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## ORIGINAL PAPERS

### SOME ASPECTS OF TRANSFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

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#### *I. Preliminary Remarks*

However close the links between theory and practice, it might be considered permissible to regard psycho-analysis as essentially a method of therapy with the manipulation of transference as its principal tool. In view of this it is rather astonishing that, apart from Fenichel's book, so little should have been written on technique and that works on transference should be even rarer. This is one of the reasons why the Psycho-Analytical Society of Paris has placed the problem of transference on its programme for the next conference of French-speaking psycho-analysts which is to take place in Paris on 1 November, 1951. Nor is this an isolated case; psycho-analysts are turning their attention once more to this problem (unless those who are themselves interested in this topic come to this conclusion as the result of an illusion). Such considerations and circumstances have carried a great deal of weight in the decision to bring up this question before your Society and to promote discussion of various points of view on transference.

Before embarking upon this matter it might be useful to indicate the sort of approach that seems practicable to me. I will content myself with three remarks.

(1) Speaking generally, psycho-analysis has tended more and more to become a psycho-analysis of behaviour (Lagache, 1948); the compatibility of psycho-analysis and the psychology of behaviour has been very clearly shown by Susan Isaacs (1938).

(2) The concept of behaviour which has been found useful in psycho-analysis is not that of

Watson's Behaviourism, but approximates more closely to the more evolved forms of Behaviourism (Molar Behaviourism) according to which conduct cannot be reduced to separate entities but constitutes a totality of responses which are both physiological, conative, and symbolical, this totality having a meaning. It is for this reason that the verbalizations of the patient are not only considered on the basis of their abstract content, their face value, but are regarded at the same time as a piece of concrete behaviour, a mode of dealing with the psycho-analytical situation; for instance, a stereotyped tendency to begin a session by an account of dreams can be interpreted as a resistance, the psycho-analyst neglecting partially and for the time being the content of the dreams.

(3) The behaviouristic point of view challenges the psycho-analyst to interest himself in the experimental studies of behaviour and particularly of learning. In relation to psycho-analysis, experimental psychology could play a part analogous to that played by experimental pathology to medicine. Experimentation, though not as concrete and comprehensive as clinical psychology, is yet in a position to furnish simpler and better-established principles. Furthermore, the use of the same or analogous concepts serves as a sort of experimentation on ideas and also shows up some new aspects of them; as an example we may cite experimental works on instrumental fixations and regressions, or on the problems of conflict. Of course such rapprochements must not lead to a falsification of psycho-analytical data and of the hypotheses put forward to account for them.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper read at the meeting of the British Psycho-Analytical Society, 4 April, 1951.

The psycho-analytical approach to behaviour finds an ideal field in the study of transference; has not Freud himself postulated that in transference the patient substitutes repetition by behaviour for remembering by thought and language? (Freud, 1917).

## II. *A Definition of Transference*

Transference is generally defined as a repetition in present-day life, and particularly in the relationship to the analyst, of unconscious emotional attitudes developed during childhood within the family group and especially towards the parents; it is usual to add that the transference may be friendly, hostile, or ambivalent. Although we could refer to Freud in defence of this definition, yet it fails to represent completely all the aspects of his thought or the complexity of the facts. It is true that definitions of this type say more than they state explicitly. Let us try to express it.

This type of definition can be subjected to three principal criticisms:

(1) In a descriptive analysis it is undoubtedly possible to speak of the phenomenon of repetition. But this does not tell us its function, such as whether we are dealing with a repetition motivated by particular needs or with an automatic and compulsive repetition due to a specific need to repeat. The second interpretation is on the whole the more usual, because the theory of automatic repetition has exercised so great an influence.

(2) The concept of unconscious emotional attitude is equally vague. Such a definition implies that, if transferred emotional attitudes are unconscious, it is because they have not been able to develop, or because they have been repressed and have for this reason retained the dynamic power of the repressed emotions and needs.

(3) The classification of emotional attitudes into those of love, hate, and ambivalence is a rather general one, and does little justice to the more specific features of the transferred emotional attitude.

