

THE LANGUAGE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Antony Maurice-Nneke

United Kingdom

Email: antony@psychodynamicsfora.com

Abstract

This paper is about the meaningful employment of psychodynamics terms and the language of the unconscious. It distinguishes literary language meaning and the special, technical, psychodynamics meaning of the term 'unconscious' as follows: a psychodynamics meaning whereby it applies to mental states such as feeling, intentions, ideations, other mental items and a literal meaning where it refers to the physical state of the individual such as when a person is said to be comatose and to situations when a person is unaware of something. The latter state is equated with situations of lack of knowledge.

The paper shows that psychodynamics language is incommensurable with literal language. It discusses the epistemological problem in using the two languages as one and mistaking unconsciousness with unawareness and, thus, with lack of knowledge. The paper argues that in failing to make the necessary distinction between psychodynamics language and literal language, some writers produce comments on psychodynamics topics which are shrouded in confusion because they are opaque and have no psychodynamics content.

The main discussion of the paper is the idea of the self-ascription of unconscious states. This gives an illuminating demonstration of the confusion in so far as such idea fails to make the distinction that is necessary to give transparency to the meaning of psychodynamics terms and fails to recognise the role of repression in making mental items unconscious. The research method is non-clinical qualitative analysis of data by Case Study. Here, I highlight a case to use it for illustration and discussion.

- ❖ *Introduction*
- ❖ *Colin McGinn and Self-Ascription of Unconscious states*
- ❖ *Epistemological Problem*
- ❖ *Alfred Hitchcock's Celluloid entertainment*
- ❖ *Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein on the Unconscious*
- ❖ *Fingarette and Sartre on the Unconscious*
- ❖ *Conclusion*

1. Introduction

The way in which general terms bearing the names of psychodynamics concepts are used in literal sense presents a special problem of understanding as it is confused and confusing because psychodynamics language is incommensurable with literal language.

This paper distinguishes a literal use and a psychodynamics use of the term unconscious.

It is common to find that in attempting to give a causal explanation to the action of a person who is afflicted with psychoneurosis, a mental disorder, one is often presented with the description, not an explanation, of an action which is found to be odious. Here, an odious action is any action which one does not like or does not understand, rather than the action of a person who is afflicted with psychoneurosis, a mental disorder.

These two actions should be explained differently. The explanation of the action of a person who is afflicted with psychoneurosis should begin with the explanation of the psychodynamics of the symptoms. It should explain the genesis of unconscious ideation in the development of the symptoms and the conflicts which are necessary and sufficient for the development of the illness. Thus, the explanation of an action which is influenced by psychoneurosis follows the pattern of the descriptive account of the formation of symptoms which exposes psychical items that have been made unconscious by their repression.

The explanation of an odious action which a person does not like because it appears unusual, unpleasant, devious, or in conflict with the norm in the person's social, political, or cultural milieu, is given ad hoc in respect of the rationality of the particular situation of the action.

The term conflict, as used above in both explanations, is crucially decisive in making the inevitable distinction between mental items and physical items, mental symptoms and physical symptoms to make language significantly transparent and meaningful. The notion of conflict which leads to the development of the symptoms of psychoneurosis is connected to the affects of the patient and not to the feelings of those who observe his actions.

Thus, I may feel horrified and appalled by a person's action because his action conflicts with my own expectations. The fact of my disappointment in his action does not provide grounds on which to use psychodynamics terms pejoratively in a claim that the person suffers from psychoneurosis. To put it bluntly, my disappointment in a person's action or my description of a person's action as odious, does not offer justification to the claim that the person is mentally ill.

However, if the person has certain conflicts in his life which cause him to behave in a certain way which he recognises and does not want yet unable to avoid, and these conflicts lead to other observable symptoms, the fact of the conflicts in his life and the symptoms that they evoke, provide grounds upon which to ascribe psychoneurosis to the person. In this instance, analytical treatment is the only route to a clinical judgement about the illness.

The special problem connected in making the above distinction concerns the technical, psychodynamics terms and general terms. General terms can be slippery under a certain context because they lack a sharp boundary due to their generality. Those who make indiscriminate use of general terms are sometimes precluded from seeing essential distinctions in the use of general terms thus making them to believe that psychodynamics terms such as the unconscious have general application. This problem is implicated in Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein's discussion of difficulties in the sense of application of

general terms (Wittgenstein 1958, PP 19-20).

