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Coming to Pass

Olivier Flournoy

1

As an introduction, and as an axiomatic proposition to any opinion expressed on the matter of psychoanalysis, I would like to mention the unconscious.

In order to avoid a definition of this concept –definition inevitably limited because of its implicit negativity, and which will necessarily imply other terms to be in their turn defined positively– I shall simply say that I believe in the unconscious.

I believe in it, not because it escapes consciousness and eludes us, not because it belongs to the first topic, not even because it testifies to the existence of infantile repressed sexuality or bears witness as to the pleasure principle. I believe in it for the simple reason that it is the word which comes to my mind when I am amazed, puzzled, excited when something unexpected appears in analysis.

These feelings are to me the indication that something is happening in the treatment, something totally new, something which validates the analytic experience itself.

That is to say that the unconscious is close to unconsciousness. These unexpected moments can of course be linked to brief and sometimes pregnant feelings, close to the primary processes, or on the contrary lengthy elaborations of successive ideas, according to the secondary processes, but this does not matter. The timelessness of the unconscious can be caught only through the elusive instant of the emerging awareness.

This discovery of something which has been unconscious and which is no longer so, or to be more precise, of something which can be now considered as having been unconscious, this discovery of something essentially fictitious since it loses its quality as soon as we seem to grasp it, this discovery again and again repeated during the analysis, has consolidated my trust in the analytic method and theory.

But this is also why psychoanalysis appears so vulnerable.

Nobody believes in justice, and nobody likes poorly baked bread, but who will question the practice of justice, or of bakery? On the other hand there are people who do not believe and do not like psychoanalysis too. But they won't hesitate to question psychoanalysis. They may easily prove that the unconscious is an absurdity since the analysts themselves believe in it strictly by default, as an afterthought so to say, using it as an explanatory hypothesis scientifically demonstrable only through its absence.

And the psychiatrists, these half brothers whose competence in soothing insanity is indisputable, will often be the most zealous and cunning detractors of analysis.

As everybody knows, axiomatic proposals are quite justified in science. They are essential, but it does not mean that they are true. One well known example: what would be the development of astronomy today, had not the sun been put in the center of the universe? On the other hand, since this decision which was no doubt a true work of genius, astro-physical problems have become so complicated that scientists are beginning to wonder whether it would not be easier to set the clock back and place the physicist himself –together with his computer– in the centre of the world so as not to lose track.

What would psychoanalysis be without the unconscious imposing its law on humanity? But, without the very existence of the psychoanalyst at work, the question of the unconscious, as a meaningful concept, may well arise again even if it is defended by so many distinguished thinkers.

This leads me back to my personal opinions. I believe in the unconscious because in my eyes it represents an indispensable tool for the “intersubjective understanding” of what is going on in the unique analytic experience. In other words, as for every belief, it is the believer and not the belief who is in the central position.

People will argue that we are in the presence of a vicious circle: experience has a meaning only when validated through the discovery of the unconscious which is itself a fictitious precondition without which there could be no experience at all.

This is partly correct. There is no psychoanalysis based exclusively on the practical conditions –setting and fundamental rule– without consistent theoretical conviction; this would be pure deceit.

This does not solve the question, quite real, of the vicious circle; one cannot escape it, but one can provisionally say that its viciousness is not indelible.

2

Is psychoanalysis a science?

It is interesting to ask this question again and again, even if nobody is in a position to answer it satisfactorily.

Is it a natural science?

Certainly, inasmuch as both its founder and the scientists at the end of the XIXth century aimed, hopelessly one may say, at reducing its complexity to simple chemical and physical laws, which in turn would have been expressed by the mechanics, the laws of movement, movement being itself indistinguishable from the essence of life. A human body without movement is dead, and analysis implies two living bodies, in other words two “moving” bodies.

A humane science? No doubt. At the same time a compact body of knowledge centered around man and around one of its most prestigious institutions, the family, and also a method of investigation of the individual placed in a precise and immutable environment, that of the psychoanalytic treatment, setting, frame and rules.

A communication science? Why not, if one stresses its transmission of information aspect, with its transformative and performative connotations, whether with or without words, information –source of conflicts or vectors of hope or discouragement– to be translated in a mutually understandable language.

