

David-Augustin MÂNDRUȚ*

Martin Buber's notion of the unconscious

Abstract: This paper investigates Martin Buber's notion of the unconscious. To accomplish this task, I will first need to come back to Buber's late philosophical anthropology, and secondly, I will need to give an in-depth analysis of his text on the issue of the unconscious. The first task will be a broader one, namely it will address certain philosophical and anthropological theories of Buber's which could have led him to propose an alternative theory of the unconscious, contra the psychoanalytical schools of his time. The second task will be an analysis of the philosophical context in which Buber elaborated his theory of the unconscious. This analysis will address the philosophical forerunners of the issue of the unconscious, at the same time providing a framework for developing further Martin Buber's notion of the unconscious in a philosophical manner. Buber's novelty is provided by the fact that he proposed a non-dualistic account of the unconscious, which could designate the wholeness of the human being before the split or division into *body* and mind phenomena. This point concerning the wholeness of the human person is in our opinion the "missing link" between Buber's late philosophical anthropology and his theory of the unconscious. Our aim would be to connect these two chapters in the development of Martin Buber's thought.

Keywords: Martin Buber, unconscious, body, mind, philosophical anthropology, phenomenon, dualism, psychotherapy.

Introduction

Martin Buber's notion of the unconscious was elaborated in the case of his critique addressed towards the psychoanalytical theories of his time, as they were found in certain theoretical paradigms. Therefore, Buber's main task was to criticize the Freudian and the Jungian approaches to psychoanalysis, providing at the same time a theoretical framework rich in therapeutical and practical consequences. Buber's theory of the unconscious is part of his philosophical anthropology; hence we could as well consider that his earlier theories concerning the human being's place in the universe, or the cosmos was decisive for his insights. This paper will be divided into three sections, the first investigating in a broad manner Buber's late philosophical anthropology, while the second addresses precisely the

* David-Augustin Mândruț, PhD Candidate, Center for Applied Philosophy, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University Of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: davidmandrut@gmail.com

question of the unconscious, whereas the third explores Buber's advice for a dialogical psychotherapy.

Martin Buber's philosophical anthropology

In his paper entitled *Distance and relation*, Buber attempts to prove that the human being can grasp the world as world through two distinct but interconnected movements, which he terms the "primal setting at a distance" and "entering into relation". (Buber 1965, 60) If the human being accomplishes these two movements, then by virtue of the synthetizing apperception (a term which has certain Kantian echoes), he comes to have a world (independent of himself). Buber's theory is mainly concerned with the epistemological view of the world; therefore, we must not mistake his approach with Heidegger's fundamental ontology. Whereas in Heidegger's, Dasein was essentially being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1996, 49), for Buber, the human being comes to have a world independent of himself by virtue of these two movements. Instead of the Heideggerian embeddedness, in Buber we find a certain detachment, namely a way in which one could see the world objectively, and even alter it. Let me give an example.

In his papers on education, Buber states that there exists a certain instinct of origination, which could be accompanied in the life of the human being by the instinct for communion. (Buber 2002, 101) For Buber, the infant wants to make things, both by analysis (destroying) and by synthesis (creating). (Buber 2013, 19) One could equate this instinct with the creative impulse, as it is found in the works of Donald Winnicott. (Winnicott 2009, 92-93) This statement could be reinforced by coming back to Buber's thesis from *Distance and relation*, namely not only does the human being use a spear for example (Buber is here addressing the primitive man), but also by virtue of his fundamental distance towards beings, the person can decorate that spear (with feathers and so forth).