The problem infects and affects the way some writers use general terms to ascribe mental concepts and to generalize and classify mental phenomena, also, in this way and purporting it to be a true psychodynamics account.

Such generality in the application of concepts fails to capture the essential deference between the special, technical, psychodynamics sense of the unconscious and the generality of the literal language meaning of the unconscious. This leads to opacity in the meaning of the expressions in which the unconscious is applied and the inevitable confusions that arise with opaque expressions. This paper distinguishes a psychodynamics meaning and a literal meaning of the term unconscious through the discussion of the comments of influential writers.

2. Colin McGinn on Self-Ascription of Unconscious States

Language may well be the prison house (Fredric Jameson 1972), but it is essentially a potent medium for clarity of expressions, elucidation and literary transparency within opaque contexts. It is for this reason that I highlight here and use Colin McGinn (1982) as a case study for illustration and discussion.

In his classification of mental phenomena McGinn divides mental phenomena into sensations and propositional attitudes (1982 P8). By sensations he means bodily feelings like pains, tickles, nausea as well as a perceptual experiences like seeming to see a red pillar box (ibidem).

He says that propositional attitudes are the mental phenomena which have propositional content, that is the ascription of which involves the use of a 'that' clause, as in "Jones believes that the sky is blue" (P8).

Applying these two mental concepts to the concept of the unconscious, McGinn observes an asymmetry between them. He sees that while propositional attitudes may be unconscious, he cannot conceive of sensations as being unconscious. The lack of essential distinction between psychodynamics concepts and the general terms of the same name allows McGinn to claim that one could ascribe unconsciousness to oneself in a psychodynamics way.

However, knowledge of the descriptive account of the psychoneuroses and the psychodynamics of the unconscious with the genesis of unconscious ideation enables two observations from McGinn's assertions as follows.

The first observation is that psychodynamics concepts such as unconscious and repression cannot be ascribed to oneself, except in the terms of reported statements because of the very nature of unconsciousness which entails inaccessibility of mental items to consciousness. In this way purported self-ascription merely features as belated reported speech and not an item of insight or direct intuition. In such instances, the self-ascription may just be an act of defence mechanism or post-analytic information from therapeutic analysis.

If one ascribes unconsciousness to oneself as a reported statement the truth of what is ascribed to the unconscious is in doubt since the ascription may just be a matter of

explaining things away defensively as entailed in the concept of intellectualisation. On the other hand, if one ascribes unconsciousness to oneself as post-analytic information, one is being wise after the event, as in knowledge by hindsight, that is, wise by the benefit of psychodynamics therapy. In this case one is merely giving assent to analytic discoveries. Such assent, then, is part of the knowledge from therapeutic education.

Thus, it is clear that self-ascription of unconsciousness has no psychodynamics content. The literal use of the term unconscious may confuse one into thinking that one may ascribe unconsciousness to oneself from a psychodynamics point of view. For example, in the literal sense unconsciousness is used synonymously with unawareness and individuals are said to be unconscious when it is meant to say that they are unaware of something. Instances of this are in situations when a person is in a coma or when a fighter, such as a boxer, has been beaten up badly and he is in a state of stupor. However, in psychodynamics language, it is mental items such as feelings, intentions, wishes, and ideational contents which are said to be unconscious, not the individual in his physical state.

Charlie Dunbar Broad's (1937) non-literal sense of the unconscious which allows for the inaccessibility of certain mental items is closely related to the psychodynamics concept of the unconscious as I use it in this paper. I have given elsewhere (Maurice-Nneke 2003), a detailed account of the benefits of the non-literal sense of the unconscious which makes psychodynamics a depth psychology.

Equally, one cannot ascribe the concept of repression to oneself. The mental concept of defence mechanism enables the individual to avoid the use of unconscious and repression to describe his own actions at the time of the actions. The concept of defence mechanism helps the individual to deny or disavow things as they really are and representing them as he would wish them to be.

The nature of the psychoneurosis helps to determine the individual's method of defence and his method of defence provides him with an illusory assurance that all is well with him. It gives him the illusory feeling that he is in control.