Even better, a “sense science”, a science with a double meaning, i.e., which tends to a common understanding (common sense) and at the same time to the understanding of two “men of sense”.

This implies the polysemy, the double or multiple meaning as a general component of the human language with its contradictions and ambiguities, and the discovery of the good direction to become “man of sense”. This last demand introduces the problem of quality or of values; it no longer concerns science exclusively but also philosophy or religion, and it confers to psychoanalysis the gravity of morals on top of the seriousness of science.

One could also mention modern economics in this context as the value is an added value which, as the analyst hopes, will no more be considered as a taxable revenue.

Of course psychoanalysis is also a science-fiction.

Not only is the unconscious fictitious since it cannot be grasped except retroactively through thought and fantasy, but also the aim of the method is in itself a fiction since its fundamentally scientific aspect seeks to gather a body of knowledge allowing anticipation or forecasting, contradicting in so doing the retroaction of the unconscious which ceases to exist as such as soon as it is discovered. In mixing up present, past and future through transference in the very instant of the session, psychoanalysis proceeds in exactly the same way as most science-fiction stories or movies.

Science-fiction, science of the fictitious, of the imaginary, science which is not occult but science of the occult, such is also indeed psychoanalysis.

Metapsychology is a psychoanalytic theory considered as a rule as distant from practical experience. Only thought-representations link them together. Metapsychology as a whole is composed of a series of chapters which are neither necessarily nor clearly bound together. But what seems quite clear to me is the fact that a single chapter cannot be thoroughly studied without taking into account the whole of metapsychology as well as the whole of clinical experience. And vice versa there is no understandable experience without metapsychology. They simply cannot be separated.

Therefore metapsychology carries the stigma of its origins. The truth is that it applies exclusively to the “psychoanalyst- psychoanalyst” which I believe we should all be. Putting things this way is necessary to underline the link, sometimes very loose, sometimes too tenuous, between theory and practice.

In the following paragraphs, I will limit my interest to one of its chapters only, the drive theory. Drives, instincts, instinctual motions, so many expressions for one single concept, showing how difficult it still is to formalise what cannot be formalised from the outside.

Since Freud, instinctual drives are described from four well known angles. Recalling them might be of interest.

Their source is located in the human body. It stems from psychophysiology or from the psychosomatic body. In short their source is in the biological.

Their pressure implies that the very human existence is inseparable from the idea of an energy. And no conception of analysis could do without such an energetic element. The theories least concerned with the instinctual, those which are for example exclusively linked with meaning, cannot do without a theoretician submitted to the instinctual pressure, if they are to be elaborated. Without pressure, these theories would be dead theories.

The object is what the pressure applies to. Like the source, the object is an object-human-body, or an object emanating from the body. Thus we are faced with at least a “two-body” theory (J. Rickman), even if one of the most important qualities of a thinking body is to build fantasies which can do without an actual or solid body.

The aim is what the whole instinctual theory is concerned with: to obtain the end of the pressure by means of the object. The aim is the fulfillment of the wish to end the pressure. There is no aim without object, no object without pressure, and once one reaches the aim, there is neither object nor pressure left. Only the source keeps flowing. This implies that, in order to reach the true aim, the end of unpleasure, the source also should dry up. A source without pressure is sheer nonsense.

The finality of the drive theory can thus be expressed in one word: death. Only through death can the object and the subject of the drive reach what the

drives tend at. From this point of view, metapsychology takes the risk of reaching beyond science which –if not exclusively pure and blind theoretical knowledge and action– aims at improving life if not death conditions.

Metapsychology is then neither science nor philosophy, it is mystics or religion. Only these two institutions consider that the ultimate goal, the true homo sapiens pleasure, the real valued object-aim, is death which liberates man from the slavery of passions.

Psychoanalysis is a religion, it is a belief, and the psychoanalyst has thus the right to be intolerant when, for instance, he refuses therapeutic oecumenism and declares analysis a unique experience, an experience which has nothing to share with psychotherapy, family therapy, and so on, or even with a so called analytic psychotherapy, whatever that may mean.

