

Achievements of Winnicott's Revolution¹

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1. Introductory remarks

This paper presents a perspective on Winnicott's revolutionary psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice, which results from more than 20 years of research. I have been greatly encouraged and assisted in my efforts by Elsa O. Dias and other members of the Brazilian Society for Winnicottian Psychoanalysis (SBPW).

The results have been presented in numerous Portuguese language publications and more recently also in other languages. All of them, together with some written by my associates, are now available on line in the two journals of the SBPW and as e-books. I am happy to announce that Elsa Oliveira Dias's seminal book *Winnicott's theory of maturational processes* has just been published by Karnac.

This material forms the framework for the Training Course in Winnicottian Psychoanalysis, offered at the seven Winnicott Centers of the SBPW, most of which are members of the IWA. It is also the backbone of the Training Course in Winnicottian Psychoanalysis, which Elsa O. Dias and I teach with other individual members of IWA. Moreover, it constitutes the theoretical foundation for discussions within the International Research Group on Winnicott's Paradigm, as well as for the elaboration of the entries of the *Winnicott Dictionary*, a Project which the SBPW is about to initiate in collaboration with the IWA and with various psychoanalytic societies and universities, notably Unicamp and PUCPR.

2. Winnicott's plea for a revolution in psychoanalysis

¹ This is an extended and revised version of my paper presented under the same title at the 1st IWA Winnicott Congress held in São Paulo, Brazil, on 14-16 May 2015.

In the recently published draft of a 1970 paper, Winnicott wrote: “I am asking for a kind of revolution in our work. Let us re-examine what we do” (Abram, 2013, p. 312).

Winnicott understood that something was wrong with what psychoanalysts do, but what is it that they do? Traditionally, they try to solve certain kinds of health problems in their patients by interpreting the meaning of the verbal manifestations of their symptoms. They practice the Freudian talking cure.

What is wrong with talking cure? The “common failure of many excellent analyses”, which are based on it (Abram, 2013, p. 313). Patients feel that the analysis is never-ending, in other words, that it never solves their health problems. What is the reason for this common perception of the lack of efficiency of ordinary analysis? Setting aside the inability of individual analysts, the talking cure does not enable the analyst to reach the dissociation in the patient, which is “hidden in the material that is clearly related to repression taking place as a defence in a seemingly whole person” (Abram, 2013, p. 313).

The hidden material in question consists of the affectively charged representational contents, which in consciousness represent censored instincts that were expelled from it. In the case of a seemingly whole personality, repression is an internal defence, but defence against what? Specifically against dissociation in the personality. The reason why instinctual drives and related contents are internally repressed rather than managed is that the individual lacks the unified personality structure which would allow him or her to integrate its various parts. The end result may be more or less rigid defences, which repress one part or the other.

Breaking into the repressed unconscious contents does not put the analyst in contact with the dissociation, nor does it reveal the hidden function of the internal repression, the repression as a defence. Retrieving repressed contents does not help; the personality dissociation remains there. In order to be able to cure the patient the analysts must be trained to deal specifically with dissociation. He or she must be able to see “and witness the parts that go to make the whole, a whole which does not exist except as viewed from outside”, because “the patient cannot do this work by himself” (Abram, 2013, p.

312). In order to become whole, all human beings depend on an adequate well-adapted environmental provision. This is what allows the lucky human baby to say: “When I look I am seen, so I exist. I can now afford to look and see” (1971, p. 114).

Winnicott illustrates his point by recalling what he learned from what I will call the FM case (Abram, 2013, p. 315).² FM was a middle-aged family man. He complained about his homosexuality. Before coming to Winnicott, he had undergone several orthodox Freudian analyses for a considerable time, but felt that they would never end (1989, p. 172). Winnicott noticed that there was a non-masculine element which was dissociated from the masculine element in his personality. FM did not know this, and “none of his dozen analysts had been able to recognise the vital fact” (Abram, 2013, p. 315). Why was this? Most likely because they tried to account for his homosexuality in accordance with the traditional Freudian view, by reaching into the repressed sexual drives fixed on a specific erotogenic zone. This did not work. What enabled Winnicott to actually *complete* the analysis was the fact that, having stopped the “witch-hunt” for fixation points, he was able to see that this man “carried a girl around with him all his life” (p. 315), and thus was able to unite him and this girl within himself. Winnicott said to FM: “I know perfectly well that you are a man but I am listening to a girl, and I am talking to a girl” (1989, p. 170). He then added: “The mad man is *myself*”. Thus, through his verbal behavior, Winnicott repeated the madness of FM’s mother, who had forced him to *become* a girl. Past madness became present in a symbolic manner. FM took advantage of this failure of the analyst. He said that now (being heard and talked to by Winnicott, that is, being held by him) he “felt sane in a mad environment”. Later on, FM added: “I myself could never say (knowing myself to be a man) ‘I am a girl’. I am not mad that way. But you have said it, and you have spoken to both parts of me” (1989, p. 171). By saying this, FM showed that he was aware that he was seen by Winnicott. He could now start to integrate his dissociated parts and begin to exist as a whole person.

² The case is described in Winnicott, 1989, Chapter 28; previously published in 1971, Chapter 5.

Repression, according to this view, is not the main cause of mental disorders as is the case with Freudian psychoanalysis. Material related to repression is, as FM's homosexuality, a hiding expedient. What then is the main cause of mental disorders? Environmental failure: something that is lacking or which jeopardises the constitution of the whole person and which results in a dissociation or splitting.

We can thus understand why Winnicott asks for a revolution: not just for additions or conservative modifications, but for a radical change in psychoanalytic theory with regard to the nature and aetiology of disorders, as well as in psychoanalytic treatment procedures. In the early 1950's he had already clearly stated that the era of psychoanalysis limited to cases dominated by the problems of retrieving the repressed unconscious was "steadily drawing to a close" (1958, p. 291). Even in carefully chosen legitimate clinical cases, beneath the repressed unconscious, dissociation lurks, that is, a failure in the structure of personality. In order to remain effective as a clinical practice, psychoanalysis must change, and do so radically.

In 1970, by deciding to plead for a revolution, despite being very ill, Winnicott was actually inviting his colleagues to ponder the one that he had already produced.

3. Psychoanalytic health problem-solving as scientific problem-solving in the Kuhnian sense

There can be no doubt that Winnicott conceived psychoanalytic problem-solving as *scientific* problem-solving, that is, as an attempt to fill in gaps in our knowledge of the facts of life. In order to achieve this goal, psychoanalysts, like other scientists, must devise a "research program", execute it step by step, find the required solutions and, if these are inconclusive, be patient and try again. If the failures persist, the research program must be changed (1986, p. 14). Winnicott once wrote: "Mature adults bring vitality to that which is ancient, old, and orthodox by re-creating it after destroying it" (1965b, p. 94). If this is a correct reading of what Winnicott was doing, additional insight into his problem-solving activity can be gained through Kuhn's theory of the structure of scientific theories

and scientific revolutions. The second, enlarged edition of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was also published in 1970. It states that scientific theories are not put forward as true or nearly true world-views, but as research programs for specific areas, which guide the so-called "normal" research into unknown facts and their properties. If there is a significant surge of unsolved problems (or "anomalies"), a crisis arises, which is solved through "revolutionary" research, usually spearheaded by a young generation of practitioners of that particular discipline, aiming at producing a "paradigm shift", which Kuhn compares to a Gestalt switch. The new paradigm is put forth as being more effective than the old one and as a new guideline for the normal problem-solving activity.

The FM case presented earlier can be seen as an anomaly within the Freudian paradigm, and Winnicott's solution for it as the result of his revolutionary research.

My Kuhnian interpretation of what Winnicott was asking for in 1970 is in keeping with the views of several other authors, for instance, Greenberg and Mitchell:

We are suggesting that Kuhn's approach to the development of scientific ideas and his definition of models as metaphysical commitments are highly applicable to the history of psychoanalytic thought and constitute a useful way to approaching different strategies of theory-construction. (1983, p. 19)

This nevertheless contradicts some well-known and widely accepted views. Thomas H. Ogden, for instance, claims that large parts of Winnicott's writings can or have to be read as "non-fiction literature", more precisely as "prose poems", since they are strongly similar in nature to fictions by Borges and Frost, "resistant to paraphrase" and not intended to "arrive at conclusions", but to "generate imaginative experience in the medium of language" (Ogden, 2002, p. 206). While Ogden's reading appeals to many, it nevertheless seems to me that the opposite is true. Winnicott quite explicitly distinguishes the poetic truth, which comes with insight, from the scientific truth established methodically. The former is necessary in order not to lose sight of the human being as a whole, the latter is required for organising human lives, which includes helping

people through clinical practice. Poetry, like religion, philosophy and alchemy, does not provide the kind of knowledge which can be used for therapeutic purposes (1996, p. 237).