In considering transference as a concrete and active piece of behaviour Freud indicated a solution whose importance we can now better assess thanks to the progress of psychology. Transference is a specific way in which the patient behaves in the psycho-analytical situation; it is a segment of behaviour. We could, therefore, in principle, apply to it the general notions regarded as applicable to an understanding of all segments of behaviour.

Now a segment of behaviour is a dynamic structure which develops through time and which consists of different facets:

(1) Motivation, that is to say, the modification of the personality which sets it in motion, until the tensions and dissociations inherent in needs and emotions have been reduced; psycho-analysis has shown that motivation is indeed multiple—that is over-determined—contentious and partly unconscious; let us add that it changes with the development of activity which is at the same time motivated and motivating; the activity is in response to certain modifications of the organism in its environment, and the organism itself is modified by this activity itself.

(2) Variable behaviour—that is to say the search after means (tools and social techniques) with the aid of which the personality tries to reduce excitation, whether through the use of old patterns or through adjusting them to the new situation; this is a phase of conduct which can work itself out more or less completely in the symbolic guise of a mental experience.

(3) The goal of behaviour which may be alloplastic, autoplatic, or mixed.

(4) The object of behaviour with the help of which the organism tries to reach its goal and which has always either a positive or a negative value correlated to the needs in question.

(5) Finally we can distinguish secondary effects of behaviour besides those immediately related to the goal; they consist most usually in modifications of the personality and sometimes in external events, which are associated in a less visible manner with the activity of the subject.

These distinctions permit a precise definition of the significance of behaviour. Behaviour being the organized whole of responses through which the personality modifies its interaction with the environment, its significance and function lies in the ability with which its actions reduce motivation (tension, dissociation) and help the personality to realize its potentialities.

Let us see how this schema of the segment of behaviour can be applied to the problem of transference:

(1) Every distinct movement can be learned and transferred; the concepts of instinct fixation, object fixation, and goal fixation are familiar to us all; although the concept of instrumental fixation has not been formulated it is often employed under the name of social techniques; for instance, a patient shows himself submissive in order to be loved.

(2) In psycho-analytic practice we frequently understand as transference partial aspects of behaviour, either because transference has developed only slightly, as if in outline, or because there are not enough data: we see clearly that a part of the analysand's behaviour reproduces his older attitudes, but we do not understand why.

(3) A complete interpretation of transference demands of the analyst that he respond to each question corresponding to its different facets.

(4) It is essential that an interpretation seize upon the functional significance of any piece of behaviour under review. It will remain dynamic if we adhere to the 'here and now'. It becomes developmental to the extent to which it can show how the past has realized itself in the present in terms of psycho-analytical situations.

Briefly it has been said in criticism of the current definitions of transference, that they are limited to statements of the equivalence of the past and the present and in particular of motivation (unconscious emotional attitudes) and its objects; thus, important aspects of transference are, if not ignored, at least passed over in silence; furthermore, and above all, these definitions do not express the dynamic relationships which exist between the various facets of behaviour. One of the ideas which derives from our various observations and which guides our researches is the following: transference is essentially the transference of functional significance, or more briefly, it is the transference of function. For instance, for a woman whose brother was preferred to her and whose husband neglected her, the functional significance of transference consists in giving her a sense of her personal value and in allowing her to 'realize' herself to be a woman; for a man brought up by an authoritarian father, the import of the analytical experience is to escape from the analyst and to show him that he is much more wicked.

### III. The Evolution of Freud's Thought

The relationship of this idea to Freud's theories varies according to the period of the development of his system of thought with which we compare it. The evolution of Freud's theories on transference can be traced as a concomitant of the meaning and rôle of repetition.

Amongst the technical writings, 'Dynamics of Transference' (1912) can be regarded as representative of the first stage. Freud emphasizes

the repetitive character of transference by his use of various expressions (cliché, stéréotype). Transference is the result both of resistance which replaces remembering by repetition in acting out, and of the dynamic unconscious, that is to say of frustrated and repressed tendencies which are 'ready for transference' (*Coll. Papers*, II, 321). Readiness for transference and the acting out of repetition are explained in terms of the Pleasure Principle.

From 1914 onwards Freud was led to stress the compulsive character of the repetition in transference (*Coll. Papers*, II, 336). However, it was only in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that repetition was regarded not only as a descriptive category but as the very origin of transference. The essence of Freud's argument in Chapter III can be summed up as follows: infantile sexual experience was a painful experience, a failure and an injury to the child's narcissism; its repression was in conformity with the Pleasure Principle; its repetition in transference is therefore contrary to the Pleasure Principle and derives from the compulsion of repetition.

But Freud's thought is not quite so simple and he raises objections to himself. Infantile experience was not quite so contrary to the Pleasure Principle; at first the child expected to have some pleasure; later what is unpleasure at one level is pleasure at another; an experience may be less unpleasant as it becomes the object of memories and dreams. Such considerations lead one to expect a more sophisticated discussion and an effort to relate the compulsion of repetition to motivation through needs and emotions.

However, these difficulties appear to have been forgotten later on, and in Chapter V, Freud asserts that transference, the product of the compulsion of repetition, is completely independent of the Pleasure Principle.

The influence which these assertions have exerted upon the conceptions of psychoanalysts as regards the way in which transference is produced has undoubtedly been very great. In their various writings authors of standing have postulated an identity between transference and the compulsion of repetition. It is this conception which is reflected in the current definitions. The explanation of transference in terms of automatic repetition often seems to have led to a forgetting of those more dynamic explanations which preceded it.

Thus in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* the texts concerning the production of transference seem

indeed to raise the problem of the interpretation of Freud's thought. However unequivocal certain passages may be, does the idea of automatic repetition as the sole causal factor really represent the last word in his system of thought or should we not look into Freud's works for a more subtle conception of the need for repetition and its relationship to the repetition of needs?

It is clear that the concept of transference as a transference of function approximates more closely to Freud's earlier formulations. Such a reversion would not be the first in the history of psycho-analysis.

#### *IV. The Need for Repetition and the Repetition of Needs*

The most extreme position taken up by Freud can be formulated as follows: transference is the product of a specific need, which transcends repetition, a need to which Freud ascribes a malignant and mysterious character. But transference is not the only manifestation of the automatism of repetition. One cannot therefore avoid searching for what it is that repeats itself in transference and enquiring into its particular form. The hypothesis of a need to repeat leads necessarily to a consideration of the methods and conditions required for a repetition of needs or, in other words, of the relationship of repetition and motivation.

The internal discussion of Freud's arguments brings a certain amount of elucidation.

Freud himself, it has been shown, objects that infantile experience and its repetition are not devoid of all search for pleasure; 'readiness for transference' was first thought of as a hope for a better outcome.

On the other hand, resistance conforms to the Reality Principle, the extension of the Pleasure Principle. But Freud has always maintained that this was a repetition of those defences which played a decisive part in primary repression. Taken in this sense, resistance could be regarded as the expression of a useful habit, a repetition in conformity with the Pleasure Principle.

Hence repetition does not exclude pleasure and pleasure does not exclude repetition. What is re-enacted in transference is the defence against repressed drives. The ego's defence mechanism does not allow their return in the form of memories, but it cannot prevent their return in the guise of action. The defence against unpleasure, that is to say, the Reality

Principle, is ousted by a more or less unrealistic search for pleasure.

Equally Experimental Psychology compels us not to ignore the complexity of the relationship between repetition and motivation. Obviously the problem is formulated in different terms; researches have brought to light more material as regards instrumental behaviour and cognitive processes. Nevertheless, as regards the rôle of repetition, we encounter the same difficulties and the same controversies. A thorough study would require the examination of instinctive behaviour and above all of the acquisition and evolution of habits. This would show that in the course of the last twenty-five years the rôle of repetition has tended to be minimized in favour of motivation; the laws of learning, which derive from repetition, do not function independently of those which express the effect of motivation.

While leaving out a description and discussion of the phenomena described as 'spontaneous recovery of conditional responses or habits', we shall linger somewhat longer over a description of the facts described as the Zeigarnik Effect.

In 1927 Zeigarnik showed experimentally that, other things being equal, interrupted tasks were relatively better remembered and taken up again with a greater enthusiasm than were completed tasks. It has been found in other experiments that those who had failed in a task showed a greater persistence of activity than those who had succeeded. The concept of the involvement of the ego is linked with the researches of Lewin and his school on changes in the level of aspiration as a result of success or failure.

Such investigations throw some light on the metapsychology of behaviour. When a cycle unfolds itself without interruption, this very unfolding is maintained by a specific tension; it is only when the tension has been resolved that the cycle of behaviour is completed; for instance, a horse troubled by flies will flap its tail until the flies have gone.

The Zeigarnik effect shows that the frustration resulting from the interruption of or failure in a task does not suppress the motivating tension. Not only does the personality remain motivated to take up the task again, but one might even suggest that the frustration resulting from interruption or failure has increased the need to complete the task satisfactorily.

Does the psycho-analytic transference not derive, in part at least, from an analogous

mechanism, though the time interval between the interruption of activity and the resumption of activity is even greater?

It follows from this that the particular way in which repetition manifests itself in transference can be schematized as follows:

(1) Infantile experience is a series of trials and errors which end in failure and an injury to narcissism.

(2) Repression is the result of the predominance of ego defences. But this renunciation is not necessarily complete or final. Repression is facilitated by a hope for a better outcome as well as by the intervention of postponement. Lampl-de Groot, explaining the passing of the Oedipus complex in the boy, saw in postponement an unconscious and phylogenetic mechanism (1927). Recourse to postponement can show itself in conscious behaviour; the child expects quite often that the parents will become small when he grows up; my impression is that the boy, particularly if there is conflict between the parents, hopes to take away his mother from his father and to give her a happier life; this reaction may continue until adolescence or even beyond it.

(3) Readiness for transference is the persistence of tensions connected with repressed needs and emotions; the narcissistic injury, of which Freud speaks, stimulates not only the defence of the ego but also the need for reparation. It plays a part in the production of transference which, as far as we know, has not been clearly defined. At the basis of transference we often find not only the frustration of instinctual drives but also a dangerous and humiliating privation of the ego.

(4) Finally transference is the progressive actualization, in the psycho-analytical situation, of unresolved conflicts.

#### *V. Positive and Negative Effects of Transference*

Classically positive and negative transference has been defined in terms of friendly or hostile feelings; the insufficiencies of this position have been resolved by postulating that transference is most often ambivalent. Such a formulation does not exclude more specific definitions; rather it is a useful way of classifying the various phenomena of transference on the basis of what is most essential. A criticism would therefore be unjust, as it would be based on too literal and narrow an interpretation. Furthermore, we must bear in mind that in many cases a complete explanation would warrant an expression in

terms of love and hate, even though such an expression would not exhaust the whole content of transference.

The terminology of experimental psychology is focussed not on emotional but on instrumental habits. Its logical structure is also a little different. In order to avoid complications and confusions we shall confine ourselves to a discussion of the positive and negative effects of transference, without insisting on their identity with positive and negative transference.

The effect of transference is negative if, in a given situation, the acquired habits interfere with the establishment of new habits, as, for example, if the habit of driving on the right interferes with the ability to learn to drive on the left. We can distinguish reproductive inhibition by means of which newly-acquired habits interfere with the performance of previously acquired skills from associative interference which has just been defined.