But the drive theory promotes also partial satisfactions, or satisfactions limited in duration. These are momentary wishfulfillments which imply the use of an adequate object. The object shall be used, manipulated, twisted, in order to fit a partial aim, or an aim-inhibited drive. In this sense, the link between the source- pressure and the aim-object can only be of a sadomasochistic nature, as the satisfaction (be it sadistic or masochistic) of the body-subject can only be achieved with the corresponding frustration of the body-object.

Another theoretical possibility implies that the object can be the subject itself (source? pressure?). This may help to get satisfaction without taking into account the whims, the refusal, of the object, or its enslavement. Thus, satisfaction of the drive, wishfulfillment, becomes sheer wishful thinking, as it implies that part of the subject will be misused as an object.

Narcissistic satisfaction is just a catch, a deception, a fallacy, a lie; it implies its own negation. It corresponds to a “death-state” into a living body and therefore can never stop. It is timeless and necessitates some intervention such as an interpretation to separate the object from the source.

The instinctual drive theory, one of the main chapters of metapsychology, implies that the analyst, while listening to his patient, will never feel anything else but a mixture of pleasure and unpleasure of a sadomasochistic nature, avoiding –let us hope– narcissism or death of the analysis. This, of course, provided he is neither psychotic nor perverse, being an “analysed-analyst”.

4

Without clinical experience, metapsychology is meaningless. Such a statement I know is not undisputable to everybody.

Nevertheless, the moral or value connotation which emanates from the finality of the drive theory, the fact that it is a matter of belief whether we agree or not with its content, whether we find it acceptable or true, or whether we dis-

regard it, all this does not simply come from sheer considerations about human condition. On the other hand, belief in metapsychology should not be based on some kind of hysterical conversion, some witchery.

If we believe in the drive theory, it is because it fits with our clinical experience, with the interpersonal relationship between analysand and analyst. And the word which crystallizes this belief is transference. Transference is like a two-way bridge between metapsychology and clinical experience.

Transference has generally been considered to be specific of the analysand. It is a means of repeating the past through a false connexion. Or a defense process against this repetition. It is a production stemming from the analysand, so to say naturally or spontaneously, but it is also facilitated by the very setting of analysis, when it does not appear precisely in order to try and modify the setting in question. And finally, it may be sometimes considered just as an intention –conscious or not– to modify the interpersonal relationship without relating any longer to some so called important figures of the past (Sandler).

My opinion on this subject differs slightly. It is as follows.

That transference be unconscious remains fundamental, in my eyes. But, as this concept belongs exclusively to analysis, at least according to me, it makes me wonder about whether it belongs to objective scientific thinking at all.

One may ask whether it is not just as important to stress the fact that transference is a production required by the analyst himself (Neyraut).

The analyst may suggest different things, this is well known and nothing new. But the fact that he has to impose this concept of transference to himself and to his analysand in order to succeed is a proposition which in my eyes is absolutely necessary and, at the same time, I am aware that it is a rather unusual one.

When an aspiring analysand comes to an analyst in order to get some help, and when the analyst answers positively, usually because he perceives some distress or some unhappiness with which the visitor is unable to cope, the analyst accepts the patient under his own terms. These are akin to the initial request of the patient: “You will keep on telling me always more”, is the implicit answer.

The usual setting will be organized according to criteria which cannot be modified without putting in jeopardy the psychoanalysis itself. The patient lies down on the couch without seeing the analyst, the analyst sits behind the patient, looking at him. Incidentally this setting is another confirmation of the astonishing coherence of the whole system: the entire analytic theory is necessary to justify this peculiar arrangement, a sort of fixed anchor which allows the free circulation of fantasies which in turn are the source of the theoretical elaboration. One of these fantasies is lent by the analyst to the analysand: he becomes a lying body desiring the missing object of his drives, an unsizable object, not to be seen, and nevertheless present and alive behind him.

This reminiscence of an inescapable circularity between theory and practice strengthens the analyst's point of view, who invokes the necessity of clinical experience in order to understand the theory but who, as I have already said, is unable to demonstrate why, let alone convince an opponent.

