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Teaching and Psychoanalysis: A necessary impossibility.

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However different the Freud biographies may be, they are unanimous on one point: Freud wanted to know. From the outset, we see an ambitious man at work whose goal is to reach a Master position through knowledge, and this colours both his initial theory and practice. The analytic cure is a search for lost knowledge, lost as a result of it becoming unconscious; the aim of the treatment is the re-inscription of this unconscious knowledge into Consciousness. The implicit expectation is that the therapeutic effects will follow automatically. In this respect, Freud reveals himself as an inheritor of the Enlightenment, in his belief that the mere transmission of knowledge is enough to induce change. Nevertheless, beyond this Enlightenment, we meet Socrates with his insistent questions: what is knowledge, and how can it be taught? These are the two questions I want to address.

With respect to the first question, I have to specify that the knowledge concerned is rather particular: it is the knowledge that is searched for by every subject right from the start. Just think about Dora: through her symptoms and dreams, she continually asks what it means to be a woman and a daughter in relation to the desire of a man. This particular illustration receives a general characterization when Freud begins to study childhood and thus discovers the generality of what he calls the infantile sexual researches, i.e., the original quest for knowledge. Just like the hysterical patient, the child wants to know the answer to three related questions.

The first concerns the difference between boys and girls; the second question concerns the origin of babies; the last one is about the father and the mother: what is their relationship? The child, says Freud, proceeds like a scientist and will forge genuinely explanatory theories, that is why Freud calls them infantile sexual *researches* and infantile sexual *theories*. The recurring problem with the knowledge produced is that the answers are never final. Instead of a correct knowledge, the child must content itself with the primary fantasies, combining true, false and lack of knowledge into imaginary constructions. This, of course, will strengthen Freud's conviction that neurosis is either the effect of an incorrect knowledge in these matters, or the effect of a lack of knowledge.

Consequently, the first therapeutic solution proposed by Freud consists of providing patients with what he considers to be the right knowledge, thus putting the therapist in the position of the Master. A perfect illustration can be found in the construction produced for the benefit of little Hans: "Long before he (i.e., Hans) was in the world, I had known that a little Hans would come who would be so fond of his mother that he would be bound to feel afraid of his father because of it...". Hans's reaction is very revealing: "Does the Professor talk to God, Hans asked his father on the way home, as he can tell all that beforehand?". This little interaction is very revealing: it shows the analyst in the position of possessing, teaching and guaranteeing the correctness of a knowledge. Again, the Dora case study demonstrates extensive clinical applicability. Freud assumes the role of the master who knows in matters of desire and jouissance, and who, by way of treatment, teaches this knowledge to the patient; the patient must accept these insights; and so

on. And again, the generalization of this conception can be found in his ideas on sexual enlightenment. In 1907 he writes enthusiastically on the subject: the adult may not withhold the necessary knowledge, on the contrary, he has to inform children correctly, in order that their incorrect sexual theories may become superfluous. For Freud, it is obvious that a general enlightenment will result in a drastic drop in the numbers of neurotic adults.

This generalization has a very strong impact on the treatment: the cure is transformed into didactics, the didactics become a cure. A perfect illustration of this confusion can be found in the famous *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, the *Vorlesungen*, - that is, literally, "What is read in front of the pupils". Both the treatment and the didactics amount to what I want to consider as a "didactical analysis of resistance". At that time, Freud became a real Master in discerning the resistances of his pupils/patients, even before they knew them themselves. Time and again, he formulates the critique of his pupils/patients himself – much better than they ever could have done – and each time he takes the edge off the argument. Such a strategy can only result in two possible reactions: either one is transformed from a patient into a pupil who says yes and absorbs everything, or one reacts as Dora did, by slamming the door and leaving. From a historical point of view, this will give birth to the analysis of the resistance, i.e. the struggle to convince the patient. If she or he does not want to accept the presented knowledge, that is a matter of resistance.

From a psychoanalytic point of view, both reactions represent a failure: the group that remains is transformed into obedient followers who absorb knowledge; the individuals who leave, remain ignorant. Both of them are identical in that sense that neither of them surpasses the knowledge of the Other. It does not take Freud long to recognize this common point of failure. Indeed, whether the patient gives a categorical 'yes' or 'no' to an interpretation, both answers are suspect and amount to the same thing: the patient has not accepted the interpretation. Both of them are an effect of something different, something that will become more and more important: the transference relationship by which the analyst is ascribed or refused the position of the master.