Let us take a simple and clear example cited by Nunberg in a recent article (1951):

'A patient showed from the very beginning an astonishing willingness for and understanding of the analysis. His associations flowed easily, he produced important recollections, and so on. He continued in this way for a fairly long period, yet the analysis did not make any progress, until we found that his mother used to ask him to tell her everything he thought and did during the day. Our patient confided all his thoughts to her until late in adolescence. It gave him great pleasure when she was talking with him at night while sitting on his bed, and he could see, through her thin nightgown, the contours of her body, particularly of her breasts. He pretended to tell her everything, but the secret of his sexual fantasies about her he kept to himself. Displaying similar behaviour in his analysis, he pretended to tell the truth; in fact, tried to fool his analyst as he had his mother. In his behaviour with other people he was sincere yet reserved and distrustful so that he never had really close friends. He was a lonesome man.'

The psycho-analytical concepts of positive and negative transference can easily be applied to this example; in the first phase the positive transference hides a latent negative transference which in its turn makes itself manifest with the appearance of resistances. Nunberg's interpretation reveals the ambivalence: 'the patient tried to fool his analyst as he had fooled his mother'. Although Nunberg does not explicitly



state this, the most apparent characteristic of this behaviour is a hostile defence.

Experimental concepts permit the presentation of data in a manner that is a little different though not incompatible. In the analytical situation the patient must acquire new habits whose import is expressed in the fundamental rule. By this essential feature the analytical situation places the subject again in the old situation of conversations with his mother. Transference has a positive and a negative effect. The negative effect is at first latent. It becomes predominant when the habit of hiding his sexual fantasies from his mother begins to interfere with the learning of the fundamental rule.

This example does not show us any divergences in the application of psycho-analytic concepts and experimental concepts (which cannot always hold true). What interests us is to find out whether formulations in experimental terms can be of any interest to the psycho-analyst. To say that the patient has transferred to the analyst the feelings of ambivalence which he had experienced towards his mother is correct but not enough; this formula does not cover all the aspects of transference nor is it sufficiently specific. In the experimental formulation the positive and negative meaning is defined in terms of the relationship of the old behaviour pattern to the psycho-analytical situation, that is to say the learning of the fundamental rule.

In other words, the definitions which can be derived from the application of the experimental concepts should be as follows: the effect of transference is positive if it is compatible with the methods and aims of psycho-analysis; it is negative if the contrary is the case.

This operational concept does not mention the direction of the emotional attitude in the determination of the direction of transference, although it implies it. It does not offend psycho-analytic opinions: psycho-analysts know well that the repetition of affect is only one aspect of transference, even though they consider it as essential and decisive. The concept proposed avoids the difficulties which everybody knows and which consist in this: that there is no constant correlation between the manifest emotions of a patient and the effect of transference on the cure; the expression of love can immobilize the analysis; the expression of hate can correspond to a definite progress, if the need for security has been reduced, though,

without doubt, the reduction of resistance is connected with a more friendly attitude; the concept of ambivalence is not sufficiently well differentiated to define the references to the dynamic relationships of love and hate; often transference covers up an emotional indifference which is a defence against both love and hate, though generally it is nearer to hostility. Doubtless, the difficulties and errors entailed by the current definition of transference can be solved or avoided; as investigations progress an adequate and specific formula should be found. However, a formulation in terms of displacement of affect is not sufficiently comprehensive and precise. Besides, it introduces obscurities and ambiguities inherent in the psycho-analytical concepts of love and hate.

In considering this problem from the point of view of behaviour in the psycho-analytical situation, the facts could be presented in another way:

(1) The patient, with all his past and all his problems, finds himself in a situation where he must learn to express freely what he thinks and what he feels, without selecting and without excluding.

(2) Not being able to adjust himself at once to this situation he falls back on trial and error behaviour, drawing upon his stock of patterns.

(3) Transference is the progressive working out in the psycho-analytical situation of his unresolved conflicts.

(4) The effect of transference is negative if the patient relies on patterns which are incompatible with the learning of the fundamental rule. Such a definition corresponds to the classical definition in as far as the relationship of hostility to narcissism and ego defence has been noted. Negative transference expresses itself in the defence and retrenchment of the ego, which seeks its security in the utilization of learned solutions. The general import of a negative transference is the reduction of tensions.

(5) The effect of transference is positive if the patterns which are enacted favour the learning of the fundamental rule. This definition is in accord with the Freudian conception, which claims that only the positive feelings of the analysand make it possible for the resistances to be overcome. This means that a friendly atmosphere is the precondition for security and the acceptance of risk. The positive effect of transference favours the attainment of an optimum level of tension and the expression and realization of the potentialities of the patient.

*VI. The Rôle of the Psycho-analyst and the Production of Transference*

As regards this vast and difficult question we shall content ourselves with a few indications concerning the position of the problem.

During the last decades psycho-analytical technique has been the object of harsh criticisms. From the moral point of view some have reproached it with the absence of real and human relationships, others have accused it of an artificial production of paranoia. From the point of view of technique Karen Horney disapproves of the neglect of the present in favour of the past; Alexander advises psycho-analysts to play that rôle which is in opposition to that of the unfavourable parental figures so as to favour the development of a corrective experience. Leaving aside the moral and technical aspects of the question we will apply ourselves more particularly to specify the positive rôle of the psycho-analyst in the production of transference.

The classical answer to this question is summed up in the Freudian allegory of the mirror. The rôle of the patient is predominant; it is he who brings to life the psycho-analytical situation because of his desires, his fears, and his habits; he makes the analyst play an imaginary rôle. Hence the importance attributed by some, such as Nunberg, to projection, conceived of as transference in terms of special perception. Summing up, transference is generally regarded as a spontaneous phenomenon whose production is explained, following the expression of Rickman, which has recently been taken up by Balint, within the framework of a 'one-body psychology'.

Balint suggests in the same work that the progress of our knowledge of transference and counter-transference depends in part on a transition into the framework of a 'two-body psychology'. The psychological field has been defined as the interaction between organism and environment. Likewise the psycho-analytical field has been defined as the interaction of doctor and patient. Thus the theory of psycho-analytical therapy becomes a problem of group dynamics and here the use of the psycho-social concept of the rôle seems to become particularly fruitful.

In a few words, every individual participates in a number of groups. In each of them he has a different status and a different rôle. But he cannot play his rôle independently of the complementary rôles played by the other

members of the group; authority has submission, exhibitionism has contemplation, sadism has masochism for its correlative. These ideas have already been put forward by Pierre Janet, who has several times insisted on the dual character of social behaviour. If this point of view is applied to psycho-analytical experience, the concepts of rôle and of interdependence of rôles are called upon to explain a number of functions which the classical theory, expressing itself in terms of intra-psycho processes, assigns to identification.

The concept of inter-individual rôles, in fact, lends itself to the description and explanation of numerous aspects of the psycho-analytical experience.

(1) The ideal rôle of the psycho-analyst is a cultural and technical pattern; it would serve as a means of describing the various stages in the Freudian technique and its typical differences according to the various schools.

(2) As a correlative there is the rôle of the analysand which is also a more or less differentiated cultural and technical pattern: the sophisticated patient frequently adds to the instructions of the analyst (lying down on the couch, keeping the face averted from the analyst, talking freely) rules of conduct of his own, borrowed from stereotyped conceptions of analysis: to recount his dreams, to recount his childhood memories.

(3) The actual rôle of the psycho-analyst is the personal and concrete way in which he interprets the cultural and technical pattern.

(4) The actual rôle of the analysand is no other than the transference. Transference may make the patient want to get out of the rôle of analysand or, on the contrary, he may confine himself within the limits of this stereotyped rôle because of his need for security.

(5) The analysand imposes upon the analyst an imaginary rôle; this part of the psycho-analytical experience could be regarded, as Nunberg has done, in terms of projection.

(6) The active expression, the dramatization in everyday life of the unconscious conflicts.

(7) Counter-transference is the rôle which the psycho-analyst assumes in response to the actual rôle played by the analysand.

(8) The techniques which have been described as 'active' consist in the psycho-analyst consciously playing a rôle; for instance, in the technique which relies on 'corrective experience', as advocated by Alexander, the psycho-analyst consistently plays a rôle which is different

from that played by the unfavourable parental figures.

(9) Even if inactive, the analyst still plays a positive rôle and he induces in the patient a complementary rôle; psycho-analytical therapy can be defined theoretically as a learning of rôles.

(10) The patient transfers into his everyday life the rôles acquired in his interaction with the psycho-analyst.

Leaving aside other possible applications, let us return to the positive and original characteristics of the ideal rôle of the psycho-analyst. However artificial and neutral the psycho-analytical situation may be in principle, it cannot be denied that it has the structure and feeling of a situation of inferiority-superiority in which the psycho-analyst plays, to some extent, the rôle of the leader. But what kind of a leader? The work of Kurt Lewin and his collaborators (1939) has defined with remarkable precision the rôles of the authoritarian leader, the democratic leader and the *laissez-faire* leader. Each type of leader creates a specific social climate where the degree of aggression is variable: it is lowest (2) in the authoritarian climate where we find an apathetic reaction (covert aggression); it is medium in the democratic climate (20); it is still higher (30) in the authoritarian climate with overt aggression, but exceeded by the level reached in the *laissez-faire* climate (38). Thus, all being equal, these experiments seem to show the interdependence of the form and degree of frustration on the one hand and the level of aggressivity on the other, or, in other words, the interdependence of the rôle of the leader and the rôle of the led.

We may try to clarify the characteristics of the ideal rôle of the psycho-analyst, that is to say, of a cultural and technical pattern and not of a concrete and actual rôle, in comparing these to the patterns created by the three types of leaders described by Lewin. The rôle of the psycho-analyst comprises elements of all the three rôles, the traits borrowed from the *laissez-faire* leader being predominant, such as, for example, the trait of 'complete non-participation by the leader'. Now this is an eminently frustrating rôle, as shown by the level of aggression obtained in response to it in Lewin's experiments, but which at the same time allows aggression to express itself; furthermore it leads to a decrease of the constructive tendencies of the followers, and to a certain primitiveness of behaviour, or, in other words, to a regression.

Thus the analysis of the ideal psycho-analytical field in terms of rôles leads to two sequels:

(1) The psycho-analytical environment, since it is defined in negative terms, cannot be regarded as neutral; these negative aspects should be considered as positive and original traits, the most important of which, though not the only one, is frustration.

(2) The subsequent regressions which become apparent in the evolution of transference are induced in part by the frustrating rôle of the analyst.

Hence it seems that the psycho-analytical environment and the rôle of the analyst play a positive rôle in the production of transference. This idea has been developed by Ida Macalpine in her recent article in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (1950). In certain cases it is evident from the very beginning that the frustration imposed by the analyst, and particularly by his silence, reactivates the original frustration and favours regression.

If we return to the technical writings of Freud, we find that we need not stretch their meaning in order to discover elements to support the point of view here proposed. In many passages even the details in style attest the positive action which Freud ascribed to the psycho-analytical situation; his study of transference love is one of the most conclusive (Freud, 1915). But what is the nature of this action? The answer can be found in the texts concerning the rule of abstinence (Freud, 1915, p. 383, and Freud, 1919, pp. 396-397) where it is explicitly related to the 'frustration that made the patient ill' (p. 396); without doubt frustration by the analyst plays a similar rôle in the production of transference neurosis: 'When the symptoms have been dissected and the value of them thus discounted, his sufferings become moderated, and then we must set up a sufficiently distressing privation again in some other sensitive spot, or else we run the risk of never achieving any further improvement except quite insignificant and transitory ones' (pp. 396-397).

#### RESUMÉ

(1) *Preliminary Remarks.* This article is the author's first attempt to study just a few aspects of transference. Of all the psycho-analytical concepts transference is particularly suitable for a study made from the point of view of the psychology of behaviour, behaviour being regarded as a structured and significant whole of physiological, motor, verbal and mental



responses; transference lends itself also to a comparison with the results of experimental psychology where the transfer of learning plays such a considerable part.