This act of distance is not sufficient, Buber insists, because in order to grasp the wholeness (this time Buber is referring to the other human being), one needs to enter into genuine relationships with the other. These genuine relationships involve imagination, which is distinct from mere empathy in Buber's, but also the act of personal making present and the confirmation of otherness. One more time, if the "primal setting at a distance" is followed by "entering into relation", then the human being can grasp the world as a unity and totality. Let me now explicate these key components which enable the human being to grasp the other as a uniqueness. Buber's phrase "imagining the real" implies that we do not just make use of mere imagery in order to feel what the other is needing and desiring as in a simulation, rather, our imagination is projected onto the other's bodily being, which is the foundational moment of our being-with-the-other in a

common “here” and “now”, namely in a common situation. If “imagining the real” takes place from both sides of the dialogical relation, then the two persons make present one another. This involves that both are present with their whole being, alongside the wholeness of the other. Now confirmation may take place. Confirmation means not just that we statically recognize the other as being situated in front of me, rather, confirmation always implies that the other should be grasped in his dynamic becoming. For this reason, confirmation through words becomes a necessity. (Buber 1965, 71)

Returning to Buber’s analysis from *Distance and relation*, he states that if the animal lives like a fruit in its skin, man lives in a huge building onto which multiple layers are always added. Nonetheless, by virtue of the two movements of human life, man is able to grasp the world as a unity and a totality. We can once again come back to the life of the primitive man for another example. The primitive man find himself under the great starry sky, this being his point of orientation in the world. Nevertheless, he has distance from the world, as Buber puts it, and here we could recall the concept of the image of the universe, which the primitive man starts to learn about from the beginning. Therefore, we can conclude that by virtue of this primal distance, that enables man to have a world detached from himself, the primitive can imitate the image of the universe by building his own house accordingly. Buber also thematized on some occasions the human being’s place in cosmos, hence we find out that we are ultimately dwellers in this huge building which is called the universe. (Buber 1999, 94)

Moreover, when he thematized the “uncanniness of the universe” and the danger of falling forever into chaos, Buber insisted that the human being’s rhythm of building and dwelling or inhabiting a house, is fundamental for his well-being and for his relational life with the others. Finally, we could assume that after this experience of the negative sublime (the uncanniness of the universe), the human being will acknowledge his vulnerability and fragility in the face of the universe, and will start building a refuge, i.e. the house. This is due to the fact that the human being has distance from the universe from the beginning and can therefore enter into relation with this image of the cosmos by building his own house, where he can dwell peacefully.

Another key element that Buber uses in his philosophical anthropology that could be addressed as the “missing link” between his late thematizations on the human being’s place in cosmos as his doctrine of the unconscious is the sphere of the interhuman. The interhuman is the realm of interpersonal encounters, and its unfolding is called the dialogical. Buber is very attentive when he distinguishes the interhuman from the social, because whereas the latter designates entities such as the state or a specific group of people and hierarchies, the former involves the small face-to-face interactions which take place on a micro level between persons which are

equal. (Buber 1965, 72) The fundamental notion which should be underlined in our discussion is the issue of the in-between. As we are going to see, Buber's theory of the unconscious functions in the in-between rather than merely in the psychical dimension.

Summing up our discussion so far, we have noticed that the two key elements which were retained by Buber from his philosophical anthropology throughout his thematization of the unconscious are the human being's wholeness and the interhuman space. The two aspects are deeply interconnected, because man becomes whole only by virtue of his relation to another human being, which takes place in the realm of the interhuman. Let us now see how the unconscious enters the stage and functions in this realm of the interhuman.

Buber and the unconscious

Buber's claim becomes visible from the very beginning of his text on the unconscious. What the philosopher had in mind was to give a new meaning to the notion of unconscious. At the same time, he was trying to overcome the dualisms which the Cartesian tradition left to us, emphasizing the wholeness of the human being, rather than the analytical separation between mind and body phenomena. We must nonetheless remember that Buber's text represents a synthetized version of his dialogues given in America, which were attentively corroborated by Maurice Friedman. Therefore, Buber's analysis was not meant to be a theory per se, rather, through his scattered remarks on the issue of the unconscious, he was trying to shed light on the preconceptions which this concept involved in the philosophical and psychoanalytical tradition up to his point. As Maurice Friedman recalls, Buber was willing to write a paper, criticizing Freud's concept of unconscious and the theory of dreams, but unfortunately, he never managed to finish it.

