

Psychoanalysis and transmission of the knowledge

Paolo Lollo

University discourse and a desiring subject

The university discourse teaches us that knowledge is passed on integrally. The master directs knowledge to the disciple who is perceived as an empty receptacle that can be filled in, in its entirety.

The scientific discourse, foreshadowed by the Greeks and theorized by Galileo, Newton and Descartes, tries to approach the real by mathematization, statistization and literalization of the nature's phenomena. Galileo opens the book of Nature, written „in the language of mathematics“, and he deciphers it. Through learning of that language, man is able to retrieve the secrets of nature that obey the eternal and universal laws. It is therefore up to the science to discover these laws in order to master, thanks to the knowledge, the powers of the nature.

The scientific discourse devotes itself to the task of transmitting knowledge that could be measured and expressed in mathematical terms. With that being the subject, the scientific discourse also evaluates and plays the role of a policeman of the transmission. As soon as the content has been determined and is measurable, the endeavor is then to evaluate how much of it all was transferred from the master to the student. The operation of transmission is considered successful or even perfect if the transmission is total, without any remains. But how can we measure, evaluate the transmission of knowledge? For that, we need a precise measurement unit: some sort of a jar, capable of transferring the complete content of a discernible knowledge from one container to another.

For psychoanalysis that sees the matter of knowledge as a mental state and thus, protean, the instrument of measure is inevitably imprecise and produces loss that is not only necessary but also useful to the operation of transfer, as we will see later. An instrument similar to a fishnet with big stitches would be sufficient for the purpose of measuring as well as transferring any knowledge. The bigger are the stitches of the measurement net, the bigger will be the loss during the evaluation. However, it does not mean that there was not an optimal transfer of knowledge.

The knowledge is not transferred in an integral way and certainly never in the same way because its form and its quality are modified during the transfer and they are variable and undetermined.

For Lacan, the knowledge is transmittable due to the fact that a big part of it remains hidden, concealed. That would explain his rhetoric that aims to break, split up the discourse with the help of play on ludicrous words of digressions, discontinuations but also interjections, onomatopoeias, slippery vocalizations, silences and all that in order to transmit to the attentive public knowledge that dazzles and is passed around. With those breaks in the discourse, Lacan couples the continuum of a predetermined transmission where the signifier and the signified are glued and without any possibility of separation or differentiation. This separation can only be done by an outbreak of the subject that sings and dances, a desiring subject (desiderant), capable of introducing the human and the unforeseeable in the discourse.

The scientific argument holds itself up by exclusion of the desiring subject and aims for a total symbolization of the Real (the grand theory of unification, for example). But it is true that the discourse directs the subject as an external observer does the nature's object, the physis, and therefore, it can be understood that a neutral attitude in the face of the real may be at least conceivable. What seems to me problematic is to subdue the university discourse to

the scientific discourse: a neutral university discourse that economizes on the desiring subject, human quid and its singularity.

When a professor addresses a student in order to convey knowledge to him, he sparks off a dynamic between two subjects; as such it cannot be distanced from the human domain which is based on singularity. If in physics, the point of view of the observer changes the observed object, so it is in the social sciences discourse, the point of view of the professor not only shapes and transforms the disciple, but also it may be in turn transformed by a true receiver who is never passive. As such, the knowledge object, the content transferred during the teaching is transformed during that back and forth journey.

Humanist knowledge and analytical act

The psychoanalysis transmits the humanist knowledge whose ethics must take into account human specificity: the singularity, the fact that we come to the world, we stay there and we die, one by one. This specificity is linked at the same time to the human universal: the freedom to become. Every man and every woman are pushed to go to their limits of that freedom in order to become actors, creators of their own destiny. In every analyzed being, psychoanalysis attempts to activate the singular creative force, to liberate the impulse of life in such a way that she becomes capable of deactivating the mortifying force of repeating the same. By rearticulating the impulse of life and the impulse of death and by connecting them to the creative forces, the analytical work does not only try to dislodge the symptom, but to transform it as well.

The word human refers to humus and humid, and thus, to earth which thanks to its qualities is able to move the living, reproduce it, create it. It is to this singular humus that psychoanalysis and the transmission of knowledge refers to. There is neither transmission nor transformation of reality unless there is a work of creation at the same time as repetition and acquisition of the knowledge.

