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The Transformative Function of the Analyst's Words

To paraphrase Flaubert from *Madame Bovary*:

While few of us can ever speak exactly of our wishes, longings, or sorrows, and language is a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, while all the time we long to move the stars to pity.

And yet we still have a kettle, cracked though it may be, and we still long to move someone, and maybe one day someone will hear our longing, name it, help us understand it, transform it, and we may find that the longing for pity is to ward off our excitement over dancing, and in this way, maybe, we begin to joyfully play music and dance with whoever we want, or not. As I understand it, this is fundamental to the analytic task.

Flaubert's quote captures one of the many dilemmas posed for psychoanalysts regarding the complex meaning of words and language, especially the analyst's attempt to translate the polyphonic music from the cracked kettle into something meaningful and analytically useful for the patient. It has led some analysts to eschew the significance of words in analytic work,[1] while others continue to make discoveries about the use of language within the psychoanalytic situation (e.g., Green, 2000a; Rizutto, 2002, 2003, 2004), rethink why certain words appear in the way they do (e.g., words as actions), reconsider the purpose of the analyst's words (e.g., Lecours, 2007), and investigate the underlying structure of language.[2] The analyst's appreciation for the

transformative effect of words is the *sine qua non* for helping patients to develop a psychoanalytic mind.

As analysts we have had to find a way of navigating between the post-modern view of language that a signifier may mean whatever the interpreter wants it to mean, and the view expressed by Green (2000a):

> By constructing an analytic space in which free association and psychoanalytic listening are possible, the analyst can *voice and link* previously catastrophic *ideas*, quite unknown to the patient's consciousness, to help the patient to create meaning and obtain relief from previously dominant but unknown terrors.
>
> (p. 429, italics added)

Can we appreciate both positions?

Freud (1915) embraced both positions when he described the move from unconscious into conscious via linking "thing *presentations*" with "word *presentations*." In his use of the term "presentations" Freud indicated it was not a thing in itself he was referring to, whether as a *thing* or a *word*.[3] As clarified by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), "The thing presentation is not to be understood as a mental correlate of the thing in its entirety" (p. 448). Although not stated as such, we can assume the *word presentation* is also not "a mental correlate of the thing in its entirety" (ibid). In short, Freud recognized the highly saturated nature of words (and things) for the individual. This post-modern view, in itself, doesn't negate the importance of words in lifting "thing presentations" from the maelstrom of primary process thinking, it just highlights the complexity of the task.

Freud (1914) was clear in his belief that what could not be remembered in words, would be expressed in action.

Another complication for analysts today, is the observation regarding the *possibility* of the analyst's words representing actions. It is my impression this insight into the way we may, *at times*, communicate, has led some to a position where they no longer see it as useful to consider a distinction between the analyst's words and action. As stated by Stern (2002),

Contemporary clinicians also take it for granted that *every time* they speak, they are taking some kind of action with and toward the patient. The effect of the analyst's language, like that of the patient's, is hardly limited to its truth value.

(p. 230, italics added)

Greenberg (1996) believes, "Freud's starting point, the fundamental assumption that the word and the act are dichotomously alternative modes of expression, is flawed. We know that words do not restrain or substitute for action; they *are* actions" (p. 201). In fact, some contemporary American analysts seem to believe, as Vivona (2003) suggested, in the futility of trying to distinguish between *words as communications* and *words as actions*.

In contrast, throughout a large part of the psychoanalytic world,[4] there have been certain paradigm shifts based upon an increased understanding of the analyst's words as central to the curative process. Basic to this shift is the increasing understanding of the significance of *transforming* the under-represented into something

potentially *representable*,[5] *or represented in a more complex form*. In this process one can imagine the *inevitability of action being replaced by the possibility of reflection*. This is why I see the discounting of the power of the analyst's words, as in an extreme post-modern view, as leading us away from some significant developments in psychoanalytic thinking, and potentially interesting psychoanalytic questions.

In psychoanalysis the increased understanding of words and language has come from various sources. We've come to realize that unconscious mentation is "pre-symbolic" (Basch, 1981), "pre-conceptual" (Frosch, 1995), "concrete" (Bass, 1997; Busch, 1995b, 2009; Frosch, 2012) and "preoperational" (Busch, 1995b, 2009). What these labels attempt to capture is that the patient's thinking, at these times, is without *sufficient symbolic representations*. Thus, before any meaning can be interpreted, the psychic mechanism (i.e., conflict, defense, self-reparation, internalized objects, etc.), and content, will *need to be represented verbally in a way that leads to symbolization*. Words and thoughts serve as efficient, and structuring signs for what is signified.