Charles Rycroft presents a different argument. He thinks that Winnicott's theorising remains "too idiosyncratic to be readily assimilated into the general body of any scientific theory" (1985, p. 144). Apparently, it did not occur to Rycroft to consider the possibility that Winnicott produced a scientific theory of human nature in its own right.

Jan Abram hesitates. In some passages, she subscribes to my thesis of the Winnicott's paradigm shift. In others, she adheres to Green's 1996 view that Winnicott "did not break off with Freud but rather completed his work" (2013, p. 326). Green himself hesitates. In 1975, he stated that Winnicott's contributions placed on the agenda of psychoanalysis a question regarding its future, which is still today often marred by outdated theoretical views and practices. Psychoanalysis shies away from the need to search for alternatives and renewal in the face of theoretical and practical impasses, from the need to extend its reach and to subject its concepts to radical changes, and from committing itself to self-criticism, as it used to be with Freud (Green, 1975/2013, p. 193). Yet, in 2011, while affirming that Winnicott was the author of a "developmental conception going further than Freud and Klein, both credible and sufficiently imaginative to gain general acceptance", he refrained from acknowledging the full measure of the distance so established.

This being so, the problem of determining Winnicott's place in the history of psychoanalysis is still open and awaiting further research.

4. Winnicott's theory of the constitution of whole persons

As mentioned, in 1970, Winnicott asked his colleagues to pay attention to a revolution which he had already produced. What did this revolution consist of? In my view, it consisted of Winnicott's own contributions to psychoanalysis, some of which are listed below:

1) a theory of the maturational processes, by which individuals become whole persons, the main element of which is integration;

2) a theory of interruptions of the maturational processes, that is, Winnicott's theory of pathology, which includes a theory of the nature of the maturational disorders and their aetiology;

3) a theory of clinical procedures for helping individuals to restart their interrupted process of maturation and thus achieve personal wholeness; and

4) a theory of cultural experience.

I shall start with Winnicott's theory of the maturational processes, that is of the constitution and structure of a human being as a whole. This is indeed the cornerstone of his thought; in Kuhnian-like terms, it is the main guiding generalisation of his paradigm.

As we know, Freud's starting point is the stream of consciousness, which consists of mental states relating to subject-object relationships (the individual's sexual desire for objects in order to achieve sensuous pleasure) and is produced naturally in the psychic apparatus as a manifestation of external excitements and innate drives. By contrast, Winnicott's view is not focused on the stream of consciousness but on human nature manifesting itself in time as a human being. A human being is a time sample of human nature, that is, the actualisation of the inherited tendency of human nature towards integration into a personal whole, together with physical growth and emotional, as well as mental development. The process of integration is one of "agglomeration" and not of "object relating". This is how Winnicott reads the *philia* of Empedocles: not as a Freudian "drive" or "instinct", but as a love power which strives to put together and to keep together the primal particles or elements of the universe and of man (1989, p. 243). The outcome is personality structure and character formation, not a mental apparatus. At the beginning, the maturational processes are absolutely dependent on there being a facilitating environment. This dependence fades away as years go by but never vanishes completely. The Freudian subject-object relationships in search of pleasure do not belong to the initial stages of the maturational process; they only occur at a later stage, if at all,

and not automatically, as Freud thought, but only if the individual has previously received the needed environmental provision.

When duly facilitated by ever expanding environments, the integration process passes through several stages. The first few are dual: the stage of the first theoretical feed, of transitional phenomena, of the I AM and of concern; the next ones are triangular (belonging to family life) and all of the following are multilateral, taking place in family groups, adolescent groups, relationships within societies, and, finally, in total behaviour in relation to humankind, human history and cultural tradition in general.

If anyone asks for a good example of Winnicott's paradigm shift, I usually focus on his theory of the maturational processes, but there are evidently various other examples: his theory of pathology, his treatment procedures and his theory of cultural experience, which shall be presented below.

5. Interruptions of the process of integration: nature of maturational troubles, aetiology and reactions (defences)

Freud's theory of psychic illnesses is well known. He observed gaps in the stream of consciousness due to the elimination of affective and representational mental states, which were felt to be psychologically unbearable or morally and socially reprehensible. Their elimination from consciousness is explained in terms of repression from within the individual (ego, superego) and/or from the outside (morality, social pressure). If kept in the unconscious, these states have enough strength for a return to consciousness, which they do through the workings of the unconscious machinery of the mind. In this way, they become symptoms, which in turn are additional painful disorders in the stream of consciousness. The essence of the Freudian pathology is repression: the actual elimination of the censored mental states, which then, come back in a disorderly and disturbing manner.

Winnicott maintains a very different stance. For him, the disorders do not concern the elimination of what is there but should not be, but rather the lack of integration of

what had to be put together but was not. Something should have happened but did not, and this is different from something which did happen but which should not have happened.

During the stage of the first theoretical feed (first dual relationships), individuals may suffer from unthinkable agonies, that is, the painful struggle of a weakened tendency towards integration (“weak ego”, “weakened ego”) into a unity (I AM). The aetiology is the lack of holding, handling and object-presenting. Defences consist of a variety of psychoses, such as active disintegration, infantile schizophrenia, false self, psychosomatic illnesses, “primary narcissism” and self-phenomena.

Later on, during the stage of the transitional phenomena, the main problem is the lack of trust in the environment. This is mainly due to a lack of attention by the mother and her absence for periods longer than what is tolerable for very fragile “ego defences”. New defences become necessary and they include the baby stopping the activity of playing and clinging to the mother (for instance, using her body as transitional object).

During the stage of concern, the trouble lies in *doubts* about excited states elaborated and experienced as loving and hating, as good and bad, and also doubts about relating to the corresponding good and bad objects. It could, for example, be doubts about the next feed tomorrow. The breaking off of the benign circle of taking and giving, both with object-mother and environment-mother, is the paradigmatic impingement on integration. The defence is a reactive depression and an inhibition or severe damage to the instinctual relationship with the mother. The outcome shows up as lack of capacity for loving and hating, absence of ambivalence, and therefore, absence of the capacity for depression, of the sense of guilt and of the sense of responsibility. In triangular relationships with the genital backing, the maturational trouble comes from an intolerable ambivalence of loving and hating the same person – the father (by the boy) or the mother (by the girl). This stems from an immaturity in the child, whose fantasies overlap with reality. There is *internal conflict* (which is *not* a doubt) regarding what to do. The child is troubled again, as in the stage of concern, by the problem of integrating opposite feelings, the difference being that, this time, the feelings relate to sexual drives and not to digestion.

The specific castration threat in the Freudian sense is not a decisive factor. Two types of defences against the conflict are possible: regression (dropping of maturational achievements), or repression, which results in different varieties of neurosis (rigidity of psychoneurotic defence organisations). The origin of the child's failure to avoid neurosis lies in "developmental failures at earlier stages" (1989, p. 71). Indeed, "pure" cases of neurosis are uncommon, and might not exist at all. In this stage, as during the stage of concern, repression is a defence against the lack of personal cohesion. Another important implication is that, contrary to what Freud said, not only psychoses but also neuroses can be *prevented* by trying "to give to the child what is needed in the earliest stages of infancy, where there is great dependence" (1958, p. 319; cf. 1988, p. 38 and 1965a, p. 67). In infancy or at any age, if the previously good environment is lost and the individual is mature enough to be aware of the fact that the environment is responsible for the loss, the result is a "deprivation". The defence against this kind of interruption of the maturational process is the anti-social tendency, which must be seen as the individual's effort to recover what was lost and as a sign of hope. Character disorders are personality distortions which arise when the individual needs to accommodate some degree of anti-social tendency with other kinds of problems hidden in them, which could be a psycho-neurosis (a conflict in the individual's personal unconscious) or a variety of psychoses (1984, p. 245).

During adolescence, individuals are naturally drawn away from the family environment, no matter how good it is, and tend to relate to a much larger environment, to society in the broader sense. The effect is isolation and the reemergence of very early problems concerning the establishment of relationships with the external world. Among the defences, we find group identifications, instability, all kinds of quasi-psychotic symptoms, an anti-social tendency, but not neuroses, felt by the adolescent to be a false solution.

Maturational problems in social life are related to the capacity to tolerate ambivalence and feelings of deprivation. Disturbing factors in social life are social tensions and the lack or loss of social provision. Defences consist of the renewal of anti-

social tendencies, the building of walls between communities and nations, wars and a yearning for dictatorships.

