

CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

Report of a case

depressive-narcissistic personality disorder

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MARC

*The child is father to the man
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

Wordsworth

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND BACKGROUND

Marc came to me in February 1999, he was then 36 years old. He had had an experience of psychotherapy that made him furious. He had addressed a famous female therapist to help his wife who had been a heavy drinker. The therapist saw them separately, while making each of them pay a full price for the session, so that Marc got almost financially ruined. In addition their quarrels with his wife intensified around the question who said what to the therapist. After they stopped this painful contact they managed to find an addiction doctor for the wife who helped her to maintain an abstinent stance. "After she stopped her escapades, I realized I am a person too, I need to speak about myself. I am approaching the age when my mother got into a psychiatric hospital for depression. "

Marc stemmed from a complex Jewish family, in the framework of which his father and his mother were twice relatives. Both of them after high school wanted to liberate themselves from their somewhat 'suffocative' homeland, left their native town in Byelorussia, went to study to the two capitals – only to meet each other in Yalta, where their older cousin lived. For me the story acquired an 'incestual' tint from the very beginning. Much later, already during Marc's psychotherapy with me the twin sister of his mother told him that his mother had a kind of platonic love to her older cousin, that he had used to come to Leningrad where she studied, that they used to enjoy the time in museums together. Marc's story had a kind of "Biblical" tint too. It was only mentioning generations of ancestors that one could retell the personal romance of Marc. He resembled me of a Renaissance portrait (Rafael, Portrait of Thomas Inghirami) from a book I knew for years.

The patient described his father as a jolly man, a sportive and attractive guitar player having many friends. The mother was a somewhat reserved, shy woman, two years older than her husband. When Marc was 4 years old his father got killed by a heavy load that fell down at the construction of a building where he was working as an engineer. They say, it was windy, the workers shouted to warn him, but he was deaf on one ear from his childhood and simply did not hear. Marc remembers his mother sitting at the table, crying endlessly and not responding to him. In my imagination Marc was identified with his father, I even imagined that he played guitar. This appeared to be not true, however Marc had many friends from his school years, from the university. He had an appearance of a "nice person", somewhat lacking success in sports, thinking of himself as weak in competing. However, surviving all the economically hard times he became a successful businessman.

The widowed mother was supported by her older cousin who had a wife and two sons older than Marc. When Marc was about 10, the mother remarried with a man from her native town 'sent' by her relatives. Marc felt very responsible for this marriage, being 'the man to take care of his mother'.

At the age of 12 Marc acquired a younger brother, after whose birth the mother had an episode of clinical depression. Her husband was a very reliable, 'weak' man, having only simple jobs for the lack of education. When the mother felt dissatisfied with Marc, she used to send him to 'improve' to the house of his uncle for a while. The uncle was harsh. Once when Marc took 60 kopecs from the purse of his mother to buy a hook to fish, the uncle reported about this to school and hanged a big note "Thief" above the bed of the boy. "Life is more difficult for Jews than for the others,- he used to say,- you should be better than everybody to make your way in your life". The uncle was a medical doctor but/and worked as a pathologist-anatomist.

By the way, Marc was feeling himself the only 'Jew' in his family and in the world around as he was having a definitely 'Jewish' name untypical for Russia (like the name 'Marc'), while his cousins had Russian names and never felt themselves Jews. Marc was really better than everybody in physics and math until he came to study to Moscow and got to know many students equally talented as himself and also many young people identifying themselves with their Jewish background. Thus to find somebody to identify with meant, at the same time, to loose his uniqueness. Marc had an endless inner litigation with his father who had 'left him alone' in the world of males. Retroactively Marc supposed that his father had been so often absent from home, while he was still alive, that for him at the age of 4 the real loss of the father did not mean a real emotional shock. The patient developed a defensive construction that could be regarded in terms of an early and easy oedipal victory. Loneliness had implied a narcissistic gratification that Marc became deprived of in Moscow.

Being somewhat shy with women, Marc felt obliged to marry a peer student who said she was pregnant from him leaving Marc in doubts about his biological fatherhood up to now, although he was fond of his daughter. The wife appeared to be difficult to live with, emotionally unstable and manipulative, prone to alcoholism. At 28 (the age of his father's death, as Marc stressed to me at the very beginning) he survived from a dangerous illness (a 'lucky' type of cancer). As I already mentioned, approaching the age of his mother's severe depression (37) he appeared in my office.

We began a face to face psychotherapy twice and then thrice a week until the Spring of 2003 when he started using the couch four times a week. The transition to the couch was an important turn in analysis that I am going to speak about below.

MEN, WOMEN

I would generally define the way we 'went' in the first period of his psychotherapy and analysis as finding his place among men and women. Metaphorically I could say that from some point in his life his parents left him, as they were both 'dead', while Marc remained in emptiness, disoriented, 'deaf' like his father, 'mute' like his mother. The father's age of 28 and the mother's age of 37 can be regarded as screening points of Marc's basic narcissistic and oedipal problems.

The first period of psychotherapy two times a week was marked by a clear difference that Marc was making between speaking about himself and speaking about the others. Speaking about men could be understood by him as speaking about his

own position among men so we could discuss this, which very soon improved the situation at work. Marc started having a considerable success in his business. In a year he, according to his own initiative, rewarded me for that by augmenting his payment to me. It was at that time that I attempted to speak about shifting to the couch but it was of no use, Marc would do only what he 'understood'.