Buber's first paragraph from the text entitled "The Unconscious" is very telling, because he employs the term destruction, which provokes certain Heideggerian echoes. This means that Buber will borrow Heidegger's method, by which he wanted to "clear up concepts" and hence to disclose their original meaning. Furthermore, Buber uses a story which is to be found in Confucius' *Analects* about a disciple, whose very first task at the court was exactly to "clear up concepts". From the start of his text, Buber assumes this stance of clearing up the notion of the unconscious from the prejudices and preconceptions which throughout the ages were attached to this very notion. Moreover, Buber's novelty consists in his attempt to give a non-dualistic account of the unconscious. (Agassi 1999, 227)

The author goes rapidly throughout the history of philosophy, trying to show the way in which the diverse and manifold meanings which were

given to the notion of the unconscious implied certain dualisms, such as psychical and physical, inner and outer etc. Therefore, we are reminded of the Leibnizian notion of the imperceptible perceptions, as well as Plotinus' thematization of the unconscious. Buber also invokes Nicholas Cusanus, an author who stands at the basis of his doctoral dissertation. Novalis, Kant and Hamann are also mentioned, and Buber also reminds us of his contemporaries' several attempts to give an account of the notion of unconscious, and here he recalls Carl Gustav Carus, Eduard von Hartmann, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Henri Bergson. (Agassi 1999, 228) All of these authors somehow maintained a dualistic notion of the unconscious, operating in a Cartesian framework.

Moreover, Buber's critique of Freud starts with the observation that in the case of the father of psychoanalysis, the unconscious is not a phenomenon, but it has certain effects upon phenomena. For Buber, this problem belongs to the realm of functional dualism. (Agassi 1999, 229) Furthermore, Buber asks in a rhetorical manner how could any non-phenomenological instances have certain effects on the phenomenological ones. Buber concludes that Freud's assumption is from the very beginning a metaphysical one.

The psychical and the physical represent two different modes of knowing, namely the outer sense and the inner one, just as in Kant's thematization (Kant 2007, 61), from which Buber draws on. Feeling, which is pure psychic process in time cannot be found in the physical realm. Memory retains a process by a new process in time. Physiology deals with things that are to be found, psychology with things hidden so to say. For Buber, the assumption of his forerunners that the unconscious is either body or soul is unfounded, because for him, the unconscious becomes a state out of which these two elements have not yet evolved and in which the two cannot be distinguished from one another. (Agassi 1998, 229)

For Buber, the unconscious is our being itself, and both components, namely the body and the soul phenomena are continuously evolving at every moment. In order to become a phenomenon, the unconscious needs to dissociate itself, and a method that can accomplish this task is analytical psychology, or more exactly the analysis of the psyche. Buber is very subtle in his text, because throughout it, he uses a lot of Kantian distinctions, without naming them as such. Not everything that is, is a phenomenon, because the region of the phenomenon is limited. There exist meeting points between the psychical and the physical, but nonetheless, these two regions need to be distinguished. (Agassi 1999, 229)

In order to grasp the physical as a whole we need both the category of space and that of time, whereas for the psychic we need only time. Buber insists that we can say nothing of the unconscious in itself, because it is never given to us as such, namely as a phenomenon. Recalling Wilhelm

Dilthey's hermeneutical theory, Buber claims that for the Freudian psychoanalyst, the unconscious of the other cannot be understood, only the conscious aspect of his/her life. (Agassi 1999, 230)