For over 60 years French psychoanalysts have highlighted the importance of building *representations* to the curative process. Aisenstein and Smadja (2010) captured this perspective from one of the founders of the French psychosomatic school, Pierre Marty (1952), when they pointed out the significant step Marty took in understanding psychosomatic patients: "it was not a question of looking for the *content* to give sense to the

somatic symptoms but rather of observing the *inhibition or failures of psychic elaboration that preceed or accompany them*" (2010, p. 343, italics added). In short, Marty saw the symptoms of psychosomatic patients as a result of a particular type of problem in thinking, or non-thinking, i.e., *the failure of representation*, rather than primarily the result of a physical enactment of an unconscious fantasy or conflict. The concept of representation, or lack thereof, has been central in French psychoanalysis. Green, in fact, sees the essential paradigm of psychoanalysis, on the side of representation.[6] We see in Bion's (1970) concept of *thoughts without a thinker* (p. 563), and the idea of changing beta elements into alpha elements, notions very close to the French representational concept. Ferro (in Brown, 2009), writing from a Bionian perspective, highlights that "there is not an unconscious to be revealed but a capacity for thinking to be developed, and that the development of the capacity for thinking allows closer and closer contact with the previous non-negotiable areas" (p. 102).

In fact, there has been a paradigm shift *across psychoanalytic cultures*, captured by Lecours (2007) as the movement from *lifting* repression to a paradigm of *transformation*. That is, rather than *primarily* searching for buried memories, we attempt to transform the under-represented into ideas that are representable. For example, we attempt to build representations as a way of helping the patient *contain* previously threatening thoughts and feelings so that he can move toward deeper levels of meanings. As noted by Lecours (2007), what is represented can continue to build structure and enhance

the ability to contain. This leads to what Green (1975) called "binding the inchoate" (p. 9) and containing it, thus giving a container to the patient's content and "content to his container" (p. 7).

What are representations? What is transformed?

Any time we name something that was unnamed we attempt to represent it. Any time we give greater *meaning* to something that previously had no meaning, or capture meaning in something that seemed meaningful (to the listener) but without meaning (to the speaker), we are building a representation. A representation can be as concrete as a word, or as abstract as a metaphor. It can be a sound with a meaning, like "Ugh," or a symbol. Whether it becomes something that is representable for the analysand, depends on many factors, *including how close it comes to what is tolerable at that exact clinical moment*.

In areas of conflict, a patient's mind coming into analysis is filled with simple, but highly saturated representations. For the patient they are one-dimensional realities. For example, a patient with a brilliant graduate career but continual difficulty in the work place comes into analysis with the simple representation: Boss = Despot = Anger = Fear. The patient is working on something close to a stimulus–response model. *Through analysis this representation becomes more complex* so that: Boss = Father = Arrogant Authority = Domineering = Disciplinarian = Feeling Abandoned = Feeling Unloved = Oedipal Rival = Love Object = Homosexual Anxiety = Analyst … and to each there is a story along with the myriad feelings that go with these stories.

In essence, this is how simple representations become more complex, leading to the capacity to contain what previously led to immediate action. What has been *transformed* is a simple, saturated *representation* into a more nuanced complex *representation* capable of further elaboration. We do this by increasing the associative links.

Psychoanalytic and research data indicate that the earlier the experience, the more likely it is to be closer to an action. I would *suggest also that the deeper the repression, the weaker the representation and the closer it becomes to action*. In considering the work with more disturbed patients with early trauma, an added difficulty is their tendency to deal with anxiety via action.

In summary, I would suggest that the question of how something unconscious appears in psychoanalysis depends upon the depth to which it has been repressed, and the level of representation at which it was experienced. *The earlier the experience, or the deeper the repressed material, the more likely it will appear in action form*.[7]

Building representations

As I've tried to indicate it is not that *representations are there or not there, but are there in a variety of forms*. *In broad-brush strokes, then, when we talk about building representations in psychoanalysis we are talking about two separate but related issues. The first is building more nuanced, complex representation from a highly saturated, simple representation. The second is building*

a beginning representation from what is expressed in language action.

