

METAPHOR IN THREE
PSYCHOANALYTIC
PERSPECTIVES¹

Robert S. White

Adopting the Lakoff and Johnson view that conceptual systems of the mind are inherently metaphoric and embodied, I examine theoretical metaphor in psychoanalytic theory as an example of the use of metaphor more generally in the mind. I have chosen concepts of the non-dynamic unconscious to explore representative metaphors. These include the theories of W. Bion, C. and S. Botella, and D. Stern. This chapter first outlines recent interest in the non-dynamic unconscious and then examines the theories of Bion, the Botellas, and Stern in detail. Differences and similarities among the theoretical metaphors are explored. I suggest that theoretical metaphors progress both through the attempted destruction of existing metaphor and reshaping of existing metaphor into new meanings. I am interested in finding among the metaphoric collisions that there may be hidden collusions that can potentially lead to unifying concepts.

Metaphor

The modern view of metaphor was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in the now classic, *Metaphors We Live By*. In this work, our conceptual system is thought to be fundamentally metaphoric. All degrees of abstract thinking are built up of layers of metaphor. Conceptual metaphors consist of a mapping from a more concrete source domain onto a more abstract target domain. Meaning is created from such mappings. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) went on to claim that the mind is inherently embodied. Thinking is mostly unconscious and is built up out of sensori-motor experiences. This cognitive-linguistic approach is now widely accepted in psychoanalysis (Wallerstein, Chapter 4). Wurmser (1977, Chapter 5), Modell (1968, 1990, 2003, Chapter 6), Borbely (1998, Chapter 8) and Katz (2010a, 2011b) have been most instrumental in arguing for the centrality of metaphor. Wurmser believes that all scientific thinking is the systemic use of metaphor. Modell, drawing from Lakoff and Johnson, proposes that metaphor is the currency of the unconscious mind. Katz and Borbely believe that meaning, created out of metronomic and metonymic processes, can be the primary organizing concept and bridge among disparate psychoanalytic schools.

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I would like to add a dialectical dimension found in the modern metaphor. In addition to unity, there is an emphasis on collision, tension and opposition over collusion and similarity (Harries, 1978). He suggests that, in modern poetry, metaphors become weapons directed against reality, to break the referentiality of language, to find a magical presence, a godlike self-sufficiency. It is a refusal to owe anything to the world. Out of the destruction of the world, the poet creates his own poetic world. Inherited metaphor must be removed for the poet's more daring combinations. The poet seeks a presentness and instantaneity, a perpetual creation of self. Transcendence means a world that would be truly objective and transparent, free from all perspectival distortions. In a poem, there is an invitation to leave familiar ground for the sake of a more profound transcendental vision of what is, to throw into relief and destroy beloved reality. A new predicative meaning emerges from the collapse of the literal meaning. It is the destruction of ordinary reference and the projection of new possibilities.

Using collusion over similarity gives another modernist twist. Collusion is defined as a secret agreement between parties for fraudulent or deceitful purposes. So even when there is apparent similarity and agreement, we see just beneath the surface the emergence of deceit and hiding of secrets. The collusion quickly shades into collision.

Another way to view this tension is the difference between a fox and a hedgehog (Berlin, 1951). These metaphors come from the Greek poet Archilochus: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." The fox pursues many ends even if unrelated and contradictory. This is a centrifugal vision that is scattered, diffuse, moving on many levels, finding the essence in many things. The hedgehog relates everything to a centripetal vision or system, a single and universal organizing principle. The major figures in psychoanalysis have been hedgehogs (Strenger, 1997). They favor the development of a single, organizing system that guided the interpretation of every phenomenon. Hedgehogs provide magnets that shape possible voices into integrated visions. They push ideas to their logical extremes. Beauty, coherence and nobility are prized above all others. Harries' modern poets are hedgehogs. Freud, Klein, and Bion are all hedgehogs. They attract schools and apostles. They wish to destroy in order to build a pure system. I think there is a universal human need to build pure systems. It is a fantasy of being uncontaminated and of being controlled by no one. Most people who write theory take one or more organizing principles and then see all of phenomena through the lens of these principles. Another theorist comes along and sees what is missing, then builds his or her theory around that. Freud's (1919, p. 168) famous statement speaks to this: "The large-scale application of our therapy will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestion; and hypnotic influence, too, might find a place in it again, as it has in the treatment of war neuroses." The pure gold of analysis has a magical draw in psychoanalytic theory.