Now describing the beginning of our therapeutic relationship I am feeling that I am having to tell much about the external events of Marc's life, but only a few things about the events of his inner world. During that time, though, I had many thoughts about his psychic functioning. I liked to listen to him, to speak with him but I realize now that my 'analytic considerations' remained mostly my own. The dialogue with him remained a bit unilateral, I think that his non-verbal behaviour (smiles, glances) was something that helped to maintain my emotional involvement and maybe created a feeling of his participation. I am supposing now, when I already know some important details about the patient that this was not a mere illusion on my part but indeed the kind of participation affordable for him at that time. (Jumping a little bit ahead, to the more advanced stages when he started using the couch, and I lost the possibility to see him, I should say that I started to feel bored more often as if I lacked something, although it was clear that our communication became deeper, that my interpretations began to reach him.)

In the beginning of the therapy speaking about women was for Marc 'loosing time on others'. Comprehending his wife and her problems was only justified for maintaining a good enough atmosphere at home, which was extremely important for his 11-12 years old daughter. While work and male friendships attracted a mild interest of Marc, while he took great care of his mother, which was somewhat depressively coloured, the daughter was the only person about whom he was able to say definitely: "Yes, I love her". She was 'his' daughter, smart, pretty, of whom he was narcissistically proud. At the same time doubts remained, whether his wife Marina had got pregnant from another man (the story of their relationship could not exclude such a possibility), whether Marina really had known herself whose biological daughter Natasha was.

After more than a year of therapy Marc realised that he fell in love with a school friend (Summer 2001), the girl he had been in love with as an adolescent. Now Marc realized that at those times Lila was also in love with him, but hearing from his mother that he was not attractive at all, too fat, not very sportive, Marc could not believe this. Lila, in her turn, felt rejected by him. The love story developed almost entirely through telephone talks with only very rare encounters, as Lila was now living in Petersburg. She was having a daughter of the same age as Marc's Natasha and a problematic relationship with her husband, who was unreliable, living in Siberia where he was trying to earn money but not very successfully. Marc became 'a prince' in all senses, trying hard not to offend Lila with his too expensive presents to her and her daughter.

Lila was the first woman in his life with whom he could 'talk', whom he could tell about his feelings. He realized that this was never possible with his wife. Regarding the clear transference meaning of his 'discovery' I was constantly thinking about the couch – the position partly acted out on the phone - but it was still impossible to raise this question meaningfully for the patient.

After a year (the Summer 2002) they had their first sexual episode. Lila agreed to it only the second night they spent together in Yalta, their native town on the Black sea. Marc was really surprised with their first night, which he discussed with me several times. Lila was a very emotional woman, getting sexually excited very quickly, even from a short hug of Marc, even in restaurant or in the street. While in bed she was very much aroused, more than himself, allowing him all kinds of caress except vaginal penetration. "I do not want to betray my husband" she said. "But she already was fully belonging to me!" exclaimed Marc.

This was the first time in our work that I managed to interpret to Marc his unwillingness to use the couch together with "his already fully belonging to the analysis". He said he perfectly understood me but this was *not his* decision. ("This was not his daughter", I was then trying to understand his obsessive features as reaction formation against the alien persecutory inner object he was dependent from.) It took him about a half of a year to take this decision and then it looked like his own initiative comparable with his own initiative to augment his payment to me. I regard the transition to the couch as a stage of Marc's better understanding his position in his life, his intentional stance, his better orienting in the issues of the internal and the external.

During these six months before the transition onto the couch important changes happened in his external life and in his inner world. He divorced from his wife Marina. After a short period of despair she stopped talking of her love, started aggressively demanding money from him, and finally went to America where she found a man, while 15 y.o. daughter Natasha had to manage without her. The manipulative character of Marina's attitude to Marc during the 15 years of their marriage became clear. Creating problems with alcohol appeared to be last means to challenge his pity for her. During the painful divorce Marina called to Lila to Petersburg, phoned to me leaving messages on my answering machine: demanding to see her, then threatening to examine my diploma, then presenting her apologies as her therapist explained to her why did I not want to see her. Marc's mother came from Yalta according to the request of Marina to try to repair the marriage. She also called me quite unexpectedly. I was at home and had to speak with this old woman. Her main worry was whether her son was psychically ill. During the same week Marc himself left a message on my answering machine late on Saturday when I was out, pleading to see his mother on Sunday morning as she was leaving Moscow at 2 pm.

A long and difficult acquisition of responsibility for these voices on my answering machine was eventually successful for Marc. He became able to 'possess' these female voices, to see his own participation in the things going on. The same with the voice of Lila on the phone that he began not only experience as something 'contagious' to be dependent from but as a communication between two people. Speaking about women gradually began to mean speaking also about himself in the relationship to them. My own voice that he now agreed to listen to from behind the couch, as I can see it now, also partly marked this transition. At this point, I believe, there happened a gradual development of Marc's sensation implied by the word "mine". Before everything was somehow divided into "mine", like "Natasha is my daughter, pretty and smart" and "not mine" – "their voices, their wish to see you" – that is, belonging to the alien objects with persecutory features. Discussing the events

around the answering machine we remembered how at the very beginning of our work together Marc had asked me if he could once bring his wife Marina to the session, as “she wanted” to speak with me. Of course, I said ‘no’, and at that time Marc had just to accept it as a not fully understandable rule of psychoanalysis.

