

# Freud In Vigotsky. Unconscious and Language<sup>1</sup>

Alejandro H. Gonzalez,  
Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires – Argentina

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This book tries to demonstrate that the principles of Inner Speech can explain the phenomenon of Unconscious. Through the description of its peculiarities by Vigotsky and Freud, the author proposes that both phenomenon are made by the same materials: the language, motivation and affective world. But two ways of cognition. This gives us the opportunity to use the socio-historical method to the study of the Unconscious.

Thanks to it, new hypothesis is purposed on the functioning of the meaning.

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## The destiny of silence

We will begin our inquiry examining which is the destination of those psychic productions that do not reach their full conscious expression. We will take, as a starting point, the investigations of Vigotsky, bringing to our memory his concepts, expressed in the last chapter of his culminate work: “Thought and Language.”

There, and by way of epigraph, the Great Russian psychologist proposes us a fragment of O. Mandelstan's poem:

*“I forgot the word which I wanted to say  
and the thought, lacking material form,  
will return to the chamber of shadows.”* i.

In this poetic fragment is contained Vigotsky's conception, about the destination that have the contents that, in their way to the conscience, do not find their verbal expression. Just as he writes at the end of chapter” ... *A Word devoid of thought is a dead thing, and a thought unembodied in words remains a shadow*”. ii. The world of shadows, in opposition to the luminous territory of conscience, will be, then the final destination of such psychic productions.

This lugubrious territory, last destination of the naked or at any event ragged thought, could not be studied by the brilliant Russian psychologist. Nevertheless, examining his investigations, we find the key of its qualities.

## A walk into the shades

In the mentioned final chapter, Vigotsky tells us that his analysis followed the process from the outermost to the innermost plane, that is opposite to the real course of the verbal thought development. However the true sequence would be in the following way: the whole process is born in the motive, which engenders a thought that in a third step, now with the language intervention, it is

shaped, first in inner speech, then in meaning of words and finally in words. iii.

Immediately the author warns us that this development may stop at any points of its course, and that exists a countless variety of movements and even unknown possible forms for him. To reach our objective we will suppose that process is indeed interrupted in a point that we will locate in the conformation of Inner Speech. This moment will have, for our inquiry, the advantage of being sufficiently near to the motive and, at the same time, to be observed experimentally.

A thought, detained in such a circumstance of its progress would have, then, the characteristics of Inner Speech. Strange qualities that Vigotsky enumerated:

\* At first, the abrupt abbreviation that suffers the sentence extension. The subject and terms connected with him., disappears The speech takes a purely predicative character. The semantic plane occupies the center of the scene.

\* The second peculiarity is that the sense prevails over the meaning. We must remember that the sense is understood as the putting in context, the set of psychological events that the word provokes. Being in our example of an internal plane, the context is the psychological environment, in wich, the emotional-motivational aspect even executes a central function in the sense formation. Yet has not been fully completed the *sine qua non* condition for the conscience appearance. It consists in the separation of necessity and the reality reflection, the hiatus that Leontiev claims like indispensable in constitution of conscious reflection. iv. In function of reality duplication capacity that the man possesses. ( thanks to language) his desire can modify the “duplicate” in such a way, that adjusts to desire realization (it is infinitely more frequent that people dreams with the victory than with the failure).

\* In third place the **agglutination of words** “*a way of combining words fairly frequent in some languages and comparatively rare in others...*”

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When several words are merged into one word, the new word not only expresses a rather complex idea but designates all the separate elements contained in that idea... As egocentric speech approaches inner speech, the child uses agglutination more and more as a way of forming compound words to express complex ideas. "Without forcing the meaning, we can say that the language tends to condense.

\* The fourth and last peculiarity consists on the **influx of sense**, "The senses of different words **flow** into one another — literally "influence" one another — so that the earlier ones are contained in, and modify, the later ones"

Summarizing the characteristics discovered by Vigotsky at the Inner Speech, are:

\* Strong abbreviation, the language is compressed, without forcing the terms we can say that it **condenses**.

\* Preponderance of sense, the motive and the concomitant emotions are a decisive context component. The coercion that the reality imposes to motives and desires, has not still reached all its power.

\* Agglutination of Sense: the senses unite and condense in a new word that contains them.

\* Influx of Sense: the senses flow from a term to other one, they move among the words.

Thus, it is a portrait of the world of shadows. Any thought that stopped its evolution there, towards the light of the conscience, would be populated of terms that condense; senses that are displaced and impose their law to the reflection of reality.

Such a description presents surprising similarity with the characteristics that Freud discovers in territory of unconscious.

### The unconscious shapes

In "An Outline of Psychoanalysis" — posthumous work, written during the last months of life in his British exile- the father of psychoanalysis, describes the characteristic features of unconscious.

He lays them together under the name of Primary Process, in opposition to the Secondary Process that dominates the conscious processes (or preconscious as he liked to say). There he writes:

"The laws of the unconscious processes... are very strange and are enough to explain almost all that we find so enigmatic in the dream . It is necessary to mention, above all, between them, the remarkable tendency to the **condensation, tendency to form new units**, elements that we would have maintained separate in vigil thought (underlined mine). Consequently, often an only element of apparent dream represents an entire series of the dream latent ideas, as if was a common allusion to all these, and in general, the extension of apparent dream is extraordinarily brief in comparison with the rich material of the one that it replaces ... Another particularity of dreams elaboration, not completely independent of the previous one, is the easiness of the **displacement** of the psychic intensities (charges) of an element to the other one."

Later he adds a new quality that Unconscious contents must have: ..."*Tendencies with opposed purposes subsist simultaneous and jointly in unconscious, without*

*the necessity of reconciling them ... Some philologists have recognized that the same thing happened in oldest languages, and that antinomies, as strong-weak, clear-dark, high-under, they were expressed primitively by oneself root ... In a language, so evolved as Latin, still remains of this double primitive sense, as for example, in the voices altus (high and lower) and sacer (sacred and loathsome) between others."*

This last observation brings to our memory this quotation where Vigotsky writes: "*The formation of complex is also responsible that, in different situations, a same word can have different meanings or even opposed, while some union form exists among them ... We meet here with a perfect analogy with some old languages (Hebrew, Chinese, Latin) in which a word also indicates the opposed ones. The Romans, for example used the same word for high and deep. Such a connection of opposed meanings only is possible as a result of the thought in complex*"<sup>vi</sup>. Then, the co-existence of opposites is another characteristic from the previous stages to the conceptual thought full development . That, although it doesn't integrate the features of Inner Speech, it is a quality of a thought, in which there is not still been revealing, in all its power, the extraordinary forces of language.

Coming back to Freud, in his book "The Metapsychology", chapter. V "Special Qualities of the Inc. System" he put together these characteristics: "*Summarizing, we will say that the characters that we hope to find in the processes belonging to system Inc. they are the lack of contradiction, the primary process (mobility of charges), independence of time and the substitution of external reality for the psychic one.*" Regarding this it is necessary to clarify that, with these terms Freud expressed an empiric observation, according which, the man, in fantasy, gives for fulfilled wishes that are very distant of having fulfilled in reality, or that, in fact, are of impossible realization. We are saying that, at this level, the wish models the representation of reality, moving us to act in consequence. Thus, one can feel sharp blame due of mere fantasy of realization of a forbidden desire and, in function of this, suffer strong inhibitions, or the conversives symptoms of hysteria. Or at a current relationship one can act on the base of behaviour molds, learned in past stages of the life, that only coincides with the present in secondary, although relevant, factors. For example, to confer paternal qualities to a superior, precisely for the highest hierarchical degree that he holds, waiting to be taken care by him, without keeping in mind the probable contradiction of interests in that relationship.