The purpose of defence mechanism is to enable the individual to deny or disavow the conflict in his life and the unconsciousness of certain emotions which have been repressed. It is clear from this that one cannot ascribe the unconsciousness of mental items to oneself while being actively engaged in denying or disavowing them at the same time! Defence mechanisms help one to justify one's actions only to oneself by making the action sensible to oneself, thus enabling one to explain them away. This is what is called rationalisation in psychodynamics language, a very potent mechanism of defence. Here is a brief illustration of rationalisation for clarification.

Consider a person who is ill with psychoneurosis, such as the persistent hand-washer who has a compulsion to wash the hands constantly whether the hands are dirty or not. In the course of the illness, the hand-washer will explain away the hand-washing as 'fear of germs' or 'fear of being dirty' but the hand-washer would never ascribe unconsciousness to himself by purporting to be unconscious in the way that McGinn (1982) intimates.

Also, in generalised anxiety disorders (GAD), such as anticipatory traumatic stress disorder (ATSD) (Maurice-Nneke 2023), the condition debilitates, enervates, and

disables the functional ability of the individual's cognitive processes and leaves him prone to rationalisation.

In these illustrations, the hand-washer or the ATSD sufferer rationalises his unwanted action to his concern for health and cleanliness or to whatever makes him feel like other people. This is to show that his action fits with what everyone does, that he is like every other person. The rationalisation forestalls treatment and prolongs the illness.

The second observation from McGinn's assertion is that contrary to what he says in respect to the concept of the unconscious, there is no asymmetry involved in the mental phenomena which he describes because, as mental phenomena, they are all amenable to repression and unconsciousness. As encountered regularly in clinical treatment, memories of past experiences may become unconscious because of the painful feelings which they arouse in the individual which make the memories amenable to repression.

Thus, childhood traumas may become unconscious because the bitter memories which they arouse have been repressed. In McGinn's definition feelings, such as love, hate, fear, hope, revenge, which are fundamental human emotions are classified as sensations which McGinn says cannot be unconscious. These are just the emotions that are liable to be unconscious in psychodynamics language.

McGinn has excluded those emotions from mental phenomena which he feels could be unconscious because his concept of the unconscious is derived from the literal sense of 'being unaware' which is contrasted with 'being conscious'. He does not show evidence of the role of repression in the unconsciousness of mental items.

3. The Epistemological Problem

In McGinn's account unconsciousness is used synonymously with unawareness. Thus, McGinn is able to claim that in ascribing unconscious beliefs or desires to oneself one is in essentially the same epistemological position as those who ascribe it to one (1982 P10).

The epistemological situation is of great importance and it is on this ground that I pursue the point further. From psychodynamics point of view, one is never in a position to ascribe unconsciousness to oneself because one is never in the same epistemological position as those ascribing the notion to one's actions. Compare the hand-washer mentioned above who is afflicted with psychoneurosis. At what stage in the hand-washer's ritual is he ever likely to say to onlookers that, "I am unconscious that I am washing my hands"?

Clinically, the unconscious is the language of psychodynamics. However, Sigmund Freud who created psychoanalysis did not create the unconscious. Henri Ellenberger (1970) and Lancelot Whyte (1962) have given a list of writers who have used the term unconscious before Freud. Nevertheless, Freud was the first person to popularise the use of the term in the study of the workings of the mind and the treatment of the problems of neuropsychosis and psychoneurosis. On account of this, it might be supposed that following Freud's exploration of the unconscious in his self-analysis, it is legitimate to say that one can ascribe unconsciousness to oneself since Freud must have ascribed unconsciousness to himself during his analysis. However, this suggestion is tenuous as it misses the important psychodynamics issues involved by making light of the problem as

follows.

First, if an individual has acquired the skill of self-analysis, then his self-ascription of unconsciousness would be a post-analytic act of confirmation, affirming the findings of the analysis. Secondly, for the self-ascription of unconsciousness the individual has to give up the methods of defence mechanism and resistance which are keeping the unconscious in its state. If the individual is able to do this at the pre-analytic stage, then the problem cannot be said to be unconscious. Thus, the individual has no need for the self-ascription of the unconscious.