Lila was not insisting to go on with their relationship, and Marc was not ready to take over the responsibility for maintaining it further. After Marc’s mother returned to Yalta, got advice of her husband and found a classmate of their younger son Lera. A beautiful young woman who lived now in Moscow as a possible fiancée for Marc. They were dating during several months until August 2003 when Marc decided to end the relationship as it became clear for him that Lera was highly manipulative and had several boyfriends at once.

Below there is some material of two sessions from the period of their relationship. In [...] I am putting down my thoughts during the session and shortly after it.

June..., 2003, Friday, 11:00

P: I didn’t want to come, I stayed in the car [*smiling*]. I was anxious that I would disturb you. It’s all my insecurity, I am always not self-assured.

The patient speaks about his not being sure that he wants to have a long connection with the woman he is dating now, although he is now sure that she is very satisfied with their sexual contacts. It reminds him of a film about a man shifting from one woman to another, not wanting or not being able to maintain a longer relationship.

P: Why do men need many women? Is it not because they are scared with death? There is a new life with every new woman.

A: We seem to be thinking about the same. It appears somehow that security and fidelity is dangerous. Security becomes equal to death. This is maybe something very personal of your own. Is it not something connected with the destiny of your father?

P: Never thought about it like that. I never thought: what for did he die? What for was he punished?

[“What for did he die” – was a slight error against the proper language usage, which was very untypical for Marc who had a perfect capability to express himself. What for implies a purpose, an intention. “For the Motherland, for rescuing somebody”. I did not mean punishment. I think I was meaning fate, destiny – simply an unexplainable fear. I was thinking about the father’s impaired ability to comprehend the world because he was deaf with one ear that happened to be fatal for him. I did not have in my mind that the man was punished for something.]

P: Well’ you know, I have got so little from my father. He was always absent from home, I did not understand why everybody was so despaired about his death. I think I was so used to his absence. I can only remember two main things about him. One was a repetitive dream about the fence. Was it in G. [*the town of his parents’ origin in Byelorussia*]? My father walks along this long fence and then he turns round the corner and disappears. The other thing is a memory. I think it was not long before his

death. My mother was in the kitchen and told me to call the father to have breakfast. I went into the room. He was sleeping. His healthy ear was down on the pillow. I called him and he did not respond. He was already immobile like dead. Actually this turned into my first secret from my mother. I was told that my father went away to work.

[I was – defensively? - thinking about Anna Karenina's son who was told by his father that his mother was dead. I was thinking about the difference between XIX and XX centuries. In a way, in the XX century people seem to be more afraid of the 'uncanny' being less protected by the religious images of the other world.]

P: Boys in the yard told me he died. I didn't tell to my mother that I knew that he died. Probably I never spoke about this with her for years. I was living under this pressure for years. When I was 28, the same age as he was when he died, it got alleviated after this cancer illness I had. So what was I going to tell: one woman means death.

We spoke about his father's female friends who used to join the company making trips to the mountains. "Jolly Russian women" in contrast to his mother, always sad and preoccupied. Marc used to think that Jewish women were always like that. These women appeared in their house after father's death to help his depressed mother. Marc grew up spending much time with their children. Now he realised that the two main friends of his mother were lonely. That was only his mother among these friends who later remarried.

P: Well, you said that there is a new life with every new woman. But all men are like that. So what did you want to say about my personal experience? Do you know something?

A: There seems to be something very personal, connected with your own inner experience.

June... 2003, Monday, 19:00

P: You did not finish your thought last time. What were we speaking about? My father... I said I was not influenced by his death. You said my childish fantasies might have influenced my life. I fear not death, I fear life. Last time in the cafe Lera was insisting that I eat something, she was just compelling me to eat. I realised that she was so much alike her mother and I got afraid of this relationship. It seems sometimes that I am plunging into the same thing as with my wife. Lera is turning into my wife. She has so much initiative.

A: Marina had compelled you to marry her very quickly, you fear that the story would repeat.

P: Sometimes I want to fall asleep, "to die" for a while. To disappear for a while. But when I came home and received a long message from her, I calmed down. I thought: if she took time to write such a long message with Latin letters, she really wants it. It is as if God comes and says: Here you are! Everything you wanted! Your first school love. Now a younger woman, a real beauty, in addition a Jew. But I want nothing, I can enjoy nothing. I fear life, not death, I said. I am afraid I recognise the

pattern, I fear that Lera would turn into my wife. From a shining young lady into a witch that would make everything complicated and hard.

The patient recalls a film about an autistic pianist who grew up on a ship hiding from people.

P: The analysis makes it all difficult. It makes me passive and insecure.

A: Are you then afraid that Lera would turn into me?

P: Well, she sleeps not well after her divorce. That's why her mother came from Israel. Yes, I would have to delve into it. When I had only one purpose to survive with my wife and her alcoholism, with my financial position then the analysis was helpful. Now I feel well sometimes, but sometimes I fear.

A: It seems that the fear of a close relationship hinders your feeling your wish to have it. That's why you wanted to shift to twice a week.

P: The analysis deprives me of security. My uncle was so secure with no analysis: you have stolen 60 kopecs, you are a thief, you are on your way to jail! His talmud, at least a kind of security. Is our previous agreement still in action? At least one rule is still secure.

[From one side I was satisfied about the secure frame of analysis which was at the same time containing something more attractive than the cruel rule of his uncle. The frame of analysis is secure for me. He is an interesting attractive patient bringing a considerable amount of money. A hope arises to lessen my guilt feeling that my frame must be secure for him unlike his uncle's frame. A hope to alleviate, to rock to sleep my guilt feeling that my maternal holding is better. From the other side, I am feeling a burden that he is imposing on the woman, that is on me. I must be active and he claims he has no wishes. I feel identified with his "first school love" who told him: "I am not a hunter". I don't want to represent a danger for him.]