Most clinical practitioners are foxes, borrowing and using whatever theory seems to fit. In the real world of clinical work, the pure gold does not work. In thinking of the metaphor of gold and copper, we should note that pure gold is beautiful and

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precious, yet it is too soft to be useful in practical life. It must be alloyed with copper or other metals to make it useful. It is a pragmatic approach, a craft to serve people and fit local reality. The map must never be confused with the territory. Theory is a tool and not a map of reality.

We could think of psychoanalytic metaphor in three levels, metaphors of human nature, metaphors of psychoanalytic theory and metaphors in clinical practice. In this paper, I plan to concentrate on theoretical metaphors. Out of this, I will develop the following categories to use in analyzing psychoanalytic metaphor:

- 1 What reality does the new metaphor attack and attempt to destroy?
- 2 Is there preserved any continuity and similarity between the new metaphor and existing reality?
- 3 What is the mental space that the new metaphor inhabits?
- 4 To what extent does new metaphor aim for a transcendence of a unity of vision?
- 5 In destroying existing reality, can a new unity be found that provides a new coherent vision?

In this project, I will choose a common psychoanalytic space, which can be described from several theoretical points of view. From the different theoretical points of view, I will select representative technical metaphors. Each theoretical school had developed metaphoric labels to reflect their core assumptions (Bornstein and Becker-Maturo, this volume). These metaphors will be compared and contrasted, using the categories outlined above. The psychoanalytic space that I will use is non-symbolic codes. This will also give us a chance to examine the limits of metaphor when we examine non-linguistic mental space. The three theorists are all hedgehogs, who attack existing psychoanalytic metaphor and seek to organize psychoanalytic reality using new assumptions. This paper is written by a fox who admires hedgehogs but finds they do not fit the everyday reality of psychoanalytic work.

Non-Symbolic Codes

There is now widespread convergence among a number of psychoanalytic theories of the existence of dual codes in the mind, the symbolic and nonsymbolic (Lecours, 2007). Symbolic codes are the characteristic targets of classical psychoanalytic theories. This would include mental conflict, signal affects, intrapsychic mental structures, unification of self identity, links between affects and representations, networks of unconscious wishes and pathological beliefs, and networks of defenses and compromise formations. Defenses based on repression are characteristic of symbolic conflict.

The persistence of non-symbolic codes in adult life can result from deficits in early development, from borderline and psychotic functioning and from severe trauma. The lack of symbolization results in the use of primitive defenses, organized around

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splitting and projective identification, and the compulsion to repeat in actions. Affects are unmodulated and eruptive. Mental structures are split into dissociated areas or fragmentation.

Theorists from a number of traditions have articulated versions of non-symbolic code. Freud (1915a) developed a second theory of the unconscious; conscious ideas could be split into word-presentations and thing-presentations. In repression, the word-presentation is stripped off and only the thing-presentation is retained. The thing-presentation is the raw material of the sensory experience. Loewald (1978) argues that word-presentations are not a higher organization than thing-presentations. At the beginning of mental life, words are part of the undifferentiated total experience of the infant, a primordial density. Busch (2009), from American conflict theory and building on Loewald, describes action-language, where words become concrete acts. Green (1998, 1999a, 1999b) speaks of the work of the negative: disavowal, splitting and foreclosure. Bucci and Maskit (2007), from an empirical orientation, suggest multiple coding systems in the mind: symbolic codes either verbal or non-verbal, and subsymbolic coding system which can occur in motoric, visceral or sensory modes.

Three Theorists

I will choose three theorists, each coming from different analytic cultures, to compare and contrast. Wilfred Bion comes out of the English Kleinian school with its roots in object relations. César and Sára Botella come out of the French school, with its roots in early Freud, Lacan and philosophy. Donnel Stern comes from the American interpersonal school with its roots in H. S. Sullivan and interaction.

Wilfred Bion

Bion (1957, 1962, 1965, 1989, 1995b) aims for a radical attack and recasting of basic Freudian and Kleinian metaphors. He used Greek letters for his major metaphors because he wanted to start fresh, without any pre-existing meanings. This is the opposite of Freudian theorists, such as Loewald (1978) who aimed to extend existing metaphor and maintain a tradition. Bion's key metaphors would include β -elements, α -function, α -elements, reverie, K-link, and container/contained.²

Bion recasts Freud's metaphor of primary process into a more modern theory of thinking, where there is a progressive increase in complexity and integration of thinking and transformation of preverbal into verbal thoughts. Bion is dissatisfied with the primacy of libidinal and aggressive drives. While he does not deny the existence of these drives, he postulates that human growth occurs primarily through the emergence of truth in knowledge. Drives are recast as links, L (love), H (hate), and K (knowledge). For Bion, these are not drives but emotional activities. The ability to think is born out of the ability of the person to tolerate frustration. The movement is from evading pain to the acceptance of painful truths. Thinking does not reduce psychic tensions but manages them. Bion discards the polarity of conscious/

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unconscious in favor of the metaphors, finite and infinite. Primary and secondary process is discarded and replaced with β and α -elements. The structural model is replaced with the metaphor of container/contained ($\text{♀}\text{♂}$).

Bion postulated a psychic space that precedes and underlies the dynamic unconscious. It would correspond with Freud's (1915b) thing presentation and the repressed that never achieve consciousness (Freud, 1915a). For Bion (1995b), the mind starts out in catastrophe. Mental space cannot be represented, leaving an immensity that is accompanied by violent and psychotic fear. This space is filled with what Bion calls β -elements.³ They are fragments and debris of the mental catastrophe. While for Freud, these objects are a form of thought, for Bion β -elements are the matrix from which thoughts can arise. β -elements can be stored and clog up the mind or can be evacuated by projection or through acting out. The only link possible with the analyst is projective identification because β -elements can only be evacuated by projection (Bion, 1959).

For use in thought, β -elements must be transformed by α -function into α -elements. α -elements are comprised of visual, auditory and other sensory patterns that are now available for dreaming and unconscious waking thought, what Ferro (2005b, 2005c) calls visual pictograms. Dreaming, for Bion, is a form of psychoanalytic work (Ogden, 2004b), in which pre-conscious thoughts are pressing toward awareness. Attacks on α -function, from envy or hate, destroy the person's ability to make contact with herself or others. The self and objects become inanimate, lifeless, dead.

Bion uses the metaphor of a container to understand the communicative aspects of projective identification. In the metaphor of container and contained ($\text{♀}\text{♂}$), the infant projects β -elements into the containing mother, who at first provides the α -function to transform the contained β -elements into α -elements and feed them back to the baby at an appropriate moment (Bion, 1965). The mother must be in a state of reverie, a dreamlike state, in order to receive and contain the infant's β -elements. Over time, the infant can acquire his mother's α -function and perform his own transformations. The capacity for α -function makes possible the development of thinking and the possibility of thoughts.

César and Sára Botella

The Botellas (2005) propose another view of the non-verbal. Unlike Bion, they do not want to destroy existing theory but extend it. They would understand their project as completing an aspect of Freud's thought that was left unfinished at his death. But metaphors of the traumatic dream are bent and shaped into a much larger theory of trauma, so we end up much as in Bion with a completely new theory. Key metaphors include figuration, perceptual axis and non-representation.

They suggest we conceptualize the psyche space as having two axes. One axis is familiar to psychoanalysis. It is the system of representations, the familiar world of drive – repression – fantasy. It is located in the Pcs and Cs. It encompasses all of what we ordinarily think of psychoanalytic technique: conflict, defenses, transference, the

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return of the repressed, memory and interpretation. Even primitive defenses such as splitting and projective identification utilize the representational system. It is the act of giving form, of developing linguistic and symbolic forms. The object representation is not just a memory but it also contains the meaning for the subject.

What is new in their psychic space is the second axis, the perceptual system. This is drawn from Freud's metaphor of perceptual identity (Freud, 1900) and the unconscious work of representability (what the Botellas translate as figuration). They wish to emphasize that what is nonverbal cannot be understood by the same processes of normal representation. If progression of the sequence of drive to object-representation is blocked, the result is negating of representation, leading to disavowal. In this void, the mind has the capacity for creating the sensation of reality to fulfill a wish with a materialization through an hallucinatory actualization. It is transient, dazzling and instantaneous. It is what will not go into words. We have a traumatic plunge into the loss of representation and the sudden emergence of hallucinatory phenomena. The Botellas call this the act of figuration. Freud had found in the experience of the uncanny, animistic thinking and the experiences of traumatic neurosis hints of this traumatic loss of inner objects (Freud, 1913a, 1919a, 1933b, 1939). It is ordinarily only found in night-time dreams but will emerge under traumatic conditions. Figurations carry the conviction of having grasped the truth, a hallucinatory experience of continuity projected onto the sensory realm. They are created to banish what is unfamiliar and disturbing. Perception of the object must be disavowed so that belief can be maintained as representation.

In psychic trauma, there can be a sudden experience of the loss of representation, either because of a lack of internalization or a traumatic rupture of the chain of representations. The trauma cannot be represented and can only be experienced as a negative, a violent and abrupt absence. There is a violent excitement. This is experienced as a negative, a void, an implosion, a psychic death. It completely erases the negative and provides a presence. This zone of non-representation exists at the heart of the psyche.

Donnel Stern

If Bion and the Botellas are both revising the basic Freudian canon, D. Stern (1983, 1990, 1997) has more of a radical revision. This goes back to a basic distinction between repression and dissociation. In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Breuer explained Anna O's hysteria as two states of consciousness existing side by side while Freud formulated repression, that of erecting a barrier that prevents emergence into consciousness. Traditional psychoanalysis is founded on the defeat of dissociation and the primacy of repression.

Eagle (2000) points out the key differences between repression and dissociation. In repression, certain mental contents are excluded from a unified ego or self. The repressed is constantly driven by drive pressure toward consciousness and requires continual repression to maintain unconsciousness – the return of the repressed. In

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dissociation, mental contents are split into sections that each are potentially accessible to consciousness.

Stern, coming out of the Sullivanian tradition, proposes dissociation as a primary defense and the unconscious as the “natural state of experience” (1997, p. 85), where experience is outside awareness. Action and effort are then required to bring experience into consciousness. This reverses the Freudian theory of repression as a pressure to force out of consciousness. To make something conscious is to construct the experience in words. Consciousness is not a passive container but an active shaping and representing. What are dissociated, then, is differences in function, between formulated, largely verbal experiences and unformulated murky and poorly defined experience and images. Stern proposes that unformulated experience is the primary matrix of all thinking. Unformulated experience is mentation characterized by lack of clarity and differentiation, familiar chaos. It is experience that has never been articulated enough to enter into defensive operations. To be unconscious is something that is so much present that we live it rather than see it or understand it. Key metaphors include unformulated experience, construction and dissociation.

Action, an interpretive construction, is necessary for consciousness. The basic metaphor is of seeing, turning our eyes toward. Rather than forcing meaning and risking stereotyping, we let meaning come to us, to just appear directly. Language must be authentic and creative, bringing thoughts alive. The basic defensive process is one of prevention of interpretation in reflective awareness. It is a restriction on the experiences we allow ourselves. Instead of repressed content, we have familiar chaos and the refusal to allow prereflective experience to attain full-bodied meaning. Clinically we look for absences, gaps, contradictions, stereotypes, repetitions and dead spots. Dissociation is a selective inattention, an avoidance of certain unformulated experiences, so they never reach reflective consciousness.