The consideration of the two points above (a), that at the post-analytic stage, self-ascription of the unconscious amounts to confirmation of analytic findings and (b), at the pre-analytic stage, self-ascription of unconsciousness entails a relinquishment of defence mechanisms and resistance and the return to consciousness of repressed memories. The consideration of these points introduces a vague notion of the unconscious.

This vague notion of the unconscious endorses the idea that self-ascription of the unconscious is legitimate and that someone with full knowledge of self-analysis can do this. The underlying vagueness is characterised as follows.

It is believed that an instance in which one is unaware of what is going on around one is an instance in which one is unconscious. Further, it is alleged that knowledge of the technique of self-analysis allows one to know, initially, that believes and desires may be unconscious. Thus, it is presumed, one can by that token knowledge of the unconscious, ascribe unconsciousness to oneself at the same epistemological level as one's observers.

This is a mistaken belief. It is based on the vague notion of the unconscious and it stresses the problem and the need for distinction between the literal and the psychodynamics use of the term unconscious. I shall now illustrate the problem further by a consideration of Freud's analysis of his dream of Irma's Injection (Freud 1900, PFL 4) in respect of self-analysis and the ascription of the state of unconsciousness to oneself. An understanding of this illustration is relevant in understanding the nature of the problem that I am describing here and the distinction that I am concerned to make between the literal use of the term unconscious and the special, technical, psychodynamics use of the term.

In spite of all his knowledge of the dynamics of mental processes and the genesis of unconscious ideation, Freud was unable to ascribe unconsciousness to himself when he woke up from sleep and thought about the manifest content of his dream. He was unable to do so because he did not know what ideas were unconscious at the time! In terms of the psychodynamics of the situation, this is a trivial truth.

The reason why Freud was unable to ascribe unconsciousness to himself at the time he woke from sleep is that unconsciousness relates to certain feelings, beliefs, ideas, or emotions which analysis can bring to light by breaking down the walls of repression which keeps psychical items in a state of unconsciousness. Analysis involves tracing back memories to their causal origin in earlier times, taking account of what went on previously, accounting for relations and relationships in their contextual settings. It follows from this that the self-ascription of the state of unconsciousness is a second order act of confirming or avowing what was denied to consciousness by defence mechanisms and the act of repression.

The vague notion that one is said to be unconscious when one is in a coma or when one is unaware of what is going on around one, is often mistaken for the psychodynamics of the unconscious. Thus, it can be seen that the literal application of psychodynamics concepts does, indeed, tend to confuse the distinction between the special psychodynamics sense of those concepts and the generality of their literal sense.

The psychodynamics of the two classes of mental phenomena which McGinn describes, that is, sensations and propositional attitudes, follow the pattern of symptoms formation which is ascribable and explainable through the notion of conflict.

4. Alfred Hitchcock's Celluloid Entertainment

I turn now to the celluloid entertainment world of Alfred Hitchcock to take an illustration that refers to a fact which has been fictionalised or to a fiction which has the potentiality of being a fact. This illustration utilizes the two classes of mental phenomena described by McGinn. I take my illustration from Alfred Hitchcock's famous film, Marnie (1964).

In the film, Marnie killed a sailor who was involved in a violent attack of her mother. Marnie was seven years old at the time. She stabbed the sailor to death, but in terror. The sailor bled profusely and the sight of the amount of blood pouring out of the sailor's body overwhelmed Marnie who was shocked, frightened, then fainted.

The incident took place on a dark stormy night. There were flashes of thunder and lightning which also frightened Marnie and made her hysterical. Her mother comforted her and took the blame for the sailor's murder.

Now, in so far as sensations are feelings which a person has, the childhood trauma which Marnie suffered on the eventful night are sensations in McGinn's classification of mental concepts. There were propositional attitudes also. Marnie had certain hopes, beliefs, and entertained certain thoughts.

Marnie may have believed that stabbing the sailor was the most appropriate way or the only way to save her mother from her attacker. However, what is interesting for the purpose of my illustration here is that Marnie grew up into a very vivacious adult woman and developed unusual symptoms. She had a phobia of the colour red and a phobia of thunder and lightning. These things disable her and make her faint, which is described in literal language as being unconscious.

The two classes of mental phenomena described by McGinn are represented in all the things that Marnie has repressed and the repression leads Marnie to develop the symptoms of psychoneurosis which help to distinguish the literal notion of the unconscious from the psychodynamics of the unconscious.