COMMENTS

I would like now to give some comments on these two sessions that I have afterwards.

On Friday the patient asks himself: *What for did he die?* The wrong grammatical usage reflects a deep regressive thought that I was not ready to hear. I plunged into somewhat defensive thoughts about Anna Karenina. After re-reading of the text it is possible to connect it directly with the phrase: *When I was 28, the same age as he was when he died, I got alleviated after this cancer illness I had.* This would mean that the punishment was over, that Marc passed by the fence of 28 years length and went ahead. Marc passed by, while his father passed away.

Do you know something? – Marc asks me. Does the mother know the secret he was hiding from her. In fact they both knew the secret, they only were hiding this knowledge, not the secret itself from each other. Four years old is the age when the second order representation starts to develop in children. The problem with the secret of the father's death reminds me the experiment with 3 and 4 y. o. children that P.

Fonagy (1991) describes concerning ‘who was present and thus knows and who was absent and thus doesn’t know where the chocolate is now’. In Marc’s case, though, the issue was not about a bar of chocolate as it happily is with most of the children. The task of knowing who knows what was, on one hand, bearing a huge load of the “pathoanatomic” persecutive superego, on the other hand, it implied pretending not to know, that is, a fraud. It means that Marc had no possibility and was not able to formulate what he knew. This is how I would attempt to understand a specific failure of second-order representation in his case. To know is not to know (reminds of Orwell’s *1984*).

Again I would suggest that this can add something to understanding the problem of beginning the analysis on the couch. To *know* and to *formulate* are then very different things very far away from each other. Here I can follow the roots of Marc's obsessive traits.

On the next session (Monday) Lera’s using Latin letters to write a long message on the mobile phone (which is very uncomfortable to do in Russian) calms Marc down. A perfectionist (with a tint of self-punishment) effort should then prove to him her love. However, he is afraid that she would take up the initiative to feed him, which unconsciously refers to me and the difficult decision about the couch. Marc is indeed afraid to get not his own, but my child on the couch. My frame can become too harsh, like his uncle’s demands, like his own secret he had to keep.

My own interpretation of transference: *Are you then afraid that Lera would turn into me?*- seems a bit strangely shaped. A normal way would be probably to say that I too was turning into a witch in his mind. This was not a slip of the tongue on my part, however, I registered my peculiar way to formulate the thought as if it were closer to interpreting both transference and countertransference. I am asking myself now, whether it was something described as the inversion of flow of projective identification (Ferro, Meregnani 1996)? It looks like this, as the answer of the patient seems to be somewhat illogical: *Well, she sleeps not well after her divorce*. I knew the secret, which seemed to have been magically known also by the patient: this would have been exactly about me, if only to replace the word *divorce* with another word. I was then afraid that I would turn into Lera, a witch – I didn’t want to be ‘a hunter’, I didn’t want to be dangerous.

PARENTS, PATIENTS

Not my child. Whose is this analysis on the couch? Whose setting is it? A few months after he parted from Lera, Marc changed the setting decisively like he had earlier shifted to the couch and went to a club of acquaintance to a soiree to fetch a woman. He took telephone number of three among 20 who were there, met with two of them, while he already knew that the choice was made. She was wearing a dark red dress, the name on her chest was “Anka”. She was 31, ten years younger than Marc. This was her real name, slightly modified in the style of a hero of famous anecdotes. By coincidence (or by magic?) her name was the same as mine. Marc called himself Boris (not to show off with his “too Jewish a name”). When he called her for the first time at her work, she was not there and he asked to tell her that Marc was calling. She guessed at once who it was. Another time I remembered the novel “Anna Karenina”

where the hero tells about his love writing long phrases only with the first letters of the words, while object of his passion is able to read all this with no hesitation.

In contrast with his telling about Lila and Lera, Marc became a bit boring while speaking about Anna. She was too good, she was too mild, she was too tactful and comprehending. She had no shortcomings: she was even not a boring person, she could be jolly and really witty. Remember this name Anka at the beginning, Marc was telling me, a spontaneous continuation of this joke. She always wanted sex, Marc was glad one day to discover that this was indeed an exaggeration, as he became afraid that he was not a satisfactory partner for her.

Like Marina (the divorced wife) and Lera, Anna did not know her father, but unlike Lera Anna had a step-father. Her real father was a representative of Volga muslim nation and her mother could not stand his household leaving him very soon.

In somewhat a boring tone Marc was telling me that Anna was not as pretty as Lera, a real contemporary model, tall and thin. Anna was not fat, but she was "too soft, too smooth like on a painting ... by... is it Tizian?" I could not stop smiling, I felt that he was delighted with Anna's body. Now a comparison comes to my mind that he was like a schoolboy during an excursion to a gallery. When the relation became too good with Anna, she asked him if he loved her, she also felt this boredom from his side, and suggested that they part for a while and if he would have a wish later, he could call.

He called after about two months of separation, during which he made another brief attempt to conquer a woman at a New Year party, but then refused burdened by an impending guilt feeling. They started living together, Marc bought apartemnt. Anna's mother came from her native city and taking a moment when Anna was in the bathroom decided to speak with Marc regarding Anna's previous unhappy relationship. "If you are planning to part from Aniuta, please do it soon, other wise it would be too painful for her". Retelling this episode to me Marc seemed to be not at all aware that the mother was pleading him, that she was fearing him. He instead spoke about his own fear and how he managed to charm his future mother-in-law, to win her on his side, while showing his good knowledge of Biblical legends. This was clear to me that the conversation was indeed between three different ethnic backgrounds (one of Anna's biological father), which Marc took only personally.