One can think of representations as having multiple dimensions, for example: from deeply unconscious to within the range of the preconscious (Busch, 2006a); simple to complex; or degrees of saturation. In this model, building representations means attempting to make them more complex, closer to consciousness, and less saturated (or more nuanced). For example, we try to just build a representation from one that is conceptually primitive (e.g., somatic representations). With a highly saturated, simple representation that is close to consciousness, we would attempt to make the representation more complex and less saturated. With a more complex representation that is unconscious, we would attempt to bring the representation to increasingly higher levels of preconsciousness. To complicate matters, as I will show in Chapter 5, the closer we get to what is unconscious the more likely we find thoughts expressed in the language of action. This is what Freud (1914) understood when declaring that what couldn't be remembered in words would be remembered in action. Further, as Piaget's studies showed, *early thought is in action terms*, and this continues in degrees through the age of 6. In short, our earliest history is encoded in action terms, and the same is true for the working out of conflicts. As Loewald (1971, 1975) noted, the deeper one goes in psychoanalysis the greater is the likelihood the patient will express him or herself in the language of action.[8]

Broadly speaking, then, there are ranges of representations we attempt to build. At a more primitive level, we attempt to build a simple representation from what is poorly represented and often expressed in the language of action (Busch, 2009; Loewald, 1975; Rizutto, 2002); for example, helping a patient see he or she is *doing* something. At a more neurotic level, we help to build more complex representations by understanding the *meaning* in preconsciously formed associative links. In the first situation we are we are more like ethnographic researchers translating cave paintings into a written language, while in the second we are like a sophisticated translator who understands the music that goes with the words. In the first situation we are building a representation where previously there was primarily action. In the second we are building simple representations into something more complex by adding links of meaning.

A clinical example of building complex representations via associations

In this example from a patient in the termination phase, analyzing the meaning of a resistance leads to a series of preconscious associations. At these times the analyst's interpretations focus on building preconscious *meanings from the associations*, rather than assuming the preconscious meanings were inherent in the associations.

Claude, a 42-year-old businessman, was well into his analysis. While Claude benefited greatly from analysis, a particular transference remained whereby Claude both eagerly looked forward to, but could not hold on to the analyst's words.[9] This had been understood in a variety

of ways, but remained a particularly notable part of the transference.

In this session Claude was talking of his reaction to two colleagues. One was the CEO (Charles) of the company he worked for, who was presented as a bully who Claude professed hatred for, and the other was the head of his division (Nick), who was a "nice guy." As the CEO was retiring soon, and this "nice guy" was likely to be the new CEO, Claude surprised himself by wondering if Nick would be able to get him to work as hard as the current CEO. As much as he disliked being pushed by someone, he realized that he always did best when there was someone pushing him. His thoughts then drifted to a meeting on a new computer system the company was investing in, and he worried about his capacity to "*take in*" information. Immediately after Claude used this phrase "take in," he tried to find another phrase. He stumbled around for a while, and then in further associations, whenever he came to the part of the sentence where the phrase *take in* might be used, he stumbled some more.

F.B.: You seemed to notice this phrase "take in" troubled you, but were reluctant to linger on this.

Claude is able to represent[10] *a problem he's had with authority figures in a new way, i.e.*, his *ambivalence about being pushed. There is then something about this phrase "taking in" that makes Claude so anxious that he is forced to try and cover up his palpable discomfort. My comment is meant to represent the resistance to representing the resistance, i.e., the attempts to find*

alternate ways to express "taking in" rather than being able to think about the difficulty with this phrase.

*Claude:*I sort of noticed it and put it out of my mind. [Pause]. Now that I can think about it, I imagine taking in a penis. [Pause] I'm surprised at what comes to mind now. I was thinking about my colleagues at work, and how we don't socialize. I find them too caught up in the academic world, and I can't imagine watching a football game with them. Yet with the people in our neighborhood who watch football, I feel they're not intellectual enough.

Claude is able to represent his ambivalence over feeling connected to others (e.g., like in the analysis), and associatively links it with this taking in of a penis.

Claude:[continues] I got up at 3 a.m. last night and couldn't go back to sleep. I kept thinking about this remodeling project we're doing. I got an offer from one company, and it seemed pretty good, but during the night I kept worrying that *I was getting screwed*. Should I have checked with a few other companies, and gotten more bids? The other thing I was worried about was a seal around a crawl space we have in our basement. For some reason there is a danger of radon leaking from this space, so it had to be sealed up. Yesterday I noticed that the seal was broken, and last night I kept thinking about these dangerous gasses escaping from this hole.