In essence, Winnicott thoroughly modified psychoanalytic pathology:

1) Disorders are *interruptions* in the continuity of being, that is, in the relations with the environment or with other persons, and not gaps or cuts in the stream of consciousness.

2) The origin (aetiology) of the disorders are, in the first place, *environmental failures*, a lack of the needed environmental provision, and, in the second, reactions to those failures, as well as personal doubts and internal conflicts which endanger the process of integration, and not castration threats of physical mutilation (destruction of the sexual potential).

3) *Defences* are essentially renewed attempts at self-organisation, which reveal themselves to be insufficient, since they are unaided; they are not symptoms of unsuccessful attempts to compensate for frustrations.

6. Treatment of disturbances in the process of integration

Freudian troubles are meant to be cured by reconnecting the symptoms with the corresponding repressed unconscious contents through interpretation, therefore, retrieving the latter from the unconscious to the conscious memory system of affects and representations. However, since repressive instances are always present, the thwarting of desires and the disturbances of consciousness are repeatedly reinitiated, so that the treatment never comes to an end.

Having modified psychoanalytic pathology in a revolutionary way, Winnicott changed psychoanalytic treatment procedures accordingly. When halted, the tendency towards integration builds up into a powerful force to resume integration towards health. This is an essential part of Winnicott's **theory of integration**. **If the environment provides an *opportunity***, the whole process will promptly resume within the individual.

The principal aim of the treatment is to help with the dynamics of the cure, the urge to cure, based on a belief in human nature and its tendency towards integration, a belief that the maturational process will resume and eventually integrate the personality into a whole.³ For this purpose, the general task is to provide care for unattended integration needs according to the stage of the disturbance as indicated below:

In the case of failures in the personality structure (psychotic disorders): by giving the opportunity (i.e. the availability of a reliable specialised environment, the analyst) for regression to dependence, which makes it possible for the patient to experience for the first time the feared state of breakdown, which happened but was not experienced, and which is the source of unthinkable agonies and of madness itself.

In the case of depressions caused by doubts about good and bad and by ambivalence related to digestion: by giving the opportunity to recover from doubts through interpreting, rehabilitating and being patient.

In the case of neuroses due to conflicts in triangular relationships among whole persons with genital backing: by interpretation with a view to distinguishing fantasy from reality and by reliable presence. Since “pure” cases of neurosis are uncommon, the analyst must be prepared to allow for the emergence of hidden failures in the personality structure, treating them as such and not as cases of resistance.

In the case of anti-social tendencies due to deprivation (loss of a previous good environment): by management in the traditional setting or in the amplified setting (family, groups, schools).

In the case of character disorders: by dissection down to the hidden illness and confrontation with the anti-social problems as such (1984, p. 247).

In the case of adolescent doldrums: by being there, understanding and waiting.

The recovery of personality structures might not be final at any point of the treatment, just as the initial constitution is never final either. However, once started,

³ This reminds me of Balint’s concept of the new beginning. The difference is that Balint works with love relationships and Winnicott, with environmental relationships; Balint understands the need for environmental provision, but has no idea of the integration processes.

recovery may be expected to tend towards progress, with the troublesome breakdowns of whatever nature losing their strength and becoming less threatening. If this does not happen, there could be supervening physical causes. The analyst may not be good enough or may have made serious mistakes. Once again, Winnicott's perspective on the therapeutic efficiency of psychoanalysis diverges significantly from Freud's.

Winnicott's care procedures may also be applied to social tensions, such as instability of the social system, renewed anti-social tendency leading to dictatorships or to anarchy, building of walls (both internal to societies and external) and wars (civil, international or even global). The recommended interventions are respectively:

1) efforts to ensure the presence of 30% of healthy citizens, who do not behave like adolescents;

2) helping with cross-identifications and the supporting of democratic tendencies by explaining its nature and the rationale of the democratic machinery;

3) aiding with the internalisation of the divisions, that is, seeing ourselves in our opponents and tolerating them based on the capacity for tolerating ambivalence;

4) explaining the aims of wars: victory (military, not moral), re-establishment of the democratic machinery, welcoming of the mature elements in enemy countries without any allocation of war guilt (1986, pp. 219-220).

Finally, there may also be troubles with what Winnicott calls the individual's total behaviour, which involves preserving and recreating cultural traditions, both locally and universally. For example, each one of us is challenged by the objectification process (science, morality founded on laws, religions based on dogmas and rituals) which is now becoming dominant and exclusive on the global scale, and thus, threatening our personal relationships and civilisation as we know it, insofar as it interrupts the continuity of existence of a world in which things are not technical artifacts, and where good deeds are not just realisations of moral or religious commands, but have meaning, majesty and mystery, which was given to them by us, allowing for the poetry in all of us and for the protection of places where serenity can be found (1986, pp. 208 and 233).

7. Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory of social relationships and of cultural experience

For Freud, social order, morality, religion, arts and all other abstract cultural activities are products of the sublimation of objects of instincts, mainly of a sexual nature, and of the aims of instincts. This process is a development of individuals and social groups caused by the inevitable conflict related to sexual objects among parents and children. In today's families, this is a conflict between the actual father and his sons regarding the mother. Among primitive hordes, as Freud's mythology would have it, it was the rivalry between a violent, jealous and inflexible father and all of his sons regarding the females of the horde. In both situations, the father is pushed irresistibly by his own libido to defend his sexual object, or objects, and does so by threatening or even specifically eliminating the sexual potential of his rivals through castration. In both cases, castration is inevitably resisted and individuals cannot but try to protect their sexual capacity, with the father, who is valued and loved because of his protection, strength and sexual potential, becoming an object of hate, rebellion or even crime. The unavoidable outcome is the ambivalence of the son and the group of sons towards the father, implying a feeling of guilt. Since castration threats go on relentlessly due to the very nature of the conflict, the only definitive way out of this ambivalence is the submission of the sons to the will of the father; otherwise, the struggle between males for sexual objects restarts with similar consequences. This means that castration, in the sense of renunciation of the original sexual object or objects, is accepted and introjected. From then on, it becomes part of the **individual's unconscious as well as of the collective** archaic heritage, which is present in each individual and accounts for the strength, inflexible character and persistence of the threat of castration (Freud, 1912-13/1974). Insofar as they inevitably resist this treat, humans are always guilty, and the only way to deal with this guilt is to engage obsessively in the process of sublimation. Social order and human culture is thus nothing more than an inevitable outcome of sexual conflicts (Freud remains entirely faithful to determinism in his theory of culture), essentially with the same properties as those of obsessive

individuals and collective neuroses; indeed, they are merely symptoms, albeit less severe ones than those of neurotics. Social life and culture provide for the reduction of conflicts, but the pleasure so achieved is never fully satisfying; the renunciation of instinctual objects must go on forever. Repressive instances are unforgiving.

For Winnicott, the cultural landscape is quite different. The family is created by the child and is the meeting point between the child's integration needs and parental care (1965b, p. 49). The structure of the family emerges in the stage of concern, "to a large extent out of the tendency towards organisation in the individual personality" (1965b, p. VII). The father protecting the mother at this stage makes it possible for the child to bear the guilt of his excited use of the mother and to free it to love her instinctively, his instincts being initially not genital but related to digestion (1988, p. 79). The origin and the initial functioning of the family, of the mother and the father, has to do with environmental provision of the kind needed by the child at the stage of concern, and has nothing to do with the sexual rivalry between son and father or with the father's threats of castration, the son's rebellion or social interest in exogamy. Freud has simply failed to take account of the essential aspects of the first natural social group.

As regards the origins of morality, the basic elements are also acquired during the stage of concern. The child changes from "pre-ruth" to "ruth" and gradually becomes more concerned about the damage that he feels he is inflicting on his beloved mother in the excited relationship. If the mother survives and does not retaliate, which she may be able to do if she is healthy and is assisted by the father or by someone else, the result is that the child discovers "his own personal urge to give and to construct and to mend" (1958, p. 206). In this way, the child creates his or her sense of guilt and of responsibility for other people, which is the very basis of ethics, albeit evidently not of the ethics of law, and certainly not of the law that forbids incest, but of the ethics of caring for other people's existence.

With regard to religion, its different forms correspond to successive stages of the maturational process. Monotheism notably has its origin in the stage of I AM, when the father is used by the child as a blueprint for acquiring personal unity in the family

environment. Freud's Oedipal derivation of monotheism both in its ontogenetic (an individual's Oedipal situation) and in his phylogenetic version (the primitive horde conditions) is simply ignored.

Artistic activity is the continuation of playing, which starts during the stage of transitional phenomena. Playing is inherently exciting and precarious, but it does not derive (in its characteristic form) from any instinctual arousal at all. In particular, it is not, as it is for Freud, an outcome of the sublimation of repression which solves internal conflicts.

Finally, there is the question of the value of human civilisation. Freud places a lot of weight on the "higher values" created by cultural development as a result of the sublimation of original instinctual objects and aims, values related to "scientific, artistic and ideological psychic activities" (1930a/1974, p. 227) and to all our "spiritual" activities in general.

Winnicott again views things differently. The initial values are concrete human beings for whom we feel responsible. And the highest value is the "personal fulfillment" in a healthy society (capable of providing stability and mechanisms necessary for social integration) of healthy individuals (capable of acting in responsible ways, of cooperating and of cross identifying with others) (1986, p. 153; cf. p. 237). The activities which Freud contemplates are abstract products of the mind, the spirit (in German: *Geist*) or the intellect. According to Winnicott, human existence is psychosomatic, and the mind is not a higher entity, it is not an entity at all, but a "special case of the functioning of the psyche-soma", "separated out from the psyche part of the psyche-soma" (1958, p. 244). When this functioning becomes merely "psychological" without contacting the psyche-soma, which seems to be the case in higher cultural activities, it often develops into a false entity which is the basis of the false self. The false self is indeed a distorted formation of the personal unity due to an environmental failure in the early stages, which lives on only through the mind or intellect (1989, p. 467). Cultural activities insofar as they are products of a split off mind are anything but personally valuable, they are defensive and therefore, strictly pathological. This is true at the individual level – brilliant minds are often aspects

of personally failed individuals – but also at the social level – collective abstract products may be highly problematic.

Indeed, we know today that the higher spiritual activities of the Freudian kind can seriously endanger human civilisation. In recent centuries, science has produced an objectification of the world and of human beings which is the basis for modern technology. One increasingly feels that technology is getting out of control and is putting in danger not only civilisation as we know it but even the place of the human species in the world. Research into artificial intelligence and artificial life can hardly be treated as an **activity which produces “higher values”**. Instead, it serves a power which carries with it and imposes upon us quite different new values, which we may not appreciate at all. Today, artistic activities are in many cases difficult to distinguish from entertainment and show-business, with some serious groups of artists proclaiming the death of art. As we know all too well, ideologies of right and left have led to unprecedented criminal activities of global proportions. The possibility that criminal ideologies may become based on technology, a phenomenon first observed in Communist and Nazi dictatorships, but which seems to be creeping into our current technology within democratic societies, entails prospects which some of us may find very bleak.

It appears that Freud was still in the grip of the Illuminist ideal of perfectibility of human kind through a process of rationalisation under the dictatorship of theoretical and practical reason, both of which he believed were inevitable and welcome sublimations of **the primitive father’s castration threats and practices**. For some of us today, this rosy dream has turned into a dark nightmare. What Freud considered as the three main narcissistic wounds of humanity: the substitution of the Earth by the Sun as the centre of our planetary system, the descent of man from animal ancestors and the supremacy of the unconscious over consciousness are mere bagatelles compared with the three other wounds recently spelled out by Sloterdijk: the progressive and apparently unstoppable destruction of planet Earth (its ecological systems), the substitution of human beings with inanimate computer systems and robots in information processing and industrial production, and the dissolution of human creativity, love relationships and even liberty

into mechanical reflexive technologies, computer therapies, and power games in all areas of traditional human activity (Sloterdijk, 2001, p. 345).

Winnicott was well aware of these dangers. In 1969, as Americans landed on the Moon and planted a flag there, he wrote that the only way of recovering from this destruction of the Moon as an illogical thing up there in the skies, alive in its active beauty and which meant so much to us when we knew what dark and light meant, indeed the only hope for our civilisation, would be if we managed to work out the logical side together with the illogical side and to integrate the scientist in us with the poet in us (1986, pp. 197, 207-208). Once again, this is not a question of sublimation but of integration on a global and historical level.

8. Final remarks

In the light of what I have presented, I would like to make a final remark regarding **Winnicott's place in the history of psychoanalysis. He is neither a Freudian nor a Kleinian.** Instead, he is what he became by living his life and doing his job as a clinical practitioner dedicated to helping others to become integrated individuals and to engage in the “**practice of living**” creatively. **This now allows us to choose to be Winnicottians in our own right.**

Winnicott based his problem-solving activity on a new view of human beings, set forth in terms of a theory of human nature and of its actualisation in human environments and interpersonal relationships, not on a theory of repressed unconscious constituted of representations charged by affects and a mental apparatus which operates on these mental states in a mechanical way without conscious control. He thus switched from psychology to anthropology, in the original Kantian sense of a theory of the modification of human nature not by rules of theoretical and practical reason but by pragmatic knowledge gathered through observation of human behaviour and character and, in some degree, through knowledge of world history and through reading biographies and even novels and plays.

Winnicott's pathology is essentially about the "problem of existing" (1965b, p. 79; cf. p. 61), not about symptoms that replace the original objects of drives that are mostly sexual. Life, says Winnicott, is more about being than about sex (1986, p. 35).

Winnicott's clinical procedures are ways of providing for failures in the process of integration of individuals into personal units that render them capable of relating to increasingly complex environments, and not just of retrieving the representational elements expelled from the stream of consciousness and kept repressed.

Winnicott has produced an original theory of cultural experience, a phenomenon which has no place in the Freudian description of the mental apparatus, which proved itself a completely new perspective on the origin and nature of social order and of culture, including morality, religion, art and science.

In keeping with my Kuhnian interpretation, I want to emphasise that Winnicott did not offer us a final theory of the processes of integration, nor the complete set of procedures for solving integration problems, but a *scientific research programme*. This programme has significantly increased the problem-solving capacity of psychoanalysis and is meant to be used in studying time samples of human nature, that is, human beings who have been successfully integrated, as well as others who are less fortunate and who are in need of treatment for their weaknesses. It can also be applied to the study of non-clinical subject matters such as social life and culture.

Finally, Winnicott's restatement of psychoanalysis as a clinically efficient anthropology with its own subject matter, the human nature, can on the one hand be reconciled with the contemporary philosophy of language (Wittgenstein) and with the philosophy of human existence (Heidegger). On the other hand, it can successfully resist the claims of much greater efficiency and even of exclusiveness which are put forward by some clinical theories and practices of today such as the behavioral-cognitive, the medical (drug-based) and one which relies on neuroscience.

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D. W. Winnicott Evolving and Continuing

Margaret Boyle Spelman

1. A Consideration of Winnicott's Implicit Theories of Thinking and Influence

In this paper, I try to make explicit Winnicott's implicit theory of creative thinking and influence. What I put forward for consideration comes from my research into the history of Winnicott's ideas as a case study in the growth of analytical thought (Boyle Spelman, 2013a). Perhaps it explains the regular observations made concerning the ease and frequency of use of Winnicott's thinking. This paper also provides an opportunity to think of Winnicott's continuing place within psychoanalysis.

Amongst other things, *The Evolution of Winnicott's Thinking* (Boyle Spelman, 2013a) considered Winnicott's ideas against a background of the theory of two figures; Arthur Lovejoy and Harold Bloom. I attempt here to explain the observation that there are basic points of similarity between Winnicott's concepts and Lovejoy's principles and points of contrast with Harold Bloom's theory: Lovejoy's way of thinking is like Winnicott's. Bloom's is very different.

The thinking of these three men includes an awareness of the importance of the environment: for Winnicott, it is essential for healthy development and quality of experience; for Lovejoy, it is the free space in which ideas can be traced as they travel, effecting the idea's manifestation; Lovejoy and Winnicott present a notion of the thinking environment as facilitative and adaptive. Now let us meet these two other men and Bloom's ideas briefly before exploring what is common to Lovejoy and Winnicott.

In the early twentieth century, in the US the historian Arthur O. Lovejoy (1873-1962), coined the phrase "the history of ideas" and initiated its systematic study. The first chapter of Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (1936/2009), originally published in 1936, lays out what he intended to be the programme and scope of the study of the history of ideas.

Born in New York City (1930-), Harold Bloom is a prolific, controversial and award-winning literary critic known for contentious theories of poetic influence. In his seminal book *The Anxiety of Influence*,¹ Bloom (1975/1997) suggests that a relation of influence exists between any emergent artist and his literary precursors. He proposes that all literary texts are inevitably a misreading of those preceding them. For Bloom, poetic influence is related to Freud's idea of anxiety: A new poet is first inspired to write by the poetry of another, but the admiration turns to resentment when the new poet discovers that this poet has said everything that the new poet wanted to say. To evade this obstacle and add to the tradition, the new poet must convince himself that the previous poets have failed in some way in their vision. Bloom's (1975/1997) book is considered to be an important statement on the subject of tradition and individual talent.

2. Bloom's idea of Influence in the thinking environment

Bloom (1975/1997) suggests that his theory is misunderstood and not meant to be an oedipal one. However, he shows in its tone and content, that the theory which he says is not an oedipal one is in fact just that. He presents a notion of the thinking environment which is *dangerously rivalrous* and in which one has to compete for creative survival.

Winnicott said that Freud took the first early environment for granted. He assumed that his patients came into the analytic situation as whole separate people, communicating with a whole and separate analyst. Just as Freud emphasised the primary importance of the oedipal stage in psychoanalysis, so Bloom gives it greatest importance in his assumptions about the *nature* of the thinking environment and of influence. The environment is assumed to be dangerous and subsequently involves fighting and winning

¹ *The Anxiety of Influence*, which Bloom began to write in 1967, drew on the example of Walter Jackson Bate's *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet*, recasting it in psychoanalytic form. Bloom grew up in a Yiddish speaking household and learned it and literary Hebrew before English. He is Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale University and between 1988 and 2004 was simultaneously Berg professor of English at New York City University. In 2010, he became founding patron of Ralston College in Savannah, Georgia, which focuses on the study of primary texts.

supremacy rather than a wish to contribute-in to something shared. Bloom's theory neglects the pre-oedipal. It is clearly established in the oedipal stage with innovative thinkers jostling for position. There can be only one "king of the castle". The success of the creative thinking of one individual means the necessary "death" of the thinking of another. For Bloom, creative thinking, and the thinking environment, have anxiety at their core. One competes and psychically fights to the death for creative survival. The perception of the influence of the predominant thinker on the new thinker, must be distorted to avoid anxiety and in order that the new thinker can be creative.

3. Facilitating Features in Winnicott's thinking

My large study hypothesised a synergistic relationship: *Winnicott's presence in subsequent analytic generations simultaneously facilitates both the expansion of his concepts and the growth in the independent thinking of others.* In the chronologically ordered reading of Winnicott's thinking, a series of facilitative features were found. These are proposed to be facilitative of thinking generally but specifically of the use of Winnicott's thinking in that of others:

Trust in spontaneous growth, enjoyment of communication, acceptance of individuality and complexity, the importance of experience and "between" concepts, the importance of the environment, the importance of non-dogmatic classification, the importance of true self and spontaneity, trust in naturally occurring moral development, the fantasy of destruction through greedy loving/feeding, the importance to health of the fusion of affect and of the acceptance of one's destructiveness, the period of hesitation, interdisciplinary communication and the importance of both science and art, the importance of the enjoyable, creative life, the importance of transitional space, and of the capacity to be alone in the presence of someone else. The last and not least of this list is the capacity to use an object, which we discuss again shortly.

Winnicott's facilitative characteristics map onto a similar way of thinking informing Lovejoy's (1936/2009) principles for the history of ideas.

Lovejoy's (1936/2009) five principles summarised:

1) We make assumptions and have implicit unscrutinised unconscious doctrines within our "ways of thinking" made up of diverse elements.

2) Things are understood in terms of contrasts but no explanation is comprehensive and learning necessarily involves long periods of confusion and failure to understand.

3) The history of ideas requires a necessary curiosity in those who engage with it: an interest in the workings of other minds.

4) Lovejoy is against the differentiation of areas of thought and feels that there should be permeable boundaries.

5) Lovejoy's history of ideas takes as its basic unit of analysis the unit-idea or the individual concept, the building-blocks of the history of ideas which remain relatively unchanged but recombine in new patterns and gain expression in new forms.

4. The evolution of Winnicott's thinking on thinking and on influence

Now I explore what Winnicott had to say during his lifetime about the facilitative thinking space, about his own thinking process and about influence.

In his introduction to Winnicott's first collection of papers, Khan (1958/1984a, p. xvi) says that Winnicott could learn from others only "if it awakened him more largely towards his own self": Winnicott realised that "[t]he interplay between originality and the acceptance of tradition as the basis for inventiveness... [is]...just one more example, and a very exciting one, of the interplay between separateness and union" (1966/1996, p. 99).

Winnicott's awareness of influence was implicit in his dependence on and his sensitivity to his thinking environment. Communication, the act of writing and the act of letter-writing are always important to his thinking. He often complained within the BPAS of the impingements on his thinking environment of the Kleinians or of the language used by others. In 1952 in a letter, he says that creative thinking would die if everyone used Klein's language (Rodman, 1999, pp. 33-37).

Being an independent thinker is a perennial concern. Winnicott says in 1949 in a footnote that “others may have said it better but not better for [him]” (1984a, p. 177). We also know from Enid Balint that he was apprehensive about reading Ferenczi’s work (Luepnitz, 1992), perhaps feeling it to be intrusively close to his own.

In 1945 Winnicott describes his *modus operandi*. He says:

I shall not first give an historical survey and show the development of my ideas from the theories of others, because my mind does not work that way. What happens is that I gather this and that, here and there, settle down to clinical experience, form my own theories and then, last of all interest myself in looking to see where I stole what. Perhaps this is as good a method as any. (1945/1984, p. 145)

Winnicott felt that his thinking derived from clinical experience. In positioning his thinking, his aim for himself was authenticity and independence without conformity.

In January 1967, four years before he died, Winnicott engages in an activity which is telling of his sense of influence. He addresses the 1952 Club on the relationship of his **thinking to other formulations. After circulating notes for “D.W.W. on D.W.W.”** (1989), he asks his audience to suggest who influenced him. He says that he has left room for listeners to write their feedback. He chronologically reviews the development of his ideas, naming those who influenced him at various stages. He begins:

I’ve realized more and more ... what a tremendous lot I’ve lost by not correlating my work with the work of others ... [I]t has meant that what I’ve said has been isolated and people have to do a lot of work to get at it. It happens to be my temperament, and it’s a big fault. (1989, p. 573)

He ends by inviting his audience to help him supplement his list of influences.² It is not immediately apparent why people (apart from Klein and Freud) are listed³ when there are so many important omissions. Amongst these must surely be C.G. Jung.⁴ Throughout his career Winnicott's thinking has the feature of his not knowing whether he "created or found" an idea. This seems to have been vital for his professional true self.

In 1967 we see Winnicott of a very different opinion to that of 1945. In 1967 he seeks help in situating his thinking within the corpus of psychoanalytic literature. He regrets not having previously done so. By virtue of his own admissions we know that his attempt to list his influences is inaccurate. He knows that he has always been dependent on and sensitive to influence. With heightened awareness of his mortality, he realises something: He has prized his uniqueness and independence of thought so highly that he has been unable to accurately position his thinking for posterity in the psychoanalytic firmament. Winnicott's implicit theory of thinking with its similarity to Lovejoy's, suggests a rationale for all of these characteristics of Winnicott's feelings of influence. We will return to these shortly.

Earlier we considered that the facilitative features of Winnicott's thinking made it likelier that Winnicott's thinking would be used by others. Let us now consider the meaning of this and of the similarities between Lovejoy and Winnicott.

² Winnicott asks his audience to help him write a letter so that he make amends "and join up with people all over the world who are doing work which" he had stolen or ignored. He says "I don't promise to follow it all up because I know I'm just going to go on having an idea which belongs to where I am at the moment, and I can't help it" (1989, p. 582).

³ In these notes Winnicott includes titled sections. The first, "The method of investigation", lists Freud, Alice Balint, Ribble, Suttie and Lowenfeld as influences. The next area he entitles "Examination of actual Parent-Infant relationship", listing Freud and Klein as influences. "Delinquency" is the only section dated (1940), where Greenacre, Bowlby, Hartmann, Little, Fairbairn, Erikson, and Laing are listed as Influences. For the whole next section "I Am", the only influence referenced on the whole page is Klein. For a small section called "Primitive anxieties" Fordham is listed and for a small section "Aetiology" Hartmann is listed. For a slightly larger section "Contribution to the concept of sublimation" Freud is listed. For the one-line "Regression" Anna Freud is listed and similarly Kris is listed for "Adolescent doldrums".

⁴ After 1962, Winnicott refers to analytical psychology in a way that he had previously not done. We know that he was friendly with Michael Fordham who may have introduced him to Jungian ideas; we know of his Jungian dream and Abram's (1996) index lists four different concept areas under the entry "Jung". In two lectures given to the Squiggle Foundation (in 1983 and 1984) and available from the Foundation Archive, Kenneth Lambert details the points of connection between the thinking of Winnicott and Jung.

5. The Pre-oedipal Thinking Environment

We know that Winnicott privileged the pre-oedipal time of the birth of subjectivity. This is the time of transitional space: of separation that is not separation but a form of unity; of the illusion of unity between the baby and the mother and held by this healthy mature individual. What Winnicott and Lovejoy both emphasise is the early history, near birth, of an idea. They make an assumption: At its beginning, original creative thinking along with the experience of omnipotence, is based on the original experience, of unity with the adaptive mother.

With creative thinking, both men⁵ privilege this early pre-boundary time when what is created is also found. For them, creative thinking can happen when the thinking environment is adaptive. Lovejoy speaks of “gates through fences”. Both men recognise that, with the birth of an idea, a curious, alive and accommodating environment is needed. The experience is omnipotence but the fact is dependence and vulnerability. Imposition of any of the thinking environment’s own needs – for recognition of the discipline, language, imagery, doctrine, or moral code - impinges on emergent thinking destroying it or making it compliant.

I suggest that Lovejoy’s five principles could have been conceived by Winnicott. What does the compatibility mean? Perhaps Lovejoy spells out and makes explicit what is implicit in Winnicott’s thinking.

⁵ In a new introduction to *The Great Chain of Being*, Peter J. Stanlis draws a comparison between the philosophical beliefs of poet, Robert Frost (1874-1963) and Arthur Lovejoy (1873-1962), who were not known to each other but were contemporaries at Harvard University. Frost considered Lovejoy’s book and his previous one to be masterpieces. Both men were much influenced while at Harvard by their teacher, William James. The greatest affinity for Stanlis in the thinking of these two men was in their strong agreement with William James’s essay “The PhD Octopus” which protested the increasing “hold of the PhD on American life” and the extension of the scientific method to the humanities. It is interesting for this study that in Stanlis’s emphasis on these men’s prizing of independent, nonconforming thinking and creativity and their antithesis to the thinking of Descartes and their pluralistic stance, these three men have a communality in thinking with Winnicott and the school of Independents.

Both men intuit the same things about human nature and innovative thinking. Postmodern thinkers, both accept that unconscious assumptions are made and are suspicious of doctrine; both accept the complexity of things, with moments of lucidity and confusion; both presume a natural tendency towards meaning; both stress the dependence on the thinking environment; thinking needs a permeable and free relationship with it to flourish. They acknowledge that ideas are partial, complex, **provisional, temporary, and imperfect**. Their thinking mirrors Winnicott's ideas on the early stage of the development of subjectivity which we now examine.

6. Absolute and Relative Dependence in Thinking

In order to think creatively one needs the features of Winnicott's "good enough" environment at the beginning of human development; relaxed identity with the environment; the experience (rather than the fantasy) of omnipotence; an illusion of unity with the "not me"; tolerance of the paradox that objects are at once created and found. One needs to experience this unimpinged identification with the environment over time.

The first transitional space is the prototype for later shared pursuits in society, for **appreciation of culture and for "creative living"**. In the thinking process, too, it is only at the later stage of partially formed relatively dependent thinking, that the experience of *separateness* is required. Here Winnicott speaks of the need for the environment to await **a signal of need, the thinker's creative gesture. Then the environment sensitively de-**adapts which enhances the sense of self and the externality of the other.

Lovejoy and Winnicott privilege these vital but fragile beginnings as requirements for creative independence. Winnicott speaks of the capacity to be alone which happens first in the presence of someone else. In play, the baby first unintegrates and becomes absorbed in fantasy in the presence of the mother who is temporarily forgotten but still there when later sought. This is also the case with the benign cycle when the mother survives without retaliation. For Winnicott, the early stages of independent thinking involve vestiges of the perfectly adaptive environment; undisturbed, unintegrated,

omnipotent being in relaxed identification with the thinking environment which is at once found and created.

It is not known if Winnicott had read Lovejoy's classic but his concepts have equivalencies in the history of ideas. Both men think similarly about human creativity and thinking. Both privilege early-stage creative thinking in the pre-oedipal, facilitating thinking environment when "what thinking belongs to whom?" is not in question. This may explain why Winnicott first neglected, and then felt unable to position himself within the body of psychoanalytic literature. It may account for his confusion about his influences and his need of help from others to locate his thinking in the shared arena. It is also precisely for this reason that Winnicott's thinking is here considered facilitative of further creative and ultimately independent thinking.

In the 1945 paper "Primitive Emotional Development", Winnicott speaks of the infant and the mother in the feeding situation. He says:

I think of the process as if two lines came from opposite directions, liable to come near each other. If they overlap there is a moment of *illusion*— a bit of experience which the infant can take as *either* his hallucination *or* a thing belonging to external reality. (1945/1984, p. 152)

This might also be said of the situation at the beginning of thinking; imaginative unintegration and formlessness; reliance on, and obliviousness to, the environment; no place for the question of inside and outside, or influence. In later awareness of the otherness of the environment, trust has grown and transitional space bridges inside and outside.

Winnicott speaks of the development of concern. While the infant develops "unit status" and begins to know the mother to be a whole separate person, the object and environment aspects of the mother come together. The child feels an awareness of indebtedness, of "concern" for the mother whom he has destroyed in unconscious fantasy. He can tolerate his destructive aspect, his "doing", and continue to make

spontaneous gestures *if* the mother provides opportunities for his reparative “contributing-in”. The facilitative nature of the environment along with the urge to contribute-in creatively are *the important features in Winnicott’s implicit theory of influence and theory-building.*

Winnicott describes the waxing and waning, of the relatively-dependent toddler’s need, to feel separate or merged. One moment the child feels separate and needs his mother to await a gesture, a signal of need from him. At another, the child needs unity and needs his mother to predict his need and adapt to him. Perhaps an equivalent situation existed between Winnicott and his professional environment with his emergent creative thinking.

In his paper “The Location of Cultural Experience”,⁶ Winnicott (1966/1996, p. 99) says that it is not possible to be original except on the basis of tradition. He describes ordinary living and the “third area of experience”. He sketches the *shared reality* of any domain to which people contribute-in creatively. For Winnicott, Freud’s concept of “sublimation” does not explain cultural experience with its richness, enjoyment, and creativity; healthy transitional space in relative dependence.

We glimpse the nature of Winnicott’s own imaginative elaborations in his “Addendum” to this paper: For over forty years he has a recurrent “shallow dream” when he naps in an imagined place that he calls “his club”. He has grown the characters and friends that he meets there. He recounts two dreams. He imagines that this is what people who write novels do.⁷ He is reading without reading and writing without writing. It is like a new kind of potential space “between the between spaces”,⁸ a refinement in the categories of experience – a kind of *potential space* not as close to the unconscious as regular dreaming but not either in the between-space of ordinary waking experience.

⁶ “The Place Where We Live” restates this paper using everyday language for a different audience. In it Winnicott reiterates what he has got to say about this third area of experience.

⁷ Winnicott refers here to John Galsworthy writing the *Forsyte Saga*.

⁸ Winnicott says it is like the fantasizing of a child and warns against analysing it. He recommends waiting for material that comes from a deeper layer, using the material as a communication from the unconscious.

7. The Use of an Object and Winnicott's Influence

The totality of Winnicott's thinking seems to have existed within him from the beginning, requiring only to unfold in the facilitating environment. In the final one third of his life, Winnicott's output and his pace of work grew very significantly. There was a real urgency about getting his thinking into the public arena. These facts are pertinent to the paper "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications" which Winnicott gave on 12 November 1968 in New York, two years and two months before he died. Because of the way it begins, one could be forgiven for thinking that Winnicott had waited his whole life to give this paper. I imagine that he did and I will explain why shortly.

Winnicott begins:

I am now ready to go straight to the statement of my thesis. It seems that I am afraid to get there, as if I fear that once the thesis is stated, the purpose of my communication is at an end because it is so very simple. (1989, p. 222)

Rodman (2003, pp. 323-324) suggests that, along with the fact that Winnicott was having a heart attack during his lecture, this orthodox group of psychoanalysts were not used to this way of speaking and this partly accounts for why Winnicott was savaged in the discussion. Afterwards, Winnicott felt he had been unclear and wrote and re-wrote the paper up to the time that he died.

8. The Importance of Environment to Independent Creative Thinking

Winnicott explains that "object use" takes object-relating for granted. It adds a new aspect which involves the behaviour of the object. The object is a thing in itself in "object use". It has an independent existence. Winnicott gives the example of two babies at the breast; one is feeding on the self and the other on an "other-than-me" source that

can be given cavalier treatment unless it retaliates. Mother/analysts may or may not be “good enough” to carry the baby/patients over from relating to usage.

The development of the “capacity to use objects” depends on the facilitating environment. The subject’s ability to put the object outside his area of omnipotence is what differentiates “object use” from object relating. The object survives the subject’s ruthless use and destruction of it. The subject can use the object that has been destroyed, and has survived and become real, with true joy at the object’s survival.⁹ Winnicott describes the new feature that arrives into the theory of object-relating:

The subject says to the object: “I destroyed you”, and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: “Hullo object!” “I destroyed you.” “I love you.” “You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.” “While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) *fantasy*”. (1996, p. 90)

Here, Winnicott says that fantasy begins for the individual who can now *use* the object that has survived. In the clinical situation, without the experience of maximum destructiveness, the subject never puts the analyst outside the self and is engaged to a certain extent with self-analysis. The analytic patient does not depend on interpretive work but on the analyst’s survival of attacks without retaliation. I propose that in the development of one’s own independent thinking within the facilitating thinking environment, the thinking of others must be available to be found/created and “ruthlessly” used.

Winnicott intuited this for *both* the situations of human development and creative thinking. In his 1969 paper “The Use of an Object in the Context of *Moses and Monotheism*”, he makes a central and most important point about “the use of an object”: “[I]n the emotional development of any baby there is a time of *dependence* when the

⁹ The Reality Principle involves the individual in anger and reactive destruction, but in favourable conditions the destruction plays a part in creating reality, placing the object outside the self.

behaviour of the environment is part and parcel of the child's development" (1989, pp. 244-245). This happens at a time before "repudiation of the NOT-ME" is achieved. Whether or not the "love-strife drive" is destructive, necessarily depends upon whether the object survives it or not. The destruction of an object that survives leads on to "use" and is linked to Klein's idea of reparation.

For Winnicott, monotheism and having a father (experiencing the first whole object) are both factors in the development of the recognition of human individuality.¹⁰ He says that Freud, at the end of his life, began to be interested in the emotional development of *the individual*. He implies that he, Winnicott, picked up where Freud left off. He refers to Freud's "late and un-dogmatic masterpiece" and perhaps he considers that the "use of an object" concept was his equivalent "late bloom".

Winnicott places emphasis on the importance of the pre-boundary, pre-object, first object choice, pre-oedipal stages of the first dyad. He suggests revisiting psychoanalytic thinking in the light of work done with borderline patients since Freud. He says; "a portion of persons do not reach to the Oedipus complex" (Winnicott, 1989, p. 241). This paper suggests that he also emphasises the importance of the pre-oedipal for independent, innovative, creative thinking. He privileges the transitional and potential aspects of this thinking space to which the healthily independent thinker contributes.

9. Conclusion

In this paper Winnicott's last important concept, "the use of an object", is considered not so much for its clinical importance but as Winnicott's statement about theory and influence. It is proposed that Winnicott's New York lecture acknowledged twin realities: the imminence of his death and the future use and influence of his thinking. His writing on the concept of "object use" in the days leading to his death, along with the accumulated precursor facilitative concepts (such as: facilitating environment, the

¹⁰ Winnicott alludes to Freud's footnote in "Moses and Monotheism", referring to the "first individual in history".

experience of omnipotence, transitional phenomena, playing, the benign cycle, and the capacity to be alone), can each be seen as part of a theory about creativity, thinking, and influence for which this concept provided the ultimate articulation.

The New York paper on “the use of an object” may be read as Winnicott’s last will and testament. As I suggested earlier, he is speaking “the last word”, in all senses, of his entire thesis: It is his most important idea and the last of his concepts facilitating his thinking’s future use. It is the idea that he had been rushing to complete and the one which he continued to rework until his death; it completes the trajectory of his theory about theory and his thinking on influence. He knows what is required in creative and innovative thinking. It is an acknowledgement, and an invitation for the ruthless use of his thinking by his successors.

These last wishes are consistent with ideas expressed throughout Winnicott’s life: originality grows in tradition; the early need for the experience of omnipotence and full adaptation; the paradox, honoured in early life by parents that the question, “Did you find this or create it?” is not asked. Over Winnicott’s lifetime his interest in individuality, enjoyment, and creativity grew. He became aware of and forgave himself for, the difficulty he had with relating his thinking to that of others. Here he is generously offering his thinking to be ruthlessly used in the same way as he used the thinking of others. He implies that the greatest compliment that can be paid him (greater perhaps than conventional referencing) is the use of his thinking as a “facilitative environment” for the thinking of others.

The “use of an object” concept is part of Winnicott’s theory about theory, and the culmination of his ideas which facilitate the use, not only of his own thinking after what he knows to be his approaching death, but also that of other thinkers, including those who will continue his work and legacy and ensures the continuing evolution of Winnicott’s thinking in the future of psychoanalytic thought.

Please feel invited to use these proposed ideas of Winnicott’s implicit theory of thinking and of influence.

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On the Shoulders of a Giant

Leticia Minhot

1. Introduction

In this work, we propose to evaluate the future of psychoanalysis considering the paradigm change caused by D. Winnicott's theory of maturation. From this perspective, discussing the future of psychoanalysis implies referring to the development of the disciplinary matrix generated from this theory. A matrix essentially evolves when the field of application of the guiding generalisations expands, when new exemplars emerge and new problems can be addressed. In this way, the point on which we must focus in order to reflect on the possible future of this disciplinary matrix is how, starting from Winnicott, we can move beyond Winnicott. In this paper, we shall review some problems which may be considered in this sense, as well as new fields of application. As such, considering the future of a disciplinary matrix is equivalent to asking whether it has the strength of normal science and whether it is fruitful for solving new problems. Our heuristic hypothesis is that the Winnicottian paradigm meets these conditions. In the first part, we shall assess the achievements of the Winnicottian disciplinary matrix and consider its development as normal science. To this end, we shall work with the main contributions of this matrix in terms of the Winnicottian community. In the second part, we shall try to identify new problems which could be approached by this matrix as potential new areas of application. Here we distinguish, on the one hand, those problems afflicting present day society, which Winnicott did not address because they were not visible in his time. These are not regarded as anomalies. On the other hand, we identify problems relating to new disciplinary fields. We hope that this approach to new problems will show us ways in which the Winnicottian matrix can advance in its normality.

2. The Winnicottian disciplinary matrix

Loparic (2002) presents Winnicott as a revolutionary thinker who established the conditions for a new way of doing psychoanalysis, both in scientific research and in clinical practice. What we can understand from Loparic's affirmation is that, with Winnicott, a new normal science emerges, specifically with his theory of maturation. Even though its innovative character was already highlighted in 1989 by Adam Phillips and in 1988 by Judith Hughes, Loparic (2002) puts this innovation in Kuhnian terms. In the present work, we read this innovation, which emerged in the horizon of psychoanalysis, within Kuhn's frame of reference.

Kuhn's conception of the history of science offers us a productive tool for analysing paradigmatic changes. The disciplinary matrix is the appropriate tool for understanding Winnicott's transformation and its scope. Many epistemologists have adopted the disciplinary matrix in order to analyse different theories from various disciplinary fields. One of the main virtues of this tool is that it allows us to understand theories in the context of the paradigm within which they were formulated, which gives us a broader understanding than the traditional one used by logical positivism. Taking the concept of "paradigm" as "disciplinary matrix" (Kuhn, 1969/1970) we can identify the elements of the matrix in the theory. In this way, we can recognise ontological and heuristic models, guiding generalisations or systems of laws, epistemological, aesthetic and ethical values in the theory, as well as fields of application characterised as procedures for problem solving, and which form part of the paradigm from which this theory emerged. In this way, the Kuhnian tool offers us a hermeneutics with which to read Winnicott's theory of maturation.

To say that Winnicott lends a new disciplinary matrix to psychoanalysis within which new and old problems can be solved means that the theory of maturation is the new general theoretical framework guiding psychoanalytic research in a given community. According to Kuhn and to Kant, knowledge is grounded through structures of the subject. For Kuhn, the subject is the disciplinary matrix embodied not in

individuals, but in scientific communities at a certain point. These matrices are the result of consensus and make specific experiences possible.