Collisions

All of the theorists aim to attack and destroy existing psychoanalytic theory and metaphor, while preserving what they consider pure metaphor. Bion attacks Klein's extension of object relations to birth and her extensive use of the death instinct, while wanting to preserve and enlarge on Freud's later thinking on primary and secondary process. The Botellas attack the Freudian unconscious while preserving and extending Freud's ideas about dream work. Stern attacks Freudian defense and the unconscious while preserving Freud's early work on dissociation and hysteria.

The most fundamental division among the theorists is the contrast between the model of Stern and the models of Bion and the Botellas. Stern's unconscious is non-dynamic, a “natural state of experience,” having never become conscious. The post-Freudian unconscious remains dynamic, a depository of the repressed or fragmented, what once had been conscious and now excluded from consciousness. For Stern, the primary defense is dissociation, a selective including or excluding contents from consciousness. The main action of defense is not seeing, an unconscious shaping

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of what is allowed into consciousness. The flip side of defense is creativity, the active shaping of unconscious mentation into new and surprising forms. For the post-Freudians, the primary defense is repression, a force preventing the movement from unconscious to conscious. The unconscious is always forcing its way into consciousness and must be continually resisted. Creativity comes from a relaxation and reshaping of the defensive structures.

A second division among the theorists would contrast Bion and Stern against the Botellas. Bion, although he retains a Freudian dynamic unconscious, postulates a second non-dynamic unconscious with many similarities to Stern. Both are unformulated and require a translation to move toward consciousness. Both non-dynamic unconsciouss are filled with experiences and affects of early development, that both must be defended against and potentially provide creativity and life. The Botellas do not have a concept of the non-dynamic unconscious. At the bottom of the dynamic unconscious is the ultimate consequence of repression, non-representation. Non-representation is then covered over by the flash of figurability.

Collusions

All of the theorists would broadly fit into Modell's model of unconscious metaphorical process (Modell, this volume). In this view, all unconscious thoughts are cognitively organized through the medium of metaphor. Metaphor is crucial in creating more complex and more organized meaning states. The unconscious is not just a repository of repressed instinctual derivatives.

Both Bion and the Botellas have a dual unconscious. They postulate a psychic space that underlies and forms the dynamic unconscious, a second unconscious. Bion speaks of processing of β into α elements. The β elements represent the concrete source domain and the α elements the target domain. The mappings between domains are called links. The Botellas speak of a perceptual axis. The work of figurability is the act of giving form to what is unrepresentable. There is a similar mapping from the unrepresentable to the form of the hallucination.

Both Bion and the Botellas conceive of spaces of trauma and terror. For Bion, it is the space of β elements. He speaks of "an intense catastrophic emotional explosion" (Bion, 1995a, p. 14) with immense fear and violence. The explosion results when either the contained blows up the container or the container cannot contain the explosive nature of the contained. This explosion destroys links and the resulting fragments are dispersed into an infinite space. The metaphor is of debris and fragments from the explosion floating in a vast space. For the Botellas, it is the perceptual axis. In the perceptual axis, there is the presence of animistic thinking in which representation, perception and motor activity become equivalent as a continuous universe. Rather than the terror of fragmentation, it is the terror of non-representation, of the metaphor of nothingness. There is a violent and abrupt collapse into nothingness. In the violent excess of excitation and distress, the ego murders the object and its meaning. The shadowy equivalent of the perception has disappeared,

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and the persecuting perception invades the scene. The metaphor is of a deep and dark hole that is patched out and hidden from view.

Both Bion and the Botellas talk of hallucinations yet they differ phenomenologically. Bion describes hallucinations among other types of fragmentary experiences. The mental event is transformed into a sense impression. They provide only pleasure or pain and a failure to yield meaning. This is a transformation into a β element which can only be evacuated. There is a vicious cycle in which the patient continues to hallucinate to compensate for the missing meaning. Greed increases the hallucinations. Hallucinations are “a state always present, but overlaid by other phenomena, which screen it” (Bion, 1995a, p. 36). For the Botellas, the hallucination is a figuration, a defensive operation in which the hallucination is potentially reparative and integrating.