In the context of this dialogue, Maurice Friedman tries to summarize what Martin Buber has said so far about the unconscious. Friedman concludes that the psychical and the physical are categories which do not apply to the unconscious, which is in itself non-phenomenological. What this means is that the unconscious, in Buber's thematization, is prior to the split between psychic and physis phenomena. Freud's mistake was to see the unconscious as belonging solely to the person, whereas for Buber, the unconscious belongs mostly to the interhuman sphere of existence. Therefore, the radical difference between Freud and Buber might be the one between psychic reality and interhuman reality. (Agassi 1999, 230)

Buber insists that the psychoanalytical claim of a non-phenomenological, yet psychic reality is a kind of mystic basis of reality. Moreover, Buber argues that the notion of the psyche as existing in space should be considered as some kind of metaphor. Freud's mistake was that he insisted on his doctrine, without trying to improve it, thus his failure consisted in the way in which he was not daring to begin anew thinking about questions of psychology. (Agassi 1999, 231)

Furthermore, Buber argues that there are many degrees of consciousness, and here we could remind ourselves of Alfred Schutz's finite provinces of meaning (Schutz 1962, 229), provinces through which the subject could navigate according to the tension of his/her attention to life, a concept borrowed from Bergson. (Agassi 1999, 231) There are many degrees of consciousness, because there are many tensions of durations, we could argue following Schutz and Bergson (Bergson 1991, 14). Buber does not make this connection, which was only implicit in his argument.

When asked about the process of hypnosis and its relationship to sleep-states, Buber offers some arguments for his thesis concerning the existence of the non-phenomenological unconscious. He claims that when a person is influenced in hypnosis by the analyst, the analyst dissociates the patient's unconscious into psychological and physical phenomena. When the patient awakens from the hypnosis, the dissociation takes place, namely the contact between the two spheres, the psychic and the physis, and not through the common sphere, which is the non-phenomenological unconscious. (Agassi 1999, 232) Here we could ask ourselves whether Buber would argue that dreams are a manifestation of the non-phenomenological unconscious or not. Freud provided some examples to show that the dream state is composed of both psychic and physis material. However, Buber wrote in a letter that dreams are not I-Thou relationships, but a hint of them. (Agassi 1999, 204) Recalling Bergson's and Schutz's theories of the attention to life, we could argue alongside the two of them, that dreams and sleep-states

represent the lower regions of our attention to life, in which mind and body are not yet separated by any analytical process of our consciousness. Therefore, when awake we could reorient our attention to life towards certain aspects of our body (a stomachache, for example), or to aspects which belong to our psyche (imagining something).

Of the dream in itself we can never know, Buber argues, because the only thing we know is the work of shaping memory, namely not the dream per se, but our attitude towards the dream after we wake up. Buber even suggests that in dreams we have a certain feeling of consciousness. (Agassi 1999, 232) Perhaps Buber was here referring in anticipation to the sense of agency, namely the fact that in the case of dreams, we are the ones who experience them at the first person.

There is a conscious force, which orders life, for the human being. Buber names it the synthetizing apperception, borrowing this concept from Kant's first *Critique*. There the transcendental synthetic unity was responsible for uniting the manifold of experience into a whole by virtue of the transcendental imagination. This synthetic unity is responsible for our living in the common world or cosmos of men, as in Heraclitus' saying. This unity does not work in dreams, Buber argues. Dreams seem to have a continuity and a connection of their own. Here one could ask whether the transcendental imagination functions only in our vigil life, namely when we are wide-awake, or also in dreams and sleep-states. The philosopher of dialogue would argue that the realm of sleep, the private sphere (Heraclitus) has its certain dynamics and functions, which ought to be distinguished from the force that orders the vigil life (the transcendental imagination, in Kant's case). Buber insists that Shakespeare's metaphor about the relationship between dreams and death has its certain basis in everyday reality, because both phenomena are unknown in their very nature. (Agassi 1999, 233)

The difference between dreams and memories would be that between a quasi-isolated subject and a subject who exists among others, because of dreams only the dreamer knows, whereas memories have the attestation and confirmation of others. This statement resonates with Ricoeur's claim that our narratives are always intertwined with the narratives of others. (Gallagher 2012, 175) Returning to Buber, he adds that as soon as we get in touch with the dreamer, there is no more dreaming, hence a phenomenologist might argue that the dreamer does not constitute the common world of men as does an awake subject. (Agassi 1999, 233)

When asked about the nature of the work of art, Buber replies that imagination is not bound to a certain connection of images, thus it is not responsible in relation to facts. It has its own laws, and it is not bound to a certain material. The man remembering dreams would not change anything consciously, because there is a tension of will, not to change anything in the

dreams. In imagination I have the sense of being a subject, and this fact of being a subject, distinguishes imagination from the mere night of images. For Buber, the dream is epical. (Agassi 1999, 234)

Returning to our question which was asked beforehand, Buber claims that dreams are a form of the unconscious. The body material and the soul material are not separated from one another, but there is a detached world of the dreamer (Heraclitus). This private sphere manifests itself in the way that dreams do not allow people to communicate while they are asleep, only after they woke up. Therefore, the dream becomes a limit case for the philosophy of dialogue which takes place in the interhuman. (Agassi 1999, 234) In his dialogue with Carl Rogers, Buber gives several examples of limit cases of dialogic life (Buber 1965, 175), which seem to resemble Husserl's special cases of intersubjectivity. Dialogue, or in Husserl's thematization, the constitution of the world, is very different when we encounter for example a sleeping person.

Buber recalls the example of a schizophrenic patient, who wanted to introduce his wife to his particular world. Buber tried to explain the way in which the schizophrenic wanted to encourage the other to move from the common world of men towards his particular world (the private sphere) of experience, in order that meetings might take place. Buber concludes that the common world is for the schizophrenic a world of illusions, and the only real world is his/her world of experience. Schizophrenics even have a double stream of memory, the author argues. Buber was also a student of the psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler (Buber 1965, 167), and from here we can conclude that he was familiar with the phenomenon of double book-keeping. Buber's novelty, which influenced even the phenomenological psychiatrist Ludwin Binswanger, was to reiterate the distinction that Heraclitus had made between the two worlds (private and common world) and to apply it to the case of mental disorders (Agassi 1999, 235) The connection of things, both spatial and temporal, is very different in dreams from the common world. (Agassi 1999, 236) Here we could recall once again Schutz's theory of the finite provinces of meaning and give an example. When we are awake, the connection of things seems to be a continuous and constant one, while in phantasy or dream-states the connection seems to involve different states of connections between things. Whereas when awake I can influence the outside world by virtue of my actions, when I imagine something, I can manipulate that context by means of my freedom of discretion (Schutz 1962, 240-241), as in Schutz's saying. Nonetheless, when dreaming we have a certain sense of agency, but it could as well happen that the dream surprises us.

For Buber, the very reality of the dream is inaccessible. He also notices how the normal dream is very different from the hypnotic one. Buber now introduces the phrase "musical relationships" to designate a sort of floating

relation, where the therapist is more important than the method. Buber acknowledges that without methods one is a dilettante, but at the same time, he wanted the therapist to actually use the methods given, not just to believe in them. (Agassi 1999, 236-237) Now we are quickly advancing towards the third division of this paper, which concerns Buber's advice for psychotherapists.

Buber on psychotherapy

Buber insists that the therapeutic relation might come to that point when there appears the element of the unforeseen, meaning that the therapist must somehow suspend his/her method and meet the patient in his/her uniqueness. (Agassi 1999, 237) This method has been called by the psychiatrist Giovanni Stanghellini a sort of phenomenological bracketing, which should be applied to the encounter with the other. (Stanghellini 2017, 11) Also in Buber's late philosophical anthropology, especially in his theories on language, there appears the notion of the moment of the surprise, which could be seen as a forerunner to Daniel Stern's moments of meeting. (Stern 2004, 135) Therefore, dialogue is conceived as an unfolding of the interhuman, of the space between I and Thou, which leaves open the possibility of surprise, namely of a radical change between the interlocutors, or more exactly, what Henri Maldiney has called the event. (Maldiney 1991, 251-252)