We agree with Loparic (2002) that Winnicott is a revolutionary thinker, since his theoretical innovations imply a paradigmatic rupture, as it is impossible to adhere to it while continuing to live in the world of traditional psychoanalysis. At the same time, a theory does not in itself imply the emergence of a new paradigm. The epistemological concepts of “paradigm” or “disciplinary matrix” make no sense unless we suppose the concept of “community”, since for Kuhn, science is a social enterprise and the epistemic subject is a social subject. It is important to clarify that the concept of “community” is an epistemological and not a sociological one. A theory must generate community before we can speak of the emergence of a new paradigm. For a community to exist, there must be debates that are eventually integrated into unifying consensus solutions. This means that the condition for possibility of community is communication. Dialogue is the condition of consensus. By “dialogue”, we mean this movement between at least two persons who argue for and against a position, in other words, who communicate beyond the coincidence of the temporal and spatial coordinates in which they are situated. Circulation in papers, scientific events and institutions allows the consolidation of the paradigm as the community is consolidated. In themselves, Winnicott’s writings, just like Freud’s or Lacan’s in their time, do not imply a disciplinary matrix without a community in which these texts and the concepts presented in them can circulate. I think a history of the Winnicottian communities and their modes of circulation would represent a major contribution.

Despite the centrality of the theory of maturation in Winnicott’s thought, we do not find it as a unified system in his work. We have such a presentation in Oliveira Dias’ book. The book offers a key tool for the consolidation of the community generated by this theory. Driven by Winnicott’s idea that the theory of maturation is the “backbone” of his thought, the author presents a reconstruction of that central element. Winnicott’s theoretical innovation is not a mere addition to the disciplinary matrix of traditional psychoanalysis. It does not represent an advance in this direction, but the opposite: a

revolution, a change of matrix as Loparic (2002) puts it. This theory radically transforms the traditional matrix by introducing a change in how it sees the mother-baby relationship. As Loparic (2002) points out, this relationship opens the way for Winnicott to raise problems which traditional psychoanalysis does not consider, such as: what determines the feeling of being alive or of being real or what gives us the feeling that life is worth living? **Shifting the axis from the Oedipus complex to the baby's dependence on his/her bond with the mother** generates a new language for addressing human beings in general and the mental illnesses that may afflict them. We move from a language which speaks in terms of desire to one which speaks in terms of needs. From a language that speaks in terms of instincts to one that speaks in terms of environment. This change of matrix brings about the emergence of a new community, whose adherents communicate in this new language. The Winnicottian community of São Paulo is particularly notable here. Its interpretation of Winnicott is based on the idea that the author

[...] developed his own theory, which, as Freud's, covers the whole field of psychoanalysis in an unitary and articulated way – thesis that contradicts those, and they are not few, who deny that Winnicott has a theory, even to say his teaching is just fragmentary. (Dias & Loparic, 2011, p. 15)

The Winnicottian Center of São Paulo, the Winnicottian School of Psychoanalysis, the Brazilian Society of Winnicottian Psychoanalysis, the SWW editorial, the journal *Natureza Humana* are some of the publications in which the community updates a consensus with the disciplinary matrix derived from the theory of maturation. In this way, when we speak of the Winnicottian paradigm, we are not only referring to the theory of maturation but to all these publications. We must necessarily include them when we reflect **on the future of Winnicottian psychoanalysis in Kuhn's terms.**

We must describe Winnicott's innovation in accordance with the structure of the disciplinary matrix and with the mode of reception of the community in question. The theory of maturation presents the following conversions:

1) Ontological innovation: the theory of maturation changes the substantial ontology based on the logic of thing-property of traditional psychoanalysis to a relational ontology where the individual *arrives at being* starting from a bond, understood as environment. The change of ontology allows the theory to overcome dichotomies such as internal-external, which imprison traditional psychoanalysis.

2) Innovation regarding guiding generalisations: the system of laws which organises explanations of mental phenomena is no longer the Oedipus complex. It replaces the Oedipal structure generated by the pleasure principle program with maternal care understood as environment. This is a crucial change in the aetiology of pathologies. In addition to moving from a tripartite structure to a bipartite one, there is a much more radical change which must be highlighted. The Oedipal structure is representational, an internal factor, whereas maternal care is effective, an environmental factor. This leads to the second function of symbolic generalisations, as pointed out by Kuhn, which is that they also work as definitions. Psychic phenomena are not representational but relate to the real possibility of the human being to *arrive at being*.

3) Innovation in values: Freud follows the Newtonian model of science, the principal characteristics of which are the determinism of mechanicism and homogeneity. For Freud, the pleasure principle program is what structures and determines all of the operations of the mental apparatus. This program was derived from the law of inertia of Newton's mechanics. **In this psychic mechanics, the personal side, the singularity is unimportant.** In the theory of maturation, it is central, since maturation is not a mechanical but a personal process.

4) Innovation in exemplars: the field of application is essentially the clinic. **Winnicott's cases are not organised as regressions to a point of libido fixation, in other words, solutions are not presented as representations of instinctual conflicts.** By contrast, the cases which Winnicott presents are organised according to environmental failures.

3. Normal problems

For Kuhn (1962/1970), once a paradigm is consolidated it becomes part of what he calls “normal science”.

No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all. Nor do scientists normally aim to invent new theories, and they are often intolerant of those invented by others. Instead, normal-scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies. (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 36)

Progress only includes normal periods and Kuhn distinguishes three nuclei on which normal scientists focus: a) determination with greater precision and a greater variety of situations of key facts for the resolution of paradigmatic problems (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 37). In our paradigm, this translates as new clinical cases of psychosis and deprivation; b) determination of facts which may be compared directly compared to predictions extracted from the paradigmatic theory, trying to improve the application of the paradigmatic theory and opening space for new areas of application (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 38). For the Winnicottian paradigm, this represents contemporary clinical cases, such as drug addiction or eating disorders, which were not as visible in Winnicott’s time; c) resolution of residual ambiguities produced by the application of the paradigm to phenomena different from the original exemplars (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 38), that is, choosing “among the alternative ways of applying the paradigm to the new area of interest” (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 41). In our paradigm, this means the resolution of non-clinical problems, such as cultural or social problems, that is, how to apply the theory of maturation to other areas than those for which it was initially created.

3.1 New clinical cases

The class of facts that distinguishes the Winnicottian paradigm consists of clinical cases of psychosis or deprivation and of the environmental failures which produced them. One of the normal tasks that we emphasise consists of determining this class of facts with greater precision and in a wider variety of situations. In this way, the construction of new clinical cases organised according to the original exemplars, i.e., the cases presented by Winnicott, provides the disciplinary matrix with new exemplars. But in what sense does this increase in exemplars imply progress? We know that exemplars provide empirical content to symbolic generalisations and it is through them that a new way of seeing is consolidated. Since ontology and exemplars are part of the disciplinary matrix, what we call “reality” is the effect of a consensus. What we call “facts” bear witness to technologies of reasoning, of consensual practices. The mode of being of disciplinary matrices is social because it is effective within a community. Exemplars are crucial for achieving adherence to this mode of problem solving. They belong to the scientific canon established by the paradigm, and new exemplars consolidate this consensus. Scientific communities are always in the process of self-production, seeking new forms of organisation which establish and conserve their being. The construction of new exemplars serves to perpetuate this process of self-production.

3.2 Contemporary clinical cases

The other class of normal problems relates to the determination of facts analogous to the original exemplars. Establishing an analogy results in a better application of the theory of maturation and expands the scope of its use. The construction of clinical cases for contemporary problems, such as drug addiction and eating disorders, which were not as visible in Winnicott’s time, offers new exemplars to scientists. In the context of other paradigms, many of these disorders, in particular the latter ones, are resolved as representational problems, e.g. as difficulties relating to the representation of the body.

The progress of the matrix is directly influenced by improvement of theory application and expansion of the area of use. Addressing the contemporary problem of

drug addiction from the perspective of the Winnicottian paradigm clearly implies an **advance in the consolidation of the community**. At present, society's principal demands concern problems of drug addiction, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia and juvenile delinquency. While the latter belongs to Winnicott's paradigmatic baggage, the former two do not. This is why we consider it indispensable to improve these issues. Scientific communities cannot be deaf to the demands of the society in which they live. This also leads to self-production of the scientific community.

3.3 New areas

Improvement in solving problems related to the application of the theory to phenomena other than the paradigmatic ones generates new areas of use of the theory. Since we do not have original exemplars in this case, much will depend on the ability and imagination of community members. Many researchers will dedicate themselves to establishing criteria focusing on the selection of different modes of use of the theory of maturation in the new area. The new area of application would consist of non-clinical phenomena such as cultural and social ones. The theory of maturation was not created to deal with these phenomena but advancing in this direction contributes to the improvement of the disciplinary matrix. A community is ultimately consolidated when the way it sees some phenomena expands to others.

4. Conclusion

In this study, we have sought to present possible paths for the Winnicottian **community to continue with its consolidation**. We drew these paths following Kuhn's description of normal science, since we consider the Winnicottian community as one which has reached a consensus on an innovative disciplinary matrix with regard to other psychoanalytic communities.

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