Stern and Bion have a concept of dissociation in common. Bion, in the Kleinian tradition, would understand β elements as split off fragments, a type of dissociation. Stern enlarges the concept of the non-verbal to include the entire unconscious. He privileges dissociation as a primary mechanism over repression. For both of them, dissociation is the natural condition where the β space or the unconscious contain elements that are widely separated and not linked.

Both Bion and Stern are constructionists. The β elements have to undergo a construction, what Bion calls α process, before they can access consciousness. Stern postulates that all unconscious elements are unformed and undergo a construction to become conscious.

Both Bion and the Botellas think of this psychic space as containing fragments that cannot enter the dynamic unconscious. Both conceive of these elements as subject to projection. Both think of projection as a mean of communication. Both think of reverie as a receptive state. Yet these elements are quite different. For Bion, β -elements are a basic sensori-motor level of organization that directly incorporates the traumatic elements. For the Botellas, figuration is a hallucinatory experience that covers over and defends against the loss of representation.

There is a difference about the direction of psychic movement. For Bion and Stern, the movement is forward, originating in the non-verbal unconscious and proceeding forward, achieving greater complexity and symbolization in the process. The movement is toward consciousness. For the Botellas, the movement is regressive and backward. Unacceptable psychic elements are repressed and regress backwards toward the perceptual and the void. In contact with the void, there is a violent and defensive push forward again in the figuration.

The Limits of Metaphor

Borbely (this volume) provides a model of psychoanalytic process that uses metaphor as a basic template for framework language that is relevant for all the psychoanalytic schools. Source and target domains are separated by two dimensions, time and form. Defense, for example, is understood as a temporal metaphor. The defending part is associated with the present time and the defended against is associated with the past

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time. The repressed then becomes an interpretation of the present based on the past. The second dimension, form, is the domains of metaphor and metonymy. In trauma and neurosis, there is a loss of metaphoricity and replacement with metonymic relationship. This is the movement from abstract to concrete and rigid relationships. The defending part stands for, in a metonymic way, the defended against part.

This model works well to explain key dimensions in the traditional Freudian unconscious where the linguistic forms of metaphor and metonymy are maintained. In the non-verbal unconscious, there are no such forms. In addition, in a dissociative process such as splitting, there is not a temporal present and past relationship. The split off fragments are both in present time but kept separate. Or one might say they are both in the past but contemporary to each other. Borbely's model of temporal metaphors is a good fit for repressive defenses but not splitting defenses. Wurmser (this volume) suggests an answer. He distinguishes metaphorical processes from metaphor proper. Metaphoric processes are a biological aspect of the brain and a deep principle of the mind: "processes of cross modal equations." Metaphor proper is the verbal and linguistic aspect of this larger process, bound to language and symbol formation. This would imply an inherent and biologically based process of progressive organization of mental functions. Could we think of metaphor proper as only the final stages of a larger process of progressive symbolization and differentiation of mental structures?

Bion implies such an organizing principle. β -elements are unmentalized fragments that have no links to each other or to more organized forms. Bion postulates a separate α -process, at first in the mother and later internalized, that transforms the β -elements, at first into more complex α elements or pictograms and in a further process, into proto-symbols or metaphors. Bion does not specify how this α process might work but it fits well with Loewald in a progress toward linkages and symbolization.

The Botellas also imply a progressive organizing function of the mind. In the trauma of nonrepresentation and nothingness, the figuration is a binding together into a sensory whole. It erases the negative and provides a presence. Representational thinking is a higher level of organization, arising out of the mirroring and doubling of mother and child. Like Loewald, they see a linking and symmetry of word and think presentation.

A Unifying Proposal

Stern asks the question, how can we refuse to spell-out an experience without first having spelled it out? (1997, p. 123). His answer is that the self has a consistent sense of coherence. What is not me is disavowed, not formulated. Yet does not this act of disavowal depend upon the self having some recognition of what is alien and erecting some sort of barrier?⁴ It is not logically possible for the unconscious to formulate its own barrier. Does this not bring repression and dissociation closer together conceptually? Both would have barriers between the unconscious and conscious. We could postulate different elements, some of which represent excluded conscious contents that retain a linguistic mode, while other elements are unformed and have never risen to full consciousness.