Once the setting is arranged, the analyst will inform the patient of the fundamental rule –a sort of reversal of roles– asking, demanding in his turn. This double demand, to get analysed and to tell everything in return, weaves a formidable intersubjective link between both partners. And one may add that the analysand, having to pay a fee, may feel authorized to say things which he would never have dreamt to say to any human being, even under the “free coercion” of the fundamental rule.

After the very first minute of analysis, the analyst will be overwhelmed by his own questioning of this procedure. This totally new situation which can be viewed as completely extravagant, seems to have been organized in order to disturb and upset the analyst's mind.

Why does the analysand choose this particular topic rather than a different one? Why does he talk about it in such and such a way? What is the relation between what he is talking about and his initial demands which seem a hundred miles away? Or why does he keep silent? So many questions which would have remained unanswered, had it not been for the concept of transference.

And if by chance the analyst were so interested by what he heard that he forgot to ask himself these questions, what would the meaning of such an exercise be?

Talking cure or chimney sweeping, these remarkable ideas of Miss Anna O., are of no help, and Freud noticed immediately that such devices can only be used occasionally in order to alleviate some particular symptom. The person who will use the analytic setting with these sole ideas for theoretical support may have to face very difficult days, and takes unfair advantage, to say the least, of his patient's trust.

This is why the concept of transference will prove itself essential and absolutely necessary. Transference implies that the analysand is at the same time a child in a distressing situation, a child who hopes to fulfill his wishes through his parental-objects whom he mixes up with the analyst. The analyst's conviction about the “reality” of transference will help him keep track from the very first day of the analysis, since he is aware that he has to deal with two different persons, and it will allow him to discover a meaning where apparently there is none.

Two remarks are in order at this point:

First: Is the patient talking, thinking, acting as if he were a helpless child, or is he a helpless child? This is not a simple question of semantics; on the contrary this is an essential option for the psychoanalyst, a subject of passionate discus-

sions. As far as I am concerned, I am inclined to feel that I have to cope with a real child, and I prefer to drop the “as if”. Or to be more precise I take provisionally the “as if” for myself: I think and work as if I had dropped the as if. I accept the presence of an imaginary child and as a consequence the “scientific value” of psychoanalysis switches slightly from the natural sciences dimension to the “occult science” one. Such a position implies as a matter of fact that three natural entities are abandoned or at least placed upside down. The being is split into two; at the same time a unique body is a child and a patient. The space is divided as well; the office, the space represented by the couch, and the far away location where the child is. And the time, as both analyst and analysand live in the here and now and in the past at the same instant.

Whatever the choice, I believe that the only effective interpretation remains the one that takes into account the fact that the analysand who motivates it, is this particular child, this infant, whom he ceases to be at the time of the interpretation.

Such an interpretation is fascinating because it raises the question of precedence, an unanswerable question for the human mind. The interpretation gives birth to the concept of transference without which the interpretation has no meaning at all. Once more we are confronted by circularity, and we cannot be satisfied with circular thinking processes. It is absolutely necessary to break away from this circularity. And just as with the drive theory which raises the question; when is the wish fulfilled?, it remains to decide when. When? When the pressure to interpret or to transfer comes to an end, an end similar to the end of the drive theory through fulfillment.

Until then, we have to make do with the metaphor of the vicious circle, vicious because it turns round and round like a spinning top without any hope for change except falling down (psychosis, perversion),-or of the circle which may move in a certain direction like a wheel or a hoop with the help of a stick (neurosis). The hoop which moves forward by itself is like the narcissistic satisfaction, an illusion which does not last very long, and the hoop driven by a stick reminds us of the sadomasochistic and temporary drive fulfillment mentioned above.

Secondly, a few words should be said about the specificity of transference. Transference is not –as is sometimes believed in literary circles– a word used in scientific jargon to designate what could simply be called love. It could perhaps be given this connotation in the framework of a general psychology, one always loves in its own way –hate included– even when one gets older and the forgotten passions of the child remain forever the exciting matrix of the passions of the grown-up. Transference is radically different from love since it is from the start a false connexion or an artificial connexion, a feature which is, happily not systematically, linked with love.

But, in my opinion, transference is necessarily linked with analytic experience and thus concerns the analyst as well. Therefore, the analyst too is a helpless child expecting an illusory satisfaction from his parents.