Based on this experience, Freud will change his course drastically: knowledge must not be provided by the analyst, on the contrary, it is the patient who has to produce knowledge, and the position of the teaching Master becomes forbidden for the analyst during the course of the treatment. Instead of teaching, the analyst has to be taught. Instead of the analyst's ideas, those of the patient fill the scene. The patient is the one who knows, only he doesn't know himself that he knows. Knowledge coming from an external source, be it a teacher or a book, is merely an inhibiting factor. This is clearly expressed in Freud's technical advice from this period: ideally the patient should not read analytic works, the analyst should restrain from giving precocious information and interpretation, etc. In this respect, the distance separating the Dora case study from the Rat Man analysis is tremendous. In the latter case study, he confirms explicitly the futility of therapeutic explanations. In matters of clinical practice, all attention goes to the creation of a situation in, and by which, the patient can produce as many associations as possible.

This change in direction -- knowledge located in the analysand, not in the analyst -- is not a final one. A new stumbling block arises with this reversal. Freud experienced this when he studied the infantile sexual theories, which taught him the difference between knowledge and something beyond knowledge, something that belongs to

another register, a register other than the Symbolic Order. It is at this point that every form of enlightenment falls short. The same goes for the treatment: there is something that cannot be put into words, something for which words are lacking; originally he considered this to be the traumatic experience, but later on he calls it the "mycelium", the "nucleus of our being", the "originally repressed".

The difficulty that Freud faces here will take on more and more the shape of an **impossibility**. In the first half of his analytic career, he was more or less convinced of the fact that the "last word", the final knowledge, could be found, provided the treatment went far enough; in a later stage, he has to conclude that verbalisation is only possible up to a certain point. Beyond that, there lies another order, the order of the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, meaning beyond the representations ("Vorstellungen"). Knowledge as it appears in the signifier, is not final, there is a beyond. With Lacan, we meet here the dimension of the truth, and in particular a typical feature of the truth: it can only be half said, "le mi-dire de la vérité".

Why do we call it "truth", and what is the difference with knowledge? One could answer that truth always concerns desire and jouissance, but the same goes for the Freudian knowledge from the very beginning. The essential characteristic of truth is that it confronts us with the ultimate point where knowledge about desire and jouissance can no longer be put into words. Knowledge itself always stays within the realm of the signifier, truth starts within this realm but evokes a dimension beyond it, This ultimate dimension of desire and jouissance is the driving part of it -- and driving comes from drive. This dimension beyond the signifier is the Lacanian Real, or, if you look at it from the perspective of the subject, the lost 'object a' that is forever lacking for the speaking subject, causing his ever shifting desire.

With this, Freud stumbles upon a second impossibility. The first one concerned the fact that it is impossible *for the analyst* to assume the knowledge-producing and knowledge-guaranteeing Master position. The second one concerns something that applies *to every speaking subject*, namely, the impossibility of saying everything and of producing the final knowledge.

The first impossibility finds its best formulation in 1933, when Freud talked about the three impossible professions: mastering, educating, analysing. It is impossible for any person to impersonate the truth for another person, which is precisely what is required by those three professions. Freud knew very well what he was talking about, as he himself had even tried to combine them: in his early period, therapy came down to teaching from a Master position.

The second impossibility is described in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. This description faces a fundamental difficulty, as it concerns something that lies beyond the dimension of the signifier, and thus beyond normal knowledge. Something keeps insisting beyond words, even beyond any form of representation. This something has to do with the drive, albeit with that part of the drive that lies beyond the pleasure principle and that aims at another finality. Freud's first elaborations are situated both in the field of the traumatic neuroses and in children's games, thus illustrating the general character of this "beyond".

What does not become clear with Freud, is the link between these two impossibilities. They are linked in the sense that each of them tries to answer the other: assuming the Master position functions as a guarantee for the answer that covers the lack in the chain of signifiers, and, vice versa, covering the lack in the Symbolic corroborates

the position of the master. Lacan's theory of the four discourses makes it possible to chart those two impossibilities with their respective interdependence. Moreover, this theory demonstrates the structurally determined interactions between them, through the four different discourses (see scheme).

Each discourse consists of the same formal structure. There are four positions: it starts with an *agent* driven by a *truth* to speak to *another* with as a result a *product*. These positions contain two structural disjunctions: it is *impossible* for the agent to transmit his message completely to this other; this impossibility is founded on an underlying incapability: each discourse is *incapable* of producing something that would embrace its very starting-point, that is: the truth. Both the impossibility and incapability are the effect of the radical heteronomy of the truth: part of it lies beyond the signifier and belongs to the realm of the *jouissance*.