Soon Anna became pregnant and surprisingly the story with the couch symbolically repeated. Marc said that he was meaning to decorate the flat, than to marry and only after that to plan a child. Anna was sad, but tolerated this mildly, kidding: "The postman came, asked for your relatives to sign, but I am nobody to you!" Marc was not able to explain to himself and to me the reason of his unwillingness to marry. "I wish to have this child, yes. I do not want to part from Aniuta. Yes. " Finally I came to a supposition that it concerned his place among men that his father had once failed to secure for him. "How will I look into the eyes of the men of her family if we now come to visit her relatives while she is pregnant?" They married only in December and are expecting the child soon.

Simultaneously with this romance Marc was resolving a difficult lawsuit with a former friend and colleague who could not adapt for the modern market but wanted

to take absolute power. The person reminded to Marc his uncle, whose character and its influence upon Marc's development we discussed in detail during this period.

Here is some clinical material from the end of December 2004. Again in [...] there are my thoughts at the time of the sessions and immediately after.

December, 15, 2004, Wednesday, 11:00

P: So what - dollars or rubles? It is important for me that you be not offended.

We discuss his offer to pay in rubles, that would make the whole sum bigger, as the dollar went down in comparison to the euro and the ruble. Money, Natasha, offence. He is afraid that I would be offended like Natasha, his daughter, to whom he rejected giving money for a too costly winter coat.

P: I am glad about you. I am satisfied. You told me yesterday that the analysis was going well.

[I am surprised: I surely did not say anything like that. However, he wants to repay me for something that he felt as a praise from my side. He wants to punish and to reward. While he goes on speaking I realize that the thing that I really said on the previous session was: "Here it is, this is your guilt feeling that we have to understand and analyze. Why should your divorce make you guilty before your daughter". When I said: we should analyze, he felt this as a praise of his work in analysis. He wants me too to punish and to reward.]

P: Well, let's decide right now.

A: Are we in a hurry?

P: I want to speak about Natasha.

A: Nobody stops you.

P: Ok, we can think till Friday. She calls me on Tuesday. Her mother didn't wake her up, she overslept, she was late to a re-examination, her marks for this term will not be good enough. She weeps, she cries. Why is she calling me, telling me all this stuff? I realised suddenly that she was pleading for a punishment!

P: So, what about my sense of guilt? You have asked why am I guilty in front of Natasha? Is she having advantages from my divorce? Never though that she could have. No more terrible quarrels at home. What else?

A: You are asking me.

P: I think I've followed the roots of my guilt feeling. I am still not sure whether she is my daughter. When I was with Marina, Natasha was my daughter. Now Natasha uses to say: "You've become unnatural". Right, I've become a brother, an uncle. Too polite, too permissive. She is a girl that I brought up, 15 years I worry about her life,

but is she my daughter? Or is she a daughter of Marina? I was a father when I lived with them, I could use a strong voice, I could sent her away into her room...

A: Well, does this mean she needs to feel your strength?

[I intentionally do not use all the words I wanted: power, strength, safety, solidity and support not to become too powerful myself, not to stress his line of thinking too much. In fact I am thinking about possession. To possess a child, to possess a woman.]

P: Well, I will buy her a camera so that she can make presents for the New Year. But after the New Year I will take the camera away, I've told her. I said if you study you will go to the concert. That's it. She was glad about it.

We speak about her feeling his hand, his presence, about her urgent need that he powerfully confirm his fatherhood to her.

[I am thinking about my being angry in vain when I almost was pushing him to use his power to prohibit her to dance 'in slips' in the night club where she earned pocket money. I saw the mechanism very clearly right now: he does not see her sexual attraction. To passionately confirm his fatherhood to her.]

December, 17, Friday, 11:05 (extracts of the session)

Marc speaks about Natasha's age, about her adolescent crisis of "breaking the link but at the same time keeping the link".

[I am having a play of words in my mind: an adolescent *caprisis*, which makes it all very understandable and manageable, but this way it becomes somewhat boring]

Marc draws an idyllic picture of their visiting the concert (Anya, Natasha and himself), Natasha is developing a good attitude to her step-mother, they even exchanged kisses... I feel glad for them. All this report goes with a dull unsatisfied tone, the father manages to find negative sides everywhere. I stress this.

P: What other positive moments do you see then?

A: What is there in your question, are you asking me like you would ask a teacher? Show me, teach me.

Another extract follows of somewhat intellectualized construction about adolescents, about his own mother who succeeded to find bad sides in everything. It seems to be no way out of the boring frame.

A: You are maybe looking for my own emotional experience.

P: Why so? I am looking for your theoretical knowledge.

[I am quite convinced that he is looking for my personal positive experience of love that his mother lacked. After he leaves I am thinking that geometry was developed in the Ancient Egypt for a practical purpose - to exclude doubts when dividing soil. To cathect it with a meaning then it can become more understandable for children.

To put power into it. To make the power justified, “grounded” in direct and metaphoric sense.]

The next week (December 20-24) Natasha’s theme persists in the patient’s talk including their conflicts about her wanting money, her studies, about Marc’s doubts that he himself is really able to know what for should one work and study.