As a consequence the analytic situation becomes ever more complex, confronted as we are with an analyst and an analysand and at the same time with two helpless children trying to fulfill their needs through the object which is at their disposal.

Incidentally, I am well aware that the border between specific and general is arbitrary, but it seems to me that the analyst has to make a choice to ensure his own psychological peace of mind: difficult choice, agonising reappraisal sometimes, as the analyst will find his real peace of mind only with the advent of death... But this is something else. For the time being, we are confronted with these two helpless children and with their parents.

One may say that transference concerns the children and that countertransference concerns the parents. Analyst and analysand are both sometimes children sometimes parents.

* * *

An analytic treatment had been organized before the summer vacation. In September, the analysand appears for his first session. Once on the couch, and after having heard the fundamental rule, he devotes the whole hour to the topic of goats and lambs. This, in relation with a vacation spent on a farm, but does it matter?

If we don't have at our disposal a theory, we are confronted with something meaningless which is of no use. The analyst listens, does not understand what he is doing there, sitting in his armchair, and finds the situation highly ridiculous. However thanks to his theoretical knowledge, he feels free to wander around according to what he calls fantasies, these thought-activities which do not stick to the reality principle and are akin to primary processes, even if they belong to the secondary ones. These primary processes whose essential feature is immediate satisfaction just like infantile sexuality... Infantile sexuality which has been repressed in order to be protected from the unpleasurable reality, and which enjoys satisfaction in an autoerotic way... Autoerotism having nothing to do with masturbation but representing the true oedipal satisfaction, unconscious incest and murder...

So it is that the analyst wanders around... he would enjoy some tasty lamb chop, lambs are cute but goats stink, poor scapegoat...

Understanding gets organised in the analyst's mind around these sketchy associations. The analysand's speech sounds somewhat sexual –oral, anal, genital. The analysand feels probably that he is a scapegoat carrying all his parents'

sins and eventually his own. He comes for help and now the analyst is in the presence of a helpless child who complains that he is a scapegoat and demands satisfaction and reparation.

The analyst is now becoming an object which may help the source-pressure of the analysand's drives to reach its aim –wishfulfillment– and as he feels that he is a true object, he hopes that wishfulfillment will be only wishful thinking.

In the meantime the analysand feels wishfulthinkingly that the analyst is able to stop his unpleasant feeling of pressure, but the analyst remains stubbornly unreachable, present but missing.

But things are even more complicated and each time the analyst feels he has found the correct interpretation, each time he is himself like a helpless child in front of this analysand who shows him regularly that his understanding was sheer wishful thinking. As we know, this may last for years.

These transferences, these false connexions, or these helpless and demanding children, where do they come from if not from the analyst's fantasies? From his wandering mind, the analyst's mind, this other helpless child who feels lost amid this goat story, this scapegoat bearing the analysands' sins, and also this child-analyst whose drives aim at the analysand-object as if he were his parents who know what is going on but refuse to give the answer.

The analyst finds temporary reliefs: I am, he is, we are scapegoats... No, this patient is a scapegoat! But the problem is not resolved for that matter, that is simple wishful thinking once again.

To be short, it will take years to bring the analysis out of the wood.

As things take their course, wishfulfillment will finally be obtained through the end of the drive-pressure: end or death of the analysands or of the objects? Not at all. End or "death" of the analysis itself. Its end.

* * *

Psychoanalysis shows two quite different aspects. It is an occult communication, a telepathic dialogue between two children, each one mistaking the other for its parents in order to, or in the hope of obtaining wishfulfillment and it is a scientific method which aims at confounding their futile manoeuvring through interpretation.

The psychoanalyst had to organise the setting for these two children to emerge with their parents, and he has to accept playing this sometimes painful sometimes dangerous encounter game, if he wants to modify it slowly until the day... Until which day? Until the day comes when...

At this point, it seems to me that some new concept may help, a concept which could condense everything that this sentence leaves in suspense.

