UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

SELF-ANALYSIS: A THEORETICAL AND CRITICAL REVIEW OF ITS POSSIBILITIES AND IMPOSSIBILITIES AS A PSYCHOANALYTIC INSTRUMENT

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L'AUTO-ANALYSE: UNE RÉVISION THEORIQUE ET CRITIQUE SUR SES POSSIBILITÉS ET IMPOSSIBILITÉS COMME UN OUTIL PSYCHANALYTIQUE

ESSAI DOCTORAL

PRÉSENTÉ

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PAR

VANESSA CEDIEL

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What psychoanalysis, at its best, does is cure you of your self-knowledge.
And of your wish to know yourself in that coherent, narrative way.
You can only recover your appetite, and appetites,
if you can allow yourself to be unknown to yourself.

Adam Phillips

Cualquier vida, sabemos, sólo es su desnudez,
esos lentos despojos del tiempo.

Guillermo Sucre

On devrait davantage observer les minéraux,
les cailloux, la lave pétrifiée, les fossiles, la roche —
ils nous disent ce que nous sommes.
C'est dans cette minéralité qu'on se retranche
lorsque l'amour nous est retiré.

Anne Dufourmantelle

Credimi: vi è presagio, nel sogno, talvolta,
vi è un messaggio che viene da noi stessi,
come se qualcosa in noi, o qualcuno,
di noi consapevole, mentre non lo siamo noi di lui,
ci amasse.

Anna Maria Ortese

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ABSTRACT

The role and relevance of self-analysis as a psychoanalytic tool in the contemporary psychoanalytic landscape seems to be neglected and rather ambiguous. This theoretical revision underlines that such ambivalence is mitigated only when self-analysis is conceived as a historical reference (aligned with the origins of psychoanalysis), circumscribed to Freud's early beginnings and his exchange with colleague and friend Fliess or as a curiosity practiced by a few. This essay explores the current state of self-analysis based on its possibilities and impossibilities. It is primarily a tool that responds to the desire to know more about oneself and others, to search for a more profound truth and the capacity to be at one with it (Bion's notion of at-one-ment). Following Anzieu's seminal work on self-analysis we conceive it, above all, as a creative psychic endeavor, and not as a treatment in itself. However, the presence and the role of the other who serves as a symbolic protector and as a sounding board of this creative endeavor is essential and stressed out throughout the essay. Although self-discovery is not limited to psychoanalytic self-analysis, it is circumscribed as psychoanalytic because this self-investigation is conceived within a specific framework—that of a previous or ongoing analysis, with its own tools: free association, analytic listening, interpretation, the working through of transference-countertransference conflicts, resistances, defenses and the unrepresented states of the mind. Albeit the fact that the ego plays a key part in self-analysis, a more constructive and less persecutory superego play a predominant role in the work of self-analysis along with the ego ideals. We propose that the ambivalence and neglect of self-analysis may be linked to self-revelation—the shame and fear of being seen, and the desire to be seen, with the risks that such exposure might entail. Therefore, self-analysis must be rooted in a strong desire to discover and rediscover oneself, and to tolerate the discomfort of the unknown, without settling for a pre-established version of the self.

Key words: self-analysis, contemporary psychoanalysis, disposition towards the unknown, creative psychic endeavor, unrepresented states of mind, writing, dream interpretation.

RÉSUMÉ

Le rôle et la pertinence de l'auto-analyse en tant qu'outil psychanalytique dans la psychanalyse contemporaine semblent à la fois négligés et marqués par une certaine ambiguïté. Cette révision théorique met en lumière que cette ambivalence ne tend à être atténuée que lorsque l'auto-analyse est envisagée soit comme une référence historique — en lien avec les origines de la psychanalyse, les débuts de Freud et sa correspondance avec son ami et collègue Wilhelm Fliess — soit comme une curiosité pratiquée par quelques personnes. Le présent essai explore l'état actuel de l'auto-analyse à partir de ses possibilités et impossibilités en tant qu'outil psychanalytique. Il constitue avant tout une réponse au désir de mieux se connaître soi-même et de mieux comprendre autrui, la recherche d'une vérité plus profonde et de la capacité d'incarner celle-ci (notion d'at-one-ment de Bion). Dans la continuité du travail magistral d'Anzieu, nous concevons l'auto-analyse essentiellement comme un travail psychique créatif, et non comme une cure en soi. La présence et le rôle de l'autre — qui agit comme protecteur symbolique et caisse de résonance de cette élaboration créative — sont essentiels et soulignés tout au long de l'essai. Bien que la découverte de soi ne se limite pas à l'auto-analyse psychanalytique, celle-ci reste définie comme psychanalytique dans la mesure où elle s'inscrit dans un cadre spécifique — celui d'une analyse en cours ou passée — et qu'elle mobilise ses outils propres : l'association libre, l'écoute analytique, l'interprétation, le travail du transfert et du contre-transfert, les résistances, les défenses et les états non représentés de l'appareil psychique. Bien que le moi joue un rôle central dans l'auto-analyse, nous soutenons qu'un surmoi plus constructif et moins persécuteur, ainsi que les idéaux du moi, occupent une place prépondérante dans ce travail. Nous proposons que l'ambivalence et la négligence entourant l'auto-analyse soient liées à la révélation de soi — à la honte et à la peur d'être vu, ainsi qu'au désir d'être vu, avec les risques que cette exposition peut impliquer. L'auto-analyse doit donc s'enraciner dans un fort désir de se découvrir et de se redécouvrir, et dans la capacité à tolérer l'inconfort de l'inconnu, sans se satisfaire d'une version préétablie de soi-même.

Mots-clés : auto-analyse, psychanalyse contemporaine, disposition à l'inconnu, travail psychique créatif, états non représentés de l'esprit, écriture, interprétation des rêves.

INTRODUCTION

The origins of psychoanalysis were marked by Freud's studies on hysteria, infant sexuality and dream interpretation. In regard to this last one, it was the publication in 1900 of the monograph "The Interpretation of Dreams" that unraveled insights about the depths of dreams, their function in the psychic apparatus and how they are the royal road to the unconscious (Freud, 1900; Roesler, 2023). In this book, Freud addressed his own dreams and how they were connected to the treatment of different patients (for example with Irma's injection dream). The use of his own psychic material to partly understand his patients and to establish the building blocks of this recently founded science proved extremely fruitful. Moreover, it showed not only the importance of dreams but also how the use of his own personal psychic content could promote a better understanding of the unconscious.

In Freud's correspondence of that epoch, one is able to trace how he was benefiting from a rich internal dialogue that was shared with close colleagues, as it was the case with Wilhelm Fliess. For example, between the summer and autumn of 1897, when Freud carried out a part of his self-analysis, he wrote a letter to Fliess, specifying his position mid-way between acknowledging childhood traumatic events and ignoring that in favor of drives. In addition to his theoretical consideration, he wrote about a real-life childhood situation of acute anxiety in which he thought his mother had disappeared (Bacciagaluppi, 2010). This internal dialogue was allowing Freud to evoke events of his own life to nurture his comprehension, and, at the same time, Fliess was providing him a listening analytic ear and giving back inputs about his elaborations. Barron (1993) reminds us that in this correspondence and while working on The Interpretations of Dreams, Freud manifested that his self-analysis was decisive and that it promised to be of the greatest value if it were to reach its end. Therefore, the origins of psychoanalysis and the origins of self-analysis are inseparable.

Nevertheless, over time Freud's discourse changed. While at one point he declared the relevance of such internal dialogue, he progressively stopped mentioning it and an example of this is to be found in "Analysis terminable and interminable" (1937). In it, he underlines the importance of continuing the remodeling of

the ego and putting new experiences at the service of analytic thinking after the analysis has ended without specifically naming such activity self-analysis. He stated that:

> We reckon on the stimuli that he (the analysand) has received in his own analysis not ceasing when it ends and on the processes of remodeling the ego and *making use of all subsequent experiences in this newly acquired sense*. This does in fact happen, and insofar as it happens it makes the analyzed subject qualified to be an analyst himself (p.402).

The text not only addresses the myth of a "complete" analysis but also the pertinence of periodical re-analysis when needed. However, what are we to understand out of the making use of all subsequent experiences in this newly acquired sense? What is the 'making use' that Freud is referring to? How are we to understand Freud's ambivalence?.

Bacciagaluppi (2010) tackles this neglect and ambivalence towards self-analysis. Maybe most analysts, after Freud, felt that the two-person psychoanalytic procedure was above the gains and thoroughness of "single-handedly" self-analysis. Perhaps it was believed that this venue was only justified for the father of psychoanalysis and maybe, as Bacciagaluppi states: "*mainstream analysts also stood in awe of an allegedly unique achievement of Freud's*" (p.713). However, this neglect wasn't reflected in the stances taken by Karen Horney and Theodor Reik, who didn't necessarily follow mainstream psychoanalysis. They both pursued studies on self-analysis and were open and vocal about the importance of this tool and its usefulness in the analytic setting with patients and in the internal dialogue of the analyst. Nevertheless, they are the exception rather than the rule. As Barron (1993) points out, multiple generations of analysts have aligned themselves with a more negative side of self-analysis, ignoring the possibility of further understanding themselves and their patients using this tool. Is it possible, then, to re-examine the origins and the potential applications of self-analysis to psychoanalysis?.

In contemporary psychoanalysis, many authors have emphasized the usefulness of constant and rigorous thinking about their internal states and associations, within the session and outside of it. This would allow the therapist to elaborate about the understanding of his patients without being obliged to disclose his thoughts or countertransference to them (Safran, 2011). However, in the psychoanalytic literature one finds a great deal of articles dealing with countertransference and only a very small fraction addresses directly the subject of self-analysis. It seems that self-analysis has been left aside and one is left wondering whether, as Campalans Pereda (2004) states, self-analysis is a technical tool of the analyst or not. Moreover, is this form of self-reflection useful or not?. And in the case that it is, how to put it at the service of furthering truth and knowledge of ourselves and others?.

Furthermore, if one is to review the existing literature one could see, as Sonnenberg (1991) points out, that there has been a highlighting of the importance of self-analysis, the conditions for its emergence and its exercise based on very specific events in the analyst's life. Nevertheless, there is not a thorough revision of how it might be a constant, encompassing, multi-sourced tool in the analyst's work life and personal life. In this sense, the analyst could be shown as a compartmentalized being and his self-analytic skills as a fragmented and sporadic practice when it might not be the case.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Considering the limited amount of literature on the subject it seems relevant to explore the place of self-analysis in contemporary psychoanalysis. Perhaps part of the problem to be studied is why, if by working in this field one might have a greater responsibility of looking inwards, this tool is not being put sufficiently at the service of further understanding oneself, the psychoanalytic theory and its practice. Has self-analysis been relegated because of the personal implications it may entail? If analysts are usually in a listening mode and in an observational posture, is it possible that they are much more comfortable in keeping a private stance rather than showing themselves? In other terms, how much are we revealing ourselves or not? And how much are we willing to risk ourselves in the process of self-analysis and self-disclosure?

If we follow these ideas and assume that there could be some importance in this internal dialogue other questions arise. For example, what drives the exploration within ourselves? What type of internal dialogue is one to develop to become closer to who we are and who our patients are? How is self-analysis different from ordinary self-reflection or introspection? As Poland (1993) highlights, maybe through self-analysis one wishes to move from self-serving reflections and aim toward a greater truth. If that is the case, how do we make sure this internal dialogue is not flawed with resistance and avoidant tendencies that prevent us from truly getting in touch with painful feelings and thoughts or with what he calls the "*greater truth*"?

Moreover, how do we conceive this dialogue in terms of the presence of another person? Is this "other" essential to the dialogue? Can we challenge Freud's self-analysis and argue that he had the influence of other colleagues such as Fliess and, therefore, he was not alone in this process? (Anzieu, 1986). Is it possible to have a self-analysis without the presence of another? If not, how are we to conceive and redefine the concept of self-analysis? Or is it perhaps necessary to better define "otherness" within one self to better comprehend this internal dialogue?. As Poland (1993) points out:

> I have come to believe that the fundamental principle from which all other principles of clinical analytical technique derive is regard for otherness, in the analyst's marrow a deep respect for the uniqueness of the patient's self as an authentic other. In parallel, I find that in self-analysis, in looking at oneself as an other, dedication to truth with ruthless candor is the highest respect that one can pay oneself (p.223).

The subject of self-analysis seems to imply a myriad of elements to be explored. Therefore, this doctoral essay will focus on:

- outlining the definition of self-analysis,
- understanding its role in the analysis of patients and beyond the professional realm,
- grasping the importance and need of the other in order to develop and maintain the self-analytic discourse and,
- comprehending how to conceive self-analysis in regard to the psychic instances and better understand its inherent risks. For example, how a self-analytic endeavor driven by a severe superego might be of a very different nature than one modulated by an ego with more supple identifications to an ideal ego.

METHODOLOGY

This research project was conceived in three phases. The initial phase was an extensive review of the literature regarding the subject of self-analysis. This involved collecting published articles and books related to this topic and analysing what can be learned about self-analysis and contrasting opinions by considering them individually and collectively. For this systematic review of literature several sources were explored including, but not limited to journal databases, the library catalogue and specialized websites such as the Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing Database Pep-Web. The key words used included self-analysis (in French: auto-analyse; in Spanish: autoanálisis; in Italian: auto-analisi and in Portuguese: autoanálise) and similar terms related to the subject. Moreover, the article and text inclusion criteria are that the text is relevant to the topic, the article may or may not be peer reviewed, and the time reference of the material begins from the date of the publication of Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) onwards and it will not be limited to a specific geography. Once the thorough and systematic revision of the literature was completed, the second phase of critical analysis was carried out. The second phase consisted of selecting the texts and authors, from mainstream psychoanalysis, for whom self-analysis was possible and those who had a critical stance about its practice. We did not include in this critical review phase articles from a Lacanian or Jungian perspective. This narrowed down our theoretical revision to what is understood as mainstream psychoanalysis and further studies could benefit from including these theoretical perspectives.

The final phase was determined by the initial objectives and questions and those that surfaced from the systematic literature review to respond to the question of whether or not self-analysis is possible and how to conceive the multiple elements related to it such as the psychoanalytic treatment, the role of transference and countertransference, the presence of the analyst/other and the quality of that internal dialogue. The main elements stemming from this general overview of self-analysis were then critically questioned and contrasted in the discussion and a conclusion was formulated in accordance with the main theoretical findings and with some new views about the subject to, hopefully, update, enrich, and evoke further incursions, in theory and practice, into the realm of self-analysis.

CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORY OF SELF-ANALYSIS

1.1. Freud's self-analysis

Despite the differences in the contemporary psychoanalytic milieu regarding the relevance of self-analysis, there is, perhaps, a more convergent view about its historical importance in the development and consolidation of psychoanalysis. Although a review of Freud's self-analysis leads, first and foremost, to the seminal work of Didier Anzieu, other authors have shed light on earlier 'pre-analytical' influences (epistolary exchanges, recollections, and adolescent interests) that might have shaped Freud's self-observing and self-analytic capacities (Conci, 1998; Eissler, 1978). It is plausible that his self-analysis was a process that developed and matured in the course of a much longer period of time than just the Fliess exchange. In that sense, Conci (1998), Eissler (1978) and Rolnik (2008) underline that both his pre-analytic and analytic correspondence might be as highly significant and insightful as his published works in order to capture and understand Freud's evolution as a thinker and as a psychoanalyst.

Conci (1998) draws attention to the way Freud was exposed to the Greek and Latin classics at the Gymnasium where he studied from 1865 to 1873, a place where essential importance was given to the mastery of classical languages. He also mentions the relationship with his friends Emil Fluss and Eduard Silberstein during his adolescence and Wilhelm Fliess later on in his adult life. This author emphasizes the cathartic and therapeutic component, in his real-life and epistolary exchanges, which allowed a progression in the way Freud thought about himself.

In regard to the influence of the classical languages, Conci (1998) and Eissler (1978) evoke five aphorisms that a fifteen-year-old Freud published in the school newspaper 'Musarion' in 1871. Out of the five aphorisms, the second seems to be of interest because it intimates the relevance of self-analytic observation and self-awareness, stating that: "*The most egotistical of all is the man who never considered the possibility that he may be an egotist*." (p.463; Eissler, 1978). Eissler and Conci coincide in how this aphorism is

directed at man's narcissism and how: "*self- observation and self-judgment are called in as moral agencies that may reduce the gravity of a vice*". (p.463; Eissler, 1978). On the other hand, adolescent correspondence is another source to track the evolution of certain interests and sensibilities in Freud that would be of great importance for the development of his psychoanalytic ideas. Although the epistolary details regarding Emil Fluss and Eduard Silberstein cannot be discussed at large in the present essay, there is one quote that shows a seventeen-year-old Freud addressing his friend Fluss about the complexity of dealing with emotions:

> I am not asking you—should you ever find yourself in the position of doubting yourself—that you mercilessly dissect your feelings; but if you do, you will see how little there is in yourself to be sure of" (p.79; quoted by Conci; 1998).

Perhaps in this exchange with Fluss, Freud insinuates that by dissecting his own feelings and gaining understating of his inner conflicts he was trying to achieve insights and not resort to phantasy -- a defense he gave himself into quite frequently, according to Anzieu (1986) -- or incur in actions that would hinder his comprehension of an emotional nature (Conci, 1998). It seems that Freud transformed over the years his tendency to self-observation and self-inquiry into an interpersonally based and growth-promoting self-analytic capacity. Freud's self-analytic process took years to be refined and to be put at the service of developing his psychoanalytic theories. As it will be shown, it was with his colleague Wilhelm Fliess that Freud reached the peak of his self-analytic endeavor and that, due to its fruitfulness, it helped him develop and consolidate the foundations of psychoanalysis.

Didier Anzieu's seminal book, "L'auto-analyse de Freud", was published in 1986. The author rigorously recollected and documented Freud's self-analysis between 1895 and 1902. A significant part of this reconstruction was based on the constant dialogue between Fliess and Freud (Conci, 1998; Crow, 1989; Perdigao, 1993). The primary sources that Anzieu used to study Freud's self-analysis were: fifty dreams up to 1902, that appeared in "The Interpretation of Dreams" and "On Dreams"; and forty-eight childhood memories, screen memories, and parapraxes (including forty-three described in "The Psychopathology of

Everyday Life"). The arrangement and the chronological development of these unconscious derivatives by Anzieu covered a seven-year period of scientific self-exploration by Freud (Crow, 1989).

According to Anzieu (1986), Freud's self-analysis had very special characteristics. His most significant interlocutor was Fliess, with whom he held a sustained dialogue for over 13 years. Freud's attachment to Fliess was tinged by an Oedipal ambivalent 'transference', that implied certain connivance between them and unconscious homosexual cathexis. Wilhelm Fliess probably represented many things for Freud. As Perdigao (1993) pinpoints (while referring to Anzieu's work):

> Fliess was a mentor who guided him in breaking new ground in the field of sexual knowledge, he was a favorably disposed audience for Freud's ideas, a man who was critical of the content of these ideas, but kindly in his manner, a colleague who could treat him when he was ill, and an idealized double of himself. Each of the two friends expected the other to recognize his own greatness (…). Fliess was a friend, supporter, confidant, and sounding board who was vital for Freud as he embarked on his great creative venture (p.252).

As Anzieu explains (2000) in the first letters to Fliess (1887, 1888, 1890 and 1891), Freud established the themes which would be the object of self-analysis later on, and which would be figured in the dream of the injection to Irma. The topics included but were not limited to: birth and abortion; sexuality and contraception; difficulty in discerning organic etiology and psychic etiology; guilt and death. In what Anzieu calls a "pre-transference" on Fliess, Freud puts himself in a passive feminine position, which was opposite to his active role in Martha's consecutive pregnancies, as a husband and as a father.

The mechanisms of sexuality and the questions regarding it occupied almost all the correspondence between Freud and Fliess for the years 1893-1894. Freud begins to confide to Fliess and, in a way, he prepares

himself to say everything that comes to his head just as one does with a psychoanalyst. Conceivably, he assumes that Fliess knows or will discover the secrets that he doesn't know yet. He has complete confidence in his friend and he is willing to expose himself in order to gain better understanding of himself, of his patients and of certain psychoanalytic ideas. The correspondence with Fliess is a catalyst for Freud, in the sense that it ignited an evolving process, equivalent to that which will produce, when it is invented, the psychoanalytical situation. This strong bond, as seen through the correspondence and dialogue with Fliess, contrasted with the feelings he could have felt about the births of his children, which each time deprived him from his wife's love and caring for him (Anzieu, 2000).

Anzieu (2000) continues to explain his understanding of the transference of Freud to Fliess, in the context of the pregnancies of Martha and his rivalry over the lost love and care, by saying that Freud partly replaces Martha with Fliess. In that sense, Fliess becomes an object of attachment that Freud wishes to be loved by and: "*by which he unconsciously expects to be intellectually fertilized*" (p.1203; Anzieu, 2000). Anzieu also points to the destructive envy, understood from a Kleinian perspective, of the biological fecundity of the mother. Therefore, according to Anzieu:

> Freud then defends himself against this by identifying with the impregnated mother and by adopting a passive feminine position towards Fliess. This psychic reorganization prepares him to become a creator (p.1203).

Anzieu (1986 and 2000) underscores how Freud's self-analysis and active dialogue with Fliess had a major impact on his creative psychic work. Moreover, he questions whether the therapeutic effects weren't of secondary importance to Freud himself. As it will be shown later, his phobias to trains and trips, which he shared with Fliess, affected him a great deal. Nevertheless, it is the creative aspect of self-analysis that Anzieu evokes constantly throughout his work. In that sense, he explains that Freud's scientific intuitions, that emerged from his creative regression (first phase of the creative psychic work), couldn't be assumed or used unless they found a "résonance fantasmatique" (a resonance through phantasy – my translation) in his friend Fliess (the second phase of the creative work being the echo Freud found in a colleague or work

partner that gave ‘objectiveness’ to his first intuitions). This reinforces Anzieu’s idea of Freud’s unconscious identification with a pregnant woman impregnated by Fliess. Because he has made him a part of his most intimate secrets, he unconsciously hoped to be penetrated by Fliess’ thoughts, which would leave him in a bountiful and fruitful state. That is, replenished with new thoughts and ideas. If Anzieu’s interpretations show the possible complexity of the underlying phantasies and identifications between Freud and Fliess, it also reiterates the creative nature and the recurrent theme of fertility, impregnation and of becoming the creator of psychoanalysis.

As stated by Anzieu (1986), Freud’s self-analysis was an adequate complement to the constant dialogue with his patients and the working through of his ideas. Even if Freud's self-analysis had therapeutic motivations, its main driving power derived from his need to detect and confirm in himself the unconscious processes that became manifest in the psychoanalytic treatment of his patients (Anzieu, 2000; Grinberg De Ekboir and Lichtmann, 1982). As Campione (1983) calls it, the objectifying of his psychic reality to later confirm it with his patients’ mental functioning. In fact, Campione (1983) proposes a double movement of objectification: an objectification of Freud himself in his self-analytical observation (as if he were located outside himself), and the objectification of the patient who is observed with the scientific eye (that the psychoanalyst understands based upon his own objectification). As Perdigao (1993) reminds us, Freud needed to check his theory and the only way he could do so was on himself.

To contrast Anzieu’s (2000), Grinberg De Ekboir’s and Lichtmann’s (1982) and Campione’s (1983) comprehension of self-analysis understood from a creative perspective, there is Theodor Reik and his point of view of Freud’s self-analysis in his book “Listening with a Third Ear” (1948). According to Reik, the sexuality theorizations and the transference of Freud’s patients weren’t the sole purpose of his self-analysis. Freud’s phobia was a crucial element because it paved the way to understand the hidden links and meanings between his own psychological interests and his occupation with neuroses. According to Reik, the desire to untangle the neurotic condition of his patients came with a very specific demand: “*Physician, heal yourself*” (p. 16; Reik, 1948). Therefore, it is necessary to understand one’s own symptoms and psychic functioning to do so with others. But such an understanding was impossible without self-analysis, which could not remain restricted to the symptoms only. From that point onwards, Freud was able to think

analytically about himself and test his hypothesis on his patients and, progressively, on other cultural and social phenomena (Reik, 1948).

The extent of how significant Freud's phobic symptoms were, might be better understood through a discovery made by Siegfried Bernfeld (Bernfeld, 1951; Obaid, 2014). After Freud shared the most significant parts of his phobia with Fliess, he returned to his reflections about fantasy and, in particular, to the concept of screen memory. In the following years, he wrote about a case of a thirty-year-old male patient, who was none other than himself. The description of the phobia coincided significantly to the one provided to Fliess. It seems he had elaborated some of his hypotheses and he advanced ideas to explain his neurosis. It is here that a very interesting element comes to the forefront. Self-analysis would cease to be a private experience and would form part of a clinical presentation for theoretical understanding. Albeit the precautions Freud took in making the presentation anonymous, the correspondence with Fliess and the historical context allowed Bernfeld to make such discovery. Furthermore, Obaid (2014) underlines how the systematic examination of Freud's own phobia was of crucial importance in the construction of the anxiety conceptualizations, bridging it with all of the other concepts Freud was working on and analyzing within himself (sexuality, fantasy, memory and unconscious determinism).

Towards 1897, just when Freud was quite immersed in the process of developing a new etiological model and an innovative psychotherapeutic approach to nervous diseases, he declared that he had transformed himself into his principal patient. Freud described his self-analysis as an analysis that was "(...) *more difficult than any other*" (Freud, 1985; as quoted by Obaid, 2014), stating that: "(...) *it must be done and is a necessary intermediate stage in my work*" (Freud, 1985; also quoted by Obaid, 2014). In this intensive period Freud would abandon the theory of seduction and he vehemently defended the relevance of self-analysis. He described it as "indispensable" and of the "greatest value" when coming to its end (Obaid, 2014). It was self-analysis that allowed Freud to take the decisive steps forward in his psychology and in the building of psychoanalytic theory (Anzieu, 2000; Fine, 1979; Obaid, 2014). Infantile sexuality, the Oedipus complex, transference, resistance, dreams and many other concepts progressively took form. Therefore, many believe that self-analysis is the real seed and catalyst from which psychoanalysis grew. And it is perhaps "The Interpretation of Dreams" the first truly analytic work that was published by Freud (Fine, 1979).

However, according to Anzieu (2000), the discovery of the Oedipal complex in October of 1897, had nothing to do with Fliess. It is perhaps at this moment where Freud's self-analysis had a twist or therapeutic reversal. The positive transference towards Fliess went in the opposite direction and it became negative. In 1897, in his letter to Fliess in which he says 'the most important patient for me was myself', he states:

> My self-analysis is still interrupted, and I have realized the reason. I can only analyze myself with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (like an outsider). *Genuine self-analysis is impossible: otherwise, there would be no (neurotic) illness*. Since I still find some puzzles in my patients, they are bound to hold me up in my self-analysis as well' (Freud, 1950; quoted by Grinberg De Ekboir and Lichtmann, 1982; p.75).

Anzieu (2000) explains that a serious self-analysis cannot occur if it is not spoken with some other person and this condition is of capital importance. Nevertheless, due to major differences, Fliess progressively stopped playing the role of interlocutor, and Minna, Freud's sister-in-law, took his place. Freud would continue his creative psychic work independently without needing Fliess as a narcissistic sounding board but creating against him. Anzieu (2000) evokes the double meaning of "contre" in French and "gegen" in German: to be against ("contre") someone, is to be quite close to this person (movement towards) and, at the same time, it is to be against them (opposite).

From a historical point of view, Freud held on to the idea that self-analysis was feasible as late as 1914. After having openly supported self-analysis, Freud reiterated that it is efficient only in those areas that have been already worked through in one's own analysis. What he believed, at first, that anyone could do, he discovered afterwards that it wasn't the case. As a result, self-analysis was replaced by personal analysis (Fine, 1979). Moreover, the inefficiency of self-analysis for the resolution of those conflicts which have

not been sufficiently worked through becomes obvious when Freud stipulated that every analyst should go back to analysis every five years or so.

After 1914, Freud's references to self-analysis were quite limited to brief commentaries about the possible technical implications of this process in the training and practice of the analyst. His position varied but towards the end of his life he was very clear in pointing out that:

> (…) in self-analysis the danger of incompleteness is particularly great. One is too soon satisfied with a part explanation, behind which resistance may easily be keeping back something that is more important perhaps (Freud, 1935; p.16, quoted by Obaid, 2014).

As Grinberg De Ekboir and Lichtmann (1982) mention, it is highly probable that towards the end of his life Freud was more inclined towards the impossibility of authentic self-analysis. And as Fine (1979) emphasizes, in the contemporary scene it seems like analytic wisdom and knowledge stems from personal analysis more than from anything else.

Freud's experience of self-analysis is considered by many to be the key element to understanding the origins of psychoanalysis. However, for many others, the importance that has been given to this process is excessive and it leads to a fallacious myth. Be that as it may, if this process is given the recognition it deserves, it may contribute to significant new elements in the elaboration of the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. As Obaid (2014) underlines, there are those who perceive self-analysis in epic dimensions or as Gay (1991) calls it "*the splendid key to psychoanalytic mythology*" (p. 113). Others view this process from a creative point of view linked to scientific development with a therapeutic dimension like Anzieu (1986, 2000). The most severe critics take self-analysis as an argument to disregard the conceptual status and validity of psychoanalytic theory altogether (Obaid, 2014).

Beyond the diversity and clash of these perspectives, self-analysis cannot be considered an isolated minor event nor as "the master key" that could be used to explain all of Freud's theoretical and clinical developments. From a more neutral perspective, this experience can be thought of as a valuable working tool in which personal, theoretical and contextual aspects converged and led to the testing of clinical hypotheses and the resolution of some of Freud's neurotic conflicts. Memories, dreams, and forgetting would become relevant working material that would function as a way of contrasting his clinical hypotheses and offering a way of exploration of his neurosis. For Obaid (2014) the definition later proposed by Freud seems quite accurate: "*an impossible task, necessarily related to knowledge already acquired"* (p.35).

Anzieu (2000) admonishes the first biographers of Freud that considered his self-analytic attempts as a substitute to or actual psychoanalysis. Although Freud's position, before 1914, was that it was highly recommended and a fundamental skill for training psychoanalysts, the author reiterates that the main difference resides in that the self-analytical endeavor was a creative psychic work and not a psychoanalytic work or cure in itself. Having said that, it is also true that main areas of conflict in Freud's life were addressed with indisputable therapeutic benefits. Anzieu names the reduction of his feelings of guilt towards his patients and his colleagues, of his traveling and railway phobia, anxiety related to death, his cardiac difficulties and hypochondriac symptoms, awareness of the driving role of early sibling rivalry, etc.

For Anzieu (2000), Freud's self-analysis follows a route specific to the creative process (rather than to the psychoanalytical process). He divides this creative path in five phases: 1) diving into the unconscious through dreams and early memories; 2) preconscious intuitions and ideas brought by the previous regressive experience and whose importance gain value through the sounding board function of the interlocutor; 3) conscious and voluntary construction of a theory, to logically systematize his intuitions; 4) patient work, relentlessly put to question through the stimulation and control of the superego; and 5) finalize the work and submitting it to the public's appreciation, despite the risk of failure and, subsequent, narcissistic wound for the author and at the peril of giving up control of the work's destiny.

This succinct description of some elements related to Freud's self-analysis help lay out the initial attempts he made to gain more knowledge of himself, cure his own neuroses and better understand his patients. Moreover, it is evident from Freud's process that the correspondence or epistolary exchange are indissociable from the self-analytic practice. Additionally, and following Anzieu's ideas, there is a clear proximity of self-analysis to the crystallization of the creative process in Freud. Nevertheless, his changing perception of self-analysis and its limits left this tool in a grey area and today it might be thought of more as a curiosity rather than a useful construct for the progression of the psychoanalytic practice.

1.2. Theodor Reik

Theodor Reik was born in Austria in 1888. He completed a Ph.D. degree in psychology from the University of Vienna in 1912. The topic of his dissertation was a study of Flaubert's Temptation of Saint Anthony. His passion towards literature and his dissertation led him to Freud, the Viennese psychoanalyst, in order to discuss his interests in this newly founded school of thought. Over the years, Reik became one of Freud's most beloved disciples and Freud explicitly advised him to pursue a career in psychoanalysis given his scholarly aptitudes and his versatile creative spirit. Freud supported him morally, intellectually, financially and politically throughout the years and Reik was extremely grateful and recognizant for such generosity. Nevertheless, he was able to maintain an intellectual independence and share a fair part of criticism towards this important paternal figure and his ideas while maintaining a strong bond with him (Aragno, 2011; Nobus, 2006).