P: How can I explain to her why should she persist in getting access to the university education if I am not sure myself. When I am busy with everyday tasks it becomes clear, the apartment, Anya with her pregnancy and so on. However, I don’t know how should one live, how can I impose this on my daughter.

We follow the roots of his conflicts with his daughter about money along the line “more and more”. She wants things more and more expensive, her father spends lots and lots of money for the decoration of his new flat – with a fear on the background that if he buys ‘not exactly what he was dreaming about’ he, they in his new family, would face a disappointment in their emotional situation.

By the way, his indifference about his daughter dancing in night clubs to earn her pocket money gets another important facet in my eyes. He manages to formulate that his daughter’s complaints about her bad mood, not having joy of life makes him feel much more hopeless than an external danger. By trying to decorate his apartment ‘exactly as he dreamed’ he was attempting to avoid an internal danger of disappointment. Arranging a separate room for the daughter, where she could stay if she wants, he suddenly faced an internal problem of defining who Natasha would be at the celebration party of their move to the new home. Would she be an invited guest or a member of the family. Natasha acted out the solution by inviting her girlfriend to this party, thus positioning herself inside the home, where she is not yet in fact living while she remained to live with her mother in their old flat.

However, their dialogue with the daughter becomes richer. Responding to her challenge to discuss her new appearing friends from different social layers, Marc buys a book for her, which he starts to re-read himself and discuss with me. Novels by Scott-Fitzgerald, which helps him to reflect upon the life of high classes having no urgent everyday problems to resolve. I would like now to stress the word re-read, which means, of course, reinterpret according to the demand he is feeling from the side of his daughter.

On Friday, 24, Marc comes to tell me his ‘resume’ about Natasha.

A: Already a resume?

Marc gives an overview of his daughter’s situation and their relation. We speak about his probable wish to tell me something about his life as a whole through the theme of Natasha. How the adolescents grow. How his friends speak of Natasha as of a charming young woman. He should be glad. Natasha’s boyfriends that Marc likes and not, Natasha’s being still a maiden in spite of her ‘night life’.

Sometimes I respond to his constructions with questions’ like “Are you asking me now like a teacher to confirm your understanding”, and a little bit later; “Are you asking me like a mother to share my feelings with you?” I am waiting for him to touch upon

his delight about her femininity. But he seems to wait for me. I am wondering, whether not everything is clear to him. I am thinking that he has become a teacher for me to demonstrate to me Freud's theory in practice. When finally I do say something about his own appreciation of her as a young woman, we seem to have met each other. "Do you really mean this? Do you mean that I am depriving myself of my sexual excitement about her while finding negative sides?!"

At the end of the session the last words of the patient are:

P: Still it's a question for me, why do I deprive you of sexual charm?

[Again I can say that this conclusion was of no surprise for, however a bit 'academic' as if he were teaching me Freudian theory.]

December, 27, Monday, 19:00 (partly)

With a dull voice Marc tells me about his success at work, his firm was so good this year that he is offered a place to open a new shop in the center of the city.

P: Another stress for me...

A: Like with Natasha you deprive yourself of excitement when it is near.

We discuss the similarity. I joke, he jokes. We laugh. I say something that causes pauses in his discourse. I realize that I am making him reflect. We were speaking about "a formula" evident for me – his inhibiting his own excitement – that sounds new to him and that he is filling in with his own individual content. I did not bother to put down in detail after the session what did we in fact say to each other. Was I then just automatically 'driving' along not looking at landscapes? Sure, I had a sensation that I was driving along a well-known road.

On one hand, this is not my habitude to make recordings about every session and I had not yet decided at that moment to present this case in Riga. On the other hand, right now, while writing and already knowing how this dialogue ended, I am questioning myself, why did I not bother put it down. It seems I was warding off some danger 'on the highway'. At the very end I put down a piece of conversation:

P: So I am looking in a more direct way.

A: The view has become richer, there are more colours...

[a formula]

P: A direct glance is somehow dangerous, remember Meduse Gorgone. One needs a mirror.

[Lying on the couch he was seeing me in a 'mirror', wasn't he? I was not present but represented in the frame of his mirror-mind. When I think about this device – the couch – probably it is instrument that makes psychoanalysis possible. I don't know, I am not in a position to judge. I am only utilizing the device. I am seeing that it works. My patient is teaching me about that. I only have to submit, as if to the law of nature. Right before the end of the session he stresses the frame: when he is

going to see my face, he should take care with the direct glance. I represent a danger. I did not want to be a dangerous driver, so I switched off my feelings.]

December, 29, Wednesday, 14:10

P: So you mean, there is no question about why something happens, but there is only a question about how it happens.

[I really said something like this last time]

P: This means my reaction is a usual one: to concentrate on the negative.

A: This seems to calm you down.

P: Yes. I know why I should not be excited. Mania is dangerous. I would then be inadequate in seeing the reality. What first comes to my mind: to spend all the money... Abnormal... inadequate...

A: Using special terms also calms you down. If to use simple words...

P: Well, the sea below my knees (*uses several idiomatic phrases that depict hypomania*) It's only a particular case.

A: When you are using special terms you become not lonely.

P: The law of nature. Actual for me too. Physics does indeed calm you down. Is it my type of mind? I cannot see electromagnetic waves, I only can understand how the engine works. Otherwise there is an excitement, a fear. I am now recalling a picture from a book on biology... a regressive.. chain, one fish eats another fish, eats another fish. One person shouts at another person... The question is not why but how, not a particular case.