How long will it last? Until the end of the analysis. And it is precisely then that a theory, a certain way of theorizing, against which I have been struggling for years, leads the analyst who follows it to an unacceptable dead end. The solution offered is as simple as unbearable. The analyst and the analysand: confronted with a tragic choice, an inhuman choice, which may be subsumed or classified under two headings: mourning (separation) or acting out (breaking off).

From a rational point of view, these analysts may always call upon Freud, upon “Mourning and Melancholy” and contend that the normal mourning of an object is more advisable than the hopeless melancholy, and from then on elaborate theories after theories in order to make their point.

But who kills who in this matter?

The psychoanalyst is led by two main objectives whatever his theoretical options. He needs to finish the analysis he is conducting, and he wants to survive in order to keep on working as an analyst. Nevertheless, theoretically, he has no other choice but to continue. He cannot escape the transference situation. As long as analysis lasts, he will be confronted with children aiming at wishfulfillment.

Drive theory –the metapsychology of transference– because of its impelling finality, forces the analyst to keep on with the analysis. The analysis is interminable, eternal or better atemporal.

Or, if he wants to end the analysis, should one of these children necessarily die?

Here enters this particular theory: The analysand should mourn his object (usually the mother, or his combined parents, or even himself as a child). In this way the drive theory, or the transference, being deprived of its indispensable object loses its impact, and the analysand may stop the analysis: no more object, no more pressure, no more aim...

These analysts, being incapable of killing the analysand’s object in order to induce him to stop living according to the compulsion to repeat (this would imply killing the analysis itself) find nothing better than to urge the analysand to consider his object as separated, to give him up, to mourn him the way one does with a beloved one. This project seems to me like a true projective-identification...

So as not to have to suppress what he helped emerge (the child-analysand) and in order to escape mourning him, this analyst builds up a theory and makes the analysand himself mourn his own object. Shrewd hypocrisy in the name of theory. Victory of an omnipotent child getting rid of his rival and now taking in earnest wishfulfillment for wishful thinking. Such an analyst does not even need to feel sorry for this well organized breaking off since he considers it a matter of internal mourning involving exclusively his patient.

From then on, one may envision the end according to two different scripts:

Either the analysand leaves in acting; he acts out. In this case the analysis is suspended or broken off, and the analysand is responsible. Or the analysand accepts to mourn his object and the analysis will finish in an honorable way.

In the first case, the analysand ends his analysis because he no longer finds any reason to pursue it. The analyst calls that an acting out and interprets it as a breaking off whose aim is paradoxically to protect the transference link that the analysand refuses to mourn. But since this interpretation does not reach the patient's ears, it is impossible to verify it. It remains a wild interpretation. If, by chance, the analysand resumed the analysis, the analyst would then be able to see that his interpretation was wrong, that he took a mere threat to break for a breaking off, and that this threat could be interpreted as an appeal for help on the part of a helpless child. If, on the other hand, the analysand were never to come back, then the idea of acting out could be acceptable, but as a pure construction of the analyst's mind. As far as the analysand is concerned, his analysis is finished and nothing can authorise somebody else to imagine what goes on in his mind.

In the second case, the analysis finishes in conformity with the theoretical views of the analyst concerning mourning. But the analysand is left alone with his own internal break off, his own helpless mourning process. For every analyst knows perfectly well that his "imagoes", his unconscious representations, his internal objects remain alive for all his life. As for the analyst, there is no question of mourning an object who is always susceptible to return any moment.

In both cases, breaking off –acting out or mourning– separation, the scapegoat will in effect be the transference of the sole analysand.

"Do please mourn your claim to possess this object and your pretensions to get wishfulfillment through it" or paradoxically "repair what you have destroyed in order to mourn it", and the analysis may end. "Be the scapegoat of my theoretical dead-lock and weep over your object".

This seems to be the messages of the analyst who believes in these theories.

6

Without claiming to escape existential contradictions inherent to psychoanalysis and its practice, but bolstered by an ideal that would wish analysis to be an opening up to the world and not the mourning of an internal life strictly reserved for the analysand, I have tried for some time to bring out some other aspects of the theory which allow for a termination according to this option (in relation with disentanglement, disengagement, working out [cf. D. Lagache amongst others] bringing into being, sublimation, neutralisation and so on) by means of a concept for which I have coined the term "acte de passage"¹ which

¹ *L'Acte de passage*, title of a book which I hope to publish soon.