At this respect, is illustrative as Leontiev relates the personal sense with the motive or necessity, doing derive, directly, the first of its relationship with the motivational sphere. "*If in the consciousness of the subject external sensitivity connects meanings with the reality of the objective world, then the personal sense connects them with the reality of his own life in this world, with its motives*" (Leontiev, Activity, Consciousness and Personality Chap. IV point 4 the Personal Sense"). There he adds that: "*Embodying sense in meanings is a deeply intimate, psychologically meaningful process not in the least automatic or momentary. In the creation of literary*

*works of art, in the practice of moral and political education, this process appears in all its fullness. Scientific psychology knows this process only in its partial expression: in the phenomena of "rationalization" by people of their actual motives, in experiencing the torment of transition from the thought to the word ..." (L.S. Vygotski quote a poet: "I forgot the word which I wanted to say, and the thought, lacking material form, will return to the chamber of shadows.")*

### Some order

In summary, if we compare both groups of characteristic, we would have then, the following table of equivalences.

### Beyond the shape

This formal identity that although by itself constitutes a revelation, is not enough to demonstrate the intimate relationship of both processes. Because of this, we will go on in our inquiry to search some news discoveries that reinforces our hypothesis.

Thus we find that both processes, also are deeply related in their function. Meanwhile the Inner Speech is the first step for a motive, or necessity, leaves the shades and develops in their conscious expression; the unconscious processes constitute the first psychic representations of desires, they are their first manifestation.

On the other hand, at the stage of development, that we choose to stop the process described by Vigotsky, it still not fully embodied in language to become in conscious. It is necessary for a psychic process comes fully conscious, that language should exert all its ordering power.

This is, also according to psychoanalysis, the factor that determines the conscience access of a psychic content. In his book "The Ego and The Id" that marked a new theoretical way, Freud is very explicit at this point, when he writes:

"In another place, we have already exposed the hypothesis that the true difference between an unconscious representation and a preconscious representa-

tion (a thought), consists in the material of the first one remains hidden, while the second are shown connected with verbal representations. We undertake here, for first time, the tentative of indicating characters of the systems Prec. and Inc., different from their relationship with the conscience. Thus, the question of how something is made conscious, will be substituted by the one of how something is made preconscious, and the answer would be that for its connection with the corresponding verbal representations."

The psychoanalyst had also been able to subscribe O. Mandelstan's poem.

However these coincidences, should not generate in us an enthusiasm that impedes to consider that Freud ignored the true relationship between the language and the conscience. It was the most important reason for big inconsistencies in his theory at this subject. Just as psychology of his time, Viennese physician considered unalterable the relationship of word with thought. Once it was established, it should convert in conscious, all the psychic phenomenon. Only for exceptional causes they may avoid such a state.

This conception is sufficiently illustrated by the following passage, extracted of "Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (1916–1917): "At two year-old age, the child already knows how to speak with enough perfection, and soon after it, he shows us that he also knows how to be guided in complicated psychic situations and to manifest his ideas and feelings by means of words and acts that those that surround him will remember him in later years, because he will forget them completely, although that the memory is, or should be, in the early infantile years, in those that is less recharged, more sensitive and capable for its retentive mission. On the other hand nothing authorizes us to consider the memory function like a specially high and difficult psychic function; it is likely, on the contrary, to happen that people of very low intellectual level possess this ability on high degree." The explanations are no necessary about the errors of this paragraph, for those of us that adhere to Vigotsky's theory. However, this posture bares the Freudian thought toward the conscience, driving us to the hint about how fruitful that can be the application of socio-historical ideas to understand the Unconscious and its relationship with the conscience.