Emphasizing his theory of "healing through meeting", Buber states that making the unconscious conscious means that there were certain repressed elements which the patient did not want to keep. Because of Buber's notion of the unconscious, which involves both body and soul phenomena, this task of bringing back to consciousness elements which were repressed, seems impossible. As Buber states, we do not have a "deep freeze" which keeps all these repressed ideas, wishes, and drives from rushing into consciousness, rather, by virtue of the therapist's help, the patient can dissociate a certain element which belongs to the soul or to the body phenomena. This process involves a certain change of substance. (Agassi 1999, 238) Stern's theory of affect attunement (Stern 1998, 138) might resonate with Buber's thematization of dissociation. By virtue of the attunement which takes place between I and Thou, which also involves a sort of mirroring, the therapist brings to the fore an aspect of the patient's psyche, of which the latter was beforehand unaware.

Buber concludes that his perspective changes and challenges the psychoanalytical conception, because whereas the psychoanalytical transference was the presupposition of change, now what was usually called making the unconscious conscious means the elaboration of the dissociated elements which belong to the soul and to the body phenomena. (Agassi

1999, 239) Therefore, the moment of the surprise is again essential, because by virtue of a good-enough attunement between patient and therapist, the two of them learn something very important about their dialogical relationship, namely a sort of relational understanding. Daniel Stern explains that the moment of meeting (the surprise) deepens the relational field and the understanding which takes place between I and Thou. Moreover, the narrative which was created by the moment of meeting, might help both the patient and the therapist restructure their beliefs. (Stern 2004, 55) In order to clarify his statements, Daniel Stern also gives the example of the situation in which “I know that you know that I know something” and so forth.

For Buber, this process is a unique cooperation between the therapist and the patient. Moreover, the dissociated material which was further elaborated is a “lump” of the substance of the other. If the aim of the therapist is just to bring something up from the “Acheron”, that the therapist is only some kind of midwife. Transference is not enough, there needs to be a certain influence of the therapist on the act being made in the therapeutical process. (Agassi 1999, 239) This influence is brought forth by virtue of the moments of meeting and surprise which were thematized above.

For Buber, as for Daniel Stern's notion of moments of meeting, the importance lies in the change (the relation which is established and produced), and not just in excavating for something repressed in the unconscious. For Buber, this relational responsibility is a shared one, because this creating of something new in the therapeutical matrix needs to be worked through by both therapist and patient. (Agassi 1999, 239) Nonetheless, Buber insists on the moment of the surprise, which is fundamental for the interhuman because it produces changes both to the I and to the Thou involved in this process. We could as well remember Buber's saying that the presence of the Thou gives birth to the presence (Buber 2013, 33), in our case, to the “now moment”. Both Buber and Stern acknowledge the importance of the past in the ethology of mental illnesses, but nonetheless, they agreed independently of one another, that the real change occurs through the present.

Regarding free association, Buber describes two types of therapists, the one who knows what he wants to bring above from the patient's unconscious (the unconscious imposition of the therapist), and the one who does not know, and somehow, he is letting the patient be, similar to Heidegger's letting-be (Sein-Lassen) (Heidegger 2001, 224). Buber is definitely on the side of the therapist who does not expect anything from the patient's free association, rather he is letting the latter be, and then he sees what does come out of this process. This type of therapist is ready to receive what it will be delivered by the patient. He is, so to speak, in the hands of his patient, similar to Winnicott's holding. (Agassi 1999, 239-240)

Buber does not use the Winnicottian notion of holding, rather, the father of dialogue discusses everything in terms of his concept of embracing the other, which could as well be seen as echoing Winnicott's thematization. In both Winnicott's holding (Winnicott 2009, 150) and in Buber's embracing, the atmosphere of confidence (Buber 2002, 127) is the most important element. Freud emphasized the notion of free-floating attention, which in Winnicott terms could be called the "area of formlessness" (Winnicott 2009, 45) or simply a state of relaxation. Buber would agree that for the moment of surprise to take place, we must keep our attention to life relaxed and be open towards a radical change, which of course, involves trust, one of the most important elements of Buber's entire therapeutical approach.