F.B.: If we put these two worries together, we might say that feeling screwed is a way of plugging up this hole where these dangerous gases come from.

Claude's associative chain of representations deepen, so that his ambivalence over "taking in" can be seen as the fantasy of needing to be penetrated to plug up these dangerous gases, while arousing intense homosexual anxiety.

Claude: I just remembered this dream from last night. In this dream I was supposed to make a presentation to Charles and other colleagues. When I went into the room it was so bright, there was no way I could show the slides. I was thinking Charles was a real asshole for picking this room. He had put these shades on the windows that were ineffective. The room was connected to a library, and when I tried to turn the lights off to make the room dimmer, the people in the library were yelling at me. They kept yelling "bum." I was trying to get to the other room to tell this one person who kept yelling that I was a "bum" something, but it was up a steep vertical ramp and I couldn't make it there.

When I thought of how bright the room was I was thinking how bright it was in here, but then I thought "you don't have shades on the window." When I'm reading to Alice [his daughter] at night, after I turn off the light she often keeps

repeating some word I said. The library reminds me of the library at Penn, which for some reason I'm thinking was brown, although it wasn't, and all the hours I spent there trying to learn stuff and how difficult it was to let it sink in.

F.B.: So unlike Alice, who wants to hold on to her Daddy's words, words are associated for you with this dangerous brown place, and these lethal gases that need to be plugged up.

Claude: Like the feeling that I'm not sure I can hold on to what we talk about. I wonder now about it being so bright in the room, like it certainly wasn't brown. I'm thinking now about the difficulty I had learning certain subjects, like French history [his mother was French]. I guess it makes sense. I wonder if it had to do with all the bullshit I had to put up with growing up.

I see this example as fairly typical of work with a patient who has reached an advanced capacity for representational complexity. Preconsciously organized associative chains, *not fully represented as meaning*,[11] are presented in a way that deepens our understanding so that further elaboration takes place. A highly defended phrase, "taking in," is identified, which leads to an elaboration of an anxiety-producing fantasy in the night, which leads to a dream. Each component deepens the associative links that play a role in Claude's conflicted feelings about
taking in and holding on to the analyst's words. In this context it is the *representation of the meaning of the*

associations that contribute to the complexity of the representation, rather than beginning to make simple representations out of what was unthinkable, or trying to make simple saturated representations less saturated.

From language action to representation

The analytic task when the patient is communicating via language action is different. At these times the analyst attempts to build a *beginning representation* where there was an attempt to discharge or evacuate thoughts and/or feelings via language action. The associative process only begins after the representation has taken hold.

Although graduating from a good university with honors, Richard, in his late thirties, had drifted unsuccessfully from one job to another, and was "sent" to treatment by his wife's therapist. Unlike many patients who are sent to treatment by a spouse or spouse's therapist, Richard, after some brief protestations, was eager to begin psychoanalysis. It became evident he wanted treatment for some time, but like with his jobs, he couldn't take sufficient initiative to get himself to do it.

Within the first 6 months of treatment, Richard seemed to be working well in the treatment. His associations had a narrative sense, and a mixture of current conflicts and memories from the past enlivened the sessions. Correspondingly his life outside analysis seemed to improve dramatically. Around this time I began to realize that while there were many associations Richard had in the sessions, they didn't seem to deepen. In one form or another the same stories were repeated. My interpretations were greeted with interest, but the same

memories kept coming to mind. We were stuck in what I would call the "history as destiny explanation." Any potential new direction was deadened by phrases like "this must be because my mother (father, sister) …" etc. Like with his failed job opportunities, and his inability to get himself to treatment, his analytic ambition had been compromised. *There seemed to be a profound fear of any new representation*.

I began to feel increasingly as if my mind was deadened in our sessions. As I began to be aware of these associative patterns, and my own reactions, I realized that there was another sub-text to Richard's associations. Often times, when he would tell me about some incident where he felt he made progress he would say, "So that was a good thing." It was clear he was pulling for a mirroring response. Given Richard's history I initially felt there was some necessity to gratify this need. However, as the analysis went on, when he kept repeating this phrase I found myself thinking of retorts like, "Who knows?" or "It's not so easy to tell." Noticing the tenor of these remarks that came to mind, I realized I was feeling like I needed to assert my independence from how he wanted *us* to think.

At this point, I began to listen more closely to what Richard might be enacting in language action. Over time I began to see how everything he said was trying to lead us to *one* conclusion.