The pragmatical knowledge of the psychoanalysis and psychotherapy is limited to curing by moving the symptom. Its instrument is training based on repetition of the same. The impulse of death is a repetition, similar to a broken disc that turns idly. A repetition that is not associated to any action of creation or production is destined to reproduce the symptoms. Psychology moves one symptom from one place to another, it masks it and it hides it under a carpet. The analytical work must therefore, not only transfer but also transform the symptoms. In the same way, the discourse of the psychoanalysis does not only seek to transmit the knowledge but to transform it at the same time, too.

Ambition of the analytical act is to trigger a dynamic that ties repetition and creation with the goal of not only displacing the symptom but also of transforming it to a source for which part of energy that served for repetition, displacement and repression is now used for the creation of artistic objects through sublimation as well as for auto-creation and auto-regeneration. The energy that we used for maintaining the symptom, for repeating it, can be used to enable the creative displacement that we could call desire, de-siderio, de-siddus, which is energy used to distance ourselves from the star (sidus) that we keep in the repetitive orbit. To change the orbit or even the star is the goal of the analytical action and every transmission of knowledge.

Transmission of psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis reads nature as a real in movement that escapes categorization and measurements of the surveyors. The physis, the real, is for Lacan “what doesn't cease not to inscribe itself”. It refuses conceptualization of the human knowledge. This refusal does not mean that the physis is not active in symbology. It means that we must do with that absent presence that cannot fully and openly be integrated into our knowledge. For that reason, transmission of analytical knowledge is a difficult undertaking that cannot be conducted at university. For the same reason, transmitting knowledge to anyone is difficult. Freud did not wish that the psychoanalytical education could be done at university, because it would only have been transmitted in „a dogmatic form, through theoretical courses... without the possibility of carrying out practical experiences and demonstrations“. On the other hand, Freud wished that all students could come across psychoanalysis during the course of their university education as it could have opened their horizons in a number of disciplines. Nevertheless, according to Freud, only literature can give students of psychoanalysis what the university is unable to give. It is striking to see Freud oppose the literature at university in such terms. Literature is able to transmit what the university is unable to.

Modalities of transmission of the knowledge

There are four segments of knowledge that are at issue during transmission;

1. Knowledge that is efficiently transferred and can be measured

Lacan called that knowledge “what ceases not to inscribe itself”. In other words, knowledge that can be transferred through theory which is able to translate a part of the real, to the language of different specialties (mathematics, physics, philosophy, etc.). What does cease not to inscribe itself is a small part of the real that finds a form of symbolic representation. But this part, which is measurable, mathematisable, translatable to language is not the entire knowledge that is at issue during a transmission. Moreover, this small part of knowledge that passes could not even be transmitted without the other modalities of transmission being at work, too.

2. Knowledge that has been transferred, but which could not be measured

“*What doesn't cease not to inscribe itself*” Knowledge that is in the real, that can suddenly appear ex-nihilo (from a symbolically real hole), that is pulsatile and that can be transferred. We do not know how much of that knowledge in the real has actually been passed through teaching because it is not measurable. We may, however, believe that this knowledge has a verifiable existence. This is precisely what allows the process of transfer, without which there would not be any teaching. This knowledge in the real, that does not leave any trace and of which we, thus, do not have any portrayal, is the condition for the transmission of the knowledge because it enables the process. It possesses an intensity that becomes a quality as we have ascertained that some students learn quickly and well in a singular way while others are unable to do so in the same way. This knowledge is a mystery for us. It remains to a great extent inaccessible; it is a condition of the transfer, it is verifiable through the fact that a measurable knowledge has been passed on well. It is the source of the quality of that passage, of the creation of the new signifiers, therefore, of the quality of education.