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Is there here a possibility of a unified theory of defense? Defense could be conceptualized with two basic dimensions. One dimension is force. There is a variable degree of force that maintains access to consciousness of a mental element. The other dimension is separation. There is a variable degree of separation of mental elements as a means to control access to consciousness. Pure repression emphasizes the maximum degree of force to prevent consciousness and a minimum of separation. Pure dissociation emphasizes a maximum of separation and a minimum of force. Freud (1927, 1940a or b?), late in his life, was trying to grapple with such complexities. In his concept of splitting of the ego, he finds an intermediate position between repression and dissociation. Freud's example is castration but we could read these papers as a theory of trauma. Under traumatic danger, there is simultaneously a recognition and a disavowal of the danger. When the danger is recognized, repression occurs; the instinctual pressure is forced out of consciousness. When the danger is disavowed, instinctual pleasure is allowed into consciousness but displaced or separated by placement in a new object, the fetish. Thus, for Freud, there are two types of defense that operate together, repression and displacement, a type of dissociation. Both originate in the ego. I think the Kleinians have come up with a different middle view. Repressive defenses are characteristic of higher level mental operations. More developmentally primitive defensive operations are based on splitting and dissociation. In the Kleinian view, all patients have a mixture of repressive and splitting defenses. There is a greater predominance of splitting in borderline and psychotic personalities.

Bion fundamentally changes the idea of splitting. Instead of a primitive defense originating in the ego as a pressure, splitting is a fundamental property of the non-dynamic unconscious in which mental content exists as unlinked fragments. Yet there is also a sense of defense in which these unlinked fragments are further separated through evacuation via projective identification.

While the Botellas do not directly address Freud's concept of the splitting of the ego, they refer to another type of splitting, that of the two axes of representation and perception, in which animistic and formal thinking exist side by side. Animistic thinking is a kind of dissociation, in which pleasure is allowed to attach to hallucinatory objects.

Freud's concept of splitting also differs from both Bion and Stern, for which dissociation is the natural state of the unconscious. Yet Bion and Stern also differ in the origin of the dissociation. For Bion, β -elements are a result of the catastrophe of being born, of dangers that cannot be contained because there is no container. For Stern, the mind is also born in a state of dissociation but he lacks the sense of danger. It is just the natural state of the unconscious.

Conclusions

- 1 I have focused on theoretical metaphor in psychoanalytic theory to illustrate how we can conceive of theory through the eyes of metaphor.

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- 2 Psychoanalytic theory and its theoretical metaphors are born out of an attack and murder of existing theory and the erection of a new pure theory and metaphors.
- 3 Psychoanalytic practitioners take aspects of pure theory and metaphor, and mix them pragmatically in their clinical work.
- 4 In the formation of new theoretical metaphor, we can see the use of new metaphor that is thought to be uncontaminated with old meaning and the shaping of existing metaphor into new meanings.
- 5 In the development of conflicting theory and metaphor, we can see a complex of similarities and differences.
- 6 Examining such theoretical metaphors may provide insight into unifying concepts. I have given such an example in the differences and unities of splitting and repression.

Notes

- 1 Originally published in *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 31(2): pp. 147–158 with the title “The Non-verbal Unconscious: Collision and Collusion of Metaphor.”
- 2 Of course, over time, Bion’s Greek letters have become metaphors in themselves. In this paper, I treat his Greek letters as metaphors.
- 3 This account of elements and functions is taken from what Ogden (2004a) calls early Bion, up to and including *Learning from Experience*, where he does not depart significantly from Klein. Only in the later papers (Bion, 1995b) does he move beyond Kleinian theory (Symington & Symington, 1996).
- 4 The Freudian definition of “disavowal” would include an active force coming from the ego that pushes the disavowal.