I translated into “coming to pass” in opposition to the ever dreaded “passage a l’acte” or “acting out”.

The French expression “acte de passage” reflects very well what I mean since it may be opposed phonetically also to “passage a l’acte”.

Coming to pass implies that to pass from the analysis to what follows demands an act, but contrarily to acting out, it implies that such an act is acceptable, desirable, good, not bad.

In a way, one could say that the analysis implies that the analysand is asked to “talk himself out” and not to act. With one exception: the end of the analysis. The end commands the only act of the whole analysis: The analysand stops talking himself out and instead acts off. Acts off or comes to pass, as I suggest, bearing in mind that the end is neither breaking off nor mourning but rather a new beginning, a fresh start.

The true “coming to pass” is this unique happening relative to the practical end of analysis, characterised by the end of transference and therefore by the end of metapsychology.

The “coming to pass” implies certain theoretical positions which naturally exclude some others.

The first one is a specific way of looking at transference and metapsychology. Both are instruments or even tools necessary to conduct the experiment of the psychoanalytic treatment. They are not universal fundamentals or data which belong to a general psychology. Thus, the wishfulfillment of the drive theory which leads to the end of the pressure implies no death, but only the end of the drive theory itself. To mourn a theory is an absurdity.

Besides, the end of the psychoanalytic situation implies the end of the play acted by two children with their missing parents, behind closed curtains. If the play was good, it will be applauded even if it was a tragedy.

The analyst sets the stage for such a play in order to discover where it hurts, and the play may end when the patient and the analyst have lived “in their flesh” the aching problems brought by the analysand and have tried and succeeded to soothe the pain.

Coming to pass closes the game, acting out would have eliminated the actors.

Coming to pass means also that the analysand can forget all theories. In one word, he may forget analysis itself. But it does not alter the analyst’s conviction about the theories, about the unconscious as mentioned in the beginning, which stems from his profession and is founded according to me on renewed amazement whenever confronted with the value and the power of analytic interpretation to explain and resolve distressing situations, hopeless deadlocks.

I shall add that coming to pass is possible whenever one gets along, one understands one another, one escapes the misunderstandings which characterize the encounter of the two lost children. Both the analyst and the analysand agree

that incestuous and murderous wishes and the impending castration need not be acted out and that they just happen only “in absentia”.

If psychoanalysis is a science in search of the Truth, (which science would not claim this noble aim?) coming to pass is obviously less demanding, but nevertheless extremely ambitious since the mutual understanding it requires presupposes a universal understanding, an impossible requirement that goes without saying.

To return to less herculean objectives, in other words to the specifics of the cure, the coming to pass process introduces transference as a third party in the intersubjective field: analyst and analysand have come to understand each other through it. Transference, once lived in the frame of analysis, becomes the main subject of interest and vanishes.

Briefly, one may say that coming to pass corresponds to some sort of a perfect interpretation: instead of living the transference, let it be interpreted and the analysis is over.

Does coming to pass imply two visions of the end, an analytic one and an existential one? It seems quite probable. Before coming to pass it is analysis only which is at stake, after it, how could it be analysis since analysis is over

7

The Oedipus complex is a wonderful instrument on which psychoanalytical experience is based, metapsychology and transference.

Coming to pass happens when analyst and analysand stop living it and start talking about it.

Then, analysis becomes superfluous.

SUMMARY

The subject of the end of an analysis has always given rise to heated discussions. An accurate theoretical description of what goes on when an analysis is nearing the end appears difficult.

According to the author, this difficulty stems from the fact that the analytic theory is too often considered a general theory of the human mind and not a metapsychologic account of what happens during the cure. This is why such notions as mourning or separation have gained such a large audience.

The author believes that the Freudian metapsychology (notably the drive theory) and the concept of transference are perfectly adequate to describe the end of a cure as the end of the drive and transference concepts deliberately introduced –if not designated as such– into the treatment by the analyst, to allow the interpretation to reach its goal.

An appropriate term to qualify this final step seems to be missing. The author suggests *acte de passage* in French, *coming to pass* in English.

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