

The Place and Contribution of Writing in Clinical Psychoanalysis

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According to some Frenchmen, there is an "heterotopie" of Chinese thought that is totally foreign to the Greco-Roman tradition of thought. If an outside exists, I personally have found that it links up with an inside, in part unknown, of psychoanalysis. Going to China is a way of meeting up with that part of ourselves which is unknown.

Freud and Lacan on Chinese

Freud spoke little about China, concerning himself more with that other great civilization of writing, Ancient Egypt. His interest in China stems from his interest in hieroglyphics. He compared them to dreams, themselves another form of writing. He also admitted having tried unsuccessfully to understand Chinese script. He did however find certain similarities between dream symbols and Chinese script, mainly in that the elements of both can be understood only when placed in their proper context. To consider an element in isolation leads only to vagueness and imprecision. Freud, though, considered the multivocality of dreams even more difficult to interpret than Chinese written characters.

Lacan took lessons in Chinese after becoming a psychoanalyst. To judge from references made in his seminars, this was probably around 1955, with Paul Demieville, a distinguished French Sinologist. He resumed his study in 1970, with his friend François Cheng, working mainly on texts such as Lao-tsu's Daodejing [The Book of the Way and Its Power], the Mencius, and the artist Shitao's Huayu Lu [Comments on Painting]. Cheng relates that Lacan showed particular interest in personal pronouns and time expressions in Chinese.

Lacan, unlike Freud, did not stop at the multivocality of Chinese characters. He went further to find, particularly in the case of calligraphy, an exemplary source of reflection on the specific function of writing, as distinct from speaking. We will have a look at both of these aspects.

Regarding the ambiguity inherent in Chinese characters, Lacan found so much correspondence with what he termed the signifier that he announced, not without a certain irony, "perhaps it is by having studied Chinese in the past that I can now call myself Lacanian." He took as an example the character wei and its previous written form. This character has three different meanings : "to act" (also used to indicate non-action, a central notion in Daodejing); the conjunction "like," or "as" (used in similes) ; and also the verbal form "as for," "as referring to such a thing." The fact that a verb can be transformed into a conjunction is, according to Lacan "what helped me greatly to generalize the function of the signifier." The phrase from the Bible, "In the beginning was the Word" could be replaced by "In the beginning was the Act." On the subject of another Chinese character which he had analyzed, Lacan concluded: "Nothing whatsoever can be compared to the process of a concept, not even a mere generalization. We have a series of alternations where the signifier comes back to thrash water, so to speak, moving with the ebb and the flow like the wheel of the watermill rising each time with the water, only to plunge again, to enrich itself. At no moment can we determine which leads; the solid starting point or the ambiguity."

According to Lacan, Chinese handwriting illustrates the principal that "it is in the nature of language itself that, whatever attempt is made to approach a meaning, the referee is never right." "All designations are metaphorical. They can be arrived at only through something else." The end result is that "whatever I say, wherever my standpoint is, even if I feel it's good, I don't know what I am saying." This is the meaning of what Freud called the unconscious.

The unconscious is structured like a language

The unconscious, by its very definition, cannot be known. It represents a breach, what Lacan called a blunder; (bevue in French, which is evoked in the Freudian term Unbewusste). It is a place, empty and as such available for transformation, which half opens only to close up again immediately. The unconscious has no being. This notion should be easy for the Chinese to understand, because concepts have no real place in their language. This is why Freud, when speaking of the unconscious, used the term "hypothesis" (L'inconscient, p. 70), albeit a necessary hypothesis. The unconscious is inferred rather than represented. It manifests itself through its consequences on the conscious, that is, through slips of the tongue, parapraxes, memory lapses, dreams, and symptoms.

Even if the unconscious has no being, it has a structure that, according to Freud, can be grasped by the Vorstellungsrepräsentanz (ideational representative). According to Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language.

What is language?

Let's start with what it is not. Language is not made up of signs, in the sense that a sign represents something for someone and establishes a more or less stable and univocal relationship between thing and sign. Language is not for purposes of communication either. In certain highly emotional situations the more we use words to explain, the less we understand each other. What constitutes language and what is its purpose, in that case? Language is made up of signifiers (principally sound elements), of the signified (induced, non-univocally, by these signifiers), and a referee. In this sense, language does not define, but attempts to encircle the outline of things. It attempts to name the sexual, while simultaneously impeding it

What constitutes language is the subject. But the subject is not the individual. It is a grammatical term introduced by Lacan, to designate the subject of desire; that is to say, the eccentric place, the ex-sistence of an unconscious desire. This subject of desire, through speech interruptions, slips of the tongue, stumblings, changes, hitches, rifts, attempts to make a desire heard: a desire different from the desire expressed consciously, intentionally, and conventionally. The subject is unable to say "I"; any reference can be expressed only in the "it" form. It is the "it" that divides the "I" irremediably. Lacan attributes the discovery of the subject of the unconscious to the Cartesian cogito of the 17th century. However, contrary to philosophical tradition, Descartes's "I think, therefore I am" does not signify, according to Lacan, the advent of the conscious subject. "I think, therefore I am" is not a deduction: rather, it reflects a subject divided between thinking and being, between the "I" of meaning and the "I" of existence. This "I" sets itself apart from empirical reference to intuition and the objectivity of a representation of material reality, to affirm itself in the act of language. This liberation is what is recognized as a step forward in modern science. "I think therefore I am" corresponds to the Lacanian definition of a subject as represented by a signifier for another signifier.

"A subject is represented by a signifier for another signifier." Lacan gave this definition in 1961 (in *L'identification*), and maintained it throughout his teaching, using topology and logic. What does this definition mean?

First and foremost, it means that the signifier does not refer to the "being of things." The signifier refers to another signifier. Lacan's definition of subject emphasizes the breach between language and the referee, and the line dividing the signifier and the signified. As the teachings of Tao master Zhuangzi show, language is incapable of reaching the "being of things" because "it is language which not only establishes the names we give to things, but also establishes the things themselves." This "being of things" is to be found in the central void which, in Lao-tsu, enables the transformation of the Ying and the Yang, and gives a compound structure to Chinese thought. From this follows the paradox that nothingness, emptiness, a void have more value than fullness, or "somethingness": "Clay is modeled to make a container. But the container's usefulness is in its emptiness."

The signifier implies that the relationship between sign and thing has faded. The signifier defines difference in its pure form. By using the term "the 8:45 train" we have reduced all qualitative differences of trains down to a single trait that identifies and differentiates this train from all others, in a strictly countable form. Lacan calls this *le trait unaire*, the single stroke or unitary trait. It is like the notches found on mammals' ribs from prehistory, or the brushstroke in Chinese calligraphy. (6.12.61 and 15.12.65).

Inherent in the signifier is the function of unity, but what this implies is precisely that of pure difference. "It is as pure difference that unity, in its signifying function, structures and constitutes itself."

As soon as the signifier is assigned the function of representing the distinction of the one as difference, its scope becomes much wider than that of the phoneme, as stipulated by the linguistic use of the term. The signifier, according to Lacan, comprises locution, phrases, received wisdom, the law, indeed all forms of thought (*La Chose freudienne, Encore...*). Everything that counts as a distinct one is a signifier. The signifier, by its very definition, excludes tautology. Therefore, in expressions such as "a penny is a penny," or "war is war," the words "penny" and "war," once repeated, no longer have the same meaning. To define the signifier with itself, $A = A$, is totally absurd, indeed it is a pathological sign found in what is known as morbid rationalism in schizophrenia. The following is an example taken from François Klein, a psychiatrist who, as a result of his own psychosis, used this logic in his clinical approach:

"4 = (equals) 4. Do you deny this?
Yellow = yellow. Do you deny this?
Everything is equal to itself. Do you deny this?
Absurd = absurd . Do you deny this?
So: It is ridiculous to say that something is ridiculous. Do you deny this?"

Here are two clinical examples illustrating the definition of the signifier representing the subject for another signifier. In Freud's case study of Hans and his horse phobia, the young boy at one point tells a highly imaginative story, in which his sister Anna traveled to Gmunden in a box, before her birth. When released from the box, she rode off on a horse.... This story stands for a signifier representing Hans for another signifier, one which was untrue; that of the tale of the stork and the babies. Freud interprets Hans's story as equivalent to saying: "if you expect me to believe that the stork brought Anna in October, when I had already noticed my Mum's swollen tummy in summer when we were in

Gmunden, well then, I can expect you to believe my lies." The second example comes from another of Freud's case studies, the Rat Man. This young man decides one day, on an impulse, to lose weight. He does not want to be dick (which in German means fat). Analysis shows that the sudden appearance of the symptom stands in direct relation to his American cousin's name Dick (short for Richard), whom he hates and, worse still, who happens to be with his beloved. To get thinner (not to be dick) is the signifier that represents him for his cousin and his beloved. Freud uses the word "password" rather than signifier to define this sort of phenomenon. The term is equally good.

The signifier crosses all borders between body and mind, and has an effect from the earliest stages. The baby's gurgling and babbling are already structured by the mother tongue. The verbal exchanges with adults, their scanning and prosody, contribute to the physical and mental development of the child and shape his unconscious desire. They are also the grounding for future possible symptoms.

A priest traces the source of his vocation to the day when, as a young child at school, he made the mistake of writing "I've god" instead of "I've got." His teacher was quick to make the connection with religion.

We are now ready to make the transition to the function of writing and the letter in psychoanalysis.

The specific regime of the letter in language

The letter is the material support that speech takes from language, namely the undivided and "essentially localized element of the signifier." This localization, however, is topological rather than specular or geometrical. The letter can become an object, even abandoned waste -- as James Joyce's homophone letter, litter demonstrates.

It is not by chance that Lacan begins his collection of articles, specifically called *Ecrits*, with a text on Edgar Allan Poe's tale of "The Purloined Letter," soon followed by another, "L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud." Lacan demonstrates, in "The Purloined Letter," how holding (and not possessing) a letter (which passes from hand to hand and whose contents are unknown) transforms the personality and the desire of the holder, and gives rise to repetitive permutations among the characters of the story. They do not possess the letter; the letter possesses them. As a result, Lacan interprets the automatism of Freudian repetition as the "instance," the insistence of the letter on the subject.

While at certain moments the letter, for Lacan, is the signifier, he gradually places more and more emphasis on the letter in its own dimension, in relation to the signifier, particularly in its specific regime in speech. Plato also, in his own way, recognized this specificity, but in his disparaging of writing, for its resemblance to painting, stating that "the derivatives of writing appear as living creatures but remain majestically silent when spoken to."

The written character does not proceed from a representation of reality. (This is often supposed in retrospect). Its principal function is not to note the sounds of a language either, contrary to a common belief concerning our alphabetic and phonocentric languages. Lacan readily quotes Sir Flinders Petrie, who demonstrated the existence of trademarks on pottery pieces long before the appearance of hieroglyphics. These trademarks were later used as writing signs in the Greek, Etruscan, Latin, and Phoenician alphabets. The act of writing hence preceded phonetics. The choice of a pre-existing line was used thereafter to notate a

sound. "Writing, far from being a transcription, is another system, serving possibly to sustain the voice that derives from another support."

It is common knowledge today that the source of Chinese handwriting is to be found in soothsayer interpretations of the marks left by burning firebrands on the shoulder-blades of cattle, or on tortoise shells. It was only later that these single marks were used as sound supports, or as non-acoustic writing elements, for example determinatives.

To speak of language is systematically to be in language. There is no metalanguage. On the other hand Lacan claims that language is spoken of from the starting point of writing. (10.3.71). Therefore it is true that, since the time of Aristotle, the characteristic of logic is to have replaced words and entire propositions by small letters, easily calculated or combined. (Large letters were used to convey a symbolic or esoteric value.)

According to Lacan, there appears to be no difference between letters, whether proceeding from logic, or poetry. All participate in the letter's action upon the real and its repositories. The letters are not confined to a descriptive role, nor do they restrict themselves to imitation or sound notation. Their role is not utilitarian, in other words. Lacan even goes so far as to say that it is the numbers, that is to say, a calculation linked to writing, that know. (3.2.72)

This extreme position of Lacan's helps to explain his own abundant production of letter notations : S, \$, a, S1, S2, S(A), ...

He also claimed, not without a certain degree of audacity, that they represent formulas of sexualization (which for each sex define a certain relationship with the phallus), which, while not permitting sexual relations between human beings, allow each partner to make a declaration. Lacan's letters allow a form of declaration conforming to the non-complementary logic of sexual difference. "If I hadn't written them, would it be so true that the sexed being authorizes only himself?"

Some of Lacan's invented writings echo the signifier : \$, (barred S) has the same sound as "est-ce?" in French, and Freud's Es (the id) in German. Others however, such as the Borromean knot, come from another place than the signifier, and in this sense, are closer to Chinese characters.

Nonetheless, although any letter may act upon the subject, this action is not the same, depending on the origin and the form of inscription of the letter. Lacan designates the origin of the letter as the discourse, in the sense of the social link between subjects, determined by the relationships between these subjects and certain terms (a, S1, S2) in certain places. The letter is the effect of a discourse, claims Lacan. Lacan's "mathemes" come from psychoanalytical discourse, which he writes as a/S2-\$/S1.

Alphabetical writing comes from the discourse of trade (the trademarks on pottery). Chinese characters find their source in another discourse, closely linked with Chinese civilization. The character wen means writing and civilization. The development of this civilization is inseparable from the importance given to the written sign. It is a shi (lettered) civilization, which became highly significant at the time of the Kingdom Fighters (namely Xunzi, around 350 B.C.). An individual could be, simultaneously, a poet, a painter, a calligrapher, and an advisor to the prince or statesman. Similarly, in the China of the Shang, divination was a part of daily life; one spoke of "divinatory rationality." The oracles were very different from the sibyls of Pythia in Greece. They dealt with the events of daily life (rain, harvest,

marriages., and so on). It was a down-to-earth dialogue with the divine, involving straightforward questions with yes/no answers. It was more a question of "ensuring the fulfillment of a wish, rather than knowing whether such a wish would be granted or not, 'foretelling' the intention of the spirits." The oracles were of a ritualistic nature, rather than prophetic.

Recognizing the specificity of writing, its system, and its autonomy as regards speech, has important clinical consequences. First, to recognize the presence of writing inherent in speech, as for example in the writing equivalent of a slip of the tongue, a slip of the pen (according to Lacan, the only slips are of the pen), and then to follow the route of letters in their repetition. This also permits a better adjustment of the position of the psychoanalyst in regard to the stakes of the real, in the cure (what Lacan calls the science of logic).

Phobias of the letter

My objective here is not to make an inventory of these effects. I would simply like to point out how the reference to writing helped me in my approach to the different reading and writing problems of French children. These problems have various causes.

It could be a question of forcing in, or forcing of, learning to read, as such, when we consider that the acquisition of reading is in the form of learning (and not invention, as is the case): in particular, learning only the correspondence of letters to sounds, whereas an ideographical dimension is inherent in our alphabetical writing: the length and form of words, silent letters, capitals, punctuation, typography.... As a rule, such cases can be resolved by changing the reading method.

There is another category of problems, also quite easily reduced but which can nonetheless lead to other symptoms, where we find displacement of repressed or disregarded parts of the family history (especially "sexual" ones) on the activity of reading or writing. (The French word for the past participle of "read" and "bed" is the same : lit.)

This displacement is not surprising in itself, as the reading texts do not in and of themselves show what is to be understood. They set reading procedures, constraints (for example in syntax) to produce meaning, but they do not indicate if this meaning is right or not. For the child, reading represents the first real authority that challenges his parents, because it manages without them, except in the case of a conflict of authority or author. Reading can thus be a traumatic operation. The child who reads badly reconstructs through this a parental figure of authority, but a usurped authority, in fact, since it is linked to a lie or repression. The following is an example of a displacement of the letter and its insistence. A child can't make the link between letters and so his parents seek clinical help for him. After a few consultations, it turns out that his siblings have been adopted, and what's more, the mother explains that she specifically adopted girls because the blood ties are not as strong, and there is less risk of aggressiveness.

Another variety of problems exists, one much more entrenched in the personality. One wonders to what extent these problems can be resolved, without jeopardizing the subject's equilibrium; all the more so since children often attach little importance to their symptom. The autonomy of the letter, in its "ideogrammatical" version, manifests itself more clearly here. I have called these cases "phobias of the letter," in an article that appeared in 1983 (Littoral n° 7/8). We are here confronted with spelling and writing deformations, of more or less importance.

It seems to me that these children behave like those ancient Egyptians who voluntarily mutilated certain hieroglyphics in tombs, convinced that these hieroglyphics, generally ideograms, represented the hypostasis of reality (that is to say, a hieroglyphic of a snake could embody the spirit of the snake) and thus constituted a danger of death. To mutilate the letter, to make it unrecognizable, is a way to avert danger.

A child with a letter phobia fixes his anguish on certain letters, which he mutilates, deforms, and replaces with others, