

The Drawing of Analysts and the Rule of Abstinence

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Drawings, like dreams and play, are not only shaped by projections, but also by the unconscious processes of condensation and displacement, inhibition and repression. Drawing, like language, is dominated by memory lapses, errors and inhibitions.

The case presented here refers specifically to the analyst's drawings, with the understanding that both the analyst and analysand are experiencing transference.

Winnicott used the *squiggle* to rapidly establish communication with children during sessions. In these "drawings in pairs" it was difficult to differentiate who had drawn what (cf. Winnicott, D., 1971). For Winnicott however, this was not the most important aspect. The jointly drawn squiggle was a way of communicating about the child's issues. I have used this technique for years. Given that some children really take to drawing, on some occasions I have even carried out entire treatments using squiggles, especially in cases where the patients have serious difficulties with emotional connection. The squiggle technique involves the analyst in the drawing process, but the idea is to create something together, like an illustrated conversation or a drawing with commentary. At times, under transference, a drawing can become interpretation. Beyond the squiggle, the analyst's drawing is sometimes aimed at reproducing something that the patient may make out of play dough, clay or some other type of modeling material, or even at drawing the child's creations using different elements. It is a way to work with the child's creations, preserving them, for later thought outside of the session. In sessions, Françoise Dolto drew everything that Dominique modeled, during the brief duration of her treatment.¹ Julio Moreno (2009), in his work with adolescents, uses a variation on the squiggle: the alternating and joint drawing of comic strips. (The analyst draws in one square, while the patient writes the text, and then they switch roles.) Sometimes children ask the analyst to draw "them" something, on paper or on the board. These requests can be an attempt to keep the analyst busy to avoid talking. However, they can also be requests for symbolic support from the analyst.

¹ Dolto, F.(1971): El caso Dominique. Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires, 2009.

The analyst who draws "on request," agrees to be a toy. "Accepting the position of a toy requires the analyst to assume an almost depersonalized role, in order to maintain the meaning assigned to a simple toy used in play."²

In supporting the meaning attributed to the drawing, drawing on request, agreeing to be a toy, the analyst abstains from himself, declining the patient's jouissance, he refuses the patient and denies himself the satisfaction of a drive demand. This frustration (*Versagung*³) of the analyst's drive-satisfaction is one aspect, in this context, of the rule of abstinence. Abstinence, for Meltzer, acquires an ethical and humanist nature, similar to *Versagung*: "This modulation occurs through the patient's repeated experience in analysis that there is a place where the expression of his transference processes will not be met by *counter-transference activity* but only by *analytical activity*, namely a *search for the truth*."⁴ Nevertheless, the analyst cannot entirely avoid the involvement of his own body, style, worldview, beliefs about drawing and analysis and his own unconscious fantasies. The analyst also constantly adds his own words, given that his speech is not disembodied. Words and drawing form the analytical act, the analytical activity that Meltzer refers to.

The child resorts to the analyst's drawing in search of a representation that he cannot produce himself, something that represents the unrepresentable, naming and encoding it. Only then, once it has been encoded, can it be transmitted: repressed, displaced, condensed or transformed into a symptom. There is a need for an Other to take the place of the ego, denied representability. If the analyst takes on the transferred role, these temporary representations under transference can become instances of the detention and transformation of anxiety.⁵

Abstinence from one's own jouissance is a limit to the patient's jouissance and a necessary condition in order to avoid the analyst's domination of the patient. When the analyst, in drawing, accepts the role of a toy, he consents to being guided by the child's instructions, and nothing more. These instructions will also undoubtedly be related to childhood theories of sexuality. The sexual theories of children (Freud, S., 1908) reveal the "incomplete" nature of childhood sexuality and the persistence of two psychic currents, belief and denial.

² Moguillansky, C. (2008): "La presencia real del analista," in the online journal *Controversias en Psicoanálisis de Niños y Adolescentes*, www.controversiasonline.org.ar 2008, N° 3, p. 62.

³ Freud, S.(1914): *Introducción al Narcisismo*. OC, Amorrortu, T° XIV, Buenos Aires, 1993.

⁴ Meltzer, D.(1967): *The Psycho-Analytical Process*. Karnac Books, London, p. xii.

These continue until the child becomes an adult. "It is a common realization in the analysis of adults, that childhood theories of sexuality, although distorted to some degree, unconsciously remain in play, though there is a simultaneous recognition of facts, particular fantasies, symptoms, relational modes, ways of experiencing a pregnancy..."⁶

I would like to add that this does not only refer to the structure of the sexual theories of children, but also to the suspension of an ending, not unlike an orgasm.⁷ In these theories, an argument is constantly repeated without ever coming to a conclusion, signaling the impossibility of an enactment. The occurrence of a climax would also provoke an anxiety crisis. In this sense, sexual theories of children are defensive, given that they protect the subject from exposure to an unavoidable ending, the consummation of jouissance.

The Effects of Inhibition and Repression

Two or three months before turning six, Juanita, who had been undergoing treatment for a year, showed a great interest in male genitalia during a session. She had several hypothesis on the topic: that men had "pee-pees" and women did not, but her mother and I did; that men had "pee-pees" and boys did not, although doubtful, she clarified that girls did not, because she did not have one and her sister didn't either. Once again, she was plagued with doubts and said that she thought boys did have pee-pees, but small ones. During the following session, after playing with pick-up sticks for a while, she told me she was tired and wanted to play at drawing on the board. In reality, what she wanted was for me to draw a naked boy, or rather, his genitals. I asked her how I should do it. "I'll explain it to you," she said in a secretive voice. "I saw my daddy's," she added with excitement. She told me that she had seen him coming out of the bathroom. And then she told me she had had a "bad dream" that night: *she had dreamed that her daddy was leaning over her bed to*

⁵ "Drawing is characterized by its content in frozen images and, in this sense, in psychoanalysis, it has been given the role of suspending anxiety. [...] However, it should be noted that this role, this suspension, should not necessarily be restricted to the transience of images. Rather, it can also be tied to other situations of more specific movement and loss [...] related to the memory of observing the primal scene and the ensuing castration anxiety." Levin, R.: *La escena inmóvil. Teoría y clínica psicoanalítica del dibujo*. Editorial Lugar Editorial, Buenos Aires, 2005, p. 157.

⁶ Porge, E.: "La transferencia a la cantonade," in *Revista Littoral*, N° 10, 1990, p. 78.

⁷ "Not only is [the child] excluded from reproduction, but he or she is also excluded from knowledge of this aspect: 'sexual relations do not exist,' a lack of knowledge supplied by the sexual theories of children. The love for which the child is ready, is a love defined by the sexual theories of children..." Porge, E.: *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

give her a kiss and suddenly he disappeared and there was a cockroach crawling on her face. Then she woke up.

In association with her dream, she described the cockroach as having long, hairy legs. I asked her what had frightened her so much and she replied "it poked me." How did it poke? "Like when my daddy gives me a kiss." Of course, daddy has a beard, I said. She touched her mouth, as if tracing a circle around it and made a gesture, as if to say "O," but without a sound. What does your daddy's beard remind you of? "A cockroach. It's gross." It's gross? "I don't know. The cockroach... its legs tickle me..." The legs are like hairs, hairy legs. Did wanting to see daddy's pee-pee so much make you afraid? "No, not afraid." She smiled and seemed relieved and happy. She did not pursue the idea of me drawing.

Five months later, a month after beginning first grade, one day she wanted to play at drawing a naked boy again and came up with a kind of "competition." First we had to play pick-up sticks, and then the person who lost had to draw on the board. She lost and drew a boy without genitals. (I thought it coherent with her vacillating ideas on genitalia that men might have penises, while boys did not.) She was satisfied with her drawing and we went back to playing pick-up sticks. I lost and she said I had to draw a naked man.

The origin of the request is notable. It was a "penalty," a punishment for the loser. It is the person who loses who draws, not the person who knows. She could have asked me to draw a naked man, without the need to play pick-up sticks. This indicates a masking of desire, both defensively and to avoid guilt. For her, it is no longer related to her own desire to see her father's genitals, but rather mine. Added to this, and reinforcing the defensive aspect of the operation, it is no longer Juanita's request, but rather a penalty in the game. Someone else must draw, must present the naked man so that she can look at him like she did in the bathroom. Thus, the situation is repeated with other actors, safe from the temptation of sexual desire, as if it were the original situation. It is a play that attempts, like *fort-da*, to dominate both the drive excess as well as the excess of reality tied to the appearance of her naked father, a situation that she seems to have provoked herself in her attitude of spying on the intimacy of her parents.

I drew a doll and she indicated I should draw its genitals. I asked her how and, following her directions, the penis ended up being very small, almost invisible. Juanita didn't like it and grabbed the chalk to do it herself. She made various attempts, immediately erasing

each one. She was agitated. The session ended there, without achieving a satisfactory drawing.

During the following session, we began again with the pick-up sticks "competition" and she won. She told me to draw. I once again followed her instructions, with the same results as before. Juanita wanted to correct the "bad" genitals I had drawn following her instructions, but it did not work. She once again drew a tiny penis. She stopped, paralyzed, chalk in mid-air, without knowing what to do. "That's not how it is," she said. I commented that perhaps she wanted to draw a pee-pee like daddy's. While I was saying this, she repeated the soundless "O" gesture that had been associated with the dream of daddy's mouth and that expressed her own desire to put her mouth on her father's genitals, thereby indicating a *fellatio* fantasy (penis-in-the-mouth).

The transformation of her father's approach to give her a kiss into a nightmare, clearly indicates that for Juanita, it was a sexual approach and that its sexual nature came from the excitement of seeing her father naked. The dream response of the nightmare expresses the difficulties of the psychic apparatus in recovering this scene at a more symbolic level. The tiny penis (Juanita's penis-in-the-mouth kiss that replaced her father's kiss) appears to be a transaction, like the one in the dream, and just as unrewarding, given that it satisfies neither the impulse to see nor the incestuous sexual desire. Repression "cuts short" the father's "enormous" genitals. The effect is ultimately one of castration. The hand that draws does not appear to be autonomous: Does Juanita "want" to draw her father's actual genitals or does she want to experience something she felt on seeing her father? Something related to seeing or touching? None of her attempts satisfy her, none are considered good and she must keep "working." The full-on glimpse of her father's genitals challenges her former reasoning and marks the failure of her previous sexual theories. The psychic effort to restore the repressive logic requires a kind of temporary "disorder." First, a nightmare and then an inhibition in drawing this particular (?) aspect.

Here, there is a failure of the sexual theories of children in protecting child sexuality, a failure evidenced by Juanita's excitement at the sight of adult male genitalia.

Return of the Repressed and the Symptom

At the end of the year, her parents decide to discontinue her analysis. They are aware that Juanita needs more time, but admit that for the moment, the issue is no longer a priority for the family. Four months later, at the beginning of the school year, they call me: Juanita has a male teacher and she's very upset. Sometimes she starts crying and needs someone to be there with her in order to stay in the classroom. After a week of Juanita being upset in class, she asks to see me. She tells me that her teacher is good, that she doesn't know why she doesn't like him and that he has a beard.

The phobia of going to school originated with the unconscious comparison between the teacher's bearded mouth and her father's bearded mouth that poked her. Talking about her teacher once again led Juanita back to the genitals surrounded by hair, which she could never successfully draw on the board because they are too eroticized. The "O" did not reappear on her face, perhaps indicating a working-through of the oral desire for the penis and its subsequent repression. The unconscious nature of these sexual fantasies surprised Juanita: why was she unable to do the drawing if she "wanted" to do it?

This is where the analyst comes in, as one who "knows" Juanita's desires and can transfer them to the board, overcoming her momentary difficulty. The analyst's drawing, following the girl's instructions, does not reveal more than Juanita's own hand, perhaps because the analyst avoids dominating the child's subjectivity with his own drawing. The adult drawing, in this case, would have had the value of sexual abuse, expressing or graphically representing what the repression concealed. Nevertheless, the graphic illustration led to associations and reflections on male genitalia, thereby establishing a kind of bridge for working-through, an intermediate stage less tied to sexual excitement, a limit which Juanita cannot traverse alone.

Conclusion

We have examined the topic of abstinence and the analyst's drawing in a case of childhood sexual trauma. The initial "presentation" establishes the child's exposure to excitement at two different moments (a sighting and then a dream, similar to the two moments in Emma's case in the "Project," given that it is clear that repression is taking place in Juanita). Several

hours later, and without forgetting that the child in question is five, the dream about the father's kiss appears. This is the second scene (the re-presentation) in which all the unconscious mechanisms appear: the displacement of the penis to the mouth, and from the mouth to the cockroach; the condensation between the father's hairy legs and the hairy legs of the cockroach; and the excitement (tickles that refer to strange feelings) that becomes disgust in censuring the dream.

But this does not entirely explain the traumatic event the girl was exposed to when bursting in on the intimacy of her parents' bedroom. The repetition of the second session of this story in which, for the first time, the game of pick-up sticks was followed by the attempt to dominate the trauma through drawing, takes into account the need to inscribe a fact that continues to make "noise," continues to knock on the door of the unconscious, to enter the psychic process. The interpretation reveals only a part of that excitement, that which is associated with the sighting. The *fellatio* fantasy has yet to be interpreted. Perhaps this reveals a difficulty on my part related to an excess of abstinence, given that I evidently thought about it when seeing the patients "O" gesture, but nevertheless was not able to address it. It is precisely this fantasy which, through displacement, appears tied to the teacher's beard, along with the feeling of surprise at what was taking place, given that the teacher was good. The recognition that it is not about the teacher... but that it occurs when the teacher speaks, when he moves his mouth and with that moves Juanita, producing her excitement.

She turned to drawing once again, but merely in intention, given that in reality, she wished to talk about what happened, and especially about her teacher. In this way, the analysis was able to continue and she was able to deal with the anxiety that she experienced when facing the teacher (and facing her own excitement). The drawing, in this second stage, was simply an invitation directed at me, to begin talking about what was bothering her. I believe that she was already ready to continue the analysis through other means.

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SUMMARY

The author presents her ideas regarding the protective role of the sexual theories of children with respect to child sexuality and the analyst used by the patient to draw and deal with a traumatic situation. These ideas are tied to the resolution of a case of childhood sexual trauma.