream; as an overall symbol it stands out like an instantaneous snapshot of the dreamer: all the props, the whole chosen scenario has its revealing purpose, the same as the participants in their roles chosen for them by the dreamer... the latent unconscious content is already at play. What is the dreamer trying to tell us and what is he revealing unbeknown to himself? We can try to conjure the manifest dream, project it so to speak before us and let it soak our being with all the questions it posits and what little becomes already knowable. The questions are invaluable as guidelines —as a dress-pattern for our scissors to follow. True... we may at times feel at a loss, but if we are interested and committed, our subject's associations will have to make sense as to the dreams: they must answer our questions, or we are quite amiss. Time and again we can return to the dream without preconceived notions and suddenly it will reveal to both of us, its latent meaning.

But if we take the first manifest dream in therapy as it is, compare the elements in it and the activity taking place and then compare it with later manifest dreams, one can already see if there is progression or regression (more so with the associations). But above all, the manifest dream will already reveal if there are signs of improvement in the relationship to us, as therapists, by the way people of our sex are related to in it: friend or foe, or if they are still absent or those who do appear are unknown to the dreamer.



If we are to touch on their deepest fears or conflicts, it can only be when the manifest dreams reveal beings of the therapist's sex as friendly, as supporting, as dependable and as trustworthy. Dante needed two elements to go down into the nine circles of hell: faith that a beneficent force would help him return and a trusted guide; Virgil. A bond of brotherhood and faith must be established with the therapist. So too must a deep rooted trust, already visible in the subject's manifest dreams which the context makes even clearer, if he is to become really "alien" to all elements of his previous environment and to objectify them and learn "otherness", so as to find his or her "self".

Jorge Silva-García

Joaquín Romo 171, Tlalpan
México D.F., 14410. México



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