As I began to try and show him how this was happening in the sessions, he would link it to how his mother could only see him in a particular manner (not a new idea). I would point out how this was a repetition of this same

process as now we could only think this was the "cause" of what was happening.

This went on for several months, and gradually new ideas emerged (*the beginning of new representations*), captured in the following. Richard, like his father, was interested in military history. With intense effort over many months, Richard had recreated a panorama of a crucial Civil War battle, complete with soldiers he had painstakingly painted over several months. One day he came home and his mother casually told him she had to move the panorama to a different part of the basement. When he rushed downstairs to see where she put it, it was a shambles. He was enraged, and had the thought that he wished she were dead. Previously, he'd accepted her empathic inattentiveness and casual disregard for his interest with clinging behavior. Richard was sure when his father came home he would be furious with her, but all the father could do was to say "We'll rebuild it." They never did.

Captured in this archetypal memory was the beginning understanding of the fear of *new representations*, i.e., the *fear of building anything new with the analyst/father because it would only be destroyed. In his mind, I could not protect him from the destruction of what we may build, and he could not represent himself as someone whose products were safe and respected*. At the same time, Richard thwarted attempts to build new representations with him in an identification with the aggressor. Over time, other memories of attempts to build something followed by destruction came to the fore. Most poignantly, there was a time when Richard

was a budding soccer star. His mother was driving him to buy new soccer cleats, when her carelessness led to an accident, and Richard ended up with his leg in a cast, causing him to miss the soccer season.

After explication of these fears, a new pattern of language action emerged. As Richard would be talking about a situation where it would be natural for someone to express anger, he would apologize for the behavior of the other. When I would bring up this sequence, Richard would agree and then go on as if I hadn't said anything. After following his associations, and not being able to glean a pattern related to what just happened, I would attempt to bring to Richard's awareness what just happened. At first Richard was confused. He couldn't remember my saying anything. After several repetitions of the same event, and as I brought what was occurring closer to the action, Richard was able to register what just happened, but at first without further thoughts. Eventually he became intrigued. At first he was only able to capture the experience, where it felt to him like my voice was coming from a distance. Then new memories began to emerge (these were not forgotten memories, but ones that hadn't come into the analysis yet). There was a series of memories where he was alone in some part of the family's spacious home, and he had no idea what to do. There was no place for a child to play in the house, except the basement, which was cold and dreary. In high school, where he's been accepted at one of the city's most prestigious programs, which
was some distance from his home, he had to make his own way there and back via train and several buses. His

mother, who had nothing else to do during the day, never offered to help.

Sensing this also as a metaphor for the analytic journey, I wondered if there was a way he felt I wasn't available to help with his current journey (dealing with Richard's narcissistic vulnerability before the possible identification with the aggressor, i.e., the unavailable one who couldn't hear the other). After some tepid denials, Richard remembered a time when an interpretation I made sounded like it came from an analytic textbook.

I remembered the interpretation, and felt at the time that it, indeed, sounded like it came from a textbook. I recounted this with Richard, and suggested that at that time he might have felt like I wasn't able to help him get to a better place.

Richard was surprised I would acknowledge being a less than perfect analyst, and then elaborated something mentioned earlier, only in passing. His mother was an alcoholic, and at times would fly into uncontrolled rages when inebriated. She would throw things, break dishes, and one time threw a knife at his father, which barely missed him. In the early evening when she began drinking, he would watch to see if she had an extra Martini, or maybe a few more glasses of wine with dinner. His response was to get back out of the situation as quickly as possible, and flee to his room where her yelling was only a distant voice.

I reminded him of how this was the way he heard *my voice* during these times we'd been talking about. It was only over a longer period of time that Richard became

aware of his own narcissistic rages when not listened to, and the fears of killing me or being killed.

The fear that his irritation with something I said would lead to uncontained, chaotic rage, led Richard to flee to a protected part of the analytic space, where my voice was coming from a far away place. New representations couldn't be formed because they became potential sparks for rage that could only be fled from for self-protection.

In summary, Richard was only able to express his resistance to and enactment of the transference in language action. Thus, his fear of new representations or his hearing me from a great distance needed to be represented in language before a beginning understanding and further representation could take place via the emergence of painful memories of narcissistic derailments. It is the translation of language action into words that begins the process of representation for patients like Richard with severe narcissistic difficulties.