Buber is skeptical towards the methods of dream analysis proposed by Freud, Jung, or Adler. Rather, he once again emphasizes that the therapist should let the patient be, and the former should also not be influenced in the analysis of the latter's dream theory of his particular school of thought. Buber acknowledges that the task is infinitely complicated without the recourse to the theories of dream analysis proposed by certain psychoanalytical schools, nonetheless, the therapist needs to be surprised by what the patient has to deliver to him, this being the genuine moment of meeting. (Agassi 1999, 240) Once again, Buber anticipates Stern's thematization.

The responsibility of the therapist becomes far more important and difficult to bear, because he is not going to use ready-made categories proposed by the therapeutical school of which he belongs, rather he will consider the importance of the "present moment" and of the spontaneity involved in the therapeutical meeting. Even in I and Thou Buber acknowledged this risk when a person was supposed to engage in the I-Thou relationship, because once we are "playing the game", the relational one, we do not know where we are going to be transported. Here, responsibility is the decisive aspect. (Agassi 1999, 240)

Insisting of the element of surprise, Buber claims that the usual therapist imposes himself unconsciously on the patient. This means, that the therapist applies the theory which he has learned from his school of thought onto the patient, without letting the play space between him and the patient unfold. This play space is exactly the dialogical. Here we could remember Gadamer's thematization of understanding as play, an understanding which is also fundamental to the patient-therapist relation. (Gadamer 2013, 106) Therefore, a "conscious liberation" of the patient must take place. This involves letting the patient be himself and seeing what comes out of it. The patient must not be influenced by the ideas of the therapist's school of thought. There is a certain humility of the master, as Buber calls it, which means that not everything that comes out of the patient must not be put into certain categories or frameworks of thought.

The real master responds to uniqueness. (Agassi 1999, 240) Humility was also addressed by Martin Buber in his discourses on education. There, Buber insisted on spontaneity and letting-be, because if the therapist would put everything that the patient says and does into specific dogmatic categories (coming from a specific school of thought), then how could the actual moment of meeting happen between the two of them?

Buber insists that we need a new approach to psychotherapy. For example, instead of the psychoanalytical sexual puberty, we might as well speak of social or cosmic puberty. Unfortunately, Buber does not expand these notions in this dialogue or elsewhere in his published works. All of these features, namely the social and cosmic puberty, are connected with the realm of the interhuman. If we consider that the unconscious is that part of the human existence where body and soul phenomena are not yet dissociated, then the relationship between two persons would mean the relationship between two non-divided existences. This would be exactly the relationship between two unities, both of them being unique. (Agassi 1999, 241) Here Buber addresses again the wholeness of the human being.

Anticipating once again Daniel Stern's thematization of the moments of meeting, the highest moment of a relationship would be exactly the "unconscious". The unconscious has more influence in the interhuman than the conscious. For example, Buber recalls the example of shaking hands, where if there is a real desire of contact, the touch is neither a bodily phenomenon, nor a soul phenomenon, but a unity of both of these. The same could be applied to the phenomenon of the embrace or to the exchange of regards. (Agassi 1999, 241) Martin Buber anticipates once again the concept of embodied subjectivity, and even the examples that Merleau-Ponty gives concerning his notion of flesh. (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 130)

Buber calls his method one of existential healing. By virtue of the patient's existential trust in the person of the therapist, the repressed material might come to light. Confirmation does not replace transference, rather, in the case of a real meeting, the other is confirmed not statically, but dynamically. This means that the other must be confirmed in his potentiality, in his dynamic existence, or in his/her specific becoming. (Agassi 1999, 242) The strongest illness in the life of the person is just the negative form of his highest potentiality. Therefore, confirmation through language becomes the way in which these potentialities might unfold. (Agassi 1999, 243)

The unconscious is not a phenomenon, either a physical or a psychological one. Experiencing the unconscious would mean that the dissociation of a certain soul or body element takes place. Dissociation becomes the process through which we arrive at inner or outer perceptions. The conscious life of the patient is a dualistic one, whereas his objective life is not. (Agassi 1999, 243) If one were to speculate upon Buber's theory of

the unconscious, then we would conclude that the inner and the outer, or more precisely, time and space in Kant's, come to light by virtue of this dissociation. Moreover, we could guess that through affect attunement and mutual mirroring, lived space and lived time could become objectified and grasped from the third person point of view.

Buber considers that the human being can know the unity of his own self when his forces are united in the moments of real decisions. Here we could recall the Kairotic moments of which Daniel Stern was discussing in his book on time. Moreover, for Buber, when a person makes a decision, an existential one, that decision should be made with our whole being. When man perceives his unity as an object, that is not an actual unity. (Agassi 1999, 244)

Insisting once again on the pathological side on the discussion which was unfolding between him and the audience, Buber argues that a dream can be remembered only by shaping it via memory. Furthermore, the schizophrenic, for example, lives in two worlds simultaneously, having two streams of memory. Buber reiterates Heraclitus' distinction between the common world and the private world, arguing that this is exactly the case of the schizophrenic person. (Agassi 1999, 244)

The therapist must feel the other side as a bodily touch, just like in Merleau-Ponty example, in order to know what the patients actually thinks, feels and wishes. Buber employs once again his theory of imagining the real, in which by virtue of this bold swinging into otherness, the human being comes to experience what the other is feeling. Nonetheless, the existential element in teaching or healing is for Buber the process of self-healing or self-teaching. (Agassi 1999, 245) Linking this final discussion with Buber's late philosophical anthropological thought, we could once again emphasize his theory of imagining the real. By virtue of this capacity, not only does the person imagines what the other feels, desires, and needs, but also the person almost comes to feel in his/her own body what the other is needing. Therefore, the other is "set at a distance", made present and confirmed in his/her potential dynamic becoming.

By way of conclusion

Summing up, we have attempted to give a comprehensive account of the relationship between Martin Buber's late philosophical anthropology and his notion of the unconscious. The first task was accomplished by analyzing Buber's theory of the wholeness of the human being, which was treated in conjunction with his notion of the sphere of the interhuman. This activity involved the fact that we had to come back to his notions of "distance" and "relation". These two were the movements by which the human being came to have a world independent of himself. In his discussion on the issue of

the unconscious, this notion involves several meanings and usages. First, the unconscious implies a non-dualistic account of the human being, namely the human being is thematized as a totality and unity. Secondly, the unconscious has a much greater impact in the sphere of the interhuman, than in that of the psychic alone. Whereas the interhuman designates our whole being, it nonetheless functions in several different compartments, such as shaking hands and embracing the other. These sorts of behavior involve our being as a whole. We could remember Buber's discussion of imagining and real and making present, by virtue of which two persons come to grasp the other as a uniqueness. Nevertheless, we tried to compare Buber's unconscious with phenomena such as Daniel Stern's "moments of meeting". These "moments of meeting" involve a change which occurs between two whole human beings, and which in turn leaves a co-created narrative, which deepens the relational field. Finally, Buber's account of the unconscious seems at first rather ambiguous and even puzzling, because he employs from the beginning the destruction of this concept and hence his attempt to replace the dualistic account of our being with a non-dualistic one. Perhaps his terminology is not adequate at times, but nonetheless we have to remember that the fragments which we interrogated were only parts of his wider theory of the unconscious, which was unfortunately never finished as such.

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