In her growth into adulthood, Marnie's childhood trauma was repressed. The fear of the sight of blood pouring out from the sailor's body is displaced and substituted by fear of blood in general and fear of the colour red which has an associative link with blood. The original fear of the events of the dark stormy night was replaced by fear of flashes of thunder and lightning with no recollection of their origin.

When Marnie sees red coloured objects she cowers, screams, and faints. Whenever there

is a flash of thunder and lightning, Marnie screams hysterically and faints. Here 'fainting' in the literal sense means being unconscious. Thus, in this literal language sense, the expression, 'I was unconscious' means 'I fainted'. This, in McGinn's sense, would amount to the ascription of the unconscious to oneself. This is the vague sense of the unconscious in so far as this sense applies to fits, and the state that one is in sometimes during a hospital surgical operation.

In Marnie's case the reason for her fainting is inaccessible to her because it relates to ideas and feelings of the traumatic events of her childhood. These are now repressed and replaced by other ideas. Thus, the ideas and feelings relating to the events of her childhood are unconscious in psychodynamics sense, by virtue of their repression and replacement.

One might say that Marnie knows of her phobia of red coloured objects and knows of her phobia of thunder and lightning. One might say further, that it is possible for Marnie to say that "These things make me faint". In saying this she indicates that these things make her feel a sudden incapacitation. But, in relation to the occurrence of those things that make Marnie feel a sudden incapacitation, the central point is whether Marnie can answer the question, 'Why?'

Now, if Marnie wants to be intellectual or pedantic, she could say that "I am unconscious of why I am fainting at the sight of these things". This vacuous, literal expression does not answer the question about why those things occur to her but it reveals that Marnie has heard about the use of the term unconscious and this expression which has no psychodynamics content will fit McGinn's idea of the self-ascription of unconscious states.

The statement "I am unconscious of why I am fainting at the sight of these things" talks about I am unconscious in McGinn's sense of the self-ascription of unconsciousness but it says nothing about what mental phenomena has been ascribed to the unconscious. Thus it, also, reveals that Marnie lacks knowledge of the unconsciousness of mental items as the statement is vague and lacks psychodynamics content.

Thus, it can be seen that it is the vague, literal, notion of the unconscious that one may ascribe to oneself. As I have shown in this paper, this notion of the unconscious has no psychodynamics content as, contrary to McGinn, it does not deal with mental phenomena but with the physical state of the individual. McGinn is classifying mental phenomena but he confuses, conflates or equates the mental realm with the physical state of the individual.

Allowing that there is any substance in McGinn's self-ascription of unconscious states, a great epistemological feat would be accomplished if a person in a state of unconsciousness in the literal sense could say to the people around, "Please do not speak to me now because I am unconscious!" If the person could say this then it would be self-ascription of the unconscious at the same epistemological level as the observers who ascribe the state to the person.

However, it is obvious in this instance that the person is no longer concerned with mental phenomena but with the physical state of persons. This is the confusion in McGinn's self-ascription of the unconscious. The idea of the self-ascription of the unconscious has no

transparency as a psychodynamics expression.

5. Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein on the Unconscious

The problem that I am outlining in this paper is confounded in Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein's writings on the unconscious. He is positively ambivalent about the notion of the unconscious and his ambivalence is pervasive within his statements on psychoanalysis. Instances of this can be seen in the writings attributed to him (Wittgenstein 1980, 1966) and in his remarks (Wittgenstein 1988: 225, 262) and in Zettel (1967: 396, 932). However, as in McGinn's case, Wittgenstein does not make a distinction between the literal application of the term, unconscious from the psychodynamics application of the term.

He believes that he is applying the term in a psychodynamics sense but he applies the term generally in the literal sense because he is concerned to show the absurdity of the concept. His quizzical notion of unconscious toothache betrays his epistemological problem with the concept of the unconscious. The muddle is shown glaringly in Zettel (932) which I cite below in order to highlight and identify the ambiguity in Professor Wittgenstein's statement.

In Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology 1 (225) Wittgenstein makes two statements in which he ascribes the intentionality of an action to the unconscious in intimating that each action was motivated by unconscious intentions. This shows clear psychodynamics thinking.