The four positions of this formal structure can be occupied by four different terms (see scheme), by which the particularity of each concrete discourse is determined. This theory enables Lacan to formalize Freud's three impossible professions as three different discourses, each of them with a particular appearance of the impossibility. The impossible "regieren" is the discourse of the master; the impossible "edukieren" the university discourse; the impossible "analysieren" the analytic discourse. He even adds a fourth one: the impossible desire installs the discourse of the hysteric. These four discourses are closely related in the sense that there is a structurally determined shift from one to the other, as the impossibility of one discourse results in/is answered by the impossibility of the next discourse.

The particular advantage of this theory for our subject -- knowledge and its transmission through psychoanalysis versus the transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge -- is that it focuses on the transference with respect to the relationship between knowledge (a term) and truth (a position). Indeed, every discourse represents a social bond that shifts towards another social bond when it fails, that is: it shifts to another discourse with another relationship to knowledge and truth. The application of this discourse theory will permit us **to understand the relationship between teaching and analysis as a necessary one between two impossibilities.**

The relationship between analyst and patient determines our practice in a twofold way. First of all, the relationship must be made productive so that the patient produces associations; secondly, the relationship itself must be worked on. The first aspect induces knowledge, the second one concerns truth.

The productivity of the transference relationship consists in the fact that the patient ascribes the analyst the position of the-one-who-knows, and that explains why the patient produces his associations for this Other who-is-supposed-to-know. At this stage, analysis can be understood in terms of a *Master discourse*. Indeed, from the point of view of the patient, the analyst is situated at the place of the agent as a master figure, an S_1 , and that is why the patient at the place of the other produces signifiers S_2 , and so, produces knowledge: $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$

This first stage during an analysis results in a considerable growth in knowledge. That is why Lacan considered psychoanalysis an effective remedy against ignorance.

Inevitably, that is, structurally, the next step in this discourse is the production of

“object a”, something that lies beyond the knowledge that can be expressed in signifiers:

$$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$$

$$\overline{S}/ // \overline{a}$$

This second stage implies the limit of the Master discourse, which means that we are faced with two possibilities: either there is a regression to the previous discourse, or a progression to the following discourse.

The regression brings us to the *University discourse*, where knowledge as such is staged as the agent.

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{S/}$$

This regression was the choice made by Freud for a very long time, because he hoped that knowledge as such would be sufficient to bridge the gap between the subject and its object of desire. The result is exactly the opposite, because the product of the university discourse is the divided subject: $S_2 \rightarrow a \rightarrow S/$. The conclusion is quite clear: producing an ever increasing mass of knowledge, intensifies the loss of “object a” for the pupil and leaves him all the more divided. To put it bluntly: the more you know, the more you will hesitate.

The path of progression, on the other hand, brings us to the paradoxes of the *Analytic discourse*. There we find knowledge, that is the body of signifiers, at the position of the truth. Lacan expresses it as follows: "What one expects from an analyst is that he makes his knowledge function in terms of truth". This is impossible, and thus he continues: "That is why he restricts himself to halfspeaking".

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{S/}{S_1}$$

This S_2 is the body of signifiers, produced by the patient in analysis, during its logically first stage. Indeed, the beginning of treatment does not consist in an analytic discourse, but makes it possible, because this first stage obliges the patient to produce an ever increasing body of knowledge. With the analytic discourse, this body of signifiers leads inevitably to what lies beyond it, “object a”, and turns it into the agent of this discourse, which causes the division of the subject and his desire. As a product of this discourse, the subject will be confronted with a master signifier S_1 of his own making.

This theory on the four discourses makes it possible to discuss the relationship between analysis and teaching in a structural way, by focusing on the elements of transference, knowledge and truth. The crucial difference lies in the different goals, which I would like to delineate as follows: **separation** for psychoanalysis, **alienation** for teaching. In terms of discourse, these goals imply that teaching aims at the transmission of knowledge, while analysis focuses on the co-optation of truth as the cause operating beyond knowledge.