(2) *The Definition of Transference.* According to the classical and current definitions, transference is essentially a displacement on the analyst of friendly, hostile and ambivalent emotions. Three principal objections to this definition have been made: (1) the functional significance attributed to repetition is not specified; (2) the dynamics of its unconscious motivations are left unexplained; (3) the positive, negative, or ambivalent character of the transference gives us no right to infer the particular emotions transferred. According to the author the displacement of affect on to the analyst must be considered as only a partial aspect of the whole cycle of behaviour (motivation, methods, goal, object, effects); the link between these different facets is the significance or function of behaviour, that is to say, the quality through which it reduces the tensions of the organism and realizes its possibilities. The following hypothesis has been deduced: Transference is essentially transference of function, for instance, the defence against a need or an emotion, but expressed in terms furnished by the psycho-analytical situation.

(3) *The Development of Freud's Thought.* The relationship between this hypothesis and Freud's thought differs according to the stage in the development of his theory which is considered. Until 1920 transference was regarded as the result of the disposition to transfer (repressed tendencies and fantasies) and of resistance (enacted repetition instead of remembering), that is to say in terms of the pleasure principle. From 1920 onwards (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) transference was explained in terms of the compulsion of repetition, that is to say, independently of the pleasure principle. Unfortunately the later works of Freud do not shed much light on the relationship of the compulsion of repetition to the previously formulated concepts. The question becomes a little clearer when we note that in the earlier works Freud is primarily concerned with positive transference which helps to overcome the resistance, while in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* he deals above all with negative transference.

(4) *The Need to Repeat and the Repetition of Needs.* Even if we admit the existence of a specific need to repeat, the question still remains

in what particular way this need expresses itself in transference. The criticism intrinsic to Freud's position in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* establishes two points: (1) The repetition of repressed needs does not exclude the search after pleasure. (2) Resistance, in conformity with the Pleasure Principle, is also a repetition; thus repetition and motivation are not mutually exclusive. The development of experimental psychology during the years 1925-50 has also tended to subordinate, or at least to link up, repetition with motivation. One of the most interesting examples in relation to the theory of transference is the Zeigarnik effect, that is to say the fact that unfinished tasks are more easily remembered and more easily reverted to; it seems that failure plays a part in the persistence of tension. In the light of the Zeigarnik effect, transference can be considered as the activation in the psycho-analytical situation of an unsolved conflict; injury to the narcissistic drives, consequent, according to Freud, upon the failure of infantile sexuality, is not just a reason for defence, it evokes an unconscious demand for reparation and this, psycho-analytical practice often shows, is a main function of transference.

(5) *Positive and Negative Effects of Transference.* According to current definitions the emotion experienced by the patient in relation to the analyst reveals the positive or negative character of transference. In the light of the concepts of experimental psychology as regards the positive and negative effect of transference and basing himself on clinical evidence the author intends to define operationally the meaning of transference by this effect on the learning of the fundamental rule. This definition is not opposed to the classical definition, but is wider than and includes it. Negative transference corresponds to the prevalence of the defensive habits of the ego which seek security in acquired solutions and the reduction of tensions. Positive transference corresponds to the formation of new habits based on repressed needs and emotions, and an optimum level of tension having been attained, favouring the expression of the self and the realization of the patient's potentialities.

(6) *Rôle of the Psycho-analyst and the Production of Transference.* The classical conception has been summarized in the Freudian allegory of the mirror-analyst; transference is a spontaneous phenomenon attributable to the patient and explained in intra-individual terms. We propose to reconsider this question in the

framework of the theory of a psycho-analytical field created by the interaction of the psycho-analyst and of the patient, that is in terms of a psychology of inter-individual rôles. It has been suggested that the negative traits of the analyst's rôle (silence, passivity, etc.) should be considered as positive qualities, amongst which frustration is outstanding. Hence the hypo-

thesis that the successive regressions, which become evident in the evolution of transference, are induced in part by the frustrating rôle of the analyst. This approach is corroborated by examining the technical writings of Freud and the importance which he attributes to the rule of abstinence in relation to the motivation of the patient and the progress of his treatment.

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