However, in Zettel (396) Wittgenstein uses the notion of the unconscious in a sense which is quite distinct from the intentional content which he assigns to the unconscious in the Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology 1 (262). These two senses clearly betray Wittgenstein's problem with the concept of the unconscious, a problem which he created by his language game analogy and his predilection with the grammar of literal language. He writes as follows.

Imagine an unconscious man (anaesthetised, say) were to say "I am unconscious" – should we say "he ought to know"? And if someone talked in his sleep and said "I am asleep" – should we say "He is quite right"? Is someone speaking untruth if he says to me "I am not conscious"? (And truth if he says so while unconscious?) And suppose a parrot says "I don't understand a word", or a gramophone: "I am only a machine" (932)

It is clear from the above that Wittgenstein is misled by the grammar of literal language in seeing the unconscious man (anaesthetised) in the same situation as someone who is asleep. This carefully chosen illustration by Wittgenstein shows two different senses in the application of the term unconscious which Wittgenstein supposes to be synonymous or substitutional. Thus, he takes them as one. It is necessary to disambiguate Professor Wittgenstein's statement in order to make a distinction of the psychodynamics sense and the literal sense of the unconscious here for literal and psychodynamics clarity.

Literary Language Sense of the Unconscious

The first sense in Wittgenstein's statement is the literal language sense. The anaesthetised man is unconscious in a literal sense. In anaesthesiology, a person under general anaesthetic, such as during a surgical operation, loses the sense of feeling and is usually unaware of what is going on around him during the surgical operation.

However, certain individuals can be aware of everything that is going on during the surgical operation but lose the sense of feeling completely. The term unconscious is also used in literal language to describe states of fainting, or when a person is in a coma, or when a fighter such as a boxer has been beaten up badly and is in a state of stupor as I have mentioned earlier. The use of the term unconscious in these illustrations is about the physical state of the individual and has no psychodynamics content.

The Psychodynamics Sense of the Unconscious

The second sense in what the term unconscious means in Wittgenstein's statement is the psychodynamics sense. For the person who is asleep, the unconsciousness refers to mental items. His mind is actively charged with a quota of energy and he can dream and remember fragments of the manifest content of his dream upon waking up. This sense refers to mental states, intentions. Energy is necessary for every human action which leads to the development of the symptoms of an illness. It is also necessary in the transformation of ideas into symptoms. This energy is the basis of psychodynamics and it entails the idea that the symptom of an illness arises through the damming-up of an affect (Freud 1925d).

The transformation of energy is entwined with the principle of constancy (Freud 1950a) through the sequential route of the constancy of energy for the conversion and emergence of psychical ideas which become symptoms of an illness. I have designated the principle of constancy as the Psychodynamics Law (Maurice-Nneke 2022, 2013, 2003). This is not a nomic law but it is subsumable under the principle for the conservation of energy. The principle of constancy has an essential dual role in the transformation of psychical ideas into the symptoms of an illness and in the transformation of energy enabling ideas to become unconscious in psychodynamics sense. Thus, clinically, the unconscious is the language of psychodynamics.

I have made the distinctions above of two senses of the unconscious in opposition to Professor Wittgenstein who links the notion of unconsciousness to what is unknowable. In Professor George Edward Moore's (1959) report of his attendance at Wittgenstein's Cambridge Lectures of 1930-1933, he reports that Wittgenstein regards the unconscious as an absurd concept and thinks that the difference between conscious and unconscious, is rather like that between seen and unseen chair (Moore 1959 P311). In the Blue Book (1958), Wittgenstein examines the word unconscious on the analogy of the expression 'to know'. This suggests, like the unseen chair, that the unconscious is unknowable.

When does a discussion have Psychodynamics Content?

I have stated variously in this paper that certain discussions have no psychodynamics content. A discussion has psychodynamics content when the central content of the topic of discussion reveals the process of conflict in its ideational content, in the events or situations of the discussion which lead to the ideational or intentional content becoming unconscious so that its exploration leads to the genesis of unconscious ideation.