Reik's name is inextricably linked to many debates, including the one related to lay analysis that began during his practice in Vienna and prevailed during his times as practicing analyst in the Netherlands and in the United States. Given how divided the psychoanalytic community was throughout most of the 20th century about lay analysis, it goes without saying that Reik lived ostracized and rejected from many key psychoanalytic organizations. Because of this, in 1948, Reik founded the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP), in New York, that supported numerous candidates that had been

rejected as trainees by the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA), on account of their not having a medical degree, to start their clinical training in psychoanalysis.

As mentioned before, even though Reik always demonstrated a profound gratefulness towards his mentor, he was able to independently conceive ideas and bring innovative perspectives on the psychoanalytic understanding of topics such as: the Jewish culture, the mental configuration and the analytic explanations of masochism, the unconscious of the analyst and the relevance of self-analysis in the analytic practice along with multiple analytic studies related to music, artistic creation and everyday life. However, despite Reik's prolific writing and publishing, his influence and posthumous legacy was probably limited given his rejection from the official psychoanalytic bodies (Nobus, 2006).

Many psychoanalysts not only disagreed with Reik because of his non-medical training but perhaps because of his style, which was considered excessively open and confessional. His anecdotal way of portraying his thoughts was sometimes almost devoid of psychoanalytic jargon and, therefore, perhaps considered not sufficiently theoretical and solid (Aragno, 2011; Nobus, 2006). According to Aragno (2011), Reik's confessional writing style and interest in the compulsion to confess originated in Goethe's belief that the writer must bare his soul. Additionally, he had Freud's auto-analytic process, as a self-reflexive reference, that he considered one of the foundational pillars of the psychoanalytic architecture.

Nobus (2006) explains, that in his most popular books, such as Listening with the Third Ear (1948), Fragment of a Great Confession (1949), The Secret Self (1952), and The Haunting Melody (1953), Reik's style was nonlinear and he moved freely between élans of self-disclosure, academic explanations, and literary criticism, leading to an "*untamable drive toward introspection which may at best be appreciated as authentic and at worst be condemned as infuriatingly self-indulgent*" (p.688; Nobus, 2006). Moreover, maybe Freud himself wouldn't have agreed with this self-disclosure premise and with Reik's suggestion that in analyzing a patient the analyst must be involved, simultaneously, in a reciprocal process of self-analysis. For Reik, the analyst's self-analysis during the treatment is an essential aspect, in order for it to progress and evolve psychoanalytically (Nobus, 2006).

Murray Sherman, one of Reik's most renowned pupils, defined Reik's style as rhapsodic, because this term implies a flowing musical essence that Reik seemed to capture with sagacity and acuity. According to this author, Reik could convey his ideas in such ecstatic and impassioned manner that they have an aliveness and authenticity to them. His personal anecdotes were always put at the service of explaining analytic ideas and they conveyed a sense of wonder, astonishment, and surprise implicit in the psychoanalytic and self-analytic endeavors.

Reik asserted that the analyst must have both the courage to understand the voice of his unconscious and the courage not to understand what his conscious awareness of psychoanalytic theory may dictate. Furthermore, Reik knew that this type of centripetal, reflexive process of intimate self-exploration could never be taught in a formal academic transmission but demanded a lengthy and ongoing journey of personal experience, analysis and via one's constant self-analysis. Analysis and self-analysis require of analysts a deep and thoroughly honest knowledge of themselves as the instruments of their profession (Aragno, 2011; Nobus, 2006). As Reik (1948) stated: "*it is not so much a question of acquiring technical ability as inner truthfulness*" (p.493). Reik firmly believed that analysts needed moral courage to experience the shock of their unconscious, that they should develop a strong sense of intellectual independence and that any advance in psychoanalysis would come directly from self-observation and self-analysis (Aragno, 2011; Nobus, 2006). Furthermore, for him, self-analysis would be the essence of analytic training (Grotjahn, 1981).

According to Reik, the laborious studies and practice of psychoanalysis should be guided by insights, but the analyst does not arrive at his deepest insight by searching for a conclusion or by jumping to one. Surprise should pave the way and the analyst must be sufficiently patient to let the insight come to him. Understanding starts with hints, clues and hunches. It gradually develops into a larger and formal structure that crystallizes into an insight. This breaking through repression is felt with a reaction to a shocking surprise. Reik explains the surprise effect as a kind of rediscovery of something which once was known but then was forgotten and repressed. For Reik, surprise is the conscious confirmation of an unconscious expectation. As he once explained, the person must play the role of midwife to his unconscious thoughts, slowly metabolizing the felt into the understood. (Aragno, 2011; Grotjahn, 1981).

Although self-analysis might lend itself to the comparison that it is just a conversation with oneself, the main difference is that in its essence it is not chattering but discovering in oneself something that had been unknown. Reik believed that occasions for self-analysis arise when we are surprised by our thoughts or feelings, by uncanny or strange sensations or when we are amazed over actions and inhibitions, we did not suspect in ourselves. Reik admonished about the perils the analyst is subject, which are similar as those in his patient: to disavow and repress thoughts and impulses he does not want to realize in himself. He proposed that analysts should test themselves, through self-analysis, periodically, to determine how sincere they can be with themselves. This will be a reminder of how much he has to learn and recognize long after he was analyzed by another (Grotjahn, 1981).

For Reik, free association in self-analysis has an enormous value. He suggested that it renewed and deepened the experience of the analytic process, filling it with a sense of aliveness and reviving it as a part of one's life. As Reik acknowledged, there is always a danger that the psychoanalyst, who every day sees nine or ten patients, will consider his work a "profession," and assume he is an "expert" on the matters of the psyche and the unconscious. Moreover, this is a constant reminder that an analyst or any person is not forever analyzed after he has been analyzed once or x number of times (Grotjahn, 1981).

1.3. Karen Horney

Karen Horney was born in Germany in 1885. She received her M.D. degree from the Berlin University in 1913, studied psychiatry at Berlin-Lankwitz from 1914 to 1918 and taught at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute from 1918 to 1932. She immigrated to the United States in 1932 and worked for the Psychoanalytic Institute in Chicago and for the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. She was also one of the founders of the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis and the American Institute for Psychoanalysis (Kelman, 1953).

Her interests revolved around the psychoanalytic understanding of women, adolescents, self-analysis and ways to improve therapy in general. Her focus in the influence of culture and the reexamination of the mechanistic and biologic roots of the classic psychoanalytic theories led her to reformulate multiple theories and to propose her own conceptions of the self and of self-analysis, among others (Kelman, 1953).

In that sense, and despite the fact that many analysts had opposing views on the feasibility and potential of self-analysis, Horney was perhaps one of the most vocal analysts to support and write about this topic. She published her book "Self-analysis" in the 1940s defending and emphatically endorsing its practice. She stressed that it was relevant not only to diminish neurotic suffering or to free oneself from the neurotic symptoms, as Freud intended, but also, to gain enough self-confidence and freedom to become the most authentic version of ourselves or our "real self" (Falkenström, Grant, Broberg and Sandell, 2007).

Here it is worth mentioning the importance Horney gave to the "real self". She described it as "*the alive, unique, personal center of ourselves*" (1950, p.155; quoted by Horner and Paris, 1999; p.158). To not strive towards its development would come close to alienation or a "psychic death". The meaning and essence of life, as Horney understood it, is to be ourselves fully and completely. The loss of self would be a critical state in which the person would be devoid of meaning, direction, and value, being governed instead by the conflicting demands of the neurotic patterns and tendencies. Self-analysis would be a way to continue reaching a greater degree of freedom and transparency and, despite its limitations, it shouldn't be discarded because of its short fallings. Moreover, its positive accomplishments are important, but also the striving itself is of intrinsic value (Horner and Paris, 1999).

Nevertheless, as Díez Manrique (1984) points out, for Horney self-analysis is only feasible if it follows a certain technique and if, previously, the person has undergone a process of training and/or psychoanalysis. Horney believed that self-analysis was more than just keeping a private journal or seeking a friend for comfort. To analyze oneself is to strive to know oneself with rigor and depth, using a certain technique and drawing from myriads of experiences so they can be put at the service of maturation and psychic growth. As Díez Manrique (1984) states, only by grasping the areas unknown to ourselves and developing a

profound awareness of what makes us who we are, there will be the possibility of growing. To reach such comprehension will demand, as mentioned before, an awareness, a discipline, a technique, and dealing with difficulties. With awareness of all this and with hope, there is the potential for growth. Hope was an essential factor in Horney's works and its presence helps bolster the path of self-understanding and to reach the goals that she stipulated for analysis and self-analysis: to become authentic individuals, to be honest and sincere in thoughts and emotions and to put our whole soul into our life, our interests, our work and into our beliefs.

In terms of technique, Horney addresses the handling of resistances in the individual's self-analytic efforts and how to overcome them. Like Reik, Horney states in her book that the individual should use free association instead of rational thought as the primary method of discovering the neurotic tendencies. According to her, the person mustn't fight his resistance with blame or false determination. Instead, he should use free association to delve into this blocking point and make meaningful connections to gain understanding about them and himself. Horney emphasizes the importance of writing notes about these associations and to go back to them and to the previous blocking points every time he needs to in order to find ideas, clues or develop new links. Horney believed that this clarification paves the way for further understanding and, successively, this will help overcome the resistances (Davis, 1943).

For Horney, the process of self-analytic discovery or rediscovery of neurotic patterns go from a specific situation and progressively, by penetrating into its layers of meaning, evolve and include the total personality structure. She emphasized that one should begin with the shallowest trends and work gradually from them to the deeper ones. She used what she called the three steps approach that included: recognition of the pattern, discovery of its manifestations, and comprehension of its function. Having considered this three-step approach, there are no other definite rules for Horney. Each case should work itself out in its unique manner, employing free association as the primary tool for self-understanding (Davis, 1943).

Horney believed that if a person has had sufficient strength, courage and perception to discover and expose an unpleasant truth about himself, these same positive psychic forces might be trusted to promote further understanding. It is as if the person has reached a level honesty and straightforwardness that allow him to

accept his limitations and his shortcomings with all the pain and suffering that is temporarily engendered and has accepted the necessity of taking responsibility for himself (Colby, 1973).

For Horney, the technique of self-analysis is definitely feasible and a desirable one and the dangers are relatively low. For her, the main drawbacks would be complete failure of the self-analytic endeavor to prolongation of the therapeutic process. However, the positive factors outdo the negative ones. Self-analysis would be desirable for those who because of money, time or location cannot undertake regular treatment. According to her, even for those undergoing treatment it might shorten the procedure considerably if in the intervals between analytical sessions and during the sessions, analysands were inspired with the courage to do active and independent work on themselves (Colby, 1973).

But apart from such reasons, Horney emphasized other gains that are extremely significant: an increase of inner strength and of self-confidence. Although in every successful analysis it is expected that self-confidence increases, there is an additional gain from having achieved that through one's initiative, courage and perseverance. For this author, there is a pride that comes with this accomplishment and a feeling of confidence in one's capacity to face challenges and not feel lost without someone else's guidance (Colby, 1973). Following Horney's ideas, Colby states that:

> It takes no genius to perceive that even when a patient does receive persistent therapeutic help that has been truly salutary, unless at time of termination the patient is equipped to engage in an ongoing candid and effective self-analysis, the whole venture may prove superficial and transitory (p.217).

Therefore, a crucial element during and after analysis is the interest in self-analysis or in constructive introspection after psychoanalysis or psychotherapy has ended. The capacity to call upon and use one's

own strength, ability and self-confidence to meet the hardships of everyday living and not feel lost without guidance would be the major gains of the analytic and self-analytic endeavors (Colby, 1973).

Many analysts criticized Horney's ideas of self-analysis. One of them was Otto Fenichel who reviewed her book "Self-analysis" and made several critiques that are worth mentioning. In his review, he stated that most analysts coincide on the very limited possibilities and potential of self-analysis. To support his idea he mentions two reasons. The first one is that to overcome resistance without the presence of an analyst is extremely difficult, if not impossible, and demands a very strong personality. Nevertheless, it becomes entirely impossible if those resistances are "blind spots". When the analyst is present he can point out such omissions and work them through analytically but in self-analysis those blind spots will remain hidden. The second aspect is the "transference" and transference interpretation within the analysis. This meaningful relationship with the analyst is missing in self-analysis. For Fenichel, the wish to please the analyst is an important motor for overcoming of resistances and "*indirectly, the form of the transference gives an irreplaceable model for the study of the patient's behavior patterns*" (p.351; Fenichel, 1943).

Be that as it may, Horney's ideas about self-analysis shouldn't be dismissed. She is adamant and vehement in stating that previous analysis *must be completed* for self-analysis to be imbued with the psychoanalytic technique, to have a solid foundation and sufficient rigor. For Horney, free association is the primary tool for self-understanding and the self-analytic activity such be centered in the recognition of the psychic patterns, discovery of its conscious and preconscious manifestations, and thorough comprehension of their function.

CHAPTER 2: A DEFYING DEFINITION: WHAT IS AND ISN'T SELF-ANALYSIS

2.1. Definitions of self-analysis

Elizabeth Roudinesco and Michel Plon, in their Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (2006), begin the entry of self-analysis by saying that its status has been as problematic as defining the scientific nature of psychoanalysis. To make such a statement is to give an accurate idea of the complexity and challenges involved not only in defining the place of self-analysis within psychoanalysis but also the inherent difficulties in trying to trace its nature, its characteristics, and its limits. For such purpose, we examined its definition in several dictionaries, including general ones and psychoanalytically informed ones, to have a better understanding of the different depictions of this concept.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines self-analysis as: "*a systematic attempt by an individual to understand his or her own personality without the aid of another person*". (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, n.d.). The Collins English dictionary adopts a similar definition by stating that it is: "*the application of psychoanalytic techniques and theories to an analysis of one's own personality and behavior, especially without the aid of a psychiatrist or other trained person* (Collins English dictionary, n.d.). In a more generic way, the Oxford Learner's dictionary (n.d.) states that self-analysis is: "*the study of your own character and behavior, especially your reasons for doing things*". Other general dictionaries coincide with these definitions, and it is useful to underline that in two of them there is a reference to the absence of a trained person and of any external aid. Another relevant element is the description of it as a "systematic attempt". As it will be appreciated in the psychoanalytic-oriented dictionaries, the presence of the other (analyst), within an analytic therapy or analysis, is indispensable to provide the identificatory-introjective basis (including the transference-countertransference work) from which the self-analytic endeavor will inspire itself. Therefore, the absence of the other (as stated in the general dictionaries mentioned above) will be understood differently from a psychoanalytic perspective. It is also worth mentioning that, according to the author one chooses to read, self-analysis might be understood as a continuous psychic activity or as a "circumscribed" systematic approach for disentangling inner conflicts of diverse nature. Nevertheless, these differences will be better perceived as we explore more specialized sources.

The APA Dictionary of Psychology (n.d.), for example, will take into consideration the role of a therapist and its emergence within a psychotherapy. Self-analysis is defined as:

> The investigation or exploration of the self for the purpose of better understanding personal thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Self-analysis occurs consciously and nonconsciously[1] in many contexts of daily life, and *with assistance from the therapist*, it is a crucial process within most forms of psychotherapy (our italics).

In the APA Dictionary there is an additional historical reference of Freud and his own self-analysis which is closely linked to the publication of The Interpretation of Dreams. They add that: "*most psychoanalysts conduct an ongoing self-analysis to monitor for countertransference and blind spots as they work with patients*" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.). Here the ongoing nature and its use to monitor countertransference continue to give us clues to how self-analysis is perceived and defined.

In A dictionary for psychotherapists by Chessick (1993), the author takes a more descriptive stance by developing ideas proposed by Fleming (1971), Kramer (1959), Myerson (1960) Ticho (1967), among others. Although Chessick (1993) doesn't adumbrate a specific definition of self-analysis, it is pertinent to review the elements addressed in this entry. To begin with, this author refers to Freud's breakthrough in methodology with self-analysis and how it can be understood as "*an act of personal courage, daring and devotion to truth*" (p.350; Chessick, 1993). He also points out how the difficulties with this subject have been overlooked or glossed over and the fact that there is a very limited number of studies with data. Nevertheless, this doesn't help to clarify the confusion and gray areas surrounding this term.

[1] Term used by the dictionary. It is assumed that it makes references to pre-conscious and unconscious functioning.

Despite this setback, the author refers to Fleming (1971; quoted in Chessick, 1993) and states that one of the main objectives of training analysis is to promote the continuation of the analytic work through the lifelong process of self-analysis. In this sense, if a professional identity has been consolidated and personal integrity has been achieved through analysis, the introspection, empathy and interpretation will help sustain this function as a part of everyday psychoanalytic work. Nonetheless, key elements in training analysis won't be present in the same way after termination. For example, positive transference, reedition of conflicts within the transference and the analyst as an interpreter (Kramer, 1959; quoted in Chessick, 1993).

A special emphasis is made regarding the identification with one's analyst. Losing the analyst because of termination leads to a replacement through identifications which are incorporated by the ego and the ego ideal (different from the ideal ego), as described by Brunet (2022)[2]. Kramer (1959; quoted in Chessick 1993) further elaborates the idea claiming that one of the identifications with one's analyst is as an interpreter, which implies that after analysis ends the analysand will be patient and analyst at the same time. Moreover, Myerson (1960; quoted in Chessick 1993) reiterates Kramer's ideas by stating that: *"the analytic ego ideal formed from an identification with one's analyst comes to function as a "permanent part of the post-analytic personality'"* (p.351; Chessick, 1993). Ticho (1967) coincides with Kramer (1959; quoted in Chessick 1993) and he will pinpoint free association, respectful listening, and interpretation as the main ingredients for the self-analytic task. However, the integration of these functions into a whole is achieved by the analysand on his own.

In Chessick's entry there is a specific emphasis made on self-analysis and its significance in understanding countertransference. According to the author, the most important goal of self-analysis is the understanding of one's counter-transference reactions. Therefore, the disruption caused by severely disturbed patients will most likely set into motion the self-analytic task. Yet again, a crucial question arises. How does one validate the insights gathered? Chessick (1993) states that a change in the level of tension, sudden feeling of understanding oneself better and progress or changes in a patient's process can occur with correct and inexact interpretations. Consequently, a partial resolution of the countertransference does not necessarily

[2] In section 4.2. "The self-analytic dialogue and the intrapsychic instances", a more detailed definition will be included to clearly differentiate ego ideal or ego ideals (in French 'Idéal du Moi'), from the ideal ego (in French 'le Moi ideal'), which shouldn't be confused for the purposes of better understanding self-analysis and the different instances involved.

imply accurate self-analytic understanding. According to this author, self-analysis seems to happen in specific moments and not so much as a non-specific ongoing methodical process.

Chessick (1993) also evokes an interesting idea disseminated by Kohut, stating that self-analysis seems to imply a: "*need to reinstate the functions of the self-object-analyst in the form of a conscious exercise of self-analysis*" (p.353; quoted by Chessick). Moreover, according to Kohut, the decline of this function could represent a higher level of maturity and a pre-conscious personality function which runs efficiently. In the same direction, self-analysis may serve to cover up deeper and more threatening meanings and it can be a formidable resistance to analysis. As he underlines: "*the narcissistic aspect of self-analysis has the greatest potential deception of the procedure*" (p.352; Chessick, 1993).

In a more circumscribed fashion, Marty (2003), in the Bordas Dictionary, provides a more outlined definition, stating that self-analysis is an:

> Analysis carried out by oneself of one's own unconscious productions (dreams, parapraxes, memory-screens, slips, symptoms, etc.). Self-analysis differs from classic introspection which remains limited to the observation of consciousness (…). The term self-analysis designates, firstly, the historical period (1895-1901) during which Freud elaborated the foundations of psychoanalysis and, secondly, a part of the analytical technique which remains relatively under-examined and subject to discrepancies (p.70).

The author of this entry, as other authors mentioned above, provide a historical context to the definition. In this definition the formal emergence of self-analysis is related to the abandonment of the neurological theories, to the decline of the hypothesis of traumatic events in the origins of neurosis and the destitutions of the cathartic method. There is also an emphasis in the passionate transferential nature of the

correspondence between Freud and Fliess and a very particular traumatic event, the death of Freud's father in 1896, from which will emerge the recognition of the role of fantasy in Freud's psychic life. As stated by Marty (2003): "*the role of self-analysis is what allows the processes of reorganization of the ego to continue spontaneously in the analysand"* (p.71).

De Mijolla (2005), in the International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis, has a similar definition to the one proposed by Marty in the Bordas Dictionary. This entry, written by Didier Anzieu, specifies the following definition:

> Self-analysis consists of interpreting one's own preconscious and unconscious material (such as dreams, parapraxes, memories, fleeting thoughts, and intense emotions) (p.1568).

Anzieu, in this entry, breaks down the self-analytic method in 4 steps. The first step would be the writing down of material, followed by a second step which would be breaking it in sequences. After doing so, the person would proceed to free-associate and the final step would entail the forging of significative links based on associations and hypothetical interpretations. Moreover, for Anzieu, active self-analysis takes place within the contexts of interrelations, a position that differs significantly to those mentioned in general dictionaries in which this process is supposedly carried out in isolation and without any help (De Mijolla, 2005). Moreover, Anzieu specifies that within the context of a personal analysis, one hopes there will be a subjective commitment to remain in analysis despite the development of multiple crisis and despite the development of the self-analytic reflex that nurtures the analytic process.

Anzieu specifies that "*self-analysis can be fruitful if it prolongs the psychoanalytic work of which it is an echo*" (p.1568; De Mijolla, 2005). Nevertheless, the main obstacle in the self-analytic endeavour is the disregard and neglect of the transference and countertransference relationship. The author explains that a

plausible way of solving such obstacle is with the introjection of the image of the analyst as an ideal object within the ego ideal, or 'Idéal du moi', as described by Brunet (2022) and not to be confused with the ideal ego or 'moi idéal'. Once introjected, there can be an interior dialogue that can continue with this object.

Roudinesco and Plon (2006), in the Dictionary of Psychoanalysis, define self-analysis as a "*self-investigation by the self*" (p.80). They state that self-analysis as a form of investigation was banished from training standards, except as an extension of the analytic cure. Moreover, they underline that after determining the didactic requirements for the training analysis the "Freudian community", as they name it, came to the agreement that it was only Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis, who had practiced a self-investigation not preceded by a cure. Therefore, Freud had, in a way, created or originated his cure or himself on his own (the term in French being 'auto-engendré'). According to Roudinesco and Plon (2006), self-analysis stopped being a theoretical and clinical question to become one of the greatest historical questions of psychoanalysis. Subsequently, the only valid self-analysis is Freud's and, therefore, it is considered mainly in terms of the birth and origins of psychoanalysis. Following this idea, Roudinesco and Plon (2006) emphasise that Octave Mannoni replaced the term of Freud's self-analysis by a more accurate expression, that of the 'original analysis'.

In a similar vein to Roudinesco and Plon (2006), to Anzieu (in De Mijolla, 2005) and to Marty (2003), in The Language of Psychoanalysis, by Laplanche and Pontalis (1967), the authors describe self-analysis as:

> the investigation of oneself by oneself, conducted in a more or less systematic fashion and utilizing certain techniques of the psycho-analytic method, such as free association, dream-analysis, the interpretation of behavior, etc. (p.413).

Laplanche and Pontalis (1967) describe in a succinct manner the different phases in Freud's thinking and understanding of self-analysis and its uses within psychoanalysis. They mention that, although Freud never

wrote a paper or text directly addressing the subject of self-analysis, he referred to it and to his own experience in his correspondence and in different texts. Freud alluded to the relevance of studying one's own dreams and self-analytic attempts to understand them. However, he also took a rather cautious stand about it given the fact that genuine self-analysis is rather chimerical and unattainable. As Freud admits, the limits imposed by this method support the idea of analysis being the prime method for self-understanding. Moreover, as Laplanche and Pontalis (1967) state: "*Freud's reservations regarding self-analysis hold only in so far as self-analysis pretends to replace a true psycho-analysis*" (p.413).

In Laplanche and Pontalis's (1967) definition of self-analysis there is also a reference about the importance of considering resistance within self-analysis, which "*flatters narcissism and bypasses the essential motor force of the treatment–namely the transference*" (p.413). However, they also point out that although self-analysis can be understood as a complement to treatment, the continuing process, especially in analysts (and analysands), of elucidating their own unconscious is highly desirable. Therefore, training analysis does not eliminate the need for a self-analysis. It is self-analysis that will extend 'indefinitely' the process set in motion by their own analysis.

Inspired by the definitions previously mentioned, from specialized sources and more general ones, we will propose a definition of self-analysis that will serve as guiding reference given the different subtleties (in some cases) and major differences (in others) found in the literature and in classic reference sources. For the purpose of this essay, self-analysis is conceived as:

"The exploration, study and understanding of one's own conscious, preconscious and unconscious material (including but not limited to: behaviors, thoughts, emotions, dreams, parapraxes, slips, symptoms and others), through self-investigation. The self-analytic competencies are acquired throughout the psychoanalytic cure, in which the presence of an analyst is indispensable and the working through of the transferential-countertransferential conflicts is key to incorporate and introject the analyst, through progressive identifications, within the ego and the ego ideal ('Ideal du moi', as explained by Brunet, 2022)".

In this sense, self-analysis is conceived as an extension or prolongation of the analysis in which the reorganization of the ego and other psychic processes can continue to transform themselves. It can be conceived as a lifelong process but the actual practice of it can occur in a more delineated, systematic way. Although self-analysis could help to work through countertransference obstacles and blind spots, the risk of falling into a superficial narcissistic response or a habitual resistance must always be factored in while completing this self-investigative task.

CHAPTER 3: A DISPOSITION TOWARDS THE UNKNOWN IN SELF-ANALYSIS

3.1. The epistemophilic instinct in Klein

In deciphering the elements that are necessary to develop a disposition towards self-analysis and the unknown within us, there are myriad psychic aspects that are relevant to this dissertation. Due to the limits of this essay, there will be a few of them developed to enrich the understanding and discussion that will ensue. One of those elements that could be relevant in understanding the disposition towards self-analysis is the epistemophilic instinct. This notion, developed by Melanie Klein, brings to the forefront the innate tendency and satisfaction inherent to the desire to know. But more specifically, the innate drive and satisfaction of knowing oneself and others. In this sense, one could intuit that such instinct might be at root of the self-analytic disposition.

In her early psychoanalytic writings, Klein focused on infantile sexuality, the conscious and unconscious desire to know about it and its relation to a more general desire to know about others and about oneself. From 1921 to 1923 she mentioned the importance of epistemophilia and, in 1931, in her work titled "A contribution to the theory of intellectual inhibition" she established the theoretical foundations for the epistemophilic instinct (Harpman, 1992; Hinshelwood, 2004). Klein explained how unanswered questions about sexuality inhibited the development in children and how answering them could open a repertoire of fantasy life to enrich their lives. This drove Klein to study the libidinal aspect of knowledge and to coin the term epistemophilic instinct. This allowed her to study interferences and disruptions in children's' learning and, at a later stage, to elaborate on the intellectual difficulties in psychotic patients (Hinshelwood, 2004).

Aguayo (2000) explains that although Klein's ideas (1931) of an epistemophilic instinct can be considered an extension of Freud's (1908) proposal of the ego's need for established causes, what made Klein's concept unique was that, for her, the infant's need to establish the primitive causal links wasn't based in a partial instinct. For Klein, the epistemophilic instinct was more imbued by object relatedness and strongly linked and directed towards the mother's body. Therefore, for Klein, the child's inborn thirst for knowledge relates

to its initial curiosity about the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ contents of the mother's body. Fernandez and Petit (2014) underline that if for Freud the child is looking for a response to a question posed to the other, for Klein it is a search for the other in itself and a quest of otherness and alterity.

As Harpman (1992) points out, in Freud’s theories, curiosity and the predisposition of children to know is based on the discovery of sexuality. Freud linked curiosity to the parents’ sexuality and it was after this instinct was sublimated, later on, that it could be displaced to other objects. However, baby observation shows how infants are avid and prone to discover and to learn after their basic needs are covered. It is, therefore, not a luxury but a surplus. It isn’t a secondary path for freed energy or for unmet sexual demands. It is more an independent and autonomous movement, as strong as the sexual instinct, with a different origin (Harpman, 1992).

Nevertheless, in Kleinian theorization the epistemophilic instinct and its inhibition is still colored and linked to the questions about sexuality and sexual impulses, frustration and sadism. Klein added the sadistic component to Freud’s definition of epistemophilia as a partial libidinal instinct, related to scopophilia and exhibitionism. It was this sadistic component, according to Klein, which can also contribute to the inhibition of the desire to learn or to learning disorders. This allowed her to build a theory around the interferences of intellectual development, symbol formation, and the inhibition in the desire to know about oneself and others (Hinshelwood, 2004).

For Klein, as Fernandez and Petit (2014) point out, the instinct to explore and to know is driven by two basic tendencies: love and hate; and there will always be a blend of the attraction it sparks and the rejection it evokes. Therefore, splitting and ambivalence are essential elements in this quest. According to Klein, it begins with the search for the mother’s breast - first colored by the physiological needs and, afterwards, by the desire it incites - and continues by being enmeshed with the search of the object, satisfying and idealized, lost and hated. As Sedat (2007; quoted by Fernandez and Petit (2014) intimates, this scenario belongs to the infantile realm because it would lead to the ‘fantasmatic’ elaboration of how the mother is affected by the child's body and vice versa. It might be relevant to think of this idea not only referring to the concrete

body of the child, but its internal representation (the child's, the mother's and the father's body within the child's mind).

The primacy of object relations in Klein's work didn't impede her to see her theorizations as a continuum to Freud's legacy. Her interest wasn't limited to the object in itself but to the way the instinct was satisfied within the object. As Fernandez and Petit (2014) explain, in the encounter of the mouth with the breast the world of the baby is constructed. This experience, according to Klein, brings immense satisfaction but can also be felt as a sadistic and anxiety provoking situation. Breastfeeding and orality would be one of the compasses to get to know oneself, the other and the world. However, this bonding through the breast can be understood to a certain extent as an intrusion, a penetration and an appropriation. The breast is felt as a part of the child and when the breast/mother responds in a total, harmonious way this can be felt as being an experience of oneness. Some psychoanalysts understand this ultimate and transient union as the basis of what are known as 'ecstatic experiences' or what is called a state of total completeness with the other (Fernandez and Petit, 2014).

However, this unique and transient experience of completeness is constantly challenged by hunger and the inherent limitations of the mother. When the baby's attempts to calm himself down through the use of hallucinatory satisfaction is not enough, the plentiful state disappears, and the satisfying object goes missing. In Kleinian terms, a rudimentary ego is now filled with aggression and hatred towards this object and the initial experience of being one is lived as a state of destruction, despair and not being. The phantasy of being attacked and annihilated by the object is fused with those of attacking and annihilating the object (Fernandez and Petit, 2014). It is at this point when sadism reaches its peak and the epistemophilic instinct comes into play as a tendency to penetrate and acquire the content of the mother's body.

In 1928, Klein specified that the early link of the epistemophilic tendencies with sadism was of crucial importance to the psychic development and it represented an early identification with the mother. Sadism would accentuate the need to know of the infant but it would also come with the price of an early superego that evokes early persecutory anxiety and guilt. This encounter with an incognizable other is the vector in

the structuring of the instinctual forces of the child that confronts him with the void that is inherent to his knowledge and efforts of knowing. The impossibility of all knowing, of all seeing and all having. Afterwards, the interdiction of incest in the Oedipal conflict will serve as a definitive separation and mark the appearance of the threat of castration. As Fernandez and Petit (2014) underline, the epistemophilic tendency is highly aroused by the 'unknown' of the object and of oneself and, simultaneously, frustrated by its quality of being enigmatic and unknowable.

To make matters more complex, Harpman (1992) describes two types of anxieties that might arise from this: the anxiety that results from the attacks to the inside of the mother's body, which could transform any internal space dangerous and any attempts to go inside and find knowledge too risky. The other anxiety is the one evoked by the confusion of one's body and the mother's body. Therefore, the anxieties will be transformed into more depressive ones if the object functions as a good object that stimulates exploration, discovery and knowledge. On the other hand, all the sadistic elements inherent in the process of exploration of the body and mind of the other and of one's own can be severely intensified if there is an internal and external bad object that prohibits and punishes such activities.

In that sense, it is in the depressive position that the anxiety and guilt felt towards the object change in nature. This shift is based in caring for the object and the fear of losing it. The acknowledgement that a total object will never be found and is forever lost makes the child mourn for it. The integration process comes with a feeling of solitude and de-idealization. The good object will never reach perfection the way an ideal object does. This also has a repercussion in how the child sees himself, given the fact that no part of him is truly ideal and his ideal will never be reachable. The 'lack of' is internalized as 'having lost' someone or something, and it is in the mourning of this sense of completeness and oneness that reparation and sublimation of aggressive impulses will thrive. As Fernandez and Petit (2014) mention, at the heart of this quest for knowledge questions of great importance arise: 'who is this other?', 'who am I for him/her?', and more significantly for the self-analytic endeavor: 'who am I?'.