A: Then it is possible to become an element of a regressive chain.

[I am thinking: to submit to the law of nature, to become a parent, to gain power, to loose power, to disappear. It is interesting how do the two meanings of the word 'regressive' intersect.]

P: Just to understand it, well, shit, this is a situation, I've become an element.

[I am thinking that this is a construction to protect against narcissism or other way round to develop narcissistic defences. A boy who had no father to introduce him protected into the male world. Technical world. The world of science, sports, army, brotherhood, morals. The uncle who was a pathologist-anatomist: security after death.]

P: Why are you dissatisfied with terms? It seems to you that I am hiding behind them. But this is my kind of memory: main sense but no details. No superficial thing can I keep, details, dates, when...

A: So: what is superficial is individual, but in depth there is something common, general: a human, a man, a male ...

P: I cannot regard, digest a sense, enjoy a delight of a particular event. Natasha, Marina, Anya – I was putting them into a scheme. Role, algorithm, skeleton. What can be the other way to decide, whether the object is friendly or not?

A: If you could know, whether the mechanism is friendly, would you afford to pay attention at the details?

P: Oh, yes, variations of friendliness, that would be ok.

A: Then you could not digest at once but enjoy...

P: Stop! What are we speaking about? We have lost the contact...

A: Have you lost the sight of the skeleton of the conversation?

[He has lost his mirror. Letter and spirit of the law. Too much spirit.]

P: My logic is theoretical, it demands an opponent, an interlocutor.

[He has 'lost' the contact. He is afraid to gain the unity. For him it would mean a dangerous fusion. Regressive chain. For him it would mean to be swallowed. He has lost the object.]

A: You are always driving. Roundabouts, lights.

[On their way to Yalta he slept in the car with Aniuta.]

P: Sure, I am all the time driving. Earlier I was holding the wheel tight, only a glance outside and my life would come to its end. Now I would better stay at the side of the road for some time, but then there is nothing to see. The pictures do not change. In Yalta I can be in another state. To walk by foot. To wake up in the morning... What do you think?

A: I am thinking about a device and a simple sight with a not armed eye. To be a man like all the others. To loose sight, and to die like your father.

[Is the couch a device? A sight in a mirror to feel secure?]

P: To loose the sight is dangerous. There were stories that happened with myself. Today in a shop. Impertinence. She doesn't want to cut cheese. I say the cheese for such a price you should cut. Impertinence. The has cut it very well, by the way. She says: "Have you somebody at home to do it? I thought you are having not everyone at home!" I felt offended, I don't know why so much offended.

(((This is a slightly offensive joke based on a play of words. Directly meaning "do you have a woman at home to do it" the seller was hinting at another colloquial phrase meaning "you are a bit crazy"))))

A: She was pointing at whether you had a wife. Was it possible that you produced an impression? Was she not flirting?

P: Ho! I don't know. You remember that photo on the beach. I was good looking and slim and everything. I still could not believe that Lila was in love with me.

COMMENTS

Telling broader things about himself through the character of his daughter... (if to think in terms of styles of narration as conceptualized by A. Ferro, 2002). What else can I derive from the stories about Natasha? The feeling of boredom persisted in some episodes of our conversation and was and still is extremely important for me in understanding my contact with Marc. I would like to stress this feeling of boredom similar to that Marc was having towards his daughter and interpreted himself according to the commonly known Freudian ideas about incestual barrier. However, the same feeling had marked the beginning of the relationship with Aniuta and is still returning into my countertransference. To my mind, it is reflecting a solid holding in Winnicottian sense (and A. Green in *Le Travail du Negatif* 2002) that has been unfortunately empty for too long a time and became devitalized.

Speaking about countertransference my feeling of boredom is one important issue to reflect upon for me. Another important issue is my *formula-1 driving* and warding off the anxiety about my own being dangerous, becoming a Meduse or a witch from an earlier session when I had given a strange interpretative *formula*: "So... Lera is turning into me".

Marc's parents were 'deaf' and 'mute'. They were absent, at the emotional distance he was already 'not their' child, in a similar way Natasha was becoming 'not his' daughter ("You became unnatural") when he moved away from the house of his first wife. For me this was also an issue that gave grounds to reflect upon the patient's impaired self-object representations.

Was the father really absent from home with "the Russian women" from the very beginning of Marc's life? Or is it a defensive retroactive attribution (Nachträglichkeit) of Marc? I don't know. I know only that through his father, or through the "Biblical" list of generations Marc had acquired a holding that was solid enough to stay empty at times and to tolerate the 'totalitarian' attacks of his uncle. I will finish with two dreams one from the early phase of therapy, another from an advanced stage of analysis. The first dream represents the uncle's house where there is a big hole in the middle that is dangerous to fall into. The other dream is about Marc and his brother on a balcony of a house in Yalta, Marc has to take care of his brother to prevent him of slipping down. The step-father (the brother's father) is inside the apartment and is of no help. In my memory there was a heavy wind blowing, like at the time his father died. But maybe the wind is my fantasy. In this fantasy I can trace my unconscious identification with Marc's daughter who is desperately struggling with this "wind" to keep her father present (and alive).

His 'loosing contact with me' is in fact loosing the object from his sight (again his long lasting fear of the couch). This might constitute a barrier to a sexual pleasure in the loving relationship, which according to Kernberg, implies a temporary fusion, a sensation of the two bodies fusing into one. Feeling Natasha as being 'his daughter' and the lover's body as being 'his body' is going to be a problem to analyze. The 'regressive chain' he is speaking about, the fishes swallowing each other refer to the danger of oral incorporation, which make me remember a reminiscence from the early phase of analysis of Marc (already after the father died?) lying on his mother's belly on the beach and feeling 'happiness'.