Inner Speech	Primary process
Abrupt abbreviation. <b>Words Agglutination</b> , combination of several words in a new one.	<b>Condensation:</b> tendency to create new terms with different elements
<b>Influx of Sense:</b> the senses pass of a word to other, they are influenced to each other.	<b>Displacement:</b> passage of the psychic charges of an element to another
<b>Preeminence of sense.</b> The object is even malleable to the influence of the motive.	<b>Preeminence of pleasure principle</b> over the reality one. The object is adapted to the desire fulfillment. Is an special case of preeminence of sense
Although it is not a quality of Inner Speech, the aforementioned example of <b>opposed meanings</b> as a result of the thought in complex survival. It is a logical principle. Without mediation there's not Principle of Contradiction.	<b>Lack of Contradiction.</b> the example is the mentioned by Freud about the old languages.

## The reason

After checking the deep relationship between the processes of the verbal thought formation and the phenomenon of the unconscious, we will try to solve the question about the origin of its peculiarities. We have seen that in the constitution of both processes we find a particular mixture, among these elements: the desire; the emotion and the low elaborated motive of the address, on one hand; meanwhile, on the other hand, the language, the world of words as means of resolution of tension that emerges with motives.

We observe that in Inner Speech, the word is not able to impose yet, in a final way, the organizing power of its structure, becoming into a formation of transition. The thought suffers an incomplete modification imposed by the shapes of the language. Meanwhile this last one falls under the influence of inward world sways.

Is recognized by psycholinguistic that, in its first manifestations, the language has different characteristics from those that will acquire through ontogenetic development. Thus the children will designate, with one only word, a dissimilar series of objects, its reference will vary according to the current conditions, external as internal. In the early stages of the infantile development the word has an amorphous structure and a diffuse meaning, changing its reference according to the situations.

An example by Luria will illustrate us in this respect. In his book *Consciousness and Language* he describes this phenomenon with the following example commented by one of its colleagues: "*The Soviet psychologist L.I. Bozhovich (personal communication) made a similar observation. A little child named with the word 'kja' to a kitten in correspondence with the initial sound of this word (in Russian kitten = kosha) and it seemed that this word owned a firm referential. However, an attentive observation showed that the word 'kja' was used by this child not only in relation to the kitten, but also, for example, in relation to any skin (that was similar to the cat one), to a scratch, to a sharp stone (for connection with the kitten that had clawed him). In consequence, in the initial stages of the development, the meaning of word is still amorphous, it doesn't have a firm reference ...*". In this example we found notorious condensation, under the same word, of a series of dissimilar references, grouped for an affective or perceptual logic instead of a logic of reality qualities. In this way of associating mind groups objects of dissimilar characteristic, which only relation takes places in the fellow's mind.

Not only the word reference suffers an evolution, but also the meaning will change as the child grows. Luria exemplifies this evolution with the development of the "sweet shop" meaning:

"it is certain that the meaning of this word changes substantially with the child's development. In the early stages, the word spreads to designate a certain place, of where they bring him the fresh and crispy bread, or candy. For that reason, behind the word shop in child, there is an effective knot and in fact this doesn't still constitute the objective meaning of word, is rather, an effective sense that have in child's life the store... In this change of

word's meaning, it changes, not only its semantic structure, but rather it also changes the system of psychic processes that are behind this word. In the small child, the main role is played by the affection, the sensation of something pleasant. For preschool child and for the school youth, the main role is fulfilling by the immediate image, his memory that reproduces a certain situation. And for the economist, the main role is played for the logical connections that are present in the word."

Also the meaning develops from an affective perspective to a logical-rational one. Evidently the personal sense doesn't disappear, but at an advanced stage of the conscience development, the concepts determines its structure.

On the other hand with the development of language abilities, the relation with the objects turns more stable, because its recognition or "reflection" (if I am allowed to use an old category fallen in misfortune for its wrong use) will become independent of necessities or emotions of the percipient subject. The shipwrecked even recognizes, in that timber that saves him of dying drowned, its objective qualities: He knows what material is made and even what functions executed in the craft from which came. This persistence of the reference, over there its situational relations with the subject, will allow him to recognize, among the possibilities within its scope, those that gives him bigger time of flotation. Except for the very probable case in that the emotions overflow his capacity of rational mechanisms control.