3.2. Bion's tropisms

How does a person use the understanding and knowledge he is gaining through analysis and self-analysis? Is he developing a mind that is more apt for thinking? Or does the person prefer to maintain his 'status quo' – perhaps a feeling that he's being misunderstood accompanied by repetition compulsion – to avoid the pain associated with knowledge? Bion points out that the how's and why's are just as important as what the person is actually thinking about himself or bringing to the session.

Bion coined the term tropisms in Experiences with Groups (1968), Transformations (1983) and Cogitations (1991). He borrowed this term from biology and it describes the tendency of plants or animals to gravitate towards the sun, water or other essential elements. More specifically, the definition of tropism is:

> A response or orientation of a plant or animals to a stimulus that acts with greater intensity from one direction than another. It may be achieved by active movement or by structural alteration. Forms of tropism include phototropism (response to light), geotropism (response to gravity), chemotropism (response to particular substances), hydrotropism (response to water) […]. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). Tropism. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved February 25th, 2022, from `https://www.britannica.com/science/tropism

Although Bion evoked tropisms briefly in Experience with Groups and Transformations, it is in Cogitations where he addressed the nature, the dynamics and their importance for clinical purposes. In a succinct manner, he stated that psychic tropisms represent the "matrix of the mind" from which all mental life springs and from which the personality is organized (Gómez and Miramón, 2010; Gordon, 2004; Korbivcher, 2013 and Pistiner de Cortiñas, 2011). As Korbivcher (2013) underlines, with this matrix Bion presupposes an area of primordial phenomena prior to beta elements. In this realm there is only movement of approximation and removal of the organism in relation to the stimulus. Moreover, embedded in the tropism there is the

anticipation of an expecting object that will transform it. They could be present in the newborn and his disposition to search for the breast/object or, as Bion puts it, the preconception of the breast (Korbivcher, 2013).

For psychic development and maturation to be achieved, tropisms need to be rescued or won from the void or emptiness and to be communicated. The vehicle of communication (the baby's cry, the visual and tactile senses) is motorized not only to inform but also to control the tropism. If the communication, sustained by a good enough projective identification, is achieved there will be a deposition in the breast of the tropism that he cannot control, develop or modify. Only if the object or breast is able to transform it, then the infant will be able to control it and develop it. If there is a malfunction in this type of communication, or more precisely, if there is a movement towards the object without finding it, the contact with reality will be compromised, forms of autism may arise as well as rejection of the object, of tropisms and of the psyche in itself. Bion adds that such a failure could entail apathy or mania (Korbivcher, 2013). Moreover, Bion described these dynamics in his theories related to projective identification and of the container-contained. In them he established that going from contained to containing does not go in one direction given that communication should be active and meaningful in both directions. As De Masi, Capozzi and Kamm (2020) specify, the container subject gives back the message imbued with meaning and thinkable qualities back to the subject that projects.

Bion specified that tropisms could function individually and at a group level. He stated that, in an individual level, tropisms can be divided into three categories: the tropism of murdering or being murdered, the tropism of parasitism or host and, the most relevant to the subject of self-analysis, the tropism of creating or being created. Bion believed that in the patient that comes for analysis the tropism of creativity is the one that predominates over the others (Gómez and Miramón, 2010; Gordon, 2004; Korbivcher, 2013 and Pistiner de Cortiñas, 2011). Gordon (2004) adds, "*the central interpersonal tropism for Bion is that of creation, that is, the elaboration of self through the creative use of the other*" (p.27). Therefore, if the dynamic between the searcher and the found subject is good enough, there is an ongoing act of psychic regeneration that brings forward an experience of aliveness. When the regeneration is too distorted or abruptly arrested, the feeling might be closer to being shut out of the heart of life (Eigen, 2001; quoted in Gordon, 2004).

Bion talks in his book Transformations about tropisms and what he called “conscience”. In it, he provides more details of this disposition to be in “search of”. He describes it as an awareness of a lack of existence, a thought in search of a meaning (or a thinker), a hypothesis in search of a realization, a psyche seeking for a physical habitation to give it existence, the container seeking the contained (Korbivcher, 2013). It is useful to remember that the tropism is a structure of lack, to begin with, whose key word could be “in search of”.

Before continuing to elaborate on tropisms and their relation to other theoretical ideas that Bion proposed, it might be favorable to make a few connections with self-analysis to illuminate their pertinence in this essay. Thus far, tropisms can be understood as a disposition or a tendency to be “in search of”. This orientation could be directed towards someone who can perceive, receive and interpret/transform primitive tropisms and give back a message imbued with meaning. The meaningfulness will come not only from the transformed message in itself but also from the dynamic with this containing object. A sense of aliveness and meaningfulness could result from the tropism or from the disposition to search the other and, subsequently, oneself. A good-enough communication and meaningful bond will allow the creative tropisms to be predominant, as Bion mentioned, and perhaps, to prepare the terrain for the “search of” oneself. Therefore, it might be helpful to conjecture, within the already described creative tropisms, a disposition of self-discovery through creation (previously mentioned as regeneration), and through the possibility of being created by others. Nevertheless, this disposition could be halted and the creative tropisms could be devoid of meaning or space within the mind.

Still, another relevant question arises. Why choose the vertex of tropisms and self-analysis instead of the theories of alpha and beta elements, of the container-contained and of projective identification as a means of communicating? Bion described the dynamics of tropisms in Cogitations, published in 1991. This book compiled Bion’s annotations from over a span of several years. Some entries were dated and some were not. There is no date in the entry of tropisms. Therefore, we cannot deduct if, when he wrote about them, he had further developed his theories related to projective identification, of the container-contained, and of

the alpha and beta elements and how entwined or not they were in Bion's mind at that moment. For the purposes of this essay, the explanations of tropisms are considered aligned with Bion's other theoretical tenets. The decisive aspect that drives the choice is to take into account the creative tropism, understood as the tendency of creating and being created by the other, the disposition to be "in the search of" and a bond hopefully filled with meaning, provider of a sense of aliveness. These seem like crucial elements inherent to the process of self-discovery and self-analysis.

Pistiner de Cortiñas (2011), in an attempt to articulate the idea of tropisms with other theoretical tenets of Bion (for example, the theory of links), elicited the following question: "*can we make the conjecture that a tropism is a disposition to know that is transformed thanks to a K link through the containing object, provider of meaning?*" (p.200; my translation). She states that the encounter between the containing object, an essential giver of meaning, transforms the tropisms to an emotional link of love (L), hate (H) or knowledge (K). Thus, tropisms depend significantly on the transformations they go through. They might be transformed into thinkable links and have a significant meaning or become more virulent, left to wither or to freeze (Pistiner de Cortiñas, 2011).

According to this author, the difference with Freud's drives and tropisms is that tropisms are not theoretical hypotheses, they are actually tangible manifestations. She continues by mentioning the tropism of the plant and their search for the light (or phototropism) and other examples. We believe that, although they might be manifest in a concrete way in plants and animals, it might be useful to keep these ideas as conjectures of the human mind. However, even though the manifestations of tropisms in the human mind cannot be easily traced, this doesn't mean their heuristic value must be stripped away.

Pistiner de Cortiñas (2011) advances another observation related to tropisms and, perhaps indirectly, to self-analysis that might be pertinent to elaborate. The author brings forward the idea that Bion prioritizes the emotional links with oneself through the transformations of the tropisms through the other. Being the transformation, in a positive outcome, an emotional links of love (L), hate (H) and knowledge (K). These first transformations will be of utmost importance to get a rudimentary sense of oneself and they will

proceed to shape and reflect the object relation. This questions the Kleinian hypothesis that states that in first place comes the object relation as a priority. Secondly, with oneself. According to Bion, as proposed by Pistiner de Cortiñas, the discovery of the other and the nature in object relations has as a previous condition, the development of rudimentary emotional links with oneself. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to provide an in-depth discussion of theoretical differences between Klein and Bion, this point is to underline the crucial importance of the emotional links with oneself and how inextricable they are to the object provider of meaning and a sense of psychic aliveness.

Finally, the author states that for an evolution towards mental growth it is necessary to rescue the tropism from an infinite shapeless void. As she describes, to give it shape and provide it with a "container narrative skin". As stated before, the receiving object will be crucial as well as the environment. Once this first communication is completed, meaningfulness and aliveness might be perceived. A subsequent step will be to transform this message/knowledge/digested tropism and to incorporate it in oneself. To become one with the inner truth and be in unity with it. As Pistiner de Cortiñas (2011) states, it is necessary the development of knowledge about oneself but it is also, as important, to become one with the truth about one's self (at-one-ment in Bion's terms). These ideas will guide our future discussion about the disposition towards truth, knowledge and the unknown in ourselves and others and the importance of incarnating them.

3.3. Bion's theory of links

According to Hinshelwood (2004), it is with Bion's contributions that the conceptualization of the epistemophilic instinct acquired all its depth. As previously elaborated, for Bion the acquisition of knowledge is an emotional one. It is above all a recognition of the intentions of the object, benevolent or malevolent, and, as a result, the love or hate that emerge in the ego of the infant. Bion explained that in the interaction with oneself or another, there are three possible kinds of links: love (L), hate (H) and knowing (K). All of them would be emotional links and K would be of paramount importance for the growth and development of the mind and personality (Hinshelwood, 2004). His theory of links steered towards the understanding of how and for which purposes the person is using his love, hate and knowledge; more

specifically, how the thinking apparatus is used for growth and mental development or as a tool to impede any recognition of truth and reality.

With the three basic units - love (L), hate (H) and knowing (K) - Bion groups a myriad of emotions, which will help describe the bonds or links that could be established with another person and with oneself. A link, in its most basic definition, is what relates two or more humans and what each of these persons feel towards one another – basically, the quality of the relationship (García, 2008; my translation). According to Grinberg, Sor and Tabak de Bianchedi (1991) "*the word "link" describes an emotional experience in which two people or two parts of the personality are related one with the other"* (p.100; my translation). What Bion did was to group all the emotions related to love under the symbol L (love), all the emotions related to hate, represented by the symbol H (hate) and, in addition to these, as mentioned before, he added knowledge (K) as another basic unit that is part of every relationship with another person and with aspects of the personality. This third and crucial element implies thinking about and discovering the other and oneself, understanding their meaning and value, providing the object and the relationship a mental space, which represents an acknowledgment of the relation being alive (whether in love or in hate). Moreover, it is important to underline that each of these elements are 'dynamic' and not 'static'. Their qualities vary according to their presence or absence, and they can have different valences – positive valence (+K, +L and +H) and negative valence (-K, -L and –H) (García, 2008).

In an innovative manner, Bion proposed that the epistemophilic instinct is at the same level as love and hate. The pleasure principle and the reality principle were on par with the life instinct and the death instinct, as the fundamental governors of psychic life, and that knowledge, or the capacity to know, is at the very core of mental life (O'Shaughnessy, 1981). Therefore, and according to O'Shaughnessy, due to the importance he gave to knowledge, there was a major shift in psychoanalysis because it had the same relevance and pre-eminence as the instinct of love and hate. The resulting rupture in this duality was replaced and complemented by, what she calls, the trio of interactive human instincts: love, hate and knowledge (O'Shaughnessy, 2005). Sandler (2009) goes in a similar direction stating that:

> It is a commonly overlooked fact that it is possible to regard these links as manifestations of the three basic human instincts – life, death and epistemophilic – in the realm of human relations (p.18)

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning a remark made in relation to O'Shaughnessy coining the term "instincts" to describe the emotional troika. Tabak de Bianchedi (2005) in her contribution to the Psychoanalytic Controversies dedicated to Bion in the IPJ manifested her disagreement with the way she conceives links as instinctual forces:

> I don't agree when she calls the K link the instinct of knowledge because I think that what is instinctual (in Freud and also in Klein) emphasizes more quantitative than qualitative matters, as, in my opinion, links basically are (p.1531).

Although it is outside the scope of this essay to elaborate exhaustively on the differences of links and instincts, there are a few observations that could be pertinent. According to Harpman (1992), and close to the critique made by Tabak De Bianchedi, the epistemophilic instinct and the K link are not identical notions. The instinct is an innate force, directed towards a part or the totality of an object and they address the need to satisfy certain functions (for example hunger), which is seated or rooted in a specific part of the body. As Harpman (1992) implies, the whetting of the appetite of K cannot ever be fully satiated and cannot be located in one part of the body or the mind. On the other hand, Goyena (2014) explains that the K, L and H elements are not emotional aspects in themselves but attitudes and approaches ('orientations'). He will add that the negative aspects of love, hate and knowledge shouldn't be understood as an absence of these experiences but as *altered factors of the alpha function in the construction of knowledge*. These orientations, that Goyena refers to, could be closer to the definition of tropisms, however, this should be further elaborated as well as the understanding of links and the difference and similitudes with instincts or drives.

In Bion's opinion, K is as fundamental as L (love) or H (hatred). In his own words "*L (love) or H (hate) may be relevant to K but neither is by itself conductive to K*" (p.47, 1962). For him, "thinking" does not mean some abstract mental process. He is mainly concerned with thinking as a human link and as an emotional experience per se. That is, to understand, comprehend the reality of, get insight into the nature of oneself or another. K helps to designate and represent this fundamental type of thinking – in the sense of trying to know (O'Shaughnessy, 1981). According to Grinberg, Sor and Bianchedi (1991), K represents the efforts made by a person who tries to know the truth about himself and others through introspection, and this tendency is also a function inherent in our personality (what Bion named the psychoanalytic function of the personality). In other words, K is an expectation, not fully realized yet, of getting to know something or someone.

Nevertheless, deep tension exists between the basic need for knowledge (particularly knowledge of emotional experience) and the human tendency to avoid meaning, because emotional knowledge so often brings painful realizations. "Disease" arises when the individual "decides" (unconsciously as much as consciously) not to develop emotional meaning. In this situation, affects are prevented from developing. Unconscious (particularly dream experience and "reverie") as well as conscious meaning becomes impoverished (Billow, 1999). But not only does the mental pain that results from K must be tolerated, Grinberg, Sor and Tabak de Bianchedi (1991) stress out that in the activity of knowing it is of extreme importance being able to *make abstractions* from the emotional experience that is being apprehended, which ultimately will allow us to learn from experience and to increase our understanding.

Bion's hypotheses disagree with theories that understand thinking as merely the emergence of maturation or as an autonomous ego function. According to him, K is hard- won by the infant ego from emotional experience with a nurturing object, functioning normally on the reality principle. But even when K is achieved, K is subject to hazard; it may be transformed into minus K (-K) through being stripped of its significance. Minus K (-K) is understanding denuded until only misunderstanding is left. Among its main causes, according to Bion, are excessive envy and hate of the undisturbed breast (mother) and inadequate nurturing. Continuing mutual denudation and misunderstanding between mother and infant will leave only minus K (-K) between them; a cruel, empty, degenerative link of superiority/inferiority. The immediate consequences are the "temporary" destruction of truth and, furthermore, the destruction of the capacity to

apprehend truth. It could be truth but used with untruthful and deceiving intentions. Minus K (-K) is not just ignorance but the active avoidance of knowledge, and even the wish to destroy the capacity for apprehending it (García, 2008).

3.4. Bion's psychoanalytic function of the personality

The theory of links and the relevance of the K links in the growth and maturation of the mind and its applicability to the self-analytic disposition can be better understood in the light of a concept, previously mentioned, called the psychoanalytic function of the personality. It is defined by Skelton (2006) as:

> A mental function which allows self-containment and self-knowledge. In his theory of functions, and speaking of the K link, Bion holds that the human being, from a very early age, acquires and develops — if things go well — this function in his mind. A factor of it is the alpha function.

The psychoanalytic function of the personality derives from the human need to know the truth of who we are and what is occurring in our life. As Rosenfeld and Rogers (2009) explain, disturbing thoughts and undigested experiences would incite the thinking apparatus to pursuing psychological work. In addition to that, the psychoanalytic function of the personality would be an innate internal structure and this inborn structure would resemble the one for language development, which allows us to learn to speak. According to Ogden (2004):

> Bion proposes that the human personality is constitutionally equipped with the potential for a set of mental operations that serves the function of doing conscious

> and unconscious psychological work on emotional experience (a process that issues in psychic growth) (p.1354).

If the links introjected by the infant stimulate his thinking apparatus and do so in a way that he is able to contain and digest his feelings, thoughts, and the experience of being with others and himself, he will be, progressively, more capable to put into practice his own function of self-containment and self-understanding.

Moreover, this will allow the development and acquisition of the psychoanalytic function of the personality. Ogden (2004) underlines the fact that this set of innate mental functions were described by Bion as 'psychoanalytic', shedding light and circumscribing them to a type of thinking that is proper to psychoanalysis. Hence, this function would be suited to apprehend and integrate experiences from the perspectives of the conscious and unconscious mind. Consequently, as Ogden explains: "*the quintessential manifestation of the psychoanalytic function of the personality is the experience of dreaming*" (2004; p. 1354). The capacity to dream occurs when there is a fruitful dialogue that takes place between the preconscious aspects of the mind and unconscious disturbing feelings and thoughts that are being secluded from, but pushed towards, the conscious recognition.

Grinberg (1980) described certain traits, which he believed embodied the psychoanalytic function of the personality in analysts as well as patients towards the end of their analysis. He mentioned many traits, but for the purpose of this essay on self-analysis it is relevant to mention the following:

> A curiosity in relation to certain aspects of the human being, of the mind and of psychic reality; curiosity which is applied to the analyst's own psychic functions; capacity for intuition, introspection and self-analysis; creative capacity, capacity to think under adverse circumstances (in 'the middle of a storm') (…), tolerance

> to certain kinds of frustrations (…), capacity for waiting and keeping up 'floating attention'; and a 'negative capacity' (Keats, 1931); that is to say, the capacity to cope with uncertainties, doubts and half-truths without feeling compelled to the immediate search for reasons and the certainty of the facts (p.26).

Therefore, all these qualities could be developed by the mind if the positive links, which are at the service of thinking and of mental growth and the thinking apparatus, are nurturing this innate function. It seems that a curiosity towards the human being and to its own psychic functioning, creativity, capacity to tolerate frustration and to maintain a 'negative capacity and tolerance towards frustration are on par with the importance given to self-analysis. In addition, they could be thought not only as ingredients of the psychoanalytic function of the personality but also how they overlap, intertwine and blend in a way that could bolster the self-analytic endeavor. For example, creative thought doesn't warrant per se self-analytic meaningful pieces of thought for mental growth. But the willingness and tenacity to search for one's truth and to exercise the self-analytic practices in creative and intuitive ways, with curiosity, with openness to not knowing and tolerance for frustration might provide a fruit-bearing ground in which one could stand and evolve progressively. De Bianchedi (2001), goes on the same direction, adding another crucial element to the psychoanalytic function of the personality, and to the practice of getting to know oneself, which is passion:

> We are passionate psychoanalysts, and we hope our patients will also become passionate — if by "psychoanalytic function of the personality" we understand the human tendency to know oneself as truthfully as possible and to have intimate-passionate relationships with oneself and with others (p. 23).

Nevertheless, it is important to end this discussion with an idea proposed by Bion, in his book Learning from Experience (1962), in which he stated that one crucial problem is to define what each person understands and represents by the term thinking, or for the purpose of this essay, what he or she understands by the term self-analysis. One person might believe he is thinking about himself through self-analysis and,

in fact, he could be doing something quite different. Thus, it would be helpful to define how he is using his thoughts and objects and if part of what he is doing by 'thinking' or 'self-analyzing' is to evacuate the "bad object" or the excess of internal stimuli and to avoid thinking [thinking in order not to think (–K)]; or self-analyzing with the unconscious desire to obliterate any true and meaningful knowledge about himself (also –K). In this same vein, Bion explains that talking (and perhaps self-analysis as well) could be considered as potentially two different activities, one as means of communicating thoughts (and communicating with oneself) and the other as engaging and using the musculature to relieve the personality of thoughts. And in the case of self-analysis, the risk of using self-observation, self-understanding, dreams and so forth to discharge and obliterate thoughts and the discomfort of painful or complex feelings. As stated before, thinking about oneself in order not to think.

3.5. The third ear

Before delving into Theodor Reik's definition of the Third Ear it is perhaps interesting to make a remark about the psychoanalytic context when it appeared. Reik was already a practicing psychoanalyst when he immigrated to New York, during World War II. At that time only physicians and psychiatrists could be officially recognized as psychoanalysts in the existing psychoanalytic society and this represented one of the greatest challenges and an opportunity for Reik. His writing style was frank and it gravitated towards the essence of psychoanalysis, being closer to psychology than to medicine. He emphasized the relevance of the personality of the analyst, his self-observation capacities, and the inexhaustible drive towards self-knowledge in the work with patients and outside of it.

Two years after the publication of his book The Third Ear, Paula Heimann published in London her breakthrough paper "On Countertransference". It was quite a revolutionary paper for the time and it set a turning point in the psychoanalytic technique. In it she explained the decisive significance of the inner experience of the analyst in listening to his unconscious and conscious manifestations in response to his patients. As she stated:

> My thesis is that the analyst's emotional response to his patient within the analytic situation represents one of the most important tools for his work. The analyst's countertransference is an instrument of research into the patient's unconscious (p.81; 1950).

Two years earlier Reik would say, in a rather different style, that he listened to his patients by listening to himself. Although one could debate that there is a difference between what one could understand from "to listen to oneself" versus "the analyst's emotional response", one might intuit there is a similar inner psychic process they are both implying. More specifically, Reik coined the term third ear to partially explain this inner process. The type of listening he proposes is one rooted in being aware of one's unconscious reactions and emotional responses to others and to ourselves. The third ear is defined by him as an acute perceptiveness for the undertones or undercurrents. More precisely, it would be: "*an instrument of perception for the unconscious and, especially, for the repressed*" (p.2; Reik, 1948). It is also a rather interesting fact that Theodor Reik was Paula Heimann's training analyst and that they continued to correspond each other after the massive immigration due to World War II (Goyena, 2006 and Rolnik, 2008).

Reik explains that when the psychoanalyst wants to decipher this unconscious language he can do so only by listening acutely inside himself, by becoming aware of the subtle impressions it makes upon him and the fleeting thoughts and emotions it arouses in him. For this author, great attention must be given to what this language means and to the emotional and psychological effects it evokes. If all these elements are thoroughly considered, the psychoanalyst will arrive at its unconscious motives and meanings. According to Reik (1948), his conclusions will not be drawn from a logical, conscious, thought process but from, what he believes is, an instinctive and unconscious reaction that takes place within him. The author proposes that such a message or language might come as a surprise, perhaps as a physical manifestation or a response that the person was not prepared for. As Reik states, the only way to penetrate the perplexity and to unravel the mysteries and the secrets of this language is by looking into oneself and understanding one's own reactions to it.

He elaborates this by saying that any psychoanalyst who wishes to recognize the secret meaning of the almost imperceptible, intangible unconscious language needs to keenly develop sensitiveness to it. Thus, augmenting his capacity and readiness to receive it. From this it can be inferred that what he calls the third ear is by no means readily available based only on the conscious desire to hear the undercurrents of the psychic world. It will require a specific disposition and efforts to develop it. Nevertheless, what does Reik understand as looking into oneself and understanding one's own reactions?. What does it take? How can one put it into practice?. To begin with, this author brings to the forefront the necessity for constant self-analysis. However, he specifies that "*one's own personal analysis is an indispensable prerequisite to the pursuit of what he called self-analysis*" (Reik, 1948). He uses the example of, what he calls, the ineffective attempts at self-analysis of those who seek out therapy because of an impending inner need. He says:

> He (the patient) has himself tried to find the way out of the labyrinth of his emotions. It was a kind of abortive self-analysis, attempted with insufficient insight and knowledge, performed with inappropriate tools. Without elementary self-analysis, he never would have gotten to the analyst's door. Long before he saw a psychoanalyst the patient became interested in psychological problems by inner necessity, because they were his own problems (p.9).

It is, therefore, an essential necessity that this 'elementary self-analysis' is accompanied by an individual analysis in order to evolve and become more exhaustive, profound and nuanced. Yet again, Reik is quite emphatic when he underlines that the most valuable insights of psychoanalysis are found through self-analysis. He states that the scientific progress of psychoanalysis, at least the really important ones, will be accomplished by an experience in which self-analysis plays the greatest role. Therefore, no profound insight about the human mind is possible without unconscious comparisons with our own experiences.

Reik (1948), as many other authors do, mentions Freud and his own process of self-analysis to remind of the great impact of this inner experience in the creation of psychoanalysis. He believed Freud had many qualities that propelled his interest in neurosis and suffering. Out of all of them, he reiterates the relevance

of his moral courage and frankness. That being said, Freud kept many secrets to himself due to "*the discretion, which one owes also to oneself,*" (p.12). As Reik mentions, he was a self-revealer and, at the same time, he concealed many aspects of himself and his life even to his closest friends and pupils.

Reik reminds us that in many of Freud's writing and, in particular, in The Interpretation of Dreams and in the Psychopathology of Everyday Life, he reached meaningful conclusions and presented unforeseen insights that he had made through his own self-analysis. The author categorized them as 'precious self-revelations' of one of the greatest minds. They are unequalled in sincerity, inspiring because of his relentless moral courage and perspicacity, given his acute observations that Reik qualified as: "*always self-searching and never self-seeking*" (p.12). Freud's points of departure were the insights reached by analysis of his own dreams, his slips of the tongue, and so forth. As Reik underlines, they were arrived at by self-observation, guided by an extraordinarily fine ear for his inner voices. Therefore, the first and most important source of psychological understanding was this self-observing factor in the psychoanalysis of himself.

An element, which Reik doesn't mention, is that this self-observing capacity and the conclusion reached through them, were being discussed and shared to a large extent with different colleges, such as Fliess. He does acknowledge, however, the value of Freud's own criticism of premature analogies, of conclusions not nuanced enough, which were corrected when he compared his findings with the ones seen in his patients. These comparisons and the analytic dialogues with significant people led to deeper insights that extended beyond the frontiers of Freud's ego. However, as mentioned before, at some point Freud stopped recognizing self-analysis as a proper psychoanalytic tool and as a process inherent and desired within the traditional psychoanalytic endeavor.

If Freud dismissed self-analysis after being adamant about its crucial importance, Reik (1948) admonishes the perils of limiting oneself to an analysis and believing that this is enough of an emotional and mental experience to become a psychoanalyst. He advances this idea by expressing:

> As if this other, more penetrating experience—to arrive oneself at psychological insight into oneself—were superfluous! Or do they really think that study, attending courses and seminars, can be a substitute for self-acquired knowledge? It is as if listening to a poem were psychologically equivalent to writing the same poem. If being analyzed is not continued and supplemented by a man's own creative experience in finding himself, without the guidance and supervision of a psychoanalyst, it remains an isolated experience, which has no deep roots in himself and bears no rich fruit. Of the psychoanalyst, too, it may be said: By their fruits ye shall know them (p. 19).

Reik elaborates this idea by saying that in order to develop and be attuned with the third ear the person must: "*break up the ground, dig deeper and deeper into himself, until he reaches the source of all psychological understanding that is in himself*" (p.67). This cannot be acquired through other means, including analysis. He criticizes and opposes a great number of psychoanalysts who convey the idea that one can 'learn' what the unconscious is saying, as if one is learning a new 'language'. It is not from his intelligence or academic wisdom that the person will be in tune with this elusive phenomenon. For Reik, this capacity will stem from two necessary qualities, which are inner sincerity and moral courage. Moreover, he cites one of Shakespeare's characters, who three hundred years before Freud, in one of his plays set in Vienna, invitingly says: "*Go to your bosom; Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know*" (p.68).

Reik further develops this idea by underlining the relationship of the third ear and the importance of being oneself. He reminds us how many analysts try to be everything but themselves when sitting with a patient. He states that the personality of the psychoanalyst is the most important tool he has and continues by saying: "*only he who is entirely himself, only he who has the sharpest ear for what his own thoughts whisper to him, will be a good psychoanalyst*" (p.270). Again, what matters the most to Reik, is not the technique found in books but the fortitude before one's own thoughts and the fearlessness in the face of darkness in oneself and others. He reiterates courage and sincerity as the essential values for psychoanalysis and self-analysis.

However, courage and honesty won't suffice. As stated by Reik, to condition this inner ear one must go through the personal experience of a rigorous analysis in order to learn to attune to the various layers and forms of unconscious meanings, meeting each at its own level and on its own terms, a process that cannot be achieved through conscious reason or intellectual effort (Aragno, 2011; Reik, 1948).

CHAPTER 4: THE INTRAPSYCHIC AND SELF-ANALYSIS

4.1. The unrepresented states of mind

To only consider the traditional topographical models developed by Freud (in 1916 and 1923) to understand the intrapsychic instances, is to assume that the human psyche is, almost always, able to function using representation and psychic linking. Moreover, this postulate supposes that the uncovering of the unconscious (for example: the archeological metaphor of excavation and unraveling of early childhood memories) and the working through (conquering resistances and dealing with the repetition compulsion) are the two main objectives of psychoanalytic therapy. In a similar manner, self-analysis would follow the same path.

Before describing the unrepresented states of mind, it is useful to give some context depicting different models that have emerged to explain the nature and the essence of the psychoanalytic work and understanding. Brunet (2019) describes how in the first topographical model the notion of neurosis and repression shaped the psychoanalytic work of making conscious the unconscious. This first model followed Freud's first psychoanalytic notions and the idea of bringing the repressed to the surface. This model eventually became incomplete and obsolete as there were internal unconscious forces that seemed to fight back and hinder the psychoanalytic work. Taking that into account, the second model shifted from the repressed unconscious content to the actual forces opposing the eventual emergence of that content. The first topographical model no longer sufficed, and it is through this second model of dynamic interpretation that the psychic processes in themselves became the subject of interpretation, going beyond desires and drives. As Brunet (2019) explains, with this model the defenses and the unconscious conflict are at the heart of the psychoanalytic work.

Gradually, through the work of many analysts, the importance of transference came to the forefront. No longer perceived only as a way to avoid remembering and working through, transference was better understood in this third model, and it earned a privileged place. It is through and with the transference that

the patient is able to displace his internal objects into the analyst. By doing so, he would unconsciously make the analyst feel, think and sometimes, identify with those internal objects. By shedding light into these relations, the interpretation of the transference became one of the analytic tools *par excellence*. Nevertheless, the repetition compulsion developed by Freud (Freud, 1920; quoted by Brunet, 2019), eventually allowed a more nuanced understanding of the impossibilities of representing and subjective appropriation within the patient. Winnicott (1974; quoted by Brunet, 2019), described in his article the "Fear of Breakdown" the impossibility of the patient remembering something traumatic of his past, because the patient wasn't there (*psychically*) to begin with. Therefore, through the transference and the psychoanalytic work with an analyst (other), the possibility of (re)creating and living it with and through the analyst and the analytic relationship there would be a possibility of having access to them. Roussillon (2001, quoted by Brunet, 2019) further developed this notion by describing the impossibilities of psychic appropriation, the narcissistic and identity-related suffering and the psychic spaces lacking definition or differentiation (Brunet, 2019).

Following the models described by Brunet (2019) and the authors mentioned by him, we will continue to develop the present psychoanalytic landscape regarding the unrepresented states of mind. Much of what will be developed is based on contemporary conceptualizations brought forward by André Green (with his work of the negative), by Bion (with his ideas of the container-contained, the alpha and beta element, etc.) and by Winnicott (with his ideas about the fear of breakdown, the good-enough mother, the decathexis, among others). Essentially, they will help to shed light on another set of mental phenomena in which the psychic structure is weak, missing or broken (Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013). Therefore, as proposed with the fourth model, new formulations regarding psychoanalysis and self-analysis must be envisaged to respond to these theoretical and technical developments.

What is this set of new mental phenomena? To answer this question, one must delineate certain conditions that help describe it. To begin with, in these states there is an absence of representations and an inherent weakness in the psychic inscription. The existence of a "pre-psychic", archaic, rudimentary organization (close to the beta elements described by Bion), is predominant and it would manifest itself in the impossibility of linking the impulse, the conscious and unconscious content and the conscious and unconscious affect altogether. Therefore, there is a discontinuity in the ability to represent and there would

be psychic fractures and voids that impede accessing or shaping such breakages or ruptures (Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013).

Levine, Reed and Scarfone (2013) point out a possible origin or cause. They explain that when the external object has been excessively traumatic or too absent, the capacity to represent the object internally will be disturbed to such an extreme that it could be lost or impinged for further development. Likewise, they underline an important difference between André Green's and Melanie Klein's understanding about the mental existence of the internal object. Green (1975; quoted by Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013) conjectured an interference in the continuity of meaning and meaningfulness, resulting from a failure in object relations that led to an impossibility in the capacity to represent. However, Klein anticipated that the realization of the existence of the object was an inborn element of the drive, and that the unconscious phantasy (a form of inchoate representation) was always an inherent part of our psyche (Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013).