Gaining such a fusion would mean a capability for a deep regression (a regressive chain of fishes swallowing one another or, in other words, allowing future generations to fill up the space) that Marc cannot yet allow for the sake of his identity. The 28 years long fence is over but still the father disappeared behind it and this half of the word, this deaf ear still represents a danger harshly cutting the transitional space (in fact, the re-productive area, taking the nature of his severe somatic illness into account) into two parts. Marc has been able to feel this fusion only as his narcissistic continuation in the area of the positive "half" of his narcissism. The negative "half" of his narcissism would tend to destroy the object.

The alleviation after the illness reminds me of a description I read in a paper by H.Kaechele and N.Grulke (2004) who cite the words of a cancer patient: "I feel immensely enriched by this experience, I would not want to miss it." The authors go on with a comment: "Even if one might consider this as an exaggeration – based on some narcissistic features of his growing personality, the fact is well known among former cancer patients that the perspective on life in general does changed having survived."

Just to provide a picture of a safe regression I will tell a joke that I once invented for my dissertation in psycholinguistics: *if you are having seven dogs, how many tails do you have, how many paws do you have?* "I am nobody to you", Aniuta is kidding, while Marc is indeed fearing to loose his place among the parents, fathers, men of her family, like his father did loose his place in life right at the moment when his 4 year old son started to develop second order object representations like *I believe that she knows...*(Fonagy 1991). My own being a danger, 'a witch', 'Meduse' remains still a line of transference not sufficiently investigated that might suggest also a reflection upon hysterical traits of the patient.

The analytic situation framed by Freud's shake hands with his patients in fact should provide a space for a safe regression. Personally for me, Winnicott and Bion are the most important authors that I am remembering in this connection. The mirror helping to kill Meduse, that is to reduce the danger, was the image introduced by the patient at the very end of the meaningful session. *I believe that she knows* – a guess about the mother (that could have been so dangerous for Marc when he was 4) should be contained and rendered harmless in a mirror of second-order representation. Putting this mirror aside (standing up from the couch) has to be marked with a "diplomatic" symbolic gesture.

CONCLUSION

My hope for this treatment is that we are ‘staging the play anew’. We are new actors in the framework of transference-countertransference interplay who are filling the old text with actual emotions. The text Marc inherited is good and seems to be containing something like a Bionian (*Learning from Experience* 1962) alpha-function “ready to use” – which is in fact a nonsense formulation because it cannot be kept in a book, unlike the Renaissance portrait reminding me of Marc, for the reason that the very reminiscence is mine and cannot be copied or reproduced. Right now I found out that I mixed up two portraits from this book in my memory (the second one by Piero della Francesca). In this connection I can only repeat, or better say retell, the example I have already drawn above from Tolstoy’s “Anna Karenina”, when Levin making a marital proposal to Kitty spelled out only the first letters of the words, however, she was able to read the long phrase, thus cathecting the text with their shared libidinal meaning.

Basing on my special interest in linguistics and my own involvement in the psycholinguistic research of psychoanalytic process, I would like to highlight my line of thinking referring to the modern psychoanalytically based studies of language acquisition in the child. “Paradoxically, birth, reproduction and death in the human species would not be truly human with the sole aid of the sort of language focused up on by the majority of linguistic studies; continually confronted with *that* sort of language a human infant would hardly develop, or else might ‘evolve’ into a sad imitation of a human” (Corradi-Fiumara, *The Metaphoric Process*, 1995). In a broader sense it is possible to spread this statement onto the development of the child in general.

Freud, thought, used a metaphor of printed text and called transference a re-edition. In the re-edition one can try to correct errors. The parent uses his/her facility to attune (D. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* 1985) to the child and correct errors of communication providing the child with a possibility to develop his own ability to symbolize, to represent, to contain, to mentalize just to mention after Freud a whole list of psychoanalytic authors who described various sides of these processes. One’s biological “text” and one’s cultural “text” are something that everyone has to revive for oneself and live anew sharing this development with one’s primary objects and further on.

According to the developmental metaphor, the patient is usually compared with a child, while the analyst – with a parent. However, this is not only a parent who comments upon the life of the child, thus filling this biological life with a human meaning. New generations reinterpret the experience of their ancestors. These are the readers who comment upon the writers and not vice versa. This is how I would like to interpret the poetic line I have chosen as an epigraph: “*The child is father to the man*”. “The analyst “refuses the thread of Ariadna proposed to the reader” (A. Green, *Deliaison* 1992). The more the patient can attune to the new “naive” hearing of the analyst and vice versa (H. Faimberg *Listening to Listening* 1996), the better does the psychoanalytic process develop.

Every metaphor, like any comparison is, of course, limited in its application, it is in fact only applicable when it is “vivid”, contextual and not absolute. The same is true for the developmental metaphor of the analytic process. Bearing in mind this limitation, let me utilize this ‘other way round’ developmental metaphor to refer to the

analytic change. A child re-reads the parental experience. Not only the analyst can be compared with a parent. If the patient is able “to bring up a child”, that is to tell, to show things that would enable the analyst to re-vive, to re-interpret the past experience and if the patient is able to respond to this new interpretation (that is in fact stemming from the patient’s own future), then there is a change gained in analysis.