In a discussion with psychodynamics content the central content is in opposition to the dominant trend of the individual's mental life so that it provokes the individual into a defence. This involves the interplay of forces whereby the intentions of the individual

come into consideration. These intentions may be unconscious. A psychodynamics content is the psychodynamics of the particular situation. Such a state of affair involving the conflict is an essential condition in the theory of repression and hence for an action to be unconsciously motivated, that is, motivated by what is repressed. Refer to the cases of Marnie and the persistent hand-washer mentioned above.

6. Fingarette and Sartre on the Unconscious

In *Self-deception* (1969), Herbert Fingarette attempts to resurrect the earlier problems which Jean-Paul Sartre had with the unconscious in *Being and Nothingness* (1969). I have discussed the difficulties of Sartre and Fingarette with the unconscious in a previous publication (Maurice-Nneke 2003).

Suffice it to say here that Sartre took his cue from Wittgenstein while Fingarette took his from Sartre. The discussions are centred on epistemological grounds following Professor Wittgenstein's analogy with the expression 'to know'. It exposes the commentators' misunderstanding of the psychodynamics of the unconscious as they speak of the unconscious in the literal sense.

Although echoing Wittgenstein's idea of the absurdity of the concept of the unconscious, Sartre's apparently incontestable claim that "All knowing is consciousness of knowing" is derived from the classical definition of knowledge where knowledge is taken to be justified true belief. Knowledge in this sense amounts to knowing that one knows and the evidence of what is claimed to be known operates as the justification principle.

As many epistemologists know, Plato shows in *Theaetetus* (201c-d) and in *Meno* (81, 98) that there is a weakness in using the weight of evidence as a justification for knowledge claims. In recent decades Professor Edmund Gettier (1963) has shown that the classical definition based on justification by evidence is inadequate for one may have evidence yet fail to show a causal connection between one's evidence for knowledge and what is claimed to be known.

Although there are flaws in Gettier's argument particularly in his evidential illustration, I am very limited by space in this paper for the exposition of Gettier's flaws. However, it is sufficient to note here that following the foregoing discussions about the unconscious and repression, Sartre's assumption that "All knowing is consciousness of knowing" is inadequate with respect to the unconsciousness of mental items. Sartre's dictum cannot apply legitimately to the concepts of repression and unconscious in the psychodynamics sense in which I have used those concepts in this paper.

The reason for this is clear in what I have said in this paper. Since both Sartre and Fingarette follow Professor Wittgenstein rigidly, they are confusing unconsciousness with unawareness. Thus, they confuse it with lack of knowledge. This is an epistemological problem which arises whenever a writer neglects to make the necessary distinction which I have discussed in this paper. As a result, such writer is fixated in the use of the term unawareness which is mistakenly confused with unconsciousness. Thus, for the purpose of clarity, it is necessary to make the distinction between psychodynamics language and literal language.

7. Conclusion

This paper shows that literal language is incommensurable with psychodynamics language. Clinically, the unconscious is the language of psychodynamics. It facilitates the treatment of mental disorders as it enables the understanding of the workings of the mind. A knowledge of the dynamics of repression as a mechanism for psychical defence is a necessary requisite for an understanding of the unconscious as the language of psychodynamics. My illustrations with the cases of Marnie and the persistent hand-washer give clarification to the role of repression in the unconsciousness of mental items. To understand this is to understand the genesis of the problems of psychoneurosis and the psychodynamics of mental processes.

The idea of the self-ascription of unconscious mental states highlights the absurdity in confusing psychodynamics language with literal language and such self-ascription leads to opaque expressions. This absurdity is confounded in Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein's quizzical notion of unconscious toothache.

The understanding of the role of repression in the unconsciousness of mental items enables one to appreciate the absurdity in the notion of unconscious toothache. The notion of unconscious toothache has no psychodynamics content and it is clear that, as in McGinn's case above, in ascribing unconscious toothache to oneself, one is confusing talk about mental items with talk about the physical state of the individual. This is the basis of opaque expressions in the wrong application of psychodynamics language.

Thus, a distinction between psychodynamics language and literal language, in the way that I have shown above with Professor Wittgenstein's statement, is inevitable for the meaningful fluency, expressive lucidity, unrestricted fluidity and the clarity of language.

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- Antony Maurice-Nneke is Psychodynamics Analyst in a Mental Health Clinic. He is available with his BLOGS at <https://www.psychodynamicsfora.com/>.