Following Green's ideas, the absence of representation or weakness of the internal object makes the absence of the external object intolerable. A too long absence could transform the once "good-enough mother" (conceptualized by Winnicott) into what Green's described as the dead mother (Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013). In this sense, Green adamantly stated that it doesn't suffice to be interested in and to only study object relations. Psychoanalysis must ponder about the space in which these relations develop, their limits and interferences and the temporal context in which they evolve, with their permanencies and disruptions (1975; quoted by Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013).

One could ask how these contemporary conceptions have had an impact on the technical realm in psychoanalysis and, also, in self-analysis. To answer this, one must think about the psychic discontinuity, previously mentioned, and its impact on free association. As Levine, Reed and Scarfone (2013) explain (following Green's ideas):

> Without representations, both symbolization and displacement, in their usual senses marked by the presence of associatively linked and continuous chains of signifiers, are unavailable as indicators of disguised meaning (p.9).

Therefore, within the psychoanalytic relation, Green invites us to be particularly attuned, through countertransference, to discover within ourselves what the patients aren't necessarily able to articulate and to participate more actively in order to take into account the fusional needs patients may manifest (1975; quoted by Levine, Reed and Scarfone, 2013). Nevertheless, in terms of self-analysis, one might face a significant limitation given the scarcity or non-existence of free association and the voids and ruptures that cannot be transcended without the emotional connection, thinking and transformation of another mind. As Reed (2013) explains, "*the sign of the lack of stable representations of primary objects is discontinuity*" (p.24). This discontinuity could manifest itself through irregular interruptions of meaninglessness in the thinking and feeling, in which conflicting self-representations, abrupt oscillations in mental states, regressive movements linked to traumas would indicate an absence of inner continuity. Hence, the analyst would need to use his countertransference to put words into these unrepresented states of the patient. The empty quality is perceived when the person cannot reflect, cannot put into words, especially to describe an inchoate internal experience (Reed, 2013).

Moreover, as Botella and Botella (2013) state, the problematic core of mental states without representation is that they are concealed behind a network of representations (Botella and Botella, 2013). These authors developed a theory about figurability or "figurabilité" in French, a neologism that steers towards a psychic disposition in which there is a convergence of meaning that arises from creating sense in unrepresented, hitherto unrepresentable and, therefore, unreachable mental states. As these authors propose:

> *Figurability* is a psychic property determined by a tendency towards convergence, the actualization of which triggers the binding all the constituents, all the external and internal stimuli (…). The regredient process of figurability is

> not the interpretation of something already there but a creation, just as there is creation in dreams (p.107-108).

> The analyst's work of figurability, arising from the regredience of his thinking, will have the effect of opening the analysand's mind to hitherto foreclosed affects corresponding to a state of infantile distress, and to an awareness of the reality of suffering of which he was equally hitherto unaware – suffering that has its roots in early emotional deficiencies. Furthermore, it has the capacity for approaching unrepresentable zones of the infantile pre-history, thereby permitting the analysand to appropriate a new capacity for experiencing and giving shape, in the form of affects and representations, to his nameless and shapeless distress (…) (p.107).

These authors elaborate on the notion of "regredience", present in Freud's texts, which was translated by Stratchey as "regressive". For example, when Freud writes about the "*regrediente Gedankenverwandlung*", Stratchey translates it as "*the regressive transformation of thoughts*" (Botella and Botella, 2013). They directly address this translation because for these authors "regredience" is in fact:

> A psychic field, at once a state, quality and movement in a process of evolution; a potential for transformation, a permanent psychic capacity for transforming in an endo-hallucinatory manner any quantity of excitation, verbal, motor or emotional. The dream is its most accomplished manifestation (p.104).

These authors underline that, to a certain extent, the regredient potential still exists in the adult but they require specific conditions, for example, the conditions found in a session of analysis. It is thanks to the regredient experience in the session that something unrepresentable can be transformed and given concrete

shape in the form of a *regredient experience* (p.118). Therefore, one could deduct that such state of regredient thought is not easily accessible to the conscious mind and requires the presence of another. In the clinical vignette developed by the authors, the regredient process of figurability is linked with the process of dreaming within the session, that is not far away from having a certain hallucinatory quality or experience (inchoate visual, auditory, or kinesthetic elements), which have a value on their own and give meaning to the facts they integrate. As Poincaré described about certain facts, they bring order into complexity and make it accessible (1908; quoted by Botella and Botella, 2013). Cassorla (2013) explains that to crystallize such a transformation; "the analyst must be able to achieve a state of mind that will allow him to transiently identify or *become the patient* – a situation that Bion (1970) called at-one-ment" (p.207; Cassorla, 2013). For Cassorla (2013), in the non-symbolic areas, meaning is degraded and discharge through the use of action. Somatization and transformations in hallucinosis take over and create the phenomena of non-dreams which is opposed to what he calls dream-for-two. In the latter, the shared association of analyst and patient will, gradually, expand the meaning through mutual elaboration.

Circling back to self-analysis, how are we to understand these phenomena of unrepresented states and the possibility or the impossibility of the self-analytic task? It seems evident that to work through such pre-psychic states of mind the presence of the analyst and the psychoanalytic work is essential. Even, what could be thought of as, an exhaustive analysis doesn't necessarily entail the possibility of working these primitive elements. Therefore, one could think that even the most thorough self-analysis will be confronted with psychic discontinuities and voids that cannot be consciously grasped nor transformed by oneself. And it is here, again, that this essay stresses emphatically on the crucial role of the intersubjective work (two-person condition of therapy) as a pre-requisite for the self-analytical endeavor. Myriads of psychic phenomena, as described by Brunet and Casoni (1996), like communicative projective identification, will require two individuals in order to decontaminate expelled contents from the patient's mind. Consequently, in the therapy there will be two members that are, simultaneously, influencing each other and, hopefully, the figurability, the regredience and the dream-of-two (among many other factors) will allow the emergence and the understanding of the unrepresented states of mind. But such work cannot be completed solely through self-analytical means.

4.2. The self-analytic dialogue and the intrapsychic instances

Having developed the unrepresented states of mind, one is left wondering if the likelihood of intrapsychic work through self-analysis is indeed possible. Suffice it to say that we will remind the reader our definition of self-analysis to explore it from the angle of the intrapsychic instances. As previously mentioned, self-analysis is conceived as: the exploration, study and understanding of one's own conscious, preconscious and unconscious material (including but not limited to: behaviors, thoughts, emotions, dreams, parapraxes, slips, symptoms and others), through self-investigation. It is important to underline, that this part of the definition coincides with the first and second model described by Brunet (2019). Hence, the intrapsychic instances we are referring to are based on Freud's models from 1916 and 1923 and evoke the interplay of the conscious, preconscious and unconscious and the ego, superego and id.

Considering the pre-psychic states, voids and discontinuities, the psychanalytic cure would allow the necessary experience between the analyst and analysand in order to develop the regredient process of figurability (as previously described and developed by Botella and Botella, 2013). In this sense, self-analysis can only be conceived as an extension or prolongation of the analysis in which the reorganization of the ego and other psychic processes can continue to transform themselves. The ego having a significant predominance in the self-analytic work. This last one can be conceived as a lifelong process but the actual practice of it can occur in a more delineated, systematic way. Although self-analysis could help to work through countertransference obstacles and blind spots, the risk of falling into a superficial narcissistic response or a habitual resistance must always be factored in while completing this self-investigative task.

Taking into account the models described by Brunet (2019), it is relevant to underline that the self-analytic competencies are acquired throughout the psychoanalytic cure, in which the presence of an analyst is indispensable and the working through of the transferential-countertransferential conflicts is crucial to incorporate and introject the analyst, through progressive identifications, within the ego and ego ideal ('Ideal du moi', as explained by Brunet, 2022), and not to be confused with the ideal ego or 'moi ideal'. However, before further developing our definition of self-analysis and the intrapsychic instances, it is quite pertinent to make some clarifications regarding the ego ideal, the ideal ego and the superego.

Brunet (2022) describes how from 1914 onward Freud began to use the terms ego ideal, superego and, barely, the term ideal ego. Before reaching 1923 and defining his second topographical model, there were three propositions that explained their different roles. There existed the notion of an ideal ego stemming from the primary narcissism, in which the infant perceives himself without limits and boundaries. In other words, a primitive and grandiose agency. From a different perspective, the ego ideal or ego ideals provided guidance and modelling for sublimation and as a reference or notion to look up to; and third, a critical, prohibitive part which constantly observes and gages the present ego and how it measures up or not to the ego ideal or ego ideals, known as the superego. As Brunet (2022) further explains, two of them stem from narcissisms while the third one responds to the limitations and, moreover, they don't respond to the interiorization of the same external object. The ideal ego (moi ideal) pursuits a narcissistic expansion of the ego, forcing the ego in the direction of omnipotent, unbridled, unrestrained phantasies, that strive for the realization of the most grandiose wishes and desires. The superego goes in the sense of prohibition or interdiction, specifically through inhibitions of the instincts and through the repression of the narcissism of the ideal ego (moi ideal). It is through this movement, that repression allows and reinforces submission to the law. With this context in mind, the ego ideal or ego ideals are understood as envisaging a project, model or standard that would be in relative harmony and agreement with the ego. Both, the ego and the ego ideal, would be extremely decisive in the self-analytical task. However, the ideal ego should also be considered because it could threaten the self-analytic pursuit by pushing towards grandiosity stemming from the narcissistic expansion of the ego and the desire to experience unbridled omnipotence.

Brunet and Casoni (2007) in their article "*La gloire et la faute. Essai psychanalytique sur le conflit qui oppose narcissisme et culpabilité*" develop Lussier's definitions of the ideal ego, the superego and the ego ideal or ego ideals, underlining, in a very precise manner, each term. Moreover, these would be the definitions we are drawing upon to conceptualise and understand these instances (ideal ego, ego ideal or ego ideals and superego) and their relationship with self-analysis:

> The ideal ego would represent the most primitive layer of the Ego, heir of the archaic, primal narcissism. It summons feelings of perfection and omnipotence.

> It is the narcissistic paradise without restraints or limitations. There is no space for the object and its nature is anobjectal. It contains the primitive identifications, corresponding to the omnipotent and idealized parents (also known as the "self-objects"). The superego is not taken into consideration (…). The ideal ego is sometimes confused with the Id, given how it summons the most primitive desires, and plays a leading part in the harm provoked by idealisation (p.595) (Lussier, 2006; quoted by Brunet and Casoni, 2007)[3].

Quoting Freud (1914), Brunet (2022) describes this ideal ego as the seeker of the narcissistic perfection and the narcissistic haven of one's childhood. When this paradise is lost, the infant himself becomes his own ideal. Primary narcissism, saturated by omnipotence, manifests itself when the child is convinced he is sufficient in and for himself (Brunet, 2022). Moreover, the idealized self (ideal ego) of limitless primary narcissism is what the authors understands as the internal organization of omnipotence.

On the other hand, Brunet (2022) explains that the ego ideal or ego ideals guide the ego towards sublimation, stemming from reality and our limitations. Lussier's definition (quoted by Brunet and Casoni, 2007) of the ego ideal is the following:

> The ego ideal would represent what Freud considered the oedipal identifications of the infant with its idealized, or more specifically, admired parents. However, this time, they serve as models for the future Ego. (…) Contrary to the Ideal ego, the object occupies an important place in the ego ideal and it is situated closer to the axis of the possible than the Ideal ego (p.595) (Lussier, 2006; quoted by Brunet and Casoni, 2007;)[4].

[3] Our translation.
[4] Our translation.

And the definition of the superego, proposed by Lussier (2006; quoted by Brunet and Casoni, 2007) is the following:

> The superego results, essentially, from internalising the parental will, specifically in terms of the prohibitions. The superego watches over the operations of the Ego. Its way of functioning operates according to repression and the threat of guilt. It is the heir of the Oedipus complex (p.595) (Lussier, 2006; quoted by Brunet and Casoni, 2007)[5].

As Brunet explains (2022), this instance is constantly observing how the current Ego is measuring up against the Ego ideal or Ego ideals. This imposes limitations, renunciations, and repression (Brunet, 2022). The author explains that the Oedipal complex described by Freud is not so much the creator of the superego, but an organizer of the superego whose sources are rooted in a more archaic dimension. This superego would be a more developed, mature, and harmonious layer of a the more primitive, split, archaic superego instance. The fact that it entails Oedipal objects, relationships and identifications with them, will contribute (in the best of scenario) to the establishment of a regulating superego, much more subtle and silent and much less destructive than its initial split forms.

Brunet (2022) also believes that it is vital the presence of parents who have offered their symboligenic capacities to the child and have endorsed an Oedipus complex driven not only by destructiveness. It is through these new Oedipal identifications that the archaic objects will be included and integrated. Furthermore, they will enable the development of a superego that will regulate both instincts and primary narcissism as well.

[5] Our translation.

Another element, specified by Brunet (2022), and very much aligned with self-analysis is the Freudian theorisation of conflict between these different instances. The primary identification with an idealized object stemming from infantile narcissism, pulls the ego towards omnipotence on one side (ideal ego). On the other hand, the identification with a prohibitive object (superego), faces the ego to an entity that criticizes, prohibits, crushes and, in certain situations, lead to suicide. Nonetheless, the ego ideal would be thought of as serving a purpose or a function in relative harmony with the Ego, related to sublimation and of looking up to (Brunet, 2022).

To describe these instances thoroughly, responds to the fact that it is not, always, a homogeneous terrain (within the psychoanalytic literature), and we must walk through it pointing out how the authors we are drawing upon conceive the ego ideal, the ideal ego and the superego, similarly or differently. For example, Anzieu in his text « *Point de vue psychanalytique sur la structure et les fonctions du Moi* » (1987), explains how some authors merge the ego (agent of the reality principle) and, what he calls, its precocious extension the ideal ego (moi idéal in French), which correspond, according to the author, to an introjection of the narcissistic maternal omnipotence. In another direction, Marty (2003) stated that: *the role of self-analysis is what allows the processes of reorganization of the ego to continue spontaneously in the analysand* (p.71). The ego having a predominant role in self-analysis, as previously stated. Overall, we have found that the authors quoted in this essay (such as Kramer, 1959; Phillips, 2019 and Ticho, 1967) agreed with the differentiation made by Brunet (2022) and Brunet and Casoni (2007), putting a particular emphasis on the role of the ego and the conflict and tensions between the ego, the ego ideal and the superego in self-analysis.

We believe that a special consideration must be made in terms of the ideal ego (Moi ideal) and self-analysis, following Brunet's (2022) text. He points out that Freud, in 1921, brought to the forefront the narcissistic dimension of the ideal ego, making a very relevant link to mania. In manic states, the ego and the ideal ego have merged, to such extent, that the mood of triumph and self-congratulation is no longer affected or hindered by self-criticism. The ideal ego rejoices in the elimination and disappearance of prohibitions, considerations and self-reproaches (Freud, 1921; cited by Brunet, 2022). The unbridled narcissism and elimination of prohibitions, regulations, and inhibitions of the ideal ego can bring a person to a state of mania (or manic defenses) that could motorize self-analysis but at the service of these archaic and primitive desires, unrestrained narcissism, in which the other is no longer conceived or taken into consideration. The

person would perceive himself without limits and boundaries and the grandiosity of his desires and wishes could colour his thoughts in a delusional way. Therefore, self-analysis at the service of the ideal ego wouldn't follow the definition stipulated in this essay, in which the other (analyst, parents, etc.) is essential and the ego would deal, above all, with tensions and sublimation from the conflicts stemming from the ego ideal (or ego ideals) and the superego (Ticho, 1967).

If we circle back to the first model (Freud 1916 and 1923), self-analysis occurs mainly at a preconscious level and only in hindsight can one find out that it has been carried out for a while (Crisanto, 2011; Poland, 1993 and Ticho, 1967). Several authors underline the great importance that is attached to the relationship with the preconscious, as a precious source of creativity and knowledge. As mentioned before, other authors emphasize the role of super-ego but in its moralistic and persecutory aspect. For example, Ticho (1967) states that those who are predominantly influenced by a severe or persecutory super-ego might not be the best suited for the self-analytic task:

> The person who cannot accept and experience the grace, joy and light-hearted humor of his infantile tendencies, but who expects predominantly dangerous and awful discoveries is a bad prospect for self-analysis. He will not start it at all, or it may deteriorate into self-preoccupation (p.313).

Therefore, a severe conflict could lead to regression and may color with aggressiveness or libido the self-analytic task. The quality of the superego seems to be a decisive element in the nature of the self-analytic dialogue. Given the persecutory coloring of the superego and the anxieties the person might be experiencing, the self-analytic thinking might deteriorate into obsessive rumination, self-accusation, intellectualization, self-admiration or self-indulgence. Moreover, it could be mistaken for self-analysis, but it might only serve defensive purposes.

Ticho (1967) also mentions the importance of the balance between the identification processes and the optimal distance to be able to think and to grasp some consciousness about certain conflicts. He explains this by describing the effect of the work of creative artists, who try to convey human emotions in an original form. If there is no distance and one is too moved by it the effect might only be cathartic. If on the contrary, the person is able to keep a distance while being able to identify with the work and the artist then he will be able to use this information to better understand himself. For example, in the practicing analyst an obstruction in his ability for self-analysis might be reflected in his lack of motivation towards the analytic work and in analytic literature. On that same note, for Calder (1980), self-analysis has been most useful at times when the resistance to understanding himself was reduced, for example after a regression.

Crisanto (2011) mentions that self-criticism can evolve gradually to freedom and trust in oneself, with a more benign and attuned self-analytic dialogue, which would have a direct positive impact in one's work with patients. Therefore, a more subtle and less persecutory superego would allow a better integration of the knowledge grasped by self-analysis. As Poland (1993) states, we must always be cautious about the defensive nature of self-analytic conclusions. Nevertheless, cautiousness doesn't necessarily imply nihilism. According to this author, both clinical analysis and self-analysis do take place, and both work.

CHAPTER 5: PRACTICING SELF-ANALYSIS

5.1. Ways to do self-analysis

Many authors have tried to define the method or strategies with which they try to do self-analysis. Ticho (1967), for example, talks about the conditions that are most likely to produce a free flow of associations for self-analysis and he evokes everyday life situations, which are conducive to regression that can be taken advantage of, creating with progressive repetition, a habit. These situations tend to have some similarities with the analytic setting: maximum relaxation, solitude or monotonous background noise, freedom from interference and agreeable temperature. In practice, lying down in bed before falling asleep or after awakening, taking a shower or bath, traveling in a train or airplane, or driving. McLaughlin (1993) points out that what seems to be the common element in these settings is the freedom and relaxation which allow contemplation and aimless thinking while anchored in some routine activity (reinforced by familiar surroundings with its usual sights, smells and sounds). McLaughlin names these sought circumstances the 'transference sanctuaries'. Moreover, he continues talking about a peripheral awareness or sidewise looking that allows seeing what we would miss by direct looking. He further elaborates by saying:

> In the familiar safety of these known places and rituals, these sanctuaries of transference, we draw upon transitional phenomena akin to those experienced in the analytic situation, yet richer in basic sensory qualities. We tap into latent traces of our positive experiences with one or both parental figures and draw once more upon their nurturing and releasing aspects which had helped us find our earlier way, to gain affirmation and strength to face our present and assimilate our unwanted, conflictual past (p.79).

McLaughin (1993) emphasized the possibility of accessing a "psychoanalytic sanctuary", through relaxation and contemplation, in which one can find one's own voice. Perhaps one can bridge this process of accessing the psychoanalytic sanctuary with Marion Milner's definition of "increased awareness" that

she elaborates in her book “An experiment in leisure” (1936). This state is described as a heightened perception of the bodily sensations integrated with an attentiveness of being at one with the surroundings.

However, one aspect that can go against the movement of self-analysis and gaining access to an internal state of awareness could be the shame of self-disclosure. Amidst these anxieties how many fruitful discussions are avoided because of the shame of opening up and revealing one’s feelings and fears? In order to conceive ways to do self-analysis, one should also factor in what could be at stake (real and imagined) by taking a more revealing stance. Poland (1993) explains that in self-analysis one must be open to oneself but then we should aim for candor to see that self as if it were an other, allowing that the subject of one’s analyzing to submit to the “*scrutiny of self-investigative skepticism*”. Therefore, a question that arises is: how can we develop the capacity to see oneself with increasingly candor?.

Calder (1980) points out the risks of opening up with candor and sharing the psychic gains or losses of self-analysis to a broader audience. For example, he believes that by revealing and exposing his most intimate aspects he could potentially hurt himself by being in a vulnerable position. Moreover, it could hurt his patients by diminishing his anonymity and hindering their freedom in the transferential phenomena. Nevertheless, he believes there could be a significant scientific gain by revealing some of his deepest and most intimate thoughts and feelings.

If one is able to allow and submit to the scrutiny of self-investigative skepticism, Horney (1942) proposes that the process of free association would be the starting point. Expression of feeling is highly important and she emphasizes the need to abstain from reasoning while associating. For her, reason has its place in the analysis of what has emerged with the associative process, but this happens afterwards. In the same direction, Baldassarro (2007) states that self-analysis should be conceived as a starting point of any knowledge and analytical transformation, and he connects the free association process to the reverie quality in order to experience and dream the unreachable and inconceivable in ourselves:

> Self-analysis is related to the way in which the individual is linked to the other but also to the ability to communicate with a level of experience that is similar to a condition of reverie "dreaming of the incognizable other and the incognizable self". (p.144)

Calder (1980) mentioned that his method for self-analysis consists of three stages. Writing seems to be an important component. For this author, it all starts with collecting primary data or information about himself and writing it down. He follows this with his associations about that data and writing that down. Finally, he attempts to understand the primary data and the associations by giving himself the freedom to associate without having to make sense of either material and to allow comparisons at different times of his life (days, months, or years).

Ticho (1967) mentions the writing down of dreams, the countertransference phenomena, reading of psychoanalytic literature and of humanities, and self-interpretation of the analyst's response to artistic and scientific writing as different means to facilitate the self-analytical task. The choice of subject matter could be at times defined by unconscious elements that the writer might or might not be aware of. As the authors say: "*He may choose a certain topic and only during his work or after the completion, becomes conscious of the self-interpretative function of his formulations*." (p. 314). Therefore, the author must use his secondary thought process and give a clearer and more defined shape to inchoate feelings and ideas. Nevertheless, Calder (1980) mentions that dreams, in his case, proved less useful than what he originally thought. His daydreams, memories and symptoms appeared more frequently and provided more information than the interpretation of dreams.

If for each author discussed there is a preference of the material analyzed or chosen method, almost all of them highly recommended writing. For Algini (2005), writing is a medium to promote self-analysis, as 'a sprout', which springs, grows and enables a psychic potential. She states that self-analysis stems from writing and vice versa. Moreover, she mentions a specific quality of being alive, that allows giving form to inner links never experienced before or as she puts it: "*a time of self-experience, which cannot be said in*

words, which is promoted, acquired and strengthened while writing" (p.87). In a subsequent chapter of this essay, dedicated to writing and self-analysis, these ideas will be further elaborated and enriched to provide a more thorough idea of the dynamic between writing and self-analysis.

In regard to the multiple benefits of writing, Calder (1980) explains that reading again the associations made from the primary data, maybe days, weeks or months after they happened allow to gain a better perspective or find hidden meaning of the forces behind the material. A written record, as the author states, provides greater clarity and greater detail. He quotes a writer James Reston from the New York Times who says that "*he doesn't know what he thinks until he reads what he writes*" (p. 6). Moreover, there would be the secondary benefit of comparing the evolution or stagnation in dreams, memories, daydreams and symptoms.

As Sonnenberg (1991) mentions, the insights experienced through the analyst's personal growth-producing life experiences may shed new light on existing clinical mysteries. Therefore, one should not conceive the life of the analyst as constituted by multiple compartments. All experiences are or can be interrelated. Moreover, those that are seemingly disconnected could potentially be quite useful in the clinical setting by the analyst. As Calder (1980) points out, perhaps the most significant progress that self-analysis has given him is a greater sense of openness, as if more of him is available to himself.

5.2. The use of writing in self-analysis

To talk about the use of writing in self-analysis is to address a very broad subject, perhaps one that could take the form of another doctoral essay due to its vastness. The multiple types of writing (psychoanalytic writing, autobiographical writing, psychoanalytical autofiction writing, self-analytic diary writing or journaling, etc.), being referred to in the literature, cover a wide range which sometimes merges fiction and reality. It is outside the scope of this essay to complete an exhaustive classification of them and the impact of their nature in the self-analytical endeavor. It is more favorable, perhaps, to leave this section open to

different types of writing (fictional and/or non-fictional) with a certain resonance to the self-analytical task and to show how they have been, to some extent, useful to their creators in the process of gaining understanding and knowledge about themselves and others. Moreover, some key elements of writing and self-analysis will be explored to account for the psychic transformation that could potentially take place by practicing both simultaneously.

Reik (1948) considered that many first works of great writers were autobiographical. In some way, they present and share all the psychological understanding they have obtained in the process of looking within themselves. Reik implied that such material could be understood as a sort of confession and he believed that Freud's self-analytical confessions made him part of a long list of important predecessors that include: Saint Augustine, Rousseau, Goethe, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Ibsen and others. He continues by saying how writers and poets were aware of such confessional quality in their work. For example:

> Goethe's saying that his poems are "fragments of a great confession" or Ibsen's statement: "Writing means sitting in judgment upon oneself." One of these confessors, Balzac, said, "We die all unknown". Freud has made the greatest contribution in discovering this unknown self in himself and in us (Reik, 1948; p. 77).

According to this author, in a similar vein to Goethe, Ibsen or Balzac, Freud's inward movement, allowed him to understand the inner conflicts created by drives. Nevertheless, in many authors, the autobiographical tendencies wane and they became part of the background, whereas a growing interest develops towards observation of others and their problems. Again, a parallel is drawn with Freud:

> While completing The Psychopathology of Everyday Life and the Interpretation of Dreams, psychological self-dissection and psychoanalysis of others already

> appear side by side. They are treated as one process and it is no longer important which is the object, oneself or another (…). We know that much self-analysis was concealed in his [Freud's] research (Reik, 1948; p. 77).

Reik (1948) emphasizes the concealment at work in the self-analytic endeavor and in psychoanalytic writing. He underlines how there is one word missing or scarcely present (Freud being an exception) and that is the word "I". He goes on saying:

> With what fear and avoidance does the analyst write about his own method of coming to conclusions, about his own thoughts and impressions! The devil himself could not frighten many analysts more than the use of the word "I" does in reporting cases. It is this fear of the little pronoun of the first-person singular, nominative case, that accounts for the fact that reports of self-analysis are such a rarity in our literature (p.146).

Therefore, he points directly at the avoidant tendencies frequently present in psychoanalysts that inhibit the possibility of a self-analytical presentation and a more self-assumed posture. By fearing and concealing what is mostly ours and by avoiding all together to fully assume the "I" in the transmission of the self-analytical experience, we restrain ourselves and the readers from grasping a more intimate dimension of the psychoanalytic work and, more importantly, psychic change and transformative effects both in patients and analysts.

As mentioned before, in order to take a look at different types of writing and self-analysis, it might be fruitful to understand how these activities become interrelated and nurture each other. For example, the definition by Griffin (2004) of psychoanalytic writing states that it is: "*a fictional autobiographical form of writing through which a self-analytic experience is created that has much in common with the analytic*

experience created by the analyst and analysand". (p.683). This resonates, to some extent, with the definition made by the French writer Doubrovsky of psychoanalytic autofiction and developed by Faro (2021). She explains that, for this author, his texts go beyond an autobiography or a novel. It is a transitional in-between, which provides a fertile ground that, in its turn, allows the text to develop and function in and within life. For Doubrovsky (1980; quoted by Faro, 2021), the autofiction allows him to incorporate the experience of analysis, not only in the theme, but also in the actual production of the text. Seen from the perspective of this essay, it is difficult not to consider the possible self-analytic component underlying this process albeit its absence in the actual definition or as a specific objective of autofiction in itself.

As Faro (2021) explains, Doubrovsky resorts to a "self-narrative" in which he creates and recreates the analytic experience by developing a particular language and by using free association. The material thus obtained serves as a platform to new associations and to merge different temporalities. The writer aspires to convey through his writing the reflections about the analytical subject, in the immediacy of present writing.

The critiques made by Reik (1948) are also echoed and further enriched by Doubrovsky. For the French writer: "*it is in the space left empty of the narration, abandoned by the analysts, that the current development of the analysand's 'narratives' comes to be inscribed*" (Doubrovsky, 1980; quoted in Faro, 2021; my translation). Moreover, he will state that there exists in psychoanalytic writing a "*timidity of writing*" where "*no one touches the signifier*" (p. Doubrovsky, 1980b; quoted by Faro, 2021; my translation). Concealment and avoidance join the notion of a space abandoned by the analysts and a timidity (or inhibition) in psychoanalytic writing, where no one touches the signifier and, perhaps, no one dares to expose her or himself in order to show their most intimate and profound innerness.

In regard to traditional psychoanalytic writing, Doubrovsky believed it was too limited by conservative narrative structures imposed beforehand, not providing enough space or room for words to take the initiative. Therefore, this traditional writing isn't worked by the impulses of the unconscious. Au contraire, it serves to hide it or to protect it. As Faro (2021) continues to explain, Doubrovsky is more interested in

developing a way of writing not "of the unconscious" but for it. If there is a writing of the unconscious it would manifest itself through the metaphor, more precisely that of dreams. In despite of that, Doubrovsky believes there is a writing for the unconscious and this is the one that the psychoanalytical writer must give birth, develop and strive to constitute instead of simply trying to restore through words (Faro, 2021).

Here one might question to which extent this psychoanalytic writing (as the one proposed by Doubrovsky) is connected to the self-analytic writing. Perhaps it is possible to build a bridge between both by another description given by Doubrovsky. He underlines that psychoanalytic writing is not limited to literal transcription of the psychoanalytic experience, nor the effort to explain it. It is a writing that stems out of the analytic experience but goes beyond it and beyond the experience of speech. It encompasses free association, but it is capable of subtly liberating itself from a certain rigidity of the frame. As Faro (2021) underlines:

> The logic is not that of the narration, but rather an associative logic, which makes it possible to hope for a reorganization and an internal re-subjectivation. Doubrovsky, almost enchanted by this new and (self)-revealing way of investing thoughts and words, does not only internalize the process which initially requires two minds, as analysis requires: he actualizes it outside the analytic office (…) It creates a hybrid genre fluid enough to reveal the subject's presence to the subject itself, that is, *to facilitate the subject's self-revelation at the very moment it is self-revealing*. (p. 129; my translation and my cursives).

Is self-analytic writing always self-revealing? Is self-revelation the hallmark of a self-analytic breakthrough? Maybe exploring other examples of writing and self-analysis might shed more light on these questions. For example, Halton-Hernandez (2021) takes two very different authors to explore how they employ words (and sometimes images) to understand and manifest the self as a psychoanalytic subject and the self-analytic process underlying such expression. One of them is Bechdel's autobiographical work: "Are You My Mother?" (2012), while the second is Marion Milner's autobiographical and self-analytic books:

A Life of One's Own (1934), Experiment in Leisure (1937), On Not Being Able to Paint (1950) and Bothered by Alligators (2012). Both authors work in a similar fashion, exploring a different method for psychoanalysis that takes place off the couch and on the page. Their techniques include diary keeping, writing and drawing. Both Bechdel and Milner, according to Halton-Hernandez (2021), grapple with the differences between what a regular psychoanalysis can do for them, and what could be a different method for doing internal work, specifically the making of "marks on paper".

An interesting observation made by Halton-Hernandez (2021) is how Bechdel's and Milner's analysts felt that the writing of a diary was a defense. Winnicott, making reference to a regressed patient, that biographical elements point out to the possibility of being none other but Milner herself, stated:

> The meaning of the diary now became clear—it was a projection of her mental apparatus, and not a picture of the true self, which, in fact, had never lived till, at the bottom of the regression, there came a new chance for the true self to start. (p.246; quoted by Bechdel in Halton-Hernandez, 2021).

Therefore, the diary and the self-analytical writing function (for their analysts) would seem to serve as a defense against not-knowing, a denial of depending on another mind, or a need of it because there was no mind to depend on, the diary replacing the function of the good-enough mother with one's own mind. More specifically, from Winnicott's perspective, the diary (and the patient) at this point is unable to capture in words the quality of the true self because he or she is not in touch with it. They represent instead their own mental functioning and not the truthfulness and reality of their inner world (Halton-Hernandez, 2021).

For both analysts, the diary writing both expresses and promotes a faulty sense of self because it is being cut off from relations beyond the self. Therefore, it is unable to help the self fully engage with either the internal or external world. Nevertheless, Bechdel and Milner, in a sense, resist such interpretation.

According to Halton-Hernandez (2021), throughout the therapy the writing: "*is simultaneously valued and devalued as a tool for self-knowledge and experiencing that takes place on the page, and outside of the relationship to the analyst in the consulting room"* (p.248). Regardless of the posture of their analysts, both writers continued their therapies and, concomitantly, pursued their need to write and account for what they were living within and outside the session. The writing being a complement, beyond its plausible function as a defense.

It is significant that the self-analytic creative capacity is not taken into consideration in the interpretative approach of both analysts, as it promotes an often rich and nurturing relationship with the world and with oneself. It is also true that these are punctual references to the psychoanalytic processes and one cannot generalize that the analysts' point of view about self-analytic writing was strictly negative. So much so, because as Halton-Hernandez (2021) states, the diary writing can promote and bolster an alive engagement with one's inner and outer worlds that enacts internal transformation, serving the therapeutic aims the patient might be looking for. In this sense, Milner was a pioneer in shifting the notion for what 'profitable' or transformative writing about oneself is and how it might look like (Halton-Hernandez, 2021).

If for Doubrovosky the psychoanalytic autobiographic writing is conceived for the unconscious, allowing the emergence of a (self)-revealing way, one may ask how do the self-created forms of writing – in Milner's and Bechdel's case - provide a therapeutic and self-analytic function continuous for and beyond regular psychoanalysis? Halton-Hernandez (2021) believe both writers were striving to create a form of self-reparation and to compensate for the disappointments of early care and the impossibility of finding a total cure for this in an analysis. More specifically, their works provide an attuning and mirroring function: *they reflect unknown parts of themselves, and once they see these parts, they develop a more solid sense of who they are and what their inner world is like* (p.255). In addition to this, in the process of figuring out of the place of the self in relation to the other, the writer is drawn to find a place and a space for the self through the relationship with the medium (in this case, pen and paper), opening up the possibility of reshaping and redrawing their relations. Both women enrich the notion of a therapeutic relationship, not only in relation to another person, but also to a medium (Halton-Hernandez, 2021).

From a similar angle, Poland (2011) studies creativity, fictional writing and self-analysis. For him, fictionalizing is not only an alternative to recapitulating and elaborating one's own past. The conflicts imbued into stories are also a way of enacting the past by means of externalizing and facilitating displacement. The distance can favor disowning them so that they can then be played with before being reclaimed and integrated back again. An inherent question regarding writing and self-analysis is whether the writer has scrutinized himself thoroughly enough and the nature of such scrutiny (even if such process was accomplished preconsciously rather than consciously). Is he simply repetitively discharging or has he overheard himself and listened? As the author points out: "*it is the writer's own listening and integration that is a sine qua non for change to be called self-analytic*" (p. 996).

Poland (2011) explores the conditions present in regular psychoanalysis that could promote the writer to further continue the self-exploratory and self-analytic endeavor through his own creations. He points out the atmosphere of safety, relentless curiosity and unremitting honesty as some of the most relevant qualities an analyst's attitude has to offer. In self-analytic writing the emotionally safe space created when being alone with pen and paper can represent an equivalent to that offered by an analyst. However, the author warns that this aloneness does not suffice. There is, in many cases, an actual person who embodies the imagined welcoming and cared-for human other. He continues explaining that: "*individuals engaged in self-analysis, with or without originality lurking in the wings, create the analytic other whom they need, just as indeed do formal analytic patients*" (p.997; Poland, 2011). Moreover, Anzieu (1992) points out the risks of isolation that could emerge from self-analysis, expressing that in order to be fruitful it cannot and must not remain a solitary activity. If not, there is a high risk of it becoming a narcissistic consolation and/or an obsessive rumination. The author continues by stating that:

> Healing and creative self-analysis requires at least two people, one of whom is imaginary. A self-analysis cannot be effective without a witness called to be its symbolic guarantor and to protect the self-analyst from the pitfalls of his counter-transference towards his own psychic work. (p.368; Anzieu, 1992).

Even in the actual presence of another or when a third is inscribed internally, there is in self-analytic writing a "self-reflective" process. It allows seeing oneself from a distance, profoundly, without judgment and without having to pretend to be someone else. As Kelley-Lainé (2003) and Ogden (1997) explain, the self-reflective thought happens when "I" (as a subject) look at "me" (as an object). Both Ogden and Kelley-Lainé, echoed by Doubrovsky earlier in the text, underline the importance of metaphors in order bring to life a language for such internal dialogue. More precisely, a metaphor is: *a form of language in which I describe "me" so that "I" might see myself* (p.40; Kelley-Lainé, 2003). Metaphors could potentially allow us to translate or say what the unconscious experience is like and unconscious experience can only be perceived and grasped when (re)presented metaphorically. It is through dreams, reveries and symptoms that metaphors crystalize and transform what the unconscious experience is like. The creation of symbols provides mirrors in which the self as subject (I) recognizes and/or creates itself (Ogden, 1997).

For Anzieu (1992), self-analysis requires writing. He explains, that given the fact that self-analysis could be conceived as a narrative activity there are certain risks to take into account. He mentions the risk of the person being fascinated with the own content of the narrative that no further work, elaboration or critique is completed. Another risk is that the style serves the purpose of a defensive maneuver and becomes a resistance to awareness. Again, in the face of such resistances, the question arises again: Why, then, this need for writing in self-analysis? Mainly because the function of memorization, of continuity and preservation of the material is no longer ensured by the psychoanalyst's presence, attentive listening, mirroring and memory. It is the sheet of paper (the medium) that the person returns to, on which moves the surface of inscription (Anzieu, 1992).

This author continues by explaining how self-analysis draws its functioning from two conditions: first, it follows a personal psychoanalytical treatment and second, it has an aim that is both therapeutic and creative. Anzieu will underscore these two elements throughout his different works and papers on self-analysis. Especially, the fact that self-analysis is intended for and results in creative processes. For Anzieu (1992), self-analysis prior to personal psychoanalysis is mostly resistance and, also, a needed preparation for it. However, during treatment, self-analytical moments can turn out to be fruitful in the face of certain impasses. The case of Freud represents how self-analysis had a curing purpose and a creative one, the

creation of psychoanalysis. Anzieu also writes about Beckett's analysis with Bion and his own self-analysis. As he points out:

> Many creators become writers after a serious psychological crisis which obliges them to modify their way of life and work, and, if they are already writers, to change their source of inspiration and their style. To what extent can this creative crisis be considered a self-analysis? (p.369; Anzieu, 1992).

Nicolò, Tavazza and Ricciotti (2004) address the subject of psychoanalytic writing (more related to clinical cases) and its link with the self-analytic function of the analyst. They reiterate the presence of the other, previously mentioned, that they call the function of the "couple at work". This internal couple function is present not only in those moments when the analyst is alone but also when he is writing a report of a session or of an entire clinical case. This function allows him to reflect, elaborate and analyze that new object that unfolds before his eyes. In this sense, they connect this to the self-analytic function in the analyst and ask: *but aren't we still analysts of ourselves when we reread our clinical writings and analyze them?* (p.246; my translation).

It is through writing that the analyst can draw on the unspeakable and unrepresentable in the patient's dialogue. These authors believe writing crystallizes or coagulates within itself and gives voice to the chaotic, confused or uncertain elements that might have escaped in the middle of the session. Therefore, a new possibility through writing and self-analysis allows the analyst to make sense of what was not grasped in the encounter with the patient. When the psychoanalytic facts are being transcribed this allows a "psychoanalytic object" to emerge: "*whose meaning and depth, going beyond the simple representability in the linearity of the writing, will require further construction work*" (p. 246; Nicolò, Tavazza and Ricciotti, 2004; my translation). Nevertheless, we must contrast what these authors understand as "unspeakable and unrepresentable" from what we previously developed as the unrepresented states of the mind in contemporary psychoanalysis. As understood in more recent developments, to be able to fathom and shape the unrepresentable, an external object (the analyst and the analysis) is indispensable.

Moreover, for these authors, writing establishes a suspended, hybrid space of opposite qualities, that of quiet passion or concentrated wandering. In this space or state of mind one awaits for "news from the self", quoting Bollas (1986; quoted by the authors), and from the lived experience with the other. They assert that writing, considered as the final result or as the occasion to develop the self-analytic activity, constitutes an essential element of the analyst's self-care (Nicolò, Tavazza and Ricciotti, 2004). Writing can favor the self-reflexive function of the analyst who writes, allowing the emotional impact of the session to be put at a distance and stimulate the self-analytic function. To write is to facilitate the emergence of free associations of the analyst, in that specific situation with that specific patient, as a possible guarantee of a good functioning of the "couple at work". The text could also show the traces of the defensive mechanisms that escape our understanding. Finally, these authors echo previous ideas about the analysts not showing themselves, be that through writing or oral presentation: *if the analyst is not talking about the clinic, he is hiding not only from his readers but also from himself* (p.247; Nicolò, Tavazza and Ricciotti, 2004). Therefore, he is not submitting himself to the same method and rigor he demands his patients.

Anzieu (1992) and Nicolò, Tavazza and Ricciotti (2004) coincide in the idea that there is always an inherent risk and uncertainty in trying to grasp the unknown in ourselves and in others and, later, sharing it through writing or other medium. For these authors, writing is fertile if it is aware of hinting at what it does not yet know, allowing a tension between what it says and what it does not say, despite the dissonances of the forms it conveys. Anzieu, in a similar vein, asserts that:

> Writers who know in advance what they have to say affect us much less than those who venture blindly into regions of themselves unknown and who give us and give themselves to guess some indescribable reality. (p.358; Anzieu, 1992).

Nevertheless, Poland (2011) leaves a thought that shouldn’t go unnoticed. He states that what is self-analytic is not always creative, and what is creative is not always self-analytical. Therefore, not all creative

endeavors (including writing) have a self-analytic function or impact. Be that as it may, the infinite possibilities in self-analytical writing are equal to those in psychoanalytical work. As Anzieu remind us, free association and interpretations are endless. self-analysis and psychoanalysis follow one another, they mesh and get tangled and alternate between each other. The incompleteness of the psychoanalytic cure will fuel and spark the creative psychic attempts to go beyond it and discover new and unknown territories. Moreover, as Anzieu (1992) points out: "*a residual negative transference is the seed of a creative self-analysis"* (p.369; Anzieu, 1992).

5.3. The use of dreams in self-analysis

Self-analysis has an intimate relationship with dreams. It was during the writing of 'The Interpretation of Dreams' that Freud was analyzing his patients' dreams and his own, while continuing to develop the psychoanalytic theory and method. Freud tried to unravel the meaning and role of dreams, declaring them as the royal road to the unconscious (Roesler, 2023). Although the theory of transference and countertransference was still a few years ahead of him, Freud's dreams were being presented as pieces of information that showed him what he was feeling and thinking, unconsciously, about himself and about the dynamic with different patients. At that time, Freud was sharing his self-analytical findings with Fliess who served as an "imaginary other", a term coined by Anzieu (1986, 2000). As previously stated, this allowed Freud to have a psychic soundboard to explore and deepen his understanding. As Bonnet (2018) mentions, 'The Interpretations of Dreams' is a major master class in self-analysis and, specifically, Irma's injection dream is the very first example of self-analysis in history. Even though Freud's posture about dreams was that they represented an infantile wish-fulfilment, traumatic dreams later came to challenge and enrich his initial theorization. The present exploration of dreams and self-analysis will follow on one part Freud's initial ideas about dreams, and, on the other, more contemporary psychoanalytical developments proposed by different authors.

Before addressing Freud's theorization, we should briefly mention his cultural and religious background to better understand the importance he gave to dreams and self-analysis. Roesler (2023) explains that in the European context, in which Freud wrote 'The Interpretation of Dreams', the general belief was that this

nocturnal phenomenon was a casual, meaningless production of the brain. It was Freud who, in spite of this generalized posture, developed a marked interest in this psychic production and consolidated a theory that would later become a major hallmark in the psychanalytic opus. One could ask: what were Freud's sources of inspiration? As Bonnet (2018) explains, the Jewish culture and the Talmud (the book of Jewish theology and rabbinistical discussions) probably had a major influence in his interest in dreams and, especially, in dream interpretation. For example, it is quite known Rabbi Hisda's statement that says: "*An uninterpreted dream is like a letter left unopened*" (Vigée, n.d.; quoted by Bonnet, 2018). Bonnet (2018) also underlines the influence of German romanticism and authors such as Goethe, Heine, Schiller, among others. Freud read and openly admired them. Moreover, these authors valued dreams in their work and as a major source of creative inspiration. However, different to the Talmudic or romantic understanding of dreams based on symbolism, to Freud there was a very private language belonging to the dreamer. Therefore, the use of a set of pre-established symbols to understand dreams would impoverish them and mislead us when trying to decipher the particular oneiric grammar of each person (Bonnet, 2018).

Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to minutely describe Freud's complete dissertation on dreams, it is, nonetheless, useful to remember some key elements before moving into more contemporary grounds. As mentioned before, the wish-fulfillment nature of dreams comes as one (if not 'the main') conclusion drawn by Freud in 'The Interpretations of Dreams' (Mayer, 2021; Roesler, 2023). Moreover, the unconscious dream work disguises the wish, through displacement and condensation, to overcome the preconscious barrier (the first topographical model being the one developed at that moment in time). Subsequently, the dream is played out in the oneiric theater, and this would allow the desired wish to emerge in a distorted but tolerated way. The remembered dream would be known as the manifest dream, whereas the unconscious wish would be thought of as the latent (hidden) content (Mayer, 2021; Roesler, 2023). At a later moment, Freud encountered veterans from World War I and started studying repetitive traumatic dreams which challenged the sole purpose, thus far, conceived for dreams. In "Beyond the pleasure principle" (1920), he stated that the psyche is not only driven by desire and pleasure seeking. There is also a competing force against the life instinct, which struggles with aggression, annihilation, death and destructive tendencies towards oneself and others. He believed that through repetition of traumatic dreams the psyche strives to master and incorporate, albeit unsuccessfully, the traumatic events. This major change in his instinct theory significantly influenced and added new layers of complexity to dream interpretation and its comprehension.

Modern and contemporary psychoanalysis has built upon Freud's foundations on dreams and has complemented it in many ways. According to Vinocur Fischbein (2011), the tendency to regard dreams as a manifestation of unconscious wishes is becoming less and less prominent and it seems dreams are thought of as a representation of a disturbed inner state. The author explains that:

> Dreams reported in session are communicative signs, capable of being transformed into a symbolic matrix that generates processes of psychic semiosis. They are polysemous messages with an intrinsic value not entirely dependent on the analytic dialogue (p.341).

Roesler (2023), in his article, quotes the work of Gazzillo, Silberschatz, Fimiani, De Luca and Bush (2019) and the control mastery theory developed by these authors, which integrates findings from empirical dream research and contemporary psychoanalytical dream theory, stating that:

> A dream is an unconscious attempt to find a solution to an emotionally relevant concern. In dreams people think about their main worries, particularly those apprehensions they have been unable to solve by conscious thought alone and try to develop and test plans for dealing with them. From this perspective, dreams may be viewed as simple but important messages that dreamers send themselves (p.308, 2019; quoted in Roesler, 2023).

On that same note, Meyer (2021) brings forward the notion that through dreaming the psychic apparatus has developed a specific capacity to bring forward questions, difficulties and inner emotional experiences that challenge the dreamer with the vertigo of a familiar uncanniness and the complexity of the unknown.

More specifically, he states that: "*the dream is an expressive mode through which the psychic apparatus outlines, constructs and communicates an issue that it is confronted with*" (p. 261; Meyer, 2021). He mentions that dreams condense elements of experience and memory which help the unconscious to address them, readdress them, transform them, recover them, change them again and so forth. Also, he approaches dreams from a more object-related perspective stating that:

> the theoretical transformations have resulted in the dream being seen not so much as a (disguised) expression of a censored infantile desire, but more as a (disguised) expression of an unconscious phantasy (meaning the object relations that it is composed of) and of the defenses against its recognition. (…) Not only is it a via regia to the unconscious (in order to investigate it), but it also becomes a via regia of the unconscious (of its expression). It ceases to be seen in relation to an expulsive-protective perspective, which brings about relief from the economic pressure; rather, it gains an elaborative perspective focused on comprehending its meaning. (p. 260; Meyer, 2021).

In a similar vein, other contemporary authors, like Grotstein (2000; quoted in Giustino, 2009), distinguish between a dreamer who understand his dream from the one who experiences it. This author acknowledges dreaming as an intrapsychic communication. More specifically, what is communicated is the experience the dreamer has had but that he doesn't necessarily understand (Grotstein, 2000; quoted in Giustino, 2009). Mancia (1988) and Bolognini (2004), recognize that in dreams there is a constant presence of intrapsychic and intersubjective elements which could have the purpose of elaboration and communication within the consulting room and outside of it (both quoted by Giustino, 2009). Furthermore, dreams are conceived as being a source of insight (Bollas, 1987; quoted in Roesler, 2023). Bonnet (2011) underlines the inchoate and raw nature of this emerging communication: "*Dreams offer the privilege to trace the work of the unconscious in its most 'raw' and nascent state and, it is because of this, that self-analysis is still possible*" (p.14; our translation). However, this author states that it is rather sad that psychoanalysts have stopped sharing more openly their own self-analytic work, like Freud (1900) or Anzieu (1993) did. Perhaps for the sake of discretion or fear of showing themselves too much, there are less and less analysts and therapists sharing about their own symptoms, breakdowns, analytic failures, catastrophic anxieties, and so forth, from

a self-analytic perspective. In that sense, Bonnet (2011) emphasizes that it was Freud's dreams (as an analyst) that led to myriad breakthroughs in his theory and his technique.

Meyer (2021) and Bonnet (2011, 2018) remind us that a dream shouldn't be understood only as a nocturnal phenomenon, circumscribed to the time lapse in which the actual dreaming occurs. It is more precise to see it as a "*permanent elaborative process of emotional experiences (including waking ones), aiming to provide them with meaning*" (p.261; Meyer, 2021). Freud himself conceived the dream work as a process that was permanently elaborating itself, in the background of the conscious life and that the dream that emerged during the night was simply evolving out of all the moments and pieces recollected in the waking state. Bion, for example, considered dreaming a vital psychic function linked to mental growth and creativity. Based on his theory of the "alpha-function" he proposed that sense or sensual data (beta-elements) were converted into alpha-elements that provided the ingredients so the psyche would be able to concoct the dream thoughts (Roesler, 2023). Dreaming and unconscious thinking would have an inherent creative capacity for evoking new ideas and to bolster thought and psychic growth. Moreover, insights not only occur, for Bion, in making conscious the dream, but also in the process of dream-thought in itself. Going back to Meyer (2021), he also emphasizes that the extraction of meaning of the emotional experience is key in the oneiric manifestation of the unconscious phantasy. This process of extraction is destined to give meaning and to address the unresolved aspects that are part of the emotional experience.

As mentioned before, Meyer (2021) accepts the idea proposed by Freud that the dream is solution-seeking satisfaction of infantile wishes, but he goes beyond that notion. Furthermore, he doesn't agree with Donald Meltzer's proposal that the dream offers a solution or that they have a resolving character. For this author, it is an "issue" that brings alive the dream in the oneiric theater and through the dream work. There must be a conflict that demands attention in order to be identified and expressed. Only by providing some shape and communicative capacities to this issue it will then be able to manifest itself as a dream and provide some intelligibility (Meyer, 2021). Additionally, he states that an internal confrontation is the prelude before the actual constructing of the issue through the dream work. There must be a conflicting confrontation that forces the psychic apparatus to formulate it as an issue. The author explains that such confrontation: "*comes from the encounter with the perception of the existing object and the necessity of relating to it*" (p. 261; Meyer, 2021).

From a similar yet different angle, Bonnet (2011) underlines the importance of the object relation in dreams, especially in transferential dreams where the analyst is a "transference object", a term coined by the author. When the dream addresses the analyst, as a transferential object, the constructions formulated by the dream address the dreamer (himself) and (an)other. Therefore, this communication towards (an)other must be carefully contemplated in self-analysis, or more precisely, what he calls self-psychoanalysis:

> And this is also true for the dreams that we take up in self-analysis: we cannot grasp their messages if we do not take into account both those who caused them and those for whom they are unconsciously intended. This means that the work of the unconscious is a work of establishing relationships. It brings back to life ghosts who mattered in our lives, and it highlights current people who suddenly become important to us. We wouldn't fall in love if we weren't under his guidance, and conversely, we wouldn't be able to let go or grieve if he didn't do it for us. In a word, we must insist, the work of dreams does not isolate us from others, far from it, it immerses us in them, brings us back to them, and overall, it reminds us that we are nothing other than the fabric of relationships. Taking it into account in self-analysis helps to benefit from it, at least if we practice it in a lively and diversified relational context. In this regard, it would be more judicious to use the term self-psychoanalysis, rather than that of self-analysis: firstly to underline that if we cannot avoid a certain isolation and a form of introspection, it is only fleeting, in a constant coming and going leading back to others; and above all, to signify that *we are not carrying out this very particular exercise to develop infantile type theories, isolating us from the world, but to deconstruct them* (my italics and my translation; p.18-19).

Albeit the fact that Meyer (2021) and Bonnet (2018) bring forward the ever-present dynamic with internal and external objects, the necessity of relating to them seems limited as a source of conflict. Perhaps the object representation and the conflicting dynamic move forward the oneiric construction but, considering

the ideas previously developed about the non-represented states of mind, there might also be those inchoate elements to be considered in the oneiric architecture and function.

Circling back to Meyer (2021), he further elaborates by saying that the confrontation of the dream is not just reactive. In the oneiric creation, the issue is imbued with a specific interrogation about what is being experienced and is, simultaneously, an interpretation about the experience. Albeit its uncanny façade, it creates an image which reflects the perception the person has of his own psychic life and its interpretation of the psychic life of the object. Dreams would be more attuned, not to give a specific answer, but to help understand the question formulated by Laplanche (1987): "*Why at this moment of his life, his practice, his analysis, his self-analysis, why this subject at this moment*?" (p. 264; quoted by Meyer, 2021; author's translation). "*Here, my enquiry is: why this dream under these circumstances?*" (p. 264; Meyer, 2021). In that sense, the self-analytic task is to be highly attentive to the dream and to the circumstances, to not undermine the efforts that interpreting dreams demand and to do the most exhaustive decoding, considering as many details as possible.

Following Freud's ideas on the nature of dream work, Meyer (2021) underlines that the oneiric process is reigned by the laws of the unconscious. Therefore, the rational logic, which follows causality and that is regulated by linear time, is not able to apprehend or totally understand its productions. As the author states:

> We are not faced with a subjective experience that forms itself beginning with introspection, interiorization and recollection, produced by an auto-reflexive consciousness aware of its own cognizance. The issue that the dream is expressing is unconscious. It is a product of an oneiric I whose reference is the empirical I (p. 262; Meyer, 2021).

According to this author, unconscious psychic activity addresses itself as an interlocutor would, obliged to dialogue with the internalized objects. The dream represents and is a movement, a transformation, a very intimate expression of the human essence and a form of survival (Meyer, 2021). If the dreaming capacity is not capable to elicit a reformulation, actualization and transformation of persistent issues, this impossibility will hinder the dream work and we will have to deal with the psychopathology of dreams. As mentioned by Meyer (2021), the malfunctioning of the oneiric architecture will lead to traumatic, repetitive, frozen dreams that don't correspond with the dialogue of the unconscious intrapsychic activity previously mentioned. It will be more like a monologue and a monopoly of persecutory internalized objects that will impinge the elaborative qualities of the dreaming capacity (what Bion described in his works related to the lack of reverie, in which beta elements will attack the capacity to think, link and dream altogether).

In this psychic unconscious interlocution present in dreaming, what is the role of self-analysis? Meyer (2021) points out to the direction that self-analysis does not occur in a void. Preceding experience in psychotherapy or/and analysis with a qualified analyst is an essential prerequisite. It is, in part, the introjection of the analytic function of the analyst that will help pave the road for the future psychoanalytic self-analysis (Meyer, 2021) and his understanding is consistent with the ideas presented, thus far. Meyer, quoting Laplanche (1982), notes that: "*All self-analysis thus conceived must have an interlocutor*" (p.285; in Meyer, 2021; author's translation). In this sense, Meltzer (1967), emphasizes introjection of the analytic function as one of the most important objectives of analysis because it will enable the subject to perform self-analysis, conferring the person the competence to use his reflexivity in deciphering the triggers of his unconscious and his dreams (quoted in Meyer, 2021).

Therefore, the dreamer will establish an interlocution with the analytic object (embodied by analyst or former analytic figures) and the analytic self, catalyzed and sustained by the introjected analytic function of the personality. In a similar vein, Kantrowitz (2012; quoted by Meyer, 2021) states that analysis will progressively become an internalized function that will not demand the actual presence of the analyst. Without the actual presence the interlocution doesn't stop. The internal dialogue continues insofar as the analysand is capable of sustaining and elaborating the unconscious manifestations present in dreams and other forms of psychic expressions. This internalized psychoanalytic function will make self-analysis possible, aided by the analytic method, to draw upon the same associative logic that is present in the session.

Meyer (2021), in the vignette developed in his article, puts himself in the position of the patient and, at the same time, searches for a counterpart, the analyst, embodied in his analytic function. It is for this reason that self-analysis is situated in the realm of reflexibility (reflexibilité), as mentioned above (Pragier, 2012 and Meyer, 2021). However, Bonnet (2011) also warns us, as Meyer does, that we cannot do a self-analysis completely on our own. He goes in the same direction as Anzieu, who stated that "*there is no possible self-analysis if what emerges isn't shared and spoken about with (an)other*" (my translation; p. quoted by Bonnet, 2011).

Be that as it may, dream interpretation from a self-analytic perspective requires the person to be in the position of observer of himself. Guillaumin (2012) explains that this divide is "*realistic and functional to the service of internal differentiation*" (p. 151; quoted and translated by Meyer, 2021). The observant part faces another part which is in distress, unwell, which is the part that is being observed. Between these two parts, according to Guillaumin (2012), there is an interiorized mutuality. Meyer (2021) believes this concept proposed by Guillaumin echoes the concept of container–contained described by Bion. More specifically, in self-analysis there would be an "*unfolding" of this unity (container–contained), but without unmaking the unitary character produced by the conjunction*" (p.265; Meyer, 2021).

Is dream interpretation, from a self-analytic stance, beneficial? If we circle back to Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams', the correspondence with Fliess, and his monumental discoveries thereafter it is quite evident the inestimable value stemming from the self-analysis of his dreams. As Bonnet (2011) explains, it contributed enormously to the theoretical and technical development and, also, Freud found relief to myriad symptoms (gastrointestinal disorders, migraines, heart discomfort) and his phobic fears of traveling by train. Bonnet asks (2011) "*can anyone who analyzes their own dreams today hope for the same*?". The answer to this very pertinent question might depend on the dreamer, his internalized objects and his unrepresented mental states. Nevertheless, it is important to underline, as we have previously done in this essay, that a thorough psychanalytic process is recommended to develop the psychic flexibility and capacity to entertain such a painstaking labor. Furthermore, Bonnet (2011) explains that our dream activity is continuous and never ending, even during the day and in silence it influences the course of our thoughts without us realizing it. Therefore, dreams have a bigger impact than we are willing to admit and dream

interpretation opens the way to new interactions, creative linking, problem-solving, mood regulating, greater flow of energy and symptom reduction (Bonnet, 2011; Roesler, 2023).

CHAPTER 6: SELF-ANALYSIS AND THE ANALYTIC PROCESS

6.1. Identification with the analyst and the analytic process

Self-analysis needs to exist in a dialogue with another (Anzieu, 1992; Campbell, 2017; Kantrowitz, 2012; Meyer 2021; Poland, 1993), and, above all, a previous analytic experience is highly recommended. In a formal analysis, self-serving reflections by the analysand are calibrated and corrected as the images are filtered and refracted through the analyst's eyes. According to Poland (1993), this lending of the eyes is the needed "other" that will progressively allow the patient to identify with the analyst and to start developing his capacity to look differently and to seek the truth within himself.

In a similar vein, Ticho (1967) and Kantrowitz (2012) explain the process of self-analysis in terms of the introjection of the analyst during and after the psychoanalytic treatment is completed. More specifically, Ticho (1967) explores the integration of three analytic functions leading to the skill of self-analysis. He states that the patient must identify with the following psychoanalytic functions: free association, objective and respectful listening and interpretation. According to this author, the final organization of these three functions into a unified whole must be achieved by the patient on his own and this phase usually begins with a disappointing reaction. This disappointment reaction varies in intensity and the progression towards self-analysis will depend on the final outcome of this phase. The author, however, does not elaborate on this disappointment and it leaves us wondering what this reaction is about and how it affects the development of the self-analytic skills.

In regard to the first skill, free associations, Ticho (1967) explains that the capacity to do so is acquired during the analytic process. Moreover, it is through the understanding of the obstructions to free association (the resistances) that the patients obtain intellectual and emotional knowledge about the obstacles and the patterns that emerge from such blockage. Understanding these patterns is a key aspect in future self-analysis, as it will allow the person to have a healthy mistrust of automatic responses given to certain

situations. About the second skill the author elaborates on the importance of maintaining an open mind in order to listen to all the associations that could arise and to keep them as potential sources of information even if they don't necessarily make sense or are somehow obscure. Furthermore, it is with the third skill, the interpretation skill, that a person will be, towards the end of an analysis, better suited to make use of conscious and preconscious material for remodeling of the ego, as Freud stated in "Analysis Terminable and Interminable".

In terms of identification with the analytic process, Ticho (1967) describes the quality of self-analysis by explaining how at the beginning, or just after finishing the analysis, the analyst's words and presence are exactly remembered. It seems that as time progresses the analyst is less predominant in the picture and memory and the content of former (and new) interpretations remain in an objective, re-integrate form. Thus, the analysand is less dependent on the fantasied role of the analyst. Therefore, it is worth considering the nature of the identification with the analyst and the analytic process in the development and consolidation of the self-analytic skills in the analysand.

Ticho (1967) mentions the tendency of self-analysis as one that might be at service of resistances during and after analysis. Nevertheless, he mentions that when it happens in the termination phase it may be a sign of a development, perhaps that necessary identification, that analysts should encourage and shouldn't obstruct by ruling it out under the etiquette of defensiveness. Here an interesting question arises: is only self-analysis which occurs during the termination phase non-defensive? Why should it be that self-analysis done during analysis or maybe even before have a connotation of resistance?

Here we must address not only the identification of the patient with the analyst but of the analyst himself to the analytic process and to his own psychic reality, to his theoretical background and his analytic vision. Bernardi and De León (1992) affirm that a positive disposition towards self-analysis allows the analyst to become aware of the assumptions that color his vision based on his own psychic reality. Self-analysis would

allow tuning into the “personal equation of the analyst” reinforcing respectful listening and interpretation. They add that the disposition towards self-analysis helps the analyst bear the idea that his way of seeing things is not the sole way to analyze and that the patient could have transited a very different analytic path (for example, with another analyst). This creates more space for difference, diversity of thought and freedom towards the new.

Moreover, these authors emphasize that the way the analyst relates to his theoretical corpus is even more important in self-analysis than the theories themselves. The disposition towards self-analysis allows for convictions, theoretical and technical, to emerge and be treated openly in a state of free associations that reduce the limitations posed by the secondary thought process. Over-valued ideas, doubts, inhibitions to create, blind spots among others demand rigorous self-analysis to regain clarity and emotional freedom. Difficulties arise when theories and convictions are held with such rigidity or fixation that they cannot be treated as fantasies. These last ones would require, to a certain extent, some regression and the psychic permeability that comes with it. If theories cannot be spaces of transformation, they cannot be lively and malleable and they cannot nurture the patient or the analyst (Bernardi and De León, 1992).

6.2. Countertransference and enactments

Freud (1910), on his developments on countertransference, had a vision that the feelings a patient could evoke in the analyst had to be managed and/or resolved rather than be used as a valuable source of information. As mentioned previously, and as Mitchell (1993) points out, the evolution of this perspective was partly because of the works of Paula Heimann (1950) and other contemporary authors who were able to convey how the manifestation of the analyst’s own dynamic and subjectivity was not only unavoidable but also not necessarily regrettable. Therefore, the exercise of self-analysis can be understood as a valuable tool in analytic listening that would allow a more thorough comprehension of the transference-counter-transference interactions. It is by acknowledging how the deepest levels of the analyst’s psyche become activated, and perhaps provoked, in the analytic process, that one can fathom the positive impact of

exercising self-analysis in a more disciplined, rigorous, and tangible way. By doing so this could potentially provide gains in accessing the patient's struggles and the analyst's conflicts.

The analyst's self-analysis is an ongoing inner process, which is triggered and sustained by his analytical work and by the unexplored parts of his personal analysis (Baldassarro, 2007). However, as Davide Lopez (n.d.; quoted in Baldassarro, 2007) states: "*self-analysis is not only an awareness of oneself but the living embodiment of our own universality*" (p.21). According to M. and W. Baranger (p. 529; quoted by Bernardi and De León, 2007), we all have an intimate countertransferential dictionary so to speak. In it we shall find, in clear and formulated fashion or an inchoate and unformulated one, bodily experiences, fantasies of movements, flashes of images, and so forth. They will guide the moments when we switch from a free 'floating attention state' to a more perspicacious and questioning regard to interrogate what is happening in the field. Therefore, not all that happens in the analyst mind is due to projective identifications coming from the patient, it can also be his own universality, including blind spots, defensive use of his theoretical and technical repertoire and limitations (Bernardi and De León, 2007).

Part of the literature on self-analysis addresses the engagement of the analyst in enactments and how it resonates with the analyst's and the analysand's past (McLaughlin, 1993; Poland, 1993; Sonnenberg, 1991). Nevertheless, in psychoanalytic literature regarding countertransference, one finds a great deal of articles dealing with enactments but only sparingly is self-analysis addressed. This is surprising given the fact that by using self-analysis the therapist discovers the roots of his reactions and how the dynamic with the analysand's unconscious could have triggered such responses. McLaughlin (1993) believes that the ongoing impact of clinical work with patients is possibly the main driver for the self-analytic dialogue in the analyst. More specifically, he states:

> I see our clinical work as the compelling motive [for self-analysis], especially for those analysts whose need to do therapeutic work with others derive from adaptive and reparative urgencies learned in mastering troubled relations with primary others of their childhood. Such a therapeutic investment fosters the deep

> involvement necessary for significant analytic work. At the same time, it may well lead to a revival of conflict in the face of fresh provocation (p.64).

Moreover, McLaughlin agrees with Poland (1993) in specifying that it is the heightened psychic tension in the analytic relation the immediate driver that impels us to engage in a self-analytic dialogue. However, if Sonnenberg (1993) states that self-analysis can be considered as self-discipline and the capability to engage in it seen as a daily routine, McLaughlin (1993) expresses that this does not come as a habit to him. It is more while experiencing some degree of anxiety or uneasiness that he has been able to become more aware of the need to do some self-analysis. For example, he explains that if he is withdrawing from the process or caught up in a more regressive enactment, those are taken as signals in order to pursue some self-analytic reflections outside the analytic setting. Therefore, while some authors think of self-analysis as a continuous habit other portray it as an activity more circumscribed to particular impasses in the transference-countertransference dynamic.

In connection to these ideas, Poland (1993) mentions another way in which patients have an influence in the analyst's self-analysis. He states that patients are major contributors to the therapist's self-analysis not only because of the regressive elements and entanglements but also because they have their own perceptive qualities and they repeatedly show the analyst aspects of himself he would rather not know. Therefore, they are a significant source of information to the analyst in his quest to better understand the therapeutic process and himself. Along the same lines, Bernardi and De León (1992) emphasize that it is expected from the analyst to keep a self-analytic activity that nurtures his professional and personal life and also to remain humble and open to the possibility of returning to analysis whenever he or she finds it necessary.

Grinberg and Lichtmann (1981; in Bernardi and De León, 1992) warn us that any access to the unconscious through self-analysis is always incomplete and hindered by the compromises in order to reach the conscious thought. Therefore, one might ask, why bother? As Bacciagaluppi (2010) mentions, one's training analysis may prove in retrospect to be incomplete or inadequate. Even if it was a good enough analysis some issues

may emerge again and require being re-examined. Thus, the solution may lie in a more thorough self-analysis and maybe, in some cases, further analysis.

CHAPTER 7: THE USE OF SELF-ANALYSIS AS AN ANALYTIC INSTRUMENT

7.1. Development and evolution of the self-analytic skills

Following the ideas previously stated, self-analysis could be a consciously pursued aim of a training or therapeutic analysis, not only during but also after it has ended (Bacciagaluppi, 2010; Calder, 1980). In addition, Calder (1980) suggests that self-analysis can be considered an important goal of psychoanalytic education and, hence, the aim of each psychoanalytic institute for its candidates. He asserts, enthusiastically, that by giving self-analysis the respect it deserves and room for its development, it will be worthwhile and there won't be regrets about it.

In exploring the reasons that promote the emergence and the development of self-analysis, Ticho (1967) explains that while the factors are not widely known he believes there are two major driving forces. The first would be the tensions that might arise between the ego and the ego ideal or ego ideals. However, he says any kind of tension between psychic structures could motivate such internal dialogue. The second driving force would be the gains, already experienced in psychoanalysis, of resolving neurotic suffering and conflicts. More particularly, the gratification of mastering conflicts, rise of self-esteem and the observation of one's growth would make self-analysis a never-ending process. In fact, the feeling of competence could provoke a change in self-concept and this could bring about new tensions between a hierarchically higher level between the ego ideal or ego ideals (Idéal du moi) and the improved self-image. Perhaps the increase of energy, mental space and creativity, by the resolution of neurotic symptoms, would add other benefits that could drive the person to pursue self-analysis.

Ticho (1967) also specifies listening as a major element that helps develop and consolidate self-analysis. With his abstinence and neutrality, or as he calls it 'the rule of the reality principle', the analyst helps the analysand tolerate frustration and augment his capacity for delay. Moreover, with this attitude, the patient gains mastery of himself, avoiding the use of the therapeutic situation to satisfy his own infantile needs.

The listening analyst provides unconditional respect to whatever suffering the patient is having, even when it could be considered futile, distorted and objectionable. The identification with a listening analyst who respectfully maintains the rule of reality principle and is, nevertheless, present with his understanding and with the belief that the patient has the resources to find his own answers and solutions will prove key in the continuation of analysis through the form of self-analysis. Furthermore, the ending of the therapy can be encouraged by indicating to the patient the possibility of utilizing the instruments of therapy on his/her own, namely by carrying out self-analysis (Bacciagaluppi, 2010).

Although the aforementioned elements can bolster and consolidate the self-analytic skills, other authors mention how crises are moments when self-analysis can reach new depths (Anzieu, 1992) and evolve into a more thorough and profound understanding of the psychic tension and global situation. As Ticho (1967) points out:

> While crisis situations are least favorable for self-analysis, they nevertheless may provide a strong motivation afterwards. But very often anxiety is avoided by various unconscious defensive maneuvers. If these maneuvers are not sufficient to ward off anxiety, more pathological devices are called into action. Self-analysis is possible only when this sequence is held in abeyance and will be most successful the sooner the circle is interrupted. Therefore, the ability to delay, to tolerate anxiety, achieved during analysis, and the identification with the analyst who abides by the rule of reality principle are of utmost importance for self-analysis (p.312).

Even though a thorough analysis an important element for the development and progression of self-analysis, the analysand has to acquire it by himself. It is through the resolution of neurotic conflicts and the working through of the separation from the analyst that this will be able to happen. This independence can only be achieved when the analysand is on his own. As Ticho (1967) explains: "*The relationship with the analyst as a person who listens and interprets has to be given up, and the selective ego-identifications with the*

analyst's analyzing functions have to become a stable and autonomous part of the ego ideal and the ego" (p. 311). Campbell (2017) adds that the development of the patient's capacity for self-analysis within the analytic session contributes to their creative and independent thinking during and after the analysis, which prepares them for a fuller life after analysis ends.

Demos (1993) in her article about the developmental capacities and foundations underlying self-analysis, partially agrees with the ideas advanced by Ticho (1967) and Campbell (2017). She emphasizes the importance of positive affects that motivates the search and exploration within ourselves. She explains that motivation for self-analysis cannot rely solely in the wish to be liberated from painful experiences and neurotic conflicts. That wish won't suffice because alone it would lead to the desire to control external situations. She states that the capacity for self-analysis has the potential to evolve if excitement and enjoyment has been experienced in the process of exploring and understanding oneself and if the caregivers and the analyst have nurtured such state of mind.

Can self-analysis evolve and, with it, new insights be achieved? Ticho (1967) seems to believe that there is more of a working through of new derivatives of the same repetitive patterns that would allow more extensive understanding of known neurotic conflicts. Nonetheless, there are other authors, such as Poland (1993), who wonder whether character changes could be achieved through self-analysis. Moreover, Anzieu (1992), Bacciagaluppi (2010), Calder (1980) and Reik (1948) believed self-analysis might help one to discover something new not only about oneself but also in psychoanalytic dynamics or genetics. They evoke Freud's self-analysis as one of the foundations for all his analytic discoveries and they remark that as the more unauthentic self diminishes, the more the real self becomes invested with interest, creativity and purpose.

Here it is worth mentioning Horney's and Fromm's posture about analysis and self-analysis. Horney underlined that it should not only have the aim of the removal of symptoms, of gaining "freedom from", but also should strive at developing one's best potentialities, "freedom to" (Bacciagaluppi, 2010). Fromm stated that the goal of analysis and self-analysis is the attainment of being rather than having. As many

authors previously mentioned, Fromm thinks it is preferable for self-analysis to be preceded by analytic work with a competent analyst. He also emphasized that a patient that has learned enough to make use of the self-analytic tools should begin analyzing himself. Furthermore, it is a lifelong task that we continue doing until the day we die. Fromm, like Horney, also considered the possibility of self-analysis from the start of the analysis. Or as Fromm puts it, to feel around rather than to think, trying to avoid the danger of intellectualizing (Bacciagaluppi, 2010).

Another question related to the evolution of self-analysis is whether it is terminable or interminable. Poland (1993) asserts that at first glance it would seem it is interminable. However, if one takes self-analysis of analytic entanglements, there is the resolution of problematic engagements by analysts at work and these would have a specific beginning, middle and end. Therefore, the origin, development and evolution of self-analysis vary according to the different contexts in which it may arise, being a significant tool for psychic discernment and more thorough understanding.

7.2. The impossibility of the self-analytic discourse. Paradoxes and controversies.

As Campbell (2017) and Calder (1980) state, self-analysis remains complex, controversial and an elusive exercise. This is probably the reason why it has been neglected for so many years. Nevertheless, different authors have addressed the variety of opinions concerning self-analysis (Crisanto, 2011; McLaughlin, 1993; Ticho, 1967). In regard to this debate some consider the self-analytic task impossible, while others underline how the aim of a regular analysis would be to develop the capacity for self-analysis. There doesn't seem to be a consensus in terms of its possibility or impossibility, but many have tried to outline how to do it. For example, Frayn (1996) believes it is possible and he mentions two different ways in which self-analysis can be done. The first would be through self-reflection and the second one would be through dream analysis. He also includes in this last method slips of the tongue, symptoms, daydreams and memories. This author also specifies that the rational mind is not the best guide and calls in for what he calls the "internal wisdom". Moreover, he considers that the best moment to do self-analysis would be during a crisis or during a critical period of the analyst's life, for example during or after an illness. Another way would be through the enactments a therapist might have with a particular patient.

Crisanto (2011) is another author who believes self-analysis is possible done alone and in the presence of others. In his article, he evokes the saying from another analyst who explained to him that self-analysis has to do with the therapist's capacity to play alone. This Winnicottian phrase makes us evoke the paper "The capacity to be alone" and the maxim about being able to be alone in the presence of others. Poland (1993) joins this posture going further and acknowledging that every analysis develops within, what he calls, a pair of resonating and interactive self-analysis. The patient's self-analysis being the manifest one and the analyst's being the silent one. Likewise, to be a person is always to be alone and to be, simultaneously, in the presence and in relation with others. Therefore, as he states it, "*the loneliness of self-analysis unfolds in the fabric of otherness"* (p.234).

It's a paradox that self-analysis cannot be completed alone. Many authors stress that we must be in the presence of an internal image of our own analyst or with patients, like the ones mentioned by Anzieu (1986, 1992 and 2000), that are our "imaginary doubles" or mirrors that reflect the transference and countertransference. However, Crisanto (2011) explains that a person is not necessarily alone if he is capable of being with himself. As if the internal dialogue would be between an "I" immersed in the experience and an "I" observant. Poland (1993) reflects on this paradox, which basically considers the necessity of having the presence of the other in order to be able to consolidate that inner dialogue. He ponders:

> What other eyes are available for a person alone so that inner vision can yield to re-vision, so that re-vision can lead on to in-sight? Without the benefit of "other eyes" is such a thing as self-analysis truly possible? And, if as I believe it is, then how can it come about by one person alone? (p.220).

This author continues his reflection:

> We ask whether and how a self-analysis can exist, indeed, whether a self can exist, apart from the universe of others. We ask how can there be a self-analysis without the presence of others, and, as an unavoidable parallel, also how there could be a dyadic clinical analysis without having at its center one soul's self-analysis in the presence but apart from the analyst/other (p.223).

Poland (1993) addresses the presence of two beings in analysis that remain separate people. Part of the clinical success is realizing that intimacy exists within a framework of separateness, which has been named "intimate separation" (Stone, 1961; quoted by Poland 1993). This acceptance and mutual respect of two separate people connected in shared contact, but apart in selves, replaces a fantasied symbiosis, according to the author. Moreover, he goes on elaborating on the presence of other within ourselves. He explains how we are shaped by ghosts of "others" that we could have never known. Therefore, the part of ourselves that we wish to analyze and the aspect of ourselves that does the analyzing have both assimilated and unassimilated others. As he continues, our selves are the others and at the same time as they are the most genuine of ourselves, that are not the others.

This author explains that in considering self-analysis people tend to err in two ways. The first one being the split between the subject-object, more specifically, in considering that the self and object exist apart from a relationship. The second error is to fail to make a subject-object split, that is as if one assumes that the other is part of the self and the self is part of the other. Even if these two premises seem to contradict themselves, Poland (1993) invite us to assume both as real and as needed aspects to conceive the internal dialogue of self-analysis.

This paradox about self-analysis can even be extrapolated to the process of analyzing others. Poland (1993) reflects on the use of the word analyzing when applied to one and to others and he continues his thoughts going as far as to question who could truly be analyzed within an analysis:

> When we say that we analyze a patient, and when we say that we analyze ourselves, do we even use the same word in both instances or are we using a single word symbol to stand for two importantly different meanings? "Analyzing" when applied to the search for inner truth in oneself, and "analyzing" when applied to the professional technician's efforts to help another in the other's own search, are not identical. In the sense of true knowing rather than knowing about, analyzing refers to the self-knowledge that arises within. In appreciation of the private nature of inner experience and self-knowledge, it has taken provocatively that the only person in an analysis an analyst can analyze is himself (p.224).

All these ideas about the paradoxes and controversies regarding self-analysis open up a rich debate about its possibilities or impossibilities and about the need to further understand the presence and meaning of the "other" in the consolidation of the self-analytic dialogue.

7.3. Assessment of self-analysis

In assessing self-analysis one can take as a reference clinical analysis. Both must demonstrate genuine inner change and outer opening subsequent to emotional work for one to say that analysis has taken place. As Poland (1993) underlines, self-absorption is not self-reflection and self-reflection is not by itself self-analysis. Moreover, there seems to be a continuum for this author from conscious awareness of a feeling to reflection, to deeper reflection to profound opening of buried memories with increasingly candid and even merciless self-exposure.

Poland in evaluating the depth of self-analysis, and even of clinical analysis, explains that the insights and understandings gained from both forms are partial. One must always ask how far self-analysis has gone beyond a self-satisfying self-reflection. More specifically, how much and in what ways an insight is authentic and how much and in what ways that same insight serves to protect against deeper exposure and a more profound confrontation with inner conflicts.

In terms of assessing the effects generated by the self-analytic practice, McLaughlin (1993) specifies three aspects he takes into account. The first one is the effect that self-observation has had on the work with a particular patient and, beyond that, how this self-analysis has had an impact in working with all of his patients. The second element or criteria for assessing the usefulness of the self-analytic approach is the mutative effect it has had in the analysis of a particular patient. He cites an experience with a woman who he treated which became extremely difficult because of her dismissal of all interpretations and continuous sense of despair. After an impasse with her, McLaughlin (1993) went on to self-analyze his resistances and this allowed him to be more available to her suffering. Over time she was able to express that she had perceived a change but she had monitored it warily for a long time because she wanted to make sure that it was real. The last indicator this author mentions is the discernable transformation of cumulative change that is perceived by family, colleagues and others and whether those perceptions are consistent with how the author conceives himself.

7.4. Dangers and limits of self-analysis

As Mitchell (1993) reflects, the difficulty of writing about self-analysis can go against the usual tendency of the analyst to be centered in others. Therefore, "*practicing and writing about self-analysis can be fraught with the dangers of a defiant reclaiming the spotlight and the bursting forth of a thwarted exhibitionism*" (p. xvii). His reflection goes further when he questions whether analysts can be "analysts to themselves" with the same rigor, dedication and understanding that we provide to our patients. However, Sonnenberg (1991) provides a counterpoint when he states that self-analysis and self-analytic writing can be done in a non-exhibitionistic way. By sharing private but meaningful information one is describing the life and the

work of the analyst. For this author to share the heart of what the profession is and to write sincerely about who we are is essential to the advancement of our science.

If strong resistances arise, the optimal distance and capacity to maintain the critical faculty is hindered and this touches directly upon the limitations of self-analysis. Ticho (1967), quoting Freud, accentuates the fact that even if analytic understanding occurs the person might be prematurely satisfied and, therefore, not able to realize that something more unconscious, more primitive and more painful is lurking under the conscious realization that just happened in him. Incompleteness is an element that must be assumed as part of the self-analytic process, as is the case with regular psychoanalysis. Another limitation that the author specifies is the fact that most free associations are not verbalised and this would encumber the possibility of crystallizing an insight. This last limitation must be thought of because immediately the author goes on to talk about different means for self-analysis including the writing of dreams. Is verbalisation of free associations the only way to get a clear insight? What can be said about images or smells? There is always some process of verbalisation in the translation of psychic stimuli even if this one is not done out loud.

Guillaumin (1995) in his article about Ferenczi and his work related to countertransference and self-analysis, explains how countertransference did not have a proper place within the Freudian metapsychology. Freud's reticence to delve into this phenomenon made it almost impossible for his disciples to pursue that avenue and one of the few who did try to work it through was Sandor Ferenczi. Taking as reference his clinical journals, Guillaumin gives an example of what could shows us the limits and the danger of self-analysis, when is serving other purposes that could hinder the understanding and clinical work with patients. As he states:

> As for self-analysis, of which Sándor had a certain habit, it became, in his last years, assisted by his Clinical Journal in 1932, almost compulsive. It became more and more obsessively directed to detect and reduce his own counter-transferential attitudes, even to the extent of trying to cancel them out by reversing them into their opposite. He opposed a sort of voluntarism or deliberate

> behaviors to the experiences of affect and thought that emerged, given his anxiety of being moved or being passively stalled because of uncertainty, an uncertainty that he will be secretly recognized but that he could not decipher and that he would let it work and manifest through silence (…) agreeing not to act upon it or discharge it (p.165).

Another psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who was, initially, a close disciple of Freud, became known for many innovating ideas and, especially, for his Red Book which was published posthumously in 2009. This work, that wasn't intended to be published, was a compilation of clinical and personal notes. In it, Jung sought a direct confrontation of his unconscious through vision, fantasies, images and dreams. Although this theoretical essay focuses on mainstream contemporary psychoanalysis, we believe future studies could benefit from delving into different self-analytic practices completed by other psychoanalysts, such as Jung and Ferenczi, among others.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSING TWO EXAMPLES OF SELF-ANALYSIS

8.1. Who is dreaming who? or the importance of being dreamt

À l'inconnu[6]

Suéñame, que me hace falta.
(Alfonsina Storni, 1938)[7]

In Gérard Bonnet's book, "*Inconscient et culture*" (2011), the author refers to a rather curious example of self-analysis completed by Didier Anzieu. This example originally appeared in a text by Anzieu titled "*L'esprit, l'inconscient. Contribution a une méthode d'autoanalyse*" published in 1993. Succinctly, a person close to Anzieu invites him to participate in an odd experiment: a stranger or anonymous person will think about him, profoundly, for 21 nights. This, apparently, could have a positive impact on the person being thought of. It is worth mentioning that, at that moment, the French psychoanalyst had developed Parkinson's disease and, as we will see, this played an important role. Anzieu not only took part in this quirky and peculiar practice, but he also wrote in his journal (every day during the experiment), what his thoughts, feelings, recollections and associations were. To elaborate this example both sources have been taken into consideration (Anzieu, 1993 and Bonnet, 2011)[8]. Albeit the fact that we cannot address all of the diary entries the author made, we will consider a significant part of the self-analytic work completed by this French author throughout the 21 days and we will discuss, from a self-analytic angle, its usefulness, the role of the other in self-analysis, the evolution of the psychic material that emerged, the inevitable exposure that self-analysis entails and the self-consciousness that Anzieu faced.

[6] As it is written in the original text by Anzieu (1993), this dedication refers to Anzieu's stranger (in French 'un inconnu') and we wonder if, maybe, it could also hint at the unknown (in French 'l'inconnu'). In any case, we dedicate it to those who are capable of dreaming others profoundly and to the unknown that, perhaps, is dreaming us.

[7] Argentinian poet, Alfonsina Storni, wrote this in her last letter to her son before taking her own life. "Dream me, because I need it". 'Dream me' shouldn't be confused with dream *about* me ('sueña conmigo'). One could interpret 'dream me' as an act closer to keeping her alive through her son's reverie. Source: https://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/storni/acerca/montero.htm

[8] Our translations to English will be used for both texts.

We will start by explaining, in more detail, the proposition. One day, a young analyst named 'Eiffel' (a pseudonym given by Anzieu), mentions to him that a 'therapist', she had recently met, had a rather curious practice. This woman wakes up quite early and, at 4 am in the morning, thinks profoundly of someone who she hasn't met. She only knows their name, addresses and their professions, and she does so gratuitously. Nevertheless, she reserves herself the right of accepting or refusing any person proposed for this "cure". After 21 days, an improvement in the person's well-being seems to manifest. Anzieu accepts Eiffel's suggestion. He asks her to let him know if the "cure" will take place and when it will begin, in order to be attentive to the eventual effects it could have on him. That same day, in the afternoon, while sharing teatime with his entourage, Anzieu explained the details Eiffel gave him and added: "*the experience lasts 21 days, after which I will be cured from my Parkinson*" (Anzieu, 1993; p.467). The author points out that it became evident to him, at that very moment, how this experiment came with a strong desire of healing from this incurable malady, him being also aware of how impossible this illusion was. The experiment begins and Anzieu shares his 21 entries, one by one. As mentioned earlier, it is beyond the scope of this essay to elaborate on each and every one of these night entries. Nonetheless, multiple entries (if not the majority) will be addressed, and the overall evolution of this experience will be discussed.

The day the experiment begins, Eiffel calls Anzieu to let him know it will start that night. He describes that he is excited and anxious, but he is able to forget about it and move on with his day. He wakes up with his usual morning morosity, not knowing if he will be able to complete all of his obligations. He might not be able to do what he wished to do or feels he must do. However, in an instant, he remembers the "guérisseuse" (healer) and his vision changes drastically: "*there is someone thinking about me, without any reason, without demanding the same. Joy takes over my morose state, and optimism conquers defeatism"* (p.467). This makes him feeling better.

Without continuing much farther, we could stop describing this experiment and arrive at the premature conclusion that it is a case of suggestibility and its effects are explained from a placebo effect standpoint. As valid and real as this could be (this being the influence of suggestion), we are interested in how Anzieu, a highly seasoned and experienced analyst, willingly participates and navigates such experience. We believe

Anzieu 'lend himself to the game', so to speak, despite the possibility of suggestion. Moreover, he shares his intimate thoughts, recollections and feelings with an open disposition that echoes a statement mentioned early in his paper: "*Discretion is incompatible with the exercise of self-analysis*" (Anzieu, 1993; p.464). But, perhaps, we must continue delving into the sequence of the other 20 nights that, eventually, will lead us into a more complete discussion of this self-analytic experience and its overall results.

In the Night 2 entry, Anzieu recalls plenty of things, including the stranger, his writings on Samuel Beckett's creativity and how this writer's psychic evolution progressed better with an analyst absent in real life but present in his fiction, than an analyst in flesh and bone. Anzieu has an internal debate as well: " *I don't believe in spirits, but I have to be honest with myself: I believe without believing*" (…) "*From the second night, this unknown person who thinks of me, or more precisely, who I think thinks of me, does me good*" (p. 468). This sequence of written thoughts makes us aware of how Anzieu is feeling at the beginning of this experience. He thinks of the stranger, he evokes his work on Beckett's creativity and his analysis, and he ends up addressing his ambivalent confession about believing in spirits.

To provide some context, in 1934 when Samuel Beckett was 27, he began an analysis with Wilfred Bion for two years at the Tavistock Clinic (Connor, 1998). At that time, Beckett was struggling with the death of his father, a stagnation in his writing and the monopolizing and oppressive demands of his mother. Beckett was plagued by psychosomatic afflictions, panic attacks and bouts of overpowering depression. Although there are many speculations about his analysis with Bion, Anzieu points out in his writings that, perhaps, Beckett's rupture with Bion, with his analysis, with his mother, his mother tongue, England, among other things, was a way to recoil from the suffocating maternal presence to find a more ludic and transitional space in Paris (Anzieu, 1983; quoted by Connor, 1998). Anzieu, drawing upon the notion of the imaginary twin proposed by Bion, brings forward the following idea that:

> For each of these creators [Beckett and Bion] the other seems to have been his secret imaginary twin...the complementary double who constitutes a decisive stage in the creative process (Anzieu 1989, p.168; quoted by Connor, 1998).

Although we won't delve further into Anzieu's writings on Beckett, Bion and their creativities, we can draw certain parallels between self-analysis, Anzieu's stranger and the role of the other (real and/or fantasied) as an imaginary twin or complementary double. It is important to underline that Anzieu acknowledges his ambivalence and hesitation by saying he doesn't believe in spirits, but he believes without believing. The imaginary other (the stranger) is doing him good and he knows it. Perhaps, it is so because he believes it. Moreover, there is some distance from his speculation and projection (the person *who I think* thinks of me) and the transitional nature allows for it to exist without it being unsettling.

In Night 3, Anzieu is awake at 4 am like the stranger to observe what happens at that precise moment. He shares that after closing his window and going to the bathroom, he fell asleep until 9 am, something he hasn't done in ages. After the third night, his curiosity becomes more evident in terms of the stranger and the impact she has on him. There is a positive relationship being established but, also, he questions the psychic functioning of this stranger. He asks himself: "*How does it work within me for it to happen this way? How does it work in the psychic life of this woman?*" (Anzieu, 1993). Then, he makes a reference to the Holy Spirit, which makes him think of his religious upbringing. This becomes another reference to spirits, this time a sacred one, a Holy one. And at Night 4, Anzieu briefly questions the reality and the 'goodness' of this spirit, and he warns us that a prolonged doubt would collapse the scaffolding of the experience:

> Someone who doesn't know me, whom I don't know, who has no reason to think of me, precisely thinks of me, without demanding anything. To make me feel good. What sort of gift is this? Does this person really exist? I have no reason to doubt the statements of young Eiffel, nor the supposed connection established with the stranger. I realize that this experience only works because I believe in it; that the mind only functions if it believes in itself and in the possibility of circulating with other minds. A prolonged doubt would collapse the belief in this stranger and its benefits. But the momentum of belief remains the strongest. At the same time, I understand why so many people believe in spirits. A concern

> clouds the picture: this spirit with whom I am in contact, or believe to be in contact, has been beneficial so far. Will it turn malevolent? What about spirits? There are good ones, there are bad ones... It doesn't matter! This one has done me good, that's the essential. It protects me at night from my internal persecutors, and the effect continues to be felt during the day (p.468)[9]

In the Night 5 entry, the presence of two external people come into the picture. First, the dactylographer in charge of doing the transcription of Anzieu's notes makes the following remark: "*Oh… so… you've been spending all your nights with this woman!*" (1993; p.468). The sexual connotation of the comment sheds a radically different light to the angelic, asexual, pure spirit. There is shame and repugnance when Anzieu imagines the body of the spirit in a sexualized way and he wonders if the angel might be a man. Faced with such dilemma, Anzieu opts for a more Solomonic and neutral perspective. The spirit is not a man nor woman. Not young nor old. He/she doesn't talk to him, touches him or even looks at him. He/she only thinks about him. At a later moment, that same day, Anzieu gives the transcripts to someone else in order to have another opinion. This person suggests that he is fighting against depression, and that he is seeking reassurance in the spirit. Anzieu thinks it is an intelligent remark, but he believes that it doesn't do complete justice to the invocating experience.

By Night 7, new questions emerge. "*Does the nocturnal thinker only thinks of me*?" Anzieu is reluctant. "*If so, how many others? Will she deprive me of my privileged position as an only child?*". Perhaps, he is jealous and the focus shifts slightly. Will Anzieu have to share the spirit with somebody else?. As it happens with several other questions, Anzieu's confidence and faith/belief keeps him out from falling into doubt and despair. Regardless of these questions, Anzieu ends up reiterating the presence he feels intensely and the fact that she invigorates him and brings him to life ('Elle me vivifie'), and, in a sense, she wards off anxieties related to deterioration and death. He ends this entry wondering if after the 21 days he will meet her. The following night is the night of his birthday. He shares images he thinks of about being bathed by

[9] This passage reminds us of Rilke's 'Duino Elegies' (1923) in which the author describes the existence of angels. Albeit the fact that these figures are represented through light, serenity, beauty and perfection, they also reflect the ever-present duality that accompanies the above-mentioned qualities: shadow, chaos, terror, imperfection and frailty. However, Anzieu concludes in his entry:" *there are good ones, there are bad ones... It doesn't matter! This one has done me good, that's what's essential"* (p.468; Anzieu, 1993).

light and he evokes the moment of coming into the world. The luminous reverie of birth and being born and alive are also tinged by images of death.

It is in Night 10, the night of his birthday dinner party, that memories about and through the body, (corporeal sensations, fears and past reminiscences) emerge and fuse with the spirit experience. Anzieu begins the entry with a sequence of words: birthday, joy, tenderness, champagne, caviar, indigestion. Insomnia, loneliness, anxiety, agitation. For some reason, his urinations persecute him. He is having a very rough night. Due to his agitation, he wakes up, involuntarily, his family. They chide him for this, and he ends up sleeping on the couch of his office. Metaphorically, he goes back to the couch as an analysand with the imaginary presence of the spirit (analyst). But this won't suffice. He feels terribly lonely, to the point of feeling terrorised by the fear of abandonment, even so by the loyal spirit. He feels as if he must use his strength to avoid the immobilisation of his extremities (possibly understood as very intense fears of castration and death anxieties). Subsequently, a memory of a serious bicycle accident at the age of 12 emerges. It is a rainy day and Anzieu surpasses his parents (father and stepmother) with his bicycle, because they are too slow for his liking. He rushes, bends his head down to gain speed, and, shortly after, he stops abruptly and falls. He was taken care of by his parent and received a shot to avoid infections. Afterwards, he recalls the guilt of having wanted to leave them behind and his inability to manage alone. Likewise, there are multiple references to the wounded body. His open knee, the injured flesh and the expression "pissing blood" ('le sang qui pisse') which describe overflowing blood. He has an insight: his concern with his mictions have to do with him checking to see that it is urine and not blood he's pissing. In addition, the French expression describes blood flowing freely and rapidly, like the urine also mentioned. This reference to movement is the very opposite of the fear of immobilization, paralysis and being static. They're circulating abundantly and liberally while the other state refers to stagnation, unresponsiveness and death.

From a self-analytic perspective, Night 10 is a breakthrough in this experiment. The internal exchange with the spirit leads to a recollection that is directly linked to the relationship with his parents and the desire to leave them behind, followed by a fall (and subsequent evidence that he cannot take care of himself on his own). This distances Anzieu from his questions about the nature of the spirit. He is propelled to go beyond, into the realm a childhood memory, that will serve as a thread to the rest of the nights. Again, he thanks the spirit because she is interested in him, without having to reciprocate her for this. Interestingly enough,

Anzieu explains that she allows him to see a narcissistic/seductive aspect of him. He specifies that the spirit works as a figure of the analyst. An empty form, a surface, a sphere of projection and, probably, a framework for self-analysis. After that tumultuous night, he regains his confidence, his faith, his bed and he makes a series of important decisions that leave him feeling calm and placid for the rest of the day (Anzieu, 1993).

In the Night 11 entry, Anzieu talks about the bicycle accident with those around him. He explains having thrown his arms forward to avoid smashing his head, sacrificing, in exchange, his left knee. He reiterates that he almost 'lost his head'. The fragility of his left side is linked, according to Anzieu, to his Parkinson. He has sacrificed his body and movement, in order to over-invest in his intellect, devoting himself to the development theories, keeping his 'head intact'. However, the fear of falling because of the Parkinson is similar to the feeling when he fell from his bicycle. He is reinforced in his frailty, his incapacity to be autonomous, to take off and this fear comes to haunt him frequently at the moment of the experiment. The following night, he reflects about aging and ponders again about the spirit/angel. He wonders if the spirits/angels have a history? An origin? An end? Are there several species? What is the function of angels?[10] Can one self-analyze oneself without a fictitious psychic presence? (Anzieu, 1993).

It is in Night 13 that the nature of the spirit transfigures from a feminine to a masculine spirit. Anzieu believes that a feminine spirit keeps him in a passive childlike state, sort of like being carried in the arms of the mother (possible allusion to immobility). A 'he' or masculine spirit calls for separation, action,

[10] Although Anzieu alternates between spirit and angel, it seems both forms have a place in his psychic representation of the stranger. Following Rilke's reference, it is, perhaps, interesting to make a cinematic allusion about angels. German filmmaker Wim Wenders, after a long period abroad in the United States, wished to reconciliate with his country and his language by making his following film in Berlin (one could say the opposite of Beckett). He began reading Rilke's Duino Elegies to find inspiration and had a thorough exchange with friend, writer and, later on, Nobel laurate, Peter Handke. They both wrote the screenplay of "Der Himmel über Berlin" (1987) which was beautifully translated to English as "Wings of Desire". In a nutshell, two angels, Damiel and Cassiel, look after different humans who traverse existential turmoil and crises. And, paradoxically, one of the angels, Damiel, does so too.

Throughout the movie, questions, that remind the ones asked by Anzieu, emerge, such as: "Why am I me, and why not you? Why am I here, and why not there? When did time begin, and where does space end? Isn't life under the sun just a dream? Isn't what I see, hear, and smell just the mirage of a world before the world? Does evil exist, and are there people who are really evil? How can it be that I, who am I, wasn't before I was, and that sometimes I, the one I am, no longer will be the one I am? (extrait from the "Song of Childhood", a poem written by Handke (1987) for the above-mentioned film (Wenders, 1987). Albeit the different nature of the questions in the film, they seem to echo Anzieu's curiosity to grasp and decipher the origins and nature of his spirit/angel/stranger.

energy, and giving up his wish to heal completely. Anzieu explains that the spirit's silence is attentive and reflective, always observing and never judgemental. These ideas, as he shares, are colored by his entering into a new decade wanting to live. Anzieu believes in prioritizing movement in his life. The spirit observes him but doesn't guide him. As a good psychoanalyst, it forces Anzieu to observe himself and find in himself the means to achieve it.

The night after, before a short vacation, he has some anxieties regarding this trip. The spirit doesn't say anything, but he cannot not be present. As Anzieu explains: "*I believe in him, therefore, I can believe in myself*" (1983; p.473). For this psychoanalyst, it is a moment to face the fact that he is entering his last decade, and he must do so confronting his fears directly. Nevertheless, another fear arises. Anzieu tempers this mood with the reluctance of harboring futile illusions. He goes on to elaborate about the difficulty to distinguish the imaginary fulfillment of a desire and its material actualization. He states that the human pendulum moves back and forth from believing and doubting. Thus, mobilizing one's forces is indispensable for any real transformation (Anzieu, 1993).

During Night 16 there is some turmoil because a medication isn't working and Anzieu is very fatigued. He wakes up at 3:50 and realizes he is waiting to communicate with the spirit. He wonders if the spirit thinks of thinking about him. How long does his communication last? 45 minutes, like an analytic session, or a minute? At that very moment, another breakthrough occurs. He remembers that in the biking incident he is fleeing from his father and stepmother and trying to rejoin his beloved mother through this escape. He evokes the exaltation, recklessness, and punishment. Moreover, he remembers an appendectomy at 22 months. In his own words, a 'stabbing' to his stomach (a betrayal? of his body, of his dad towards his mom and vice versa, etc.), and the only ones that remember this incident are his body and his parents (Anzieu, 1993). This attack to the body (and, possibly, betrayal) come as another recollection that goes in the direction of his anxieties, his helplessness and an external attack he couldn't avoid, or even represent in his mind. Furthermore, the bicycle memory evolves, and he tries to join his beloved mother in her running

away (in the original text in French: rejoindre ma mère bien-aimée dans *sa* fuite) [11]. These insights are followed by more questions about the nature of the spirit:

> Is the spirit at the origin or the end of the universe? This is unanswerable. The spirit represents an ascent driven by a momentum that I describe as phallic. Each spirit replicates this motion. Spirit, are you presently here?
>
> The spirit indeed exists; I have encountered it. My text is brimming with it. Is it captured yet? No, cease your verbose-filled escapism.
>
> Is the absolute spirit motionless, attractive, providential, undifferentiated? Are we a fleeting spark of this eternal fire? When will the fires cease to burn and become extinct? (p.473).

These questions emerge and flow in, what seems, a free associative movement. Anzieu ponders if the spirit is at the origin or end of the universe, but this is beyond the possibility of being answered. There is a phallic

[11] Although we cannot elaborate thoroughly on Didier Anzieu's mother, Marguerite, there are certain elements that came to mind with the expression 'bien-aimée dans sa fuite' worth mentioning. Anzieu's mother was treated for an episode of erotomania by Jacques Lacan in 1932. Her case was titled: "L'Aimée" (the loved one) and it became Lacan's dissertation to complete his studies in psychiatry. Several years later, Anzieu would become an analysand of Lacan without both of them realizing the story that united them. Later on, Anzieu's mother shared that she used to be a patient of Lacan. This became a major conflict between both analysts and Anzieu took a different direction in his psychoanalytic thinking, changing his adherence and moving to another school of psychoanalytic thought.

Going back to 'la bien aimée', we wonder if the 'well loved' is Anzieu's way to be better, faster and more loving than his 'slow', inefficient father. To join her in her 'fuite' could be a reference to an escape (the divorce of her parents or, perhaps, her psychotic episode(s) and the wish to be more autonomous and take care of her). He will surpass the father and protect her beloved mother. However, it is worth remembering that throughout the experiment, Anzieu was feeling the opposite. He was probably feeling like the cycling parents (aging, sickness and death) were catching up with him, despite their slowness and inefficiency. Likewise, the fleeing (escaping) into the rescue of a loved one (projected frailty in the (m)other) didn't seem to work and made things worse (falling and punishment). However, these are our hypotheses and should be considered as possible lines of interpreting the experience.

Source: https://charliehebdo.fr/2016/05/societe/le-cas-aimee/

ascent with and through the spirit and Anzieu ends up asking if the spirit is present at that very moment. He answers to himself by saying he has encountered it and his text is filled with it. Nevertheless, he admonishes himself by saying he shouldn't escape or runaway through his verbosity. Finally, he asks if we are only fleeting sparks of an eternal fire, or if the fires will become forever extinct. This self-analytic work evolves into a deeper realm, asking profound questions about existence, life and death, presence and absence, health and sickness, youth and old, phallic and castrated.

In the Night 18 entry Anzieu feels some laziness and demobilization in the spirit, just like he does at that very moment. He wonders: Is the spirit my double? Then, the following night, turmoil stirs up again. This time an intense agitation and anxiety make Anzieu wake up every hour and he moves around to corroborate if he is able to and that he hasn't lost his mobility. He addresses his supposedly protective spirit and asks him why he didn't intervene. Why did he let him down? The answer to these questions come in two coexisting and complementing ways. In a new recollection he has, his mother, with a sardonic smile, pushes him down the staircase of his grandparents' basement while on holidays and she lets him fall down. In the bicycle accident, he repeats the scene but inversely, by pushing away the mother/stepmother and surpassing them, to prove that it is them who reject him and not the other way around. He also evokes the transference towards the spirit or 'fictitious analyst'. He grasps that he wants to show his mother that she's good for nothing, to his analyst that he's a bad psychoanalyst, and to the loyal spirit that he is futile. The work of the negative becomes evident to Anzieu, as he realizes this manoeuvre to render the others completely helpless and discard the efforts and all the good he received thus far from them.

In Day 21, the last one of this experiment, something goes wrong and Anzieu falls down and hits his face on the corner of his night table. He injures his left cheekbone and, using the French expression, he 'pisses blood'. Why is he punishing himself? He asks. He receives help from a colleague who, surprisingly enough, is there to work with him on the 'psychology of aging and the elderly'. Anzieu makes important decisions in his life (that he keeps to himself), and he feels relief physically and mentally. He conceives the spirit as a will and not a representation. Furthermore, he shares being more capable of accepting help from others, within a framework that delimits and guarantees it. Finally, he finds to whom he will dedicate his text: 'the stranger' (in French: l'inconnu).

On his final observations, Anzieu reiterates his anxiety about exposing himself through his text. He is very reluctant, considering what his reader could potentially think, especially his colleagues. He finds solace, courage and motivation in Freud's self-analytic unveiling of himself through his writings. He realizes the magnitude of his fantasies and desire to heal, which strike a few chords of his Christian upbringing (hoping for a miracle). However, he emphasizes the quasi-universality of the belief in spirits and its relevance: "*as long as I know or believe that someone thinks of me, I think that I exist and that I think*" (Anzieu, 1993; p.475). For Bonnet (2011), the spirit provided Anzieu with an exceptional opportunity to conduct a rich and productive piece of self-analysis and to live his birthday, and the beginning of a new decade, looking towards the future. With this example we are faced with the importance of the role of the other in an exercise that appears to be extremely solitary. However, it is much more complex. The exchange without words, at a distance, allowed Anzieu to access another form of self-analysis and to face his present fears and anxieties by drawing from those of the past. He let his unconscious move (and play) by taking part of this unique experience and give himself to the (phallic) rise and (inevitable) falls that came out of it.

8.2. The end or the beginning? The intertwining of analysis, poetry and self-analysis

Siempre se busca la noche originaria.
(María Negroni, 2021)

Y sé también que en algún momento
debería cerrar este libro y tampoco sé cómo
salvo que al final
caiga como una fruta madura
y pegue en la cabeza de alguien que por fin
pase por aquí.
(Tamara Kamenszain, 2014)

The following example is taken from my own attempts at self-analysis. It is, above all, a way to link it to: 1) my personal analysis, 2) the exploration, developments and constraints in my creative writing (both academically and for personal leisure) and 3) the experience of sharing what I had created. I will begin by saying that when I use the term 'self-analytic', I don't wish to imply that I consciously tailored or carefully selected a moment or period of my life to do so. Neither did I chose creative writing (or poetry) because I

had a specific genre or method in mind that I wanted to explore. It was all rather spontaneous, and the process, in hindsight, might be better described as a progressive, self-analytic 'collage' of experiences, thoughts, feelings, memories, anxieties, doubts and so forth. Similarly, when I evoke the image of a 'collage', it is in the sense that the writing evolved slowly, the analysis progressed at its own pace and the bits and pieces of self-analytic information emerged and juxtaposed over time. As I kept moving and joining them together, they continued to transform themselves until something more meaningful (and, possibly, more unconscious) emerged.

During a challenging period of my life[12], I came across the work of French philosopher and psychoanalyst Anne Dufourmantelle, at a small stand in a public library. It was the summer of 2017. Several of her books were being displayed because, due to very tragic circumstances, she had passed away and they were honoring her life and her work. I was so moved by the brief description I read, that I decided to take several of her books with me that day: Éloge du risque (2011), Intelligence du rêve (2012) and Puissance de la douceur (2013). These titles resonated with my interests and with my personal situation. Additionally, reading, to me, has always proved to be an essential. Even more so in dire circumstances.

While reading the books, I was quite moved by Dufourmantelle's sensitivity, finesse and depth. I was in awe at her capacity to share herself (as a person and as an analyst), something that is not found easily in academic papers or analytic presentations. She gave me the impression that she incarnated the psychoanalytic knowledge she shared throughout the chapters of her books. What I read didn't feel contrived or tinged with the desire to show off. She did show herself but, to me, it felt more like 'lending herself' in order to have access to unconscious thoughts and emotions related to the analytic and personal experiences she was writing about. She shared elements of countertransference, but it didn't only circumscribe to that. She wasn't talking about dreams, analysis or risk-taking from a distance; it felt like she embodied what she was saying. Suffice it to say that these readings (and the moment I read them) had

[12] The moment I am referring to is the beginning of a divorce process. As an immigrant single mother, doctoral student and professional it represented a very challenging time of my life. It felt like I was cutting ties not only with the person who used to be my partner, for many years, but, also, to a part of my history and my origins. More specifically, to separate from the person with whom I shared a crucial moment of time in Venezuela (chaotic, yet important, that forced us to leave the country) and in Canada. It was a major decision, and, to me, it felt like jumping into a void. I shall spare unnecessary details, hoping to give a general idea of what was happening in my life at that moment. I will elaborate on other details, as the self-analytic process unfolds throughout this chapter.

a significant impact on me. Moreover, Dufourmantelle's ideas remain very alive and present, up to now, in my mind.

A few years later, in July 2020 and during the pandemic, something rather odd happened. I came across a poetry contest in Montreal and I thought of participating in it. The odd part is that a very clear-cut idea came immediately to my mind. Out of all the infinite topics I could choose from, I would write a poem inspired by Anne Dufourmantelle and her work. I wanted to recognize the impact she had in me during those difficult times and show some gratitude for keeping me 'company'. Nevertheless, I must underline that, despite the fact of being someone who enjoys reading in general (and, particularly, poetry), I had little to none experience in the art of crafting verses, understanding metrics and having an ear for rhythm. My ambition clearly, and largely, exceeded my rudimentary skills (rudimentary being a very generous adjective) and, in spite of that, I embarked into the project without feeling too daunted by my lack of experience.

I went on to write the poem, and, once finished, I let some friends read it and correct it. I sent it to the organization responsible for the contest and hoped for the best. I felt proud of the work I had done, and I had the illusion that the poem (and I) had potential. After waiting for four weeks, the results came out and my poem wasn't selected. Suffice it to say that I felt very discouraged and disappointed. My illusion led me to a disillusionment and to a narcissistic wound of having let down myself and, perhaps, in a more unconscious level, Anne Dufourmantelle.

Here, I will make a parenthesis to specify that I don't believe there is something, consciously, self-analytical in what I have described. The writing of the poem and the impact of reading Anne Dufourmantelle could be considered as self-analytic catalysts of what happened afterwards. However, there was nothing about that creation that manifested in my dreams, parapraxes, jokes, slip of tongue or analytic material to further deepen unconscious knowledge about myself (at least that I was aware of). Nonetheless, I allow myself such digression in order to clarify that reading something that moves you or inspires or writing a poem in itself isn't, necessarily, self-analytical per se in the way this essay comprehends self-analysis. What

ultimately became self-analytic are the interwoven psychic movements and manifestations that, afterwards, led to a more unconscious layer and experience.

During the weeks that followed I kept thinking and talking with friends, and in analysis, about this failure and letdown. However, some of my friends confronted me with the reality that I did not have the knowledge and understanding to write poetry. They insisted, that given the impact of this flop, perhaps, I should consider registering myself at a poetry writing course. It made sense and, in doing so, I responded, not only to a narcissistic need (the wound of not having succeeded in the contest) but also to a desire to transform it creatively. Specifically, transform the discouragement I was feeling and turn my 'rudimentary almost inexistent' abilities into some knowledge and basic understanding of poetry writing. I had the good luck that an analyst friend, Aurelio Calvo, sent me the information of an online poetry course in Spanish. My good luck proved to be even more generous. The course was taught by a greatly talented teacher, poet and writer, Carlos Pardo, who I hadn't had the opportunity of knowing before. This learning experience was a major opportunity in many ways. Moreover, I was sharing with tremendously gifted classmates that made the process even more stimulating and inspiring. Over the next few months, we were asked to do writing exercises, and, for some reason, I kept coming back, in my head, to my Dufourmantelle's poem, titled "Transformations". I felt there were verses that I wanted to save or rescue from the initial poem. To change and use them, not hide them or completely throw them away. So, I reread it and began moving verses and playing around to improve them.

Along with the work in the poetry course, I began talking constantly about it in my personal analysis. After some time, my analyst asked if there was a reason that kept me from reading what I wrote in our sessions. For me, this became a major revelation and realization. It had never occurred to me, until that moment, to share my poetic attempts with my analyst. It felt, almost, as I would be bringing together two worlds apart. We talked about my fear that it would become a defense and my reluctance to share them more openly and directly with her or anyone else. Although I was hesitant and very shy at the beginning, I finally decided to do so. However, I had to fight against a strong feeling and reflex of wanting to hide what I was doing. But it resonated and it felt as if it could have an impact on the analytic work and the writing I was doing. It was this movement, of 'un-hiding' and of using what I was creating analytically that finished paving the way towards, what I believe was, the self-analytic component of this experience.

To begin with, the reading of the poems out loud was, in itself, a 'transformative' experience. Although I had written, corrected and read my poems many times, I was confronted with an eerie feeling I hadn't experienced before. It is difficult to describe but the way I would put it is to be in contact with something that is more you than yourself. As I finished reading them, I told my analyst, quite stirred, that '*that was me*'. I added, more or less, that: '*it was as if the poems had my DNA in them… they're more me than I am, and I recognize so much of myself in them'*. To say this feels like stating something so incredibly obvious that it's almost discouraging. However, there was something paradoxical about this experience. It was as if I knew the poems were mine, but they were not totally mine yet, even though I had written them. Sharing them with my analyst, brought them back to me under a new light. I was seeing and feeling a part of me that constantly remained hidden, even when writing the poems. '*They're more me than I am'*, as if something surprisingly genuine sprung and moved me immensely. And it goes without saying that, above all, I was being seen, heard and encouraged by my analyst to show what I was carefully hiding. And all of this, leading to that moment of experiencing a beautiful part of yourself that you've been blind or oblivious to.

Yet again, the question comes back to me: how is this experience self-analytical? After being influenced by, what I call, multiple self-analytic catalysts (Anne Dufourmantelle, her books, the poetry contest, the failure and disappointment, my friends' feedback and the poetry course), the encouragement of my analyst and the sharing of my poems was a turning point or eureka moment. Subsequently, free associations and dreams sprung, and the poems enriched the analytic work, in and outside the consulting room. From that moment onwards, the verses and sharing them became part of the analysis. Their fruitfulness and potential still expand in surprising ways.

Why do I consider this experience self-analytical? Because I believe that if I had left my poems outside the consulting room, I don't necessarily think I would have had the experienced in which the poem became more than a poem to me. The poems so to speak, became me and I incarnated my poems. I had the space, confidence and capacity to see it and to be seen. The possibility of showing and sharing a part of me led us to a more profound and unconscious strata (for example, I began addressing a mild but chronic health issue

I had been dealing since a very young age, that I had barely spoken about in all the years in analysis). Moreover, I was able to comprehend my 'hiding' which referred to all the things I was doing creatively that I would, literally and metaphorically, keep buried in drawers, closets, unsent emails, old projects, and this, formerly unwritten, thesis dissertation that took me many years to conceive and complete.

I would like to illustrate what I've described with some of the verses from the 'Transformation' poem that were, and still are, very rich and present in my self-analysis and analysis. I've borrowed them as they appear in the original poem, although in a different order. I will include them in Spanish and translate them into English, albeit knowing that, in doing so, the verses will inevitably lose part of their musicality. The verses are the following:

Martillazos de desconfianza quiebran la semilla del misterio

Mistrust batters the seed of mystery until it is shattered.

La turbulencia de mudar piel exige osadía

The turbulence of shedding skin demands courage.

Pues el ímpetu y la espera no hacen las paces.

For impetus and waiting cannot seem to reconcile.

Verdugos somos de lo embrionario, de lo invisible.

We are executioners of the embryonic, of the invisible.

¿Cómo intuir lo que aún no sabemos existe en nosotros?

How to intuit what we do not yet know exists in us?

Although I believe the verses are very self-explanatory, I find it pertinent to provide more elements concerning my self-analytic process and how it also relates to writing this doctoral essay and completing it. After finishing my poetry course, after sharing my poems in analysis and analyzing them on my own, it became increasingly evident how much I wanted to write but how little faith I had in my capacities and in the value of what I was doing. Moreover, what I produced I kept hiding or doing nothing with it. I kept working on myself thoroughly but this, I believe, was a turning point. I had started this essay several years ago, but for some reason, I couldn't finish writing it. I had vast support and I had been in analysis for ages. Consciously, I felt I had the capacity to do so. However, for some reason, it was too daunting. Through the verses it became evident how much difficulty and mistrust I had towards myself and towards the process of creating. Not only was it difficult, but I was also destroying, shattering (and even executing) what I couldn't perceive yet (the embryonic). I was eager to do but, at the same time, extremely impatient and lacking the basic trust to do so. How to intuit what we do not yet know exists in us? And, moreover, how to tolerate the uncertainty of not knowing. To be faced with the tumultuousness of navigating uncertainty and to pull through despite not knowing what the result will be.

Bion writes about O (origin), the unknowable, unfathomable, ultimate reality. Albeit the fact that it cannot be grasped through the sensuous realm or directly through knowledge, O 'becomes' but it cannot be 'known' (Eigen, 1981). It is through 'faith' that we try to reach what is beyond our representations and use them to "*light up the mystery of who we are*" (Eigen, 1981; p.424). Mystery being a basic dimension in which we live (Lowe, 1977; quoted by Eigen, 1981). Civitarese (2019) in his creative "Apocryphal Dictionary of Psychoanalysis", has an entry for 'faith' that I find resonates with this experience. He states that this concept, in psychoanalysis, is not conceived as a religious term, but more as an attitude. He

succinctly and poignantly ascribes to the idea that to believe and to have faith, in a way, is to let the unconscious do its work. The author continues and states that faith:

> indicates what can be the ideal state of mind to develop the ability for intuition (as opposed to logical/rational thought). For human beings, the meaning lies in a particular point of balance along a continuum of Faith ↔Fate: between trust which, thanks to the experiences that have nourished our being, we get in the reappearance of the object (meaning, representation) in contrast with destiny, a concept expressing our distress and synonymous with the irrepresentability of death (p.41).

It is here that the presence and thinking of my analyst as (an)other proved essential for experiencing my writing and embodying my self-analytic efforts. Bringing my writing to analysis didn't feel as a defense. On the contrary, it was thanks to the observation of my analyst that it became a possibility. Likewise, her observation didn't feel as intrusive or burdening. It felt as genuine interest and a welcoming attitude to what I was constantly talking about (without directly talking about it). If anything, it felt closer to taking a risk rather than a defense. This movement brought to the surface how not showing what I was writing was, perhaps, a defense from showing myself. At many different levels, I kept attacking my capacity (and my time) by not incarnating this part of me. I had the possibility and the freedom to take a closer look at something creative I had done, to feel it, be perplexed by it and, finally, for it to become a part of me. If Eigen (1981) states that: "*the essential freedom analysis provides is the analytic attitudes itself, the liberation of the capacity to focus on O*" (p.429), then self-analysis would be linked to the liberation of the creative capacity to continue focusing on O, delving into mysteries of our being, embodying faith despite the perils of ending up in the unrepresented and darkest night of the soul. Although, passion has not been addressed directly throughout this example, I will quote a passage of the chapter "The risk of passion", from Dufourmantelle (2014), included in the book "Éloge du risqué". She addresses intensity, risk and writing:

> We want intensity without risk. It's impossible. Intensity is the leap into the void, the part of the unknown, what has not yet been written and which, nevertheless, is waiting within us, for precisely that (p.41; my translation)

I wanted to end this chapter with the final poem I wrote for my poetry class. It is called "The End" and it is a transformed version of the initial poem 'Transformation' I had written for the contest. It was completed in December 2020. It is presented in the original version (in Spanish) and, afterwards, a loose translation in English:

Fin

Se acaban las palabras
La turbulencia de mudar piel
Exige calma e ímpetu.

Tactilidad feroz e indómita
Nos alberga sin más preguntas.

Desabrochamos las falacias
La soberbia erigió lo débil
Así que celebraremos lo profano
Pues lo originario se intuye.

Pero desear que el alba se apresure
sólo deja ocasos vacíos
Y así van acabando

… los latidos

…. las horas

The End

Words come to an end
The turbulence of shedding skin
demands stillness and impetus.

A fierce and untamed tactility
shelters us without asking further questions.

We unbutton fallacies
because arrogance erected the fragile
Therefore, we shall celebrate the profane
because we intuit in it the origin.

But wishing dawn to haste
Will only leave us with emptied twilights
And thus, it ends

... the heartbeats

... the hours

DISCUSSION

The divergence in how self-analysis is perceived within the contemporary psychoanalytic landscape makes it easier to think of it as a historical curiosity rather than a psychoanalytic tool. Freud's perspective towards self-analysis gravitated, over the years, from a rather positive stance that, progressively, turned into its opposite. It was declared an impossible task that was supposed to be replaced by personal analysis and, if exercised, Freud reiterated that it would only be efficient in those areas that had been already worked through in one's own analysis. One could intuit from this declaration several ideas worth specifying: 1) not everyone can do it the way he did it (*Freud being the exception*); 2) self-analysis is insufficient and, possibly, a defensive maneuver and 3) Freud's ambivalence could stem from the risk that people might want to "bypass" or "demean" the actual psychoanalytic cure because of their own "self-analytic practice". These negative aspects of self-analysis, as previously discussed, are a reality. We could, following Freud and myriads of contemporary analysts, state that self-analysis is an impossible task (he even referred to it as chimerical and unattainable) and leave it at that but, perhaps, it would be a rather reductionistic and simplistic conclusion.

What we propose in this discussion is that self-analysis is possible and impossible. First and foremost, as Anzieu (1986, 2000) adumbrates, self-analysis shouldn't be conceived or confused as a cure in itself or as a psychoanalytic work from which a cure will derive. *Self-analysis is, above all, a creative psychic work and self-analysis is not a cure in itself.* Anzieu (1986, 2000) is joined by almost all of the authors included in this essay, by repeatedly stressing out the importance of a thorough analysis as the basis of a fruitful self-analysis. Therefore, self-analysis (as defined in this essay) shouldn't be conceived as a one-person analytic cure project and its depth and rigour could be compromised without the foundations of a personal analysis. The relevance of an analysis cannot be ignored, and one important aspect of our discussion is to underline its decisive role. First and foremost, because for a psychoanalytic cure to happen the presence of the other is indispensable. The analyst's essential role, among many, is to provide the conditions necessary for the unconscious forces and conflicts to emerge, take shape and be played out throughout the analysis with and within the analyst. It is within the transference and countertransference that, for example, the unrepresented states might begin to appear and could be elucidated over time.

Furthermore, according to Fenichel (1943), to overcome resistances without the presence of analyst is impossible. A systematic and thorough analysis will allow the person to progressively identify and incorporate the analyst and to develop his or her psychoanalytic function of the personality, as understood by Bion. But incorporate him how? Following Brunet's (2019) nuanced definition of the ego ideal, the introjection of the image of the analyst as an ideal object within the ego ideal or ego ideals (*idéal du moi in French*) would allow an identification and incorporation of the analyst not tainted so much by the persecutory superego but colored by the desire to emulate and be like the analyst and to further develop the self-analytic understanding beyond the years on the couch.

If that is the case, what is the role of self-analysis in the early, intermediate, and final phases of analysis? Is only self-analysis done during termination phase non-defensive? Horney and Fromm, for example, would answer that self-analysis, even at the start of an analysis, is acceptable and highly recommended. Other authors, on the contrary, consider that self-analysis can be a formidable resistance to analysis and a narcissistic defense, especially at the beginning. Reik mentioned that self-analysis during the treatment is an essential aspect for it to progress and evolve. Moreover, self-analysis would be the ultimate goal of analytic training.

Perhaps we could argue that it isn't so much the moment in the analysis in which the self-analytic creation emerged that has the most relevance, but the nature and its usefulness. As with any other resistance, if a piece of analytic (or self-analytic) material seems to block or ward off exploration and curiosity, seems to be superficial and/or cliché, doesn't fuel and nurture the free associative movement, or it is used to show superiority over the analyst or a part of oneself, one could, indeed, think it might be a piece of information that hinders and, maybe even, attacks the capacity to think and feel of the person (disguised as "self-analytic thinking"). If we were to use Bion's grid[13] (1977), as a reference, we could argue that a self-analytic

[13] It is beyond the scope of this essay to thoroughly develop Bion's ideas of the grid and the negative grid. However, a general description could allow a better understanding of its relation to self-analysis. Bion first presented his ideas of the grid in 1963 to the British Psychoanalytic Society. He wrote about it in different books and more specifically in "Two papers: The Grid and the Caesura" (1977). As Grotstein (2002) states, the grid could be understood as an "*abstract mathematical metaphor for Bion's more well-known concept of container-contained, in which the thoughts are the contained and thinking is the container*" (p.449).

Grotstein (2002) and other authors suggest that, with it, Bion was trying to combine intuition and reason in the processing of analytic (and we could argue self-analytic) material. Grotstein explains that the union of the "right-hemispheric" and "left-hemispheric" modes would merge the intuitive, nonlinear, and the rational, linear and contemplative. Therefore, following Grotstein (2002), Bion believed that true thinking is intuitive and unconscious. This author states: "*the thinking that we call thinking is, to*

undertaking should follow the movement the author proposed downwards ↓ from row A to H and from left to right → from column 1 to ^{n}. In that sense, self-analysis should be informed by intuition and the unconscious and, also, by the rational, logical thought. However, if Bion's grid threatens to drift us towards an exceedingly abstract realm, we can always recapitulate his notion of creative tropism, his theory of links (love, hate, knowledge), the container-contained, and the psychoanalytic function of the personality, developed throughout this essay. As Meyer's (2021) stated, perhaps self-analysis can be evaluated by determining its role in catalysing and allowing the unfolding of the unity (container–contained), without unmaking the unitary character produced by the conjunction. We believe this comes close to Bion's concept of mental growth and, perhaps, its relationship to self-analysis.

Circling back to the question of the role of self-analysis at different moments of analysis or post-analytically, we think it is more helpful to consider the quality and the function of the self-analytic undertaking to make the most of it and not dismiss it because it didn't happen at the "right time", which is usually referred to, by many authors, as self-analysis towards the end of the treatment. If we continue down this path, what are the inherent qualities, of the person doing self-analysis, that will bolster and/or hinder such task? Is it useful to advance the idea of a self-analytic disposition? As previously developed, the epistemophilic instinct would be of utmost importance because it is highly aroused by the 'unknown' of the object and of oneself, and, simultaneously, frustrated by its quality of being enigmatic and unknowable. This impulse, if one could entertain its existence, would be fundamentally linked to the desire (and, in some cases, the inhibition) to know about oneself and others, for example, with questions such as: who am I? who is this other? And who I am to the other? Besides the desire to see (scopophilia) and to be seen (exhibitionism), that Freud connected to the epistemophilic instinct and curiosity, Klein included the anxiety-provoking sadistic elements that could underlie the unconscious phantasy and wish to explore the (m)other's body and mind and one's own. Hopefully, in Kleinian terms, the good external and internal objects will allow the person to explore, discover and gain knowledge without this being inhibited by the sadistic aggressive component and it will be sublimated and put at the service of mental growth. Therefore, scopophilia and exhibitionism are two important developmental elements that will be addressed more thoroughly in a subsequent part of this discussion.

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him, "after-thinking." (p.449). Hence, self-analysis, even if considered as the creative thinking of the after-thinking, should strive to be informed by intuition and the unconscious, to merge linear and nonlinear and to further foment transformations (thoughts and emotions) to make self-analytic ideas more sophisticated and abstract (through the movement downwards ↓from row A to H and from left to right → from column 1 to n).

If we were to conceive a self-analytic disposition, we would highlight its creative nature (already emphasized by Anzieu) and relate it with the creative tropism proposed by Bion. Basically, the disposition of self-discovery through creation (regeneration) and the possibility of being created by others. The latter alludes to the fact that creating oneself will always be intertwined with the vital and indispensable presence and significance of the other (including the analyst). Furthermore, following Bion's link theory, it is of crucial importance the emotional links with oneself and how inextricable they are to the objects provider of meaning and of a sense of psychic aliveness. The development of profound and significant knowledge about oneself will require the meaningful presence of the other.

Self-analysis, as previously stated, is, above all, a creative psychic work and it has to do with the search of our own inner truth and the capacity and willingness to be one with it. As Bion would conceive it, to become one with the truth about oneself (also known as at-one-ment) one must navigate the incertitude and turmoil of psychic life and resort to the use of the negative capability (a term coined by the poet Keats and quoted by Bion). This negative capability allows us to cope with uncertainties, doubts, half-truths and what is to remain a mystery within us and about the others, without feeling compelled to the immediate search for reasons and the certainty of facts. Self-analysis should have at its core the strong desire to discover and continue discovering one's inner truth, navigating the discomfort of the unknown, without settling for a preestablished self-satisfying version of oneself.

An interesting question arises: is the self-analytic disposition, we are proposing, any different from the psychoanalytic function of the personality, as Bion conceived it? If we follow closely the definition of the psychoanalytic function of the personality, it would be an innate internal structure to learn to know oneself and this inborn structure would resemble the one for language development, which allows us to learn how to speak. We believe the self-analytic disposition would derive from this innate, internal structure, especially because both are related to the human need to know the truth of who we are and what is occurring in our lives. They both advance forward the tendency to know oneself as truthfully as possible and to have intimate-passionate relationships with oneself and with others. Nevertheless, the self-analytic disposition and endeavor, as much as it may be informed by unconscious, intuitive processes, is a secondary process

thinking that require psychic representation and, preferably previous analytic work, to further deepen the person's understanding of himself and others. Moreover, as previously developed, the self-analytic undertaking cannot solely decipher the unrepresented states of the mind. Here we would underline, again, the impossibility of self-analysis both as a cure and as a way to have access to more primitive, inchoate, unrepresented states of the psyche.

We would like to further discuss the desire to see (scopophilia), the desire to be seen (exhibitionism)[14] and its relation to self-analysis and to shame. Perhaps one of the risks, in self-analysis and in the self-disclosure of it, is the fear of feeling we are showing too much of ourselves and feel ashamed. Bernard Williams (quoted by Phillips, 2019) said: "*in my experience of shame, the other sees all of me and all through me… the desire [is] to disappear, not to be there*" (p.41). To show ourselves too much might come with the fear of failing a test of love: I have shown an utmost inner and intimate part of me and what follows is the desire of wanting to vanish and disappear. It is, perhaps, highly probable that self-analysis has been relegated and neglected because of the personal implications it may entail. Moreover, it is interesting that there is a sparingly reference to self-analysis in countertransference papers, which, of course, are more abundant. But, why so? In "*The telling of selves: notes on psychoanalysis and autobiography*" (1994), Adam Phillips, although addressing autobiography, brings to the surface questions that are relevant to why we are or, perhaps, *aren't* practicing and sharing our self-analytic findings. He explores, for example, the idea of what kind of person do we (unconsciously) believe we will turn the analyst into (or others) by telling him or her a specific version of ourselves? Even more poignantly, what is the version of ourselves that we show to stop people thinking about us? (that perhaps echoes with Bernard William's desire to vanish and disappear). Or what are the imagined catastrophes associated with the repressed stories of ourselves? (Phillips, 1994). Here we can add: which version are we constantly telling ourselves to stop thinking altogether and/or to avoid traverse an uncertainty that might be perceived as catastrophic?

[14] It is important to differentiate perverse exhibitionism from the exhibitionism we are referring to which stems from Freud's epistemophilic instinct. From a developmental perspective, exhibitionism is linked to the desire to be seen and looked by the other (and by oneself), while showing who one is and feels. As Phillips (2019) puts it, it is the ultimate test of love. Perverse exhibitionism, at its core, will be a failed attempt to try to disavow castration or "the missing of", and it pivots in the forbidden exposure of genitals to someone unwilling to take part of this act (coercive nature) (Calvert, 2014).

Likewise, how can we develop the capacity to see ourselves with candor, with relentless curiosity, and unremitting honesty? As Reik underlines about Freud's self-analysis, the moral courage, frankness, sincerity and perspicacity in his self-observing and self-analytic undertaking allowed him to tell us a story about himself, in which he bluntly addressed his own shortcomings, mistakes and dislikes. Phillips (1994) points out, that the openness and outspokenness in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) encouraged Freud's readers to become his analysts. Maybe we don't practice self-analysis, as much as we could, because we would rather take a more private stance and avoid additional analyzing (from others and ourselves) that we aren't necessarily looking for or wanting to hear. But if were to take this path, the risk is that, perhaps, we would not continue to transform, nuance, and deepen the long analytic work (theoretical and practical) many people have put themselves through for many years. Additionally, Phillips (2019) intimates that any theory or experience, that is simply abided rather than personally transformed is similar, to some degree, to a traumatic experience. In Winnicottian terms, the child needs to use what is accessible to him and lying close to transform it according to his own needs and desire. As Phillips (1994) states: "*handed-down morality, as any handed-down knowledge*[15]*, is always potentially a dead end*" (p.26). In that same vein, we could ask ourselves what is the handed-down psychoanalytic moral compass that would allow us, or not, to show ourselves more openly? And is it leading us, or not, to a dead end?

If we take a closer look at shame, we might be able to better understand the lack of self-analysis in the contemporary psychoanalytic landscape. Shame can possibly have the same dead-end effect, mentioned above, because it is usually unbearable and difficult to think about. As Phillips (2019) intimates, when feeling shameful our capacity of observation and attention narrows down and, ultimately, disserts us. That is one of its functions and one of its objectives is to create blind spots. Shame is a certain kind of attention (or inattention) that one gives to the self. Along the same line, the dreaded exposure and shame is possibly linked with the terror of being estranged, separated and, ultimately, abandoned. As Phillips (2019) claims:

> But so absorbing is the experience of shame that it prompts the wish to disappear, to not be there. First there is the unbearable attention to the self, and then the murder, the vanishing act of the mortified self. Attention to the so-called external world is long vanished, reduced to a chorus of the appalled. In shame there is a

[15] And we would add, any handed-down self-knowledge.

> loss of interest in the external world, and a loss of interest in what is or may be good about the self. *Shame is the ethnic cleansing of the self*. (p.42; our italics).

If shame is directed at eliminating and vanishing aspects that we are trying to conceal, it's because, in a certain way, shame has a strong conservative nature. As Phillips (2019) asserts, it is there to maintain our privacy, to conserve ourselves as we would wish to be seen and to preserve our belief that we can conceal ourselves. He states that it is shame's determination to confirm us which really is or ought to be our ideal self and it points at it flagrantly. In that sense, shame would be the distance between our ego and our ego ideal(s) (idéal du moi). Different to the conflict with the superego that induces guilt, conflict with the ego ideal arouses shame (Phillips, 2019).

The discussion of concealment and the avoidance of showing oneself resonates with what we previously developed about self-analysis and writing. As proposed by several authors, especially Doubrovsky (1980), there could be a space abandoned by the analysts and a timidity (possibly an inhibition) in psychoanalytic writing, where no one dares to expose her or himself and show their most intimate and profound innerness. Specially, because self-analytic writing is a particular writing for and to the unconscious. A potential space for the represented unconscious to emerge. And, once the creative process and result materialize, it will, hopefully, be the result of a dialogue with the different psychic instances (the ego, the ego ideal and the preconscious and conscious at large).

As we mentioned before, self-analysis is intended for and, sometimes, results in creative processes. Nevertheless, self-analysis is not always creative (in the sense of it materializing in a specific creation) but it is indeed a psychic creative work, as conceived by Anzieu (1992). However, what is creative is not always self-analytical, as Poland (2011) reminds us. In self-analytic writing, the writer's own listening, his own self-analytic function and psychic integration should allow for an attuning and mirroring to create the analytic other while writing. In that same vein, individuals engaged in self-analysis, with or without originality, create the analytic other whom they need, just as formal analytic patients do and as Freud did with Fliess.

But with self-analytic writing we encounter a similar setback generated by the statement that only self-analysis completed towards the end of the treatment is useful and not a resistance. For example, for some analysts, a self-analytic diary and the self-analytical writing would seem to serve as a defense against not-knowing, a denial of depending on another mind, or a need of it because there was no mind to depend on. From Winnicott's perspective, the diary is unable to capture in words the quality of the true self because the patient is not in touch with it. They represent instead their own mental functioning and not the truthfulness and reality of their inner world (Halton-Hernandez, 2021). It seems that self-analytic writing is, in many cases, valued and devalued as a source of self-knowledge because it takes place outside of the relationship to the analyst in the consulting room and/or because the reading that is being done is that the patient is trying to defend, deny and replace the analyst's mind with his own mind. This is reasonable and it shouldn't be ignored or minimized. However, albeit this risk, we are left wondering how many self-analytic creative manifestations have been dismissed and hindered and how their dismissal (at any given moment of the therapy) could be understood as a defense of the analyst and detrimental to the analytic process.

In any case, we think self-analytic writing can promote a lively engagement with one's inner and outer worlds that bolsters internal transformation, allowing the person's writing or creative product to reflect unknown parts of themselves in order to develop a stronger sense of who they are and what their inner world is like. As Anzieu (1992) points out, writers who know in advance what they have to say (known parts of themselves) affect us much less than those who venture blindly into regions of themselves unknown and who give us and give themselves to fathom and grasp some indescribable reality[16].

[16] The work of Clarice Lispector could be one possible example, based on Anzieu's comment. It is known that the Ukrainian-born Brazilian-author had several psychoanalytic experiences (one of them with Jacob David Azulay, a Brazilian psychoanalyst). It would be interesting to explore novels such as "The passion of G.H." (1964) and many others from a self-analytic angle. Moreover, it is said that Lispector rewrote her novel "Água Viva" (1973), because she felt the first version was too psychoanalytical. We are left wondering what this could have meant for Lispector, a writer of *and* for the unconscious. Source: https://site.claricelispector.ims.com.br/en/2023/07/13/child-and-origin/

Self-analysis is, perhaps, more openly discussed through the realm of dreams. As previously stated, if for Freud dreams were a wish-fulfilment and/or a way to master traumatic psychic content, it was also and above all, a via regia to the unconscious. More contemporary authors have added new layers of comprehension seeing it not only as a result or psychic product but considering it more like a permanent elaborative process of emotional experiences aiming to provide them with meaning. As we underlined before, for authors like Meyer, dreams are an expressive mode through which the psychic apparatus outlines, constructs and communicates an issue that is confronted with. Mainly, the meaning of dreams would point to an unresolved aspect of an emotional experience. An issue, a conflict, a confrontation, an element of dissonance and tension that would demand our attention, perception, and interpretation. A conflict with an existing object and the necessity to figure it out. Moreover, the attention, perception, and interpretation with which we colour our dreams reflect our own psychic life and how we perceive the psychic life of others.

But even, within the realm of dreams, authors like Bonnet (2011) express how it is rather sad that psychoanalysts have stopped sharing more openly their own self-analytic work related to dreams or not, like Freud (1900) or Anzieu (1993) did. He stresses that, perhaps for the sake of discretion or fear of showing themselves too much, there are less, and less analysts and therapists inclined to share about their own symptoms, breakdowns, analytic failures, catastrophic anxieties, and so forth, from a self-analytic perspective. Moreover, as Bonnet (2011), explains it was Freud's dreams (as an analyst) that led to myriad breakthroughs in his theory and his technique. Perhaps we could counter-argue that there is no guarantee that opening up and sharing one's own dreams, symptoms, anxieties, and so forth, will lead to the advancement of psychoanalysis. Be that as it may, without any guarantee whatsoever, perhaps it is the effort in itself that should motivate and lead this interlocution between the analytic object and the analytic self. This internalized function and presence of the psychoanalyst, outside and within the person, hopefully, will allow a continuation to further delve into the unknown known parts of himself and incarnate what this person is. Besides, self-analysis is still possible because dreams offer the privilege to trace the work of the unconscious in its most 'raw' and nascent state.

While addressing the subject of dreaming and self-analysis, an element was mentioned before that we should accentuate in this discussion: a certain isolation in self-analysis. Albeit the fact that it is true, many

authors coincide that it should be transient or only fleeting because self-analysis is not an exercise to develop infantile type theories, but to deconstruct, re-elaborate and share them. As Anzieu (2000) acknowledged, there is no possible self-analysis if what is sprouting in our minds isn't shared and spoken about with some else. Therefore, it is hoped that the dreamer will establish an interlocution with the analytic object (embodied by analyst or former analytic figures), the analytic self, other significant and meaningful figures (supervisors, colleagues, peers, etc.) and, also, that the person will share it with others. Moreover, the process of sharing dreams might have a bigger impact than we are willing to admit and dream interpretation opens the way to new interactions, creative linking, problem-solving and revisiting theoretical formulations (Meyer, 2021).

It is important to discuss how some authors believe self-analysis is a constant, encompassing tool while others think its presence becomes manifest when conflict or crises arise. According to some authors presented in this essay, self-analysis is useful to understand countertransference reactions at very specific moments. For other authors is it pertinent at specific impasses and, also, as a continuous source of understanding (with dream interpretation and writing). Be that as it may, they unanimously agreed in one key element: free association and its crucial role in self-analysis. As Ferenczi (n.d.) stated: "*the patient is not cured by free association, he is cured when he can free-associate*" (p.47; quoted by Phillips, 1994). Although, this assertion should be nuanced in terms of what is conceived as a cure (if there is one, considering analysis is an interminable process), it is through free association that the person can began to manifest any emerging thought or feeling (for example: about a dream, an analyst's countertransference, a lapsus, etc.) the person is using to complete the self-analytic task. As Calder points out, for him, there would be a first writing (primary data write), then would come a first round of written free associations and, afterwards, a second round of associations (a more refined one based on the first ones).

If free association is a fundamental element, it is imperative to discuss the capacity or incapacity to do so. As we previously mentioned in the unrepresented states of the mind, these inchoate (and/or traumatic) aspects of the psyche are a major limitation that self-analysis, on its own, cannot overcome. As Winnicott stated, in many patients one finds that remembering something traumatic of the past is impossible, because the person wasn't there (*psychically*) to begin with. Consequently, it is through the transference and work with the analyst that the possibility of (re)creating and having access to them becomes feasible. An absence

of representations, major difficulties in psychic inscription and discontinuity make it extremely complex to crystallize such states. Therefore, a failure in object relations leads to an impossibility in the capacity to represent and this psychic discontinuity hinders free association. In terms of self-analysis, one might face a significant limitation given the scarcity or non-existence of free association and the voids and ruptures that cannot be transcended without the emotional connection, thinking and transformation of and with another mind. Moreover, as Botella and Botella (2013) point out to us, the problematic core of mental states without representation is that they are concealed behind a network of representations. As previously developed, to be able to work through such states of mind requires the presence of the analyst and the psychoanalytic work is essential. Even an exhaustive analysis doesn't necessarily imply the possibility of working through these primitive elements. Self-analysis will, inevitably, be confronted with psychic discontinuities and voids that cannot be consciously grasped nor transformed by oneself. And it is here, again, that this essay stresses the role of the intersubjective work (two-person condition of therapy) and how it is strongly recommended for the self-analytical endeavor.

In terms of psychic instances, some authors emphasize that self-analysis is what allows the reorganization of the ego to continue, spontaneously, after analysis has concluded. The ego having a predominant role. We agree with these authors, and, in a similar note, they state that the development of self-analysis arises from the tension between the ego and ego ideal (or ego ideals) or any structure. But it is precisely the tensions that might appear between the ego and the ego ideal (*idéal du moi*, in French) that are given a greater importance. The quality of the superego seems to be a decisive element in the nature of the self-analytic dialogue and a less persecutory superego would allow a better integration of the knowledge grasped by self-analysis. Moreover, we shouldn't undermine the influence of the ideal ego (*moi idéal* in French) because it could threaten the self-analytic pursuit by pushing it towards grandiosity stemming from the narcissistic expansion of the ego and the desire to experience unbridled omnipotence. When self-analytic manifestations are colored by the ideal ego (*moi idéal*) it is highly probable that it is a resistance and an attack on the thinking capacity of the patient and the analyst. Considering the models described by Brunet (2019), it is also important to underline that the incorporation and introjection of the analyst is completed within the ego and ego ideal (Brunet, 2022). Therefore, these would be two major instances at the very heart of the self-analytic practice.

Can anything new be achieved through self-analysis? As previously stated by many authors, the incompleteness of the psychoanalytic cure will fuel and spark the creative psychic attempts to go beyond it and discover new and unknown territories. As Anzieu (1992) points out: "*a residual negative transference is the seed of a creative self-analysis"* (p.369). However, will those attempts guarantee any new discoveries of unknown territories? According to Ticho, no. For this author, only new derivatives of known conflicts will emerge from self-analysis. We believe this to be true and, at the same time, we would like to bring forward the notion of an anti-narrative, that Phillips (1994) intimates. This can be understood as the capacity and disposition to slip out of a well-known version of ourselves during and after analysis. If after the completion of an analysis, the person is not capable of unknowing himself again, as he or she did during the years on the couch, then the transformation will probably be much more limited or scarce. Self-analysis should strive to go beyond a self-satisfying completed psychoanalysis. Will the narrative of the analysis be reshaped and rewritten completely by self-analysis? No. It will be, above all, a complement to the work thus far accomplished.

However, the question comes back to us as if unanswered. Will the anti-narrative or any type of self-analytic effort guarantee any "new discoveries of unknown territories? We shall try to continue answering this question by saying no, first and foremost, because there are no guarantees. But, at least, this disposition and position could bring us closer to a state in which our creative self-thinking can bear new fruit from known conflicts and leave us open to the unknown, in ourselves and others. And that demands unknowing ourselves from the narrative we've habituated ourselves to.

Another question that arises is: is it implied, throughout this essay, that psychoanalysis has an absolute monopoly over any attempts of self-exploration, self-discovery and self-knowledge? We don't believe so. Nevertheless, the psychoanalytic self-analysis we are discussing, understood from the historical, theoretical, and practical angle we have developed, follows the tenets and principles of classic and contemporary psychoanalysis and a personal analysis is pertinent to complete it. As Fromm stated it, the goal of analysis and self-analysis is the attainment of being rather than having and self-analysis is freedom to instead of freedom from. As some authors mention, it refers to the capacity to play alone and to build a nuanced and rich intimacy with oneself, while keeping alive the internal objects that have made that capacity to be and to play a reality. Hopefully, this undertaking will be coloured by excitement and

enjoyment because, as with the case of personal psychoanalysis, the process of exploring and understanding oneself is enticing and never ending.

Finally, it is true one must always be cautious about the defensive nature of self-analytic conclusions. Nonetheless, cautiousness doesn't necessarily imply a complete dismissal of the self-analytical undertaking. The determination to continue deepening and refining the work completed through analysis is of intrinsic value regardless of the positive accomplishments it may entail. Self-analysis would be a way to continue reaching a greater degree of freedom and transparency and to stop it before, during or after analysis is a risk. We agree with Davide Lopez (n.d.; quoted in Baldassarro, 2007) when he illuminates us by stating that self-analysis is not only an awareness of oneself but the living embodiment of our own universality.

CONCLUSION

A poem doesn't do everything for you.
You are supposed to go on with your thinking.
You are supposed to enrich
the other person's poem with your extensions,
your uniquely personal understandings,
thus making the poem serve you.
(Gwendolyn Brooks, 1996).

To closely examine the origins and the potential application of self-analysis, from a psychoanalytic perspective, is to realize that, in fact, it is a useful tool and a broader, more profound practice that can contribute greatly to expand truth and knowledge about ourselves and others. Paradoxically, self-analysis can be both possible and impossible. It is impossible or chimerical when it is conceived as a cure in itself. It is possible when it is envisioned as a creative psychic work that complements a thorough personal analysis or psychotherapy, as proposed by Anzieu (1986, 1992, 2000, 2009). It is impossible when it is only at the service of the ideal ego and its defensive grandiosity. Possible when it responds to the tensions between the ego, the ego ideal and the superego. Impossible when understood as a hermetic, one-person process, cut off from the fabric of otherness. Possible when it entails sharing it with an other person and crystallized in some form that allows its use and transformation (for instance, through dream interpretation or writing).

Most psychoanalytic papers present self-analysis as a sporadic practice, circumscribed to critical moments in the treatment of certain patients (for example, when analysts approach transference-countertransference impasses) and, less frequently, as a continuous, encompassing, richly nurtured, endless practice. We consider that both exist and that it will depend on the need of the person practicing it. Some might have a more circumscribed tendency to use it to address specific situations, while others might have a more pronounced inclination to explore themselves and others more rigorously and continuously, using self-analysis as a plausible and useful instrument to do so.

Having said that, it is striking how little self-analysis is currently evoked and discussed in contemporary psychoanalysis. It is perceived more as a historical rarity or curiosity, having a relegated place in theoretical and clinical discussions. To the extent that out of the 150,000 articles currently available at the Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing Database Pep-Web, only 3% (4,768) are dedicated to or include the word "self-analysis". What are we to conclude about the current state of self-analysis? And how can we explain it?. Throughout this essay we have presented several possible reasons including: 1) the shared idea that no one can emulate Freud's self-analysis and, therefore, it is something unrepeatable and impossible; 2) the belief that it is defensive or, at its best, insufficient; 3) that by supporting it more openly it would hinder or demean the actual psychoanalytic treatment, which, unfortunately, is presently not in an advantageous position, given the monopoly of brief, punctual, cost-reducing psychological interventions that do not have the depth and long-term impact as psychoanalytic cure does.

Albeit these possibilities, we tried to delve into other elements that are not necessarily linked to Freud's ambiguity in regard to self-analysis, to the current status of psychoanalysis or to the inherent and realistic limitations of practicing self-analysis. These are directly connected to how the psychoanalytic practitioner (in this case, the analyst or therapist) feels about revealing himself or herself through self-disclosure and self-analysis. Moreover, throughout this essay, qualities such as: ruthless candor, devotion to truth, moral courage, frankness and creativity emerged over and over again. How can we be more candid and truthful about ourselves?. Anzieu incarnates the above-mentioned qualities in the first self-analytic example presented in this essay. However, he warns us by stating that discretion is not compatible with the practice of self-analysis. If that is the case, should we assume that indiscretion is the missing candor we are searching for?.

To answer this question, we'll briefly look into the synonyms of the word indiscreet, and we will find the following terms: carelessness, recklessness, injudiciousness, imprudence, thoughtlessness, stupidity and so on. We don't believe the candor we are referring to, throughout this essay, has to do with embodying the above-mentioned characteristics. The discretion we are referring to hints directly at our veiled, concealed aspects that are possibly linked with shame. Furthermore, it alludes to not addressing them properly out of fear of exposing ourselves too much. As Adams (2019) reminds us, shame's purpose is to reiterate to us which really is and ought to be our ideal self and it points at it *unashamedly*. How many fruitful

theoretical/clinical discussions and discoveries are being hindered or thwarted because there are less and less analysts and therapists sharing about their own symptoms, breakdowns, analytic failures, catastrophic anxieties, and so forth, from a self-analytic perspective? We can imagine that more than just a few. In a way, we leave the question open, as food for thought, to continue thinking about the narrowminded nature of shame and its calamitous consequences.

Circling back to self-analysis we cannot stress enough the relevance of a rigorous personal analysis. The presence of the analyst and the analytic work is highly recommended, and it represents the bedrock of the psychic foundations that will allow this intimate practice. A thorough analysis should provide the necessary conditions for the unconscious forces and conflicts to emerge within the transference and countertransference. Moreover, it is within the analytic dynamic that the unrepresented states might begin to develop some inchoate form and be worked through over time. Additionally, the introjection of the image of the analyst as an ideal object within the ego ideal or ego ideals (idéal du moi in French, as described by Brunet, 2019) should allow an identification and incorporation of the analyst not tainted so much by the persecutory superego but colored by the desire to emulate the analyst and to further develop the self-analytic understanding beyond the years on the couch. Finally, it is hoped that this function will be a permanent part of the post-analytic personality (Kramer, 1959).

The psychoanalytic theoretical tenets that we have explored throughout this essay [epistemophilic instinct, the creative tropisms, the positive links (K, L and H), the psychoanalytic function of the personality and the third ear] are understood as essential catalysts that promote self-knowledge and self-analysis. Nonetheless, these elements are not readily available based only on a conscious desire to have access to them. It will require a specific disposition and efforts to develop them. We coined the term “self-analytic disposition” to define the conscious and preconscious inclination and efforts to seek and cultivate a more profound and meaningful relationship with oneself and with others. As some authors point out, this creative act of psychic regeneration brings forward an experience of aliveness, a greater sense of openness and as if more of ourselves is available to us. Furthermore, as Pistiner de Cortiñas (2011) points out, it is not only a matter of accessing a certain type of knowledge about oneself, but also essential to become one with the truth and incarnate it. In this sense, the ego has a significant predominance in self-analysis and so do other instances, such as the ego ideal(s) and a more benevolent and constructive superego.

Throughout this essay, a special reference has been made to the importance of free association, respectful listening, and interpretation as the key ingredients for the self-analytic task. These concrete actions potentially allow a more refined connection to preconscious and repressed currents of emotions and thoughts. Moreover, Milner's (1936) "increased awareness", which describes a heightened perception of the bodily sensations integrated with an attentiveness of being at one with the surroundings, could be considered a precursor that will allow putting into practice free associating, careful listening and interpreting of certain internal states conflictual situations. Additionally, Milner's increased awareness harmonizes with Davide Lopez (n.d.; quoted in Baldassarro, 2007) statement that: "*self-analysis is not only an awareness of oneself but the living embodiment of our own universality*" (p.21). It is the awareness and the embodiment of our individuality and universality what makes self-analysis so enticing and interesting as a tool for specific critical moments but, above all, as a continuous, encompassing, fruitful never-ending process.

If self-analysis is tinged by its creative nature it doesn't come as a surprise that dreaming has a monumental influence in this psychic activity. As discussed in this essay, a more contemporary understanding of dreams stresses its inherent creative capacity for presenting unresolved matters from everyday interactions with ourselves and with others, evoking new ideas and bolstering thought process and psychic growth. Correspondingly, insights not only occur, for Bion, in making conscious the dream, but also in the process of dream-thought in itself. Therefore, the self-analytic dreamer will establish an interlocution with the analytic object (embodied by analyst or former analytic figures) and the analytic self, catalyzed and sustained by the introjected analytic function of the personality.

On a related note, writing seems to be, by far, one of the prefer method to sustain the self-analytic practice. Writing, like a seed or a sprout, allows self-analysis to germinate and grow and vice versa. Authors like Algini (2005), describe how writing and self-analysis intertwine and potentially bring out a feeling of being alive, giving form and shaping inner links never experienced before. This self-experience, which sometimes cannot be put into in words, is bolstered, acquired and strengthened while writing and through the writing. Furthermore, self-analytic writing is not limited to literal transcription of the psychoanalytic experience,

nor the effort to explain it. As Faro (2021) intimates, there is a type of writing that stems out of the analytic experience but goes beyond it and beyond the experience of speech. It encompasses free association, but it is capable of subtly liberating itself from a certain rigidity of the psychoanalytic frame and of certain conventionalisms. Thus, facilitating the subject's self-revelation at the very moment it is self-revealing, in a new and creative way.

Self-analytic writing is also imbued with another meaningful purpose. An attuning and mirroring function that allows the reflection of unknown parts of ourselves. In doing so, these unknown parts could surface in a way that is accessible and prone to transformations. Additionally, once these parts are seen, grasped and interiorized, they develop a more solid sense of who we are and what our inner world is like. Kelley-Lainé (2003), summarizes this idea beautifully when she explains that metaphors in self-analytic writing represent a form of language in which I describe “me” so that “I” might see myself. This also reverberates with Ogden’s (1997) idea that all of these symbols/metaphors in self-analytic writing will provide mirrors in which the self as subject (I) recognizes and creates itself. In this essay, the second example of self-analysis tries to illustrate how writing, attuning, mirroring and accessing unknown parts of oneself meld in such a way that transformations emerge and, subsequently, they are internalised within the ego and the ego ideal.

Many authors question the relevance of self-analysis based on its capacity to evoke character changes or new transformations after analysis. The majority of these authors seem to coincide in the fact that self-analysis revolves around the same elaborated conflicts and reshapes issues previously dealt with in therapy. However, authors such as Anzieu (1992), Bacciagaluppi (2010), Calder (1980) and Reik (1948) believed self-analysis might help one to discover something new aspects not only about oneself but also in psychoanalytic dynamics or genetics. They underline how self-analysis was of vital importance in the building of the psychoanalytic foundations and in Freud’s analytic discoveries. Perhaps by exercising more actively and vocally self-analysis new discoveries can be made to further advance psychoanalysis. If this reason doesn’t move us towards the practice of self-analysis, at least let’s not undermine how through its use the more unauthentic self could potentially diminish, and the real self can become more invested with interest, aliveness, creativity and purpose. In that same vein, Horney emphasised that self-analysis should not only have the aim of the removal of symptoms, of gaining “freedom from”, but also should strive at

developing one's best potentialities, “freedom to” (Bacciagaluppi, 2010). Likewise, Fromm stated that the goal of analysis and self-analysis is the attainment of being rather than having.

A more philosophical, perhaps slightly mystical, subject comes to the forefront when examining and exploring self-analysis. The discussion about uncertainty, doubt, intuition and faith. Bion wrote about O (origin), the unknowable, unfathomable, ultimate reality. Although it cannot be grasped through the sensuous realm or directly through knowledge, O ‘becomes’ but it cannot be ‘known’ (Eigen, 1981). This state of uncertainty and of becoming can only be navigated through and with ‘faith’, as we try to reach what is beyond our representations and use them to “*light up the mystery of who we are*” (Eigen, 1981; p.424). Containing and delving into this mystery is essential because it is a basic dimension of our lives as Lowe (1977; quoted by Eigen, 1981) explains and because, hopefully, we are not static entities or final versions of ourselves. The anti-narrative described by Philips (1994), the aliveness repeated by many authors and the creative inherent nature of self-analysis reminds us, over and over again, that we are ever-evolving, constantly changing and constantly ‘*at the verge of becoming*’. At the verge because in order to do so we must face the unknowable, the darkness that doubt casts upon us and our creativity, the disparaging doubts and the desire to perpetuate a self-narrative that illuminates us with artificial light.

Yet again, how do we understand faith and its relationship with self-analysis? Civitarese (2019) conceives faith not as a religious term, but more as an attitude. Poignantly he explains that to believe and to have faith is to *let the unconscious do its work*. In a way, faith show us a state of mind that will allow intuition to emerge (this being very different to the rational thought or Cartesian logic). Faith is the trust that stems from nurturing, meaningful experiences and the belief that they will happen again. They go in the opposite direction of inevitable fate and the distress of death with all the irrepresentability it entails. It reminds us of Anzieu (1993) and his debate about the nature of the spirits when he states: “*there are good ones, there are bad ones... It doesn't matter! This one has done me good, that's what’s essential”* (Anzieu, 1993; p.468). Faith, understood as an attitude, is essential in self-analysis.

But to maintain hope alive and illuminating us is not an easy task. In order to become one with the truth about oneself (also known as at-one-ment) one must navigate the incertitude and turmoil of psychic life and resort to the use of the negative capability (a term coined by the poet Keats and quoted by Bion). This negative capability allows us to cope with uncertainties, doubts, half-truths and what is to remain a mystery within us and about the others, without feeling compelled to the immediate search for reasons and the certainty of facts. Therefore, self-analysis should have at its core the strong desire to discover and continue discovering one's inner truth, navigating the discomfort of the unknown, without settling for a preestablished self-satisfying version of oneself.

At this point, we will circle back to the self-analytic disposition notion proposed in this essay. This disposition and endeavor, as much as it may be informed by unconscious, intuitive processes and a negative capability, is a secondary process thinking that require psychic representation and, previous analytic work, to further deepen the person's understanding of himself and others. Moreover, as previously developed, the self-analytic undertaking cannot solely decipher the unrepresented states of the mind. Here we would underline, again, the impossibility of self-analysis both as a cure and as a way to have access to more primitive, inchoate, unrepresented states of the psyche. The narrative of self-analysis will be inspired by the one achieved through a personal analysis. Although there are no guarantees, it will be a complement of the work thus far accomplished and the bridge towards the unknowable part of ourselves waiting for us to be written, dreamt or thought of, as Dufourmantelle revealed.

To practice self-analysis demands rigour, frankness, courage, faith and the capacity to unknown ourselves from our usual narrative. It is true that we must always be cautious about the defensive nature of our self-analytic conclusions. However, we don't believe the potential risks or harms due to self-analysis compel us to dismiss its practice. The determination to continue deepening and refining the work completed through analysis is of intrinsic value regardless of the positive accomplishments it may entail. We believe self-analysis is a plausible pursuit of a greater degree of freedom and transparency and to stop it before, during or after analysis is a risk and a potential loss. In that sense, the main drawbacks would be to nurture distorted ideas (stemming from narcissistic, omnipotent, manic defenses and the ideal ego), strong resistances and having to prolong the therapeutic process (Chessick, 1993). Also, one must carefully consider the nature of the superego because it could color the self-analytic dialogue with persecutory anxieties and deteriorate

into obsessive rumination, self-accusation, intellectualization, self-admiration or self-indulgence. Moreover, it could be mistaken for self-analysis, and, paradoxically, be a way of "thinking of ourselves" in order not to think about ourselves.

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