3. *Knowledge that could not be transferred; it is lost, it has not arrived at the destination – the student*

“*What ceases to not inscribe itself*” This concerns a repressed or a barred real knowledge that blocks the system of learning and transfer. Something from the real can no longer be inscribed, or else, something from the real of the transmission, of the student becomes deadlocked in the impossibility of being transferred, of making a pen vibrate on the body of a paper and a letter. It is about the *trou-matisme*, about an empty product, not astonishment (*Verblüffung*), cessation of a desire. This cessation can of course be in the form of a repetition like that of a broken disc that turns idly. Repetition that becomes an impulse of death is not associated with a creative action. Astonishment, that puts a stop to the pulsatile character of the physis, is no longer the appearance of the real, the symbolic writing bridged by the real. Nevertheless, this cessation erases everything, even the text relative to the superego and thus, can paradoxically create the conditions for a possibility of a new enthusiasm that would push for new writing. Astonishment is an experience of a dazzling opening to the real that provokes the cessation and that could become the condition of a possible hindsight that would enable new symbolic writing.

It is in Lacan’s seminars, on 8th February 1977 and 5th May 1979, to which I refer, that Alain Didier-Weill has tried to ask three questions on the psychoanalysis and respond to them: What makes the experience of astonishment possible? And how can the analyzer break the barrier of denial in order to encounter the real? And how can from the experience of astonishment appear suddenly a new signifier? For Alain Didier-Weill, there were three logical stages which led the analyzer to the production of a new signifier: 1. Passing by of the denial that prevents the subject from encountering the real; 2. Experience of astonishment; 3. Reaction and response of the analyzer by creating a new signifier. The astonishing signifier emerges *ex nihilo* from the real and original hole which clearly differs from the symbolic hole, but which in my opinion anticipated it and created it.¹

4. *Knowledge that could not be transmitted but one that rises from nothing, produced by the pupil, by his creative impulse*

“*What doesn't cease not to inscribe itself*” This concerns a pulsatile knowledge that gives its all to the passage of the real in the symbology. It rises up from the real hole in the chain of unconscious signifiers that Freud would call the navel moment of a dream. The place of appearance, birth and creation.

This knowledge was able to rise up due to the fact that something had been lost in the transfer by leaving a space („*What ceases not to inscribe itself*”); it is a creative gap that allows to get out of the *trou-matisme* and from astonishment, thus, enabling the pupil (as well as the analyzer) to produce knowledge that was not called for in the beginning; knowledge which is production and thus, singular activity and which is supposed to produce new signifiers.

As such, the entire transmission process can be accomplished. As each transmission is singular, it cannot thus, refer to the system of universal evaluation. The problem is that the mental real can never be precisely measured nor quantified. We could measure its external signs but we could not transmit something that is by its nature and experience, unequivocal and integral... The learning of animals and humans who cannot speak remains mechanical, superficial and external. In the human knowledge, the unconscious is at work, a knowledge

¹ Alain Didier-Weill, „Un mystère plus lointain que l’inconscient“, Aubier, Paris, 2010, pp. 163-181.

that operates intimately, in the in-timate. The inner space where the singular time allows a new type of learning which moves and questions the subject which learns and invites him to create his own knowledge.

Knowledge and “Transcreation²”

Learning to learn is a singular experience that everyone creates in a way that is his own, but it can be brought about by transmission that suggests and respects that part of freedom of the receiver.

To transmit knowledge means, first of all, to teach how to receive what is being given to us and to produce what we cannot directly receive and what we must create in ourselves ex novo. To transmit knowledge means, therefore, to create conditions so that the knowledge can be received and at the same time produced. There is an un-transmittable part of transmission that cannot be transferred, simply because it is not where one believes it to be and perhaps, neither is it what one believes it to be. This part is not transferable because it does not yet exist in a form that could be welcomed or received. I would call it “transcreation”- this part that can only be transferred and received, once it has been created.

Every knowledge is always singular because it is produced, to a large extent, by those who receive it, even in the case of a scientific knowledge as it is in symbiosis with subject that produces it and supports it at the same time.

To transmit knowledge means, therefore, to transmit the transmittable but also to make sure that what is not transmittable can reproduce itself. The problem is thus not only to transmit, to pass on the knowledge but also how to receive it. The transmission takes place only as long as there is someone listening to another. This listening is a receiving that fulfills the transmission only after a new statement has begun (new transmission). This statement sets out two movements: reception and transmission which reunites in the transfer, repetition and creation.

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² Neologism that condenses the verb to transfer and the noun creation in order to signify a transfer of knowledge that takes place only with the production ex novo of the knowledge.