

Sentinel

Closing Remarks

Clinical Study Days 3, in Omaha, Nebraska, June 8, 2008

ON INTERPRETATION

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“Interpretation in Psychoanalysis” will be the subject for the fourth annual Clinical Study Days, to be held in 2009, in New York, under the coordination of Maria Cristina Aguirre and the W.A.P. Ad Hoc Committee for the U. S.

The subject for Clinical Study Days number four (CSD4) will be Interpretation. This topic is also the topic for next Congress of the W.A.P., to be held in Paris, in 2010, with the title “Semblants and Sinthomes”.

This title refers to two aspects of the clinic of today and is grounded in the last teachings of Lacan. It refers to the clinic of the Real, a moment in Lacan’s teachings where for him there is not a discourse that is not a “semblant”. It affects, of course, the Analytic Discourse as well.

The second aspect of the clinic of today is the Sinthome, which indicates a new relationship between Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. These three registers can be woven together in unique ways, wherein what becomes important is the way in which each speaking being sustains himself in his relation to life.

From this perspective, the subject of interpretation must be understood as the passage from a clinic of the Other to a clinic of the Real. It necessarily implies many new questions: What is the place of the analyst? Is it still the place of the Subject Supposed to Know, which is more likely to bring about the cause of desire?. Or, is it the place of the “semblant” of the object, more linked to an object of jouissance?. Can we say that we still work with language and words?. Is

“interpretation” the same as saying the “act of the analyst”? Do we really interpret anything?. What is the new relationship of “interpretation” to the notions of repression, resistance, or defense?

Throughout his teachings, Lacan used different types of interpretation, depending to which dimension he wanted to reach. He used the “punctuation” as a way for the analyst to underline a word or a sentence, focusing the attention of the analysand on it. What will be the opposite of the “cut”, a stopping of signification that produces an impediment of the immediate S2 effect. It can also be done through the “equivocal” and the “enigma”, as different ways of stopping meaning, or, creating new meanings. There is also the “quotation”, which the analyst takes directly from the discourse of the Other in the words of the analysand. Even though these are the more frequently mentioned, there is not an established limitation of the analyst’s possible interventions, with the previous consideration of the effects he is looking for.

In L’Etourdit, Lacan differentiates the “saying”, from the “said”, establishing that the analyst’s interpretation is usually not a “said”, but a “saying”, which has solidarity with the linguistic notions of statement and enunciation, the “saying” (or to say) at the level of the enunciation, as the possible deciphering of the truth, the repressed truth, the covered truth, and the statement being at the level of the signified, the “said”. It is a way to establish that the analyst’s intervention does not have a specific meaning. Rather, the analyst only situates something that is already there in the discourse of the analysand. The analyst’s intervention adds or subtracts meaning using the elements of the analysand’s discourse.

In Freud’s article *Constructions in psychoanalysis*, he says that the task of a construction is to produce a “conviction (or effect) of truth” which has the same effect as recovering a memory. Patients did not want to know about the truth of the unconscious, so, they resisted, and the analyst’s interventions went in the direction of revealing this truth.

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There are other examples of interpretations in Freud's works, there is one in the case of the "Rat man" when Freud says to the patient that his father "forbid him to choose the woman he loves". This interpretation, a modality of construction, as it never actually happened, nonetheless produced a "conviction (or effect) of truth" that provoked a change of the subject's position on the matter involved. Lacan calls this intervention an "inexact but truthful" interpretation, where truth is clearly differentiated from reality. It is truth at the symbolic level, where a subjective "psychic reality" is present.

The developments in relation to interpretation, in Freud and Lacan, had to do with different ways to work with resistance, which Lacan situated at the level of the id and the superego, and involved working with a resistance that is present in the discourse (as Freud explains in his example of his Signorelli's episode). Towards this objective, Lacan developed the notion of an unconscious "structured as a language", as an operational tool, able to register the "effects of truth".

J.A. Miller in his March 19, 2008 course entitled: "The Interpretation of Psychoanalysis" describes it as follows:

"Lacan's critique of the theory of the analysis of the resistances was accompanied by his work on language and linguistics, and based on the power of words and its efficacy toward the drives. His notion of the subject of the unconscious situates a point where a docility to interpretation occurs, as the notion of subject is precisely a variable to which an interpretation gives its value, (a new value is added, or substituted, each time there is new reading of the history) . In this way, Lacan erases the notion of the ego and situates the notion of the subject in a primary place. It implies the primacy of the Symbolic Order.

The way this primacy proved to be useful in analysis, was through the creation of a "psychoanalytical knowledge", ("savoir"), a specific form of knowledge created

in the analytic experience. The place of the Subject Supposed to Know made the analyst responsible for the production of this new knowledge through the operation of the Tuche, as opposed to the Automaton, which is the repetition of the history, the same old history, full of certainties, therefore, closed to any new knowledge.