First of all, teaching. Education always amounts to the process of passing signifiers, and thus knowledge, from the teacher to the pupil. This passing is only effective on condition that there is a positive transference: one learns where one loves. This can be understood perfectly in Freudian terms: the subject identifies itself with the signifiers of the Other, that is, with the knowledge offered by this Other, on condition of a positive transference with this Other. From a Lacanian point of view, this identification is always an alienation: taking in signifiers coming from the Other turns the subject ontologically into a stranger for itself. This alienation implies both gain and loss. Of course, there is a gain in knowledge, but the process goes even further than that. Depending on the number of signifiers taken in by the subject, its external reality grows as well, because this reality is precisely determined by the Symbolic Order. On the other hand, we have a loss, which is structurally determined and concerns firstly the Real, more particularly the loss-of-being, "le manque-à-être", and secondly the Symbolic, more particularly the loss of choice: one's own desire is always alienated to the desire of the Other.

These effects apply to the pupils for whom teaching inevitably results in an effect of unification and group formation in which each particular subject disappears. For the teacher, the act of teaching -- producing signifiers -- results inevitably in a confrontation with the limits of his knowledge, and thus with that part of the truth that lies beyond verbalization. This is the structural reason why teaching can be considered an impossible profession.

Next, analysis. Here, the process moves in the opposite direction, albeit also under transference: it is the analysand who produces signifiers and thus knowledge for the analyst who sits at the receiving end. This time, he is the one who has to be taught, with the result that the alienation is situated on his side, entailing the risk that he identifies himself with the knowledge that is produced for him and even ascribed to him. In contrast, on the part of the patient, the possibility of bypassing the alienation is created. Indeed, the more the analysand keeps producing signifiers for the analyst in the position of the one who knows, all the more this analysand will be confronted with the alienating character of these signifiers with respect to 'his' identity as a subject. To quote Lacan in this respect: "For in this labour which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken from him *by another*". In this sense, the analytic work is closely related to the work of mourning, as it results in a working through of our alienated identity. This work confronts the subject with the primordial lack that lies at the heart of the Symbolic. This is the same lack where the infantile search for knowledge came to a standstill for the same reasons: the symbolic sexual identity, the function of the father, the sexual rapport. The Symbolic can never embrace these aspects of the Real; as a lack, it confronts the subject with a void, leaving him with two possibilities.

In the first option, the analysand may recoil at this confrontation, and return to the answer produced and guaranteed by the master; as a result, he remains within the alienation and stays subjected to the desire of the Other and his knowledge: he remains a pupil. Consequently, he enters the group and shares the group's knowledge. To put it in the linguistic terminology of F. de Saussure: he shares the conventions of the signifiers used by that group to cover the Real.

In the second option, the analysand can engage in a confrontation with the truth, that is, with the fundamental lack in the Other. As a result, he will reduce *the*

answer of the Master to *an* answer, by which the possibility of separation is opened. Beyond the dimension of knowledge, the subject has co-opted the truth: there is no guaranteeing Other. Consequently, the next step can only be indicated, but never predicted, let alone prescribed. From this point onwards, creativity is possible and the determinism of the alienation is replaced by the semi-determinism of the separation. Compared to the process of teaching, which resulted in the homogenization of the pupils into a group (and left the teacher divided), analysis ends with the production of the radical difference between the analysands (and risks leaving the analyst in alienation). It is no coincidence that Lacan discusses this in his seminar on ethics: the choices one has to make beyond this point are arbitrary ones (there is no guarantee).

Because of the structural gap between the symbolic and the real, separation cannot be taught, but teaching is the necessary precondition for it. The subject needs a sufficient amount of supporting signifiers and the accompanying alienation and knowledge, before he can afford the point of lack of support. Once that point is reached, every signifier and knowledge fails.

To conclude: transference can be used in a twofold way, either to pass signifiers on or to make someone produce them. In both cases, producing signifiers, whether in the position of teacher or of analysand, confronts the subject inevitably with the point of lack, and opens the possibility of an analytic process. In the first case, teaching is the main goal, it gives rise to alienation and transmission of knowledge, resulting in group formation around shared signifiers, i.e., a "doxa". For the Master, however, it provokes a confrontation with the lack in the Symbolic order and obliges him to question his own position as a divided subject towards this lack. In the second case, analysis becomes the aim, it gives rise to separation and co-optation of the truth, confronting the analysand with his own subjectivity, his other-ness. For the analyst however, it opens the trap of an identification with the Master position, from which he must stay away. The two processes are narrowly related. The discourse of the master instills knowledge, but produces the 'object a' in such a way that it cannot be related to the divided subject. The analytic discourse starts beyond this knowledge, with this 'object a' in the position of the agent in a causal relationship to the divided subject, who produces an S_1 of his own.

The internal antinomy between those two processes finds its clearest expression in what are called the psychoanalytic "schools" and their ever-present difficulty: how is it possible to form a group with people who have reached the pinnacle of their other-ness?