The slide that we find in a purely affective-emotional reflection, for its particular way of associating dissimilar objects under one sense, unites and enriches with the participation of language, generating this common territory where the qualities of both types of world apprehension and impulses control appears.

Thus we find that in Inner Speech, that word is not able, yet, to impose, definitively, the organizing power of its structure, becoming a formation of transition. The thought suffers an incomplete modification imposed by the language. At same time, the language falls under the influence of the affective-motivational world sways.

The word didn't still impose its logical ability of organization: A two year-old child can name the objects, however its emotional relation with them imposes, still, the rhythm of the reflection; his memory is not yet logically organized. Thus the memories can not be evoked by the work of thought, just as Vigotsky found that memory restructures. The memories of so early age are subordinate to the emotional repercussion that they arouse.

Even without the writing exercise, adult's memory is immersed in a lot of variations that depends, frequently, of contextual environment, of sense and emotions put at stake.

One proof is the enormous efforts that should carry out the oral cultures to preserve their history from individual variations, that expose to extinction their arcane treasure (just as demonstrates the series of formalisms that Milman Parry (vii) found in the *Odyssey* and *Ilíada*. They was used as a stop of involuntary deviations). Everyone is an attempt to protect the transmission from

the outbursts of individual variability. viii. The social meaning should be protected from the lunge of sense.

The role of Totem, demonstrated by Levy Strauss, gives us a new sample about the importance of external references, that allows to organize the collective memory, to avoid the risks that implies its necessary transmission, in the oral cultures, through the individual mind, so fickle in its obedience to the objectivity of remembrance.

Even in the contemporary cultured man's developed conscience, Vigotsky notices us about the possibility of coexistence of zones and non-conceptual processes near the elaborated thoughts. In the XIV paragraph, of chapter V of Thought and Language, indicate us that "*even the normal adult, able to form and to use concepts, doesn't operate consistently with them in his thought. Furthermore the imaginative processes of primitive thought, the adult constantly strays from the conceptual thought to the concrete thought, to thought in complexes*".

The unconscious according this hypothesis, becomes, the proof of Conscience emotional control, gradual development. Which is a peculiar form of processing the contents. In which is essential the division between necessity and reality reflection. Meanwhile in the Unconscious such a premise is only half completed, and there its particularities. In a hesitant recognition, the object fluctuates among the weight of its entity and that who is intrinsically determined by its relationship toward the desire.

The unconscious, according this conception, will be only a by-product of conscience generation. An effect of the first encounter (unfinished) of language with motives and emotions.

Where the language begins to show but doesn't exerts its power.

In the uncompleted intersection of language with elementary psychic abilities, a space opens up where the unconscious contents dwell. In this space, take their empire the slide and instability phenomenon. The personal sense conserves the thought address, the desire that doesn't find its conscious expression instrument, goes on course of slant: the metaphor reigns with absolute power.

Nevertheless, unconscious is a social construction. Its Contents are, besides idiosyncratic, products of social interaction. Due this, the more frequent contents, are those referred to interpersonal relationships, and the handling of own tendencies. All of them find in family their first matrix.

When producing the emotional scaffolding of children, under the parent's direction, the family constitutes the space for unconscious existence.

When there is more verbalization, rules stability and confidence, more understanding and clarity. On the contrary, when more variability and uncertainty, and rules are based in fear; when family is fewer explicit, more propensity to regulate the behaviour on the base of unconscious processes. ix.

The unavoidable necessity to be loved, the parental love search, hold down the child to the adults rules. Whose finding, in most of times, will be in child's hands.

Due his innate dependence, the man needs of his mother's unconditional care, her love will certificate

that his existence is under the aegis of his adults. First proof of right to life and absence of fear to perish. Later the society will ratify it, or not: when excluding him of working life, is addressing him a murderous message.

During the first years of life, with few tools and the light that our adults give us, we should construct the foundations of our emotional life. Many times at dark, the course strays and the rest of life will not be but intent to compensate errors.

During life many facets modified, but those that have a deeply effect on our personality, if do not modify on time, they will accompany us for always, determining foundational postures in our relationship with world. Adult's task is to offer the appropriate instrumental scaffolding, so that children be able to manage his inner world.

### In arts

"How shall the heart express itself?  
How shall another understand?"  
[F. Tjutchev] x.

The metaphor is the imperial power that holds down the realm of unconscious to its law. The individual point of view finds there its testimony. As the unconscious, the art is the dwelling of slide. Being in right, literature have felt invaded and plagiarized its territory for psychoanalysis.

In consonance, Freud recommended to inhabit the *Universitas Literatum* to all those who wished become unconscious scanners.

Thanks to their capacity to express the emotional world, beyond social restrictions, art is the mean, par excellence, socially used to manifest the inner universe wealth. Just as Borges wrote, the symbols and their variety of values may constitute a scandal for the logic, not so for the dreams that have their singular and secret algebra, and in whose ambiguous territory a thing may be many.

The stories narration, the tales, the legends, have been, and still are, the means that, par excellence, has been historically used to model the youngest emotional world, and not only of them. According to society or historical time, it was good to hinder or to allow the access to conscience of emotions and children's feelings. In any event, no society has neglected the verbal modelled (oral or written) of its offspring inner life. In consonance with our conception, the art will be, in the education environment, a generating tool of instruments for the inner world enrichment, and the children's emotions handling.

The concept of unconscious, even the repression phenomenon, they are not categories out of time and context. On the contrary, each society has chosen which contents consents, and which were outside of communication context, that generates the conscience. Not accidentally in the Victorian, so restrictive (and hypocrite) society in front of sexuality, was where Freud met in front of such clinical patterns, in which, sex was the first pathology producer.

The art has been who revealed the submerged world.

i. "Thought and Language" Chapter VII "Thought and Word."

ii. Ibid § VI

iii. Ibidem § VI

iv. A. Leontiev. : Essay on the development of the psyche. "Chapter II "Appearance of the human Conscience". Also in "Activity, consciousness and personality" Cap. IV Activity and Consciousness."

v. compare you this quotation with the following one of Vigotsky "In inner speech, the phenomenon reaches its peak. A single word is so saturated with sense that many words would be required to explain it in external speech. No wonder that egocentric speech is incomprehensible to others." Thought and Language Chapter VII § V.

vi. "Thought and Language" Chapter V § XI

vii. Milman Parry "The Making of Homeric Verse: The collected Papers of Milman Parry "[his son] Adam Parry comp.

viii. Walter Ong "Orality and Literacy – Technologies of Word"

ix. Beyond these general rules, constitution of language whose discussion would largely exceed the purposes of this work, is the constituent of unconscious. Even more, in all family there are basic assumptions that never arrives as explicit reality

x. Quoted by Vigotsky, about the impossibility of expressing the whole thought and its motive. (Chapter VII § VI)

## Автореферат книги «Фрейд в Выготском. Бессознательное и язык»

**Александр Гонзалес**

Психотерапевт, профессор Национального университета БуэносАйреса,  
судебный психолог в суде по семейным делам г. Ломас де Самора, БуэносАйрес,  
директор Академии Выготского в Аргентине

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Эта книга пытается продемонстрировать, что принципы внутренней речи могут объяснить феномен бессознательного. Основываясь на работах Л.С. Выготского и З. Фрейда, автор предполагает, что в оба явления вовлечены язык, мотивация и эмоциональные переживания. Они являются двумя способами познания. Это позволяет использовать социоисторический подход к изучению бессознательного. Выдвигается также новая гипотеза о функционировании значения.

**Ключевые слова:** Л.С. Выготский, З. Фрейд, А.Н. Леонтьев, внутренняя речь, бессознательное, личностный смысл, значение.