By way of the different types of interpretations and interventions, the Tuche is the way to make the real to emerge, throughout the symbolic work, bringing about new readings of the past and having a direct effect in the drive's repetition.

Through this operation, the interventions of the Subject Supposed to Know produce effects over the jouissance while going across the signifiers linked to the Fundamental Fantasy. That is, the way the analysand maintains his defense, and, within it, his jouissance.

With time, Lacan realized that even though he worked with the "sayings", which provided new meanings to the subject's convictions, the "crossing over" the Fundamental Fantasy had a result that wasn't more than a story made of language; a reinterpretation of the old history, but always a story that gave the symbolic a place of reality as Realitat (Psychic Reality). For the Lacan of the 1970s, already confronted with a new form of the Real, the Wirtlichkeit, meaningless and raw, Realitat had to be called a "lying truth".

In Seminar XX, Lacan clearly states that language is nothing but an "elucubration of knowledge" in relation with what he calls *lalangue*, signifiers out of the laws of language, out of the signifier's chain and the symbolic, which have complicated effects over the body. It was the moment when he dropped the notion of "resistance" to use the old Freudian word of "defense" instead, situating the intervention of the analyst more as an annoyance, a bothersome intervention over the defense, whose effect is not a deciphering of the truth but more a confrontation with the Real itself.

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It is also the moment he stops using the notion of subject, and instead uses the term “speaking being”, which, more than language, involves the body and the jouissance of the body. Here, he also substitutes the word signifier with the word “letter”, which is a combination of signifier and object, related not to language anymore, but to *lalangue*. All this is out of the field of the Subject Supposed to Know.

Thus, we have to accept that interpretation works in the analytical experience in more than one register. There is the interpretation of the unconscious itself as a machine of interpretation, the Symbolic unconscious, where there is always a new possible meaning left and where the analyst’s interventions are directed to produce new subjective positions. But there is also the field of the Real – Lacan mentioned a Real unconscious at least once- where the speaking being is left alone with the repetition of his autistic jouissance.

When we are at this dimension, even if words are used, the interventions of the analyst cannot come anymore from the field of language, or, from the Discourse of the Other. The word “interpretation” loses its usual context and instead we should talk of “the act of the analyst”, which doesn’t come from the symbolic. The symbolic is always on the side of the thinking being whereas the Real is on the side of the act, and the act isn’t the product of an elaboration of thoughts, or an elaboration in the level of the signifiers. That is why the only thing in the Analytic Discourse that isn’t a “semblant” is the act of the analyst.

In seminar XXIII, *The Symptom*, Lacan says: “The hypothesis of the unconscious is only sustainable if we suppose the Name of the Father, who is certainly God. That is why, if psychoanalysis prospers, it proves that it is possible to do without the father, on the condition of using it”.

Lacan also makes a distinction between the “elucubration of the unconscious” and the “reality of the unconscious” in the sense of the consistency of the body

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and the Real of the symbolic, *lalangue*, as elements of this “reality of the unconscious”.

That is why the new clinic he proposes has to do with Joyce’s solution, which gave him the orientation of a new perspective not based on truth, meaning, or deciphering, not even in transference, but rather where the *Sinthome* is the way to name the perspective of a cure that deals with unchained signifiers, holes of knowledge and erogenous body zones.

This Lacanian 360 degree turning point at the end of his teachings requires a new place of the analyst that allows the presence of the symptomatic *jouissance* in analysis in a way to make possible for the speaking being to use it, instead of being used by it. The complex structure of the analytic device is now the place where a symptom can be transformed in a *sinthome*, where the analyst itself is to be used as one of the objects of the world, may be as a new gadget, for the analysand to get to learn “how to do with it”, “how to use” this object of *jouissance*, out of the symptomatic repetition.

Nevertheless, it will be too extreme to say that this very last teaching completely denies the former uses of interpretation. Rather, it makes us redefine them in order not to be hypnotized by the production of meaning. Miller alerts us to take carefully this “devaluation of knowledge”, as it is necessary to well understand its scope.

Even though we validate the “therapeutic effects” in analysis, which many times can be reached without a necessary gain in knowledge, it is something that pure psychoanalysis lends to applied psychoanalysis, but for the ones who are going to occupy the place of the analyst, it is necessary to be able to deeply experience and acknowledge the “lying truth” that sustains their own Fundamental Fantasy, to be able to occupy a place that should be empty of it. To be aware of the value of the *semblant* teaches us to not believe in words as a representation of the

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truth, and, at the same time, to learn how to use them as a tool to point out the horizon of the impossible.

In “The Moment of Conclusion,” one of his last seminars, Lacan asks the following:

“Is it necessary to be inspired by something on the order of poetry to make an intervention as a psychoanalyst?”

We have one year up until the next CSD to figure out some of the possible answers to this question.

Thank you.