The power of words and thoughts

The study of language's effect on thinking is as old as Socrates, and *supports the psychoanalytic discoveries of the importance of words and language in shaping thinking*. At the beginning of the third century we find Tertullian (a prominent theologian) writing about the inseparability of thought and language, who came to the conclusion that *in uttering speech you generate thought* (in Holmes, 1870).

W. Chomsky (1957), summing up 2,000 years of thinking about these issues, states:

> Language is not merely a means of expression and communication; it is an instrument of experiencing, thinking, and feeling … We think in words, by means of words. Language and experience are inextricably interwoven, and the awareness of one awakens the other. Words and idioms are as indispensible to our thoughts and experiences as are colors and tints to a painting.
>
> (p. 3)[12]

The legitimate questions raised by those who see in post-modern theory the difficulty in ever knowing what a word means to the listener, or those who see words themselves as action, have led some to diminish the significance of words in a psychoanalytic cure. However, in my own experience analysands hear words in a variety of ways, and it is this very fact that helps us understand our patients in a deeper way. This is captured in Faimberg's (1996) concept of *listening to listening*. Further, we have all moved from the view that we are just objective observers of the patient's psyche, and we've learned that how the patient hears our words can sometimes give us important insight into our countertransference reactions. However, I find that in psychoanalysis we have a tendency to take new insights in the field as refutation of older ideas, rather than as a window into greater complexity. As noted by Anna Freud (Sandler and Freud, 1982), "*It is very interesting to look at the losses in psychoanalytic theory that occur under the name of progress. It is important to see that*

with every step forward we lose some very useful things" (p. 10).

From this perspective I find it apt to end with a quote from approximately 500 BC:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought;

it is founded on our thoughts;

it is made up of our thoughts.

(Buddha)

Notes

1 See Vivona (2003) and Katz (1998) for summaries of this position.

2 See Litowitz (1975) and Shapiro (1988, 2004).

3 Freud used the German word *Vorstellung*, which is closer to "imagination" than "presentation," but Strachey's choice of "presentation," once elaborated, seems apt.

4 The French, the Kleinians, most of Europe and Latin America, and those still working within a Freudian tradition in America, and its developments over time.

5 Stern's (2002) concept of "unformulated" experience captures descriptively what is meant by unrepresented thinking. There are two problems with his conception. The first is that he ignores an admittedly difficult issue, i.e., in what part of the mind are
these unformulated experiences? Second, he contrasts unformulated experiences with the unconscious, which

he depicts as something already inside the individual's mind, "just waiting for him to acknowledge it" (p. 241), as if the Freudian unconscious was populated only by already formed representations rather than the formless and inchoate, and that which exists in the language of action (e.g., Widlocher, 1986).

6 Fonagy et al. (1993) think of mental representations as structures, similar to Freud's view in "The Project" (Freud, 1895). It is a position supported by others (Busch, 2006a; Westen and Gabbard, 2002; Schmidt-Hellerau, 2001).

7 I will only mention the difficulty here of trying to understand what happens to the very earliest representations of experience. Somatic representations may be one of the earliest forms of experience.

8 I think Loewald was describing what happens with patients who are more neurotically organized, because with more severe character disorders language action is prominent from the beginning. It is what makes the analyst's task more complicated in that we are bombarded with transference reactions in a language we most often understand via our countertransference that we pick up unconsciously, and thus react before we understand.

9 Throughout this book the reader will find many examples of where I pay close attention to what the patient does with the analyst's words, as I find it becomes a central manner in which the transference neurosis is expressed, and becomes clearer as the treatment progresses.

10 One colleague asked me, "Why don't you just *say you are putting a resistance into words?*" While this is what I am doing, it doesn't capture the theoretical construct for why we put things into words. If one were to say the above we would be working at a *clinical descriptive* level, while what I'm trying to describe is from the perspective of *clinical theory*, which attempts to *add to our understanding of the underlying psychic mechanism*.

11 I find it useful to distinguish between the representations of experiences and representations of meanings in psychoanalysis, the latter occurring with increased understanding.

12 However, from the late 1950s to the present, following the discoveries of Noam Chomsky, linguists turned toward the general theory of universal grammar. It ruled out any examination of the ways in which languages may affect thinking. However, even Pinker, one of the most prolific explorers and explainers of Chomsky's theories, has stated that "one's language does determine how one must conceptualize reality when one has to talk about it" (Pinker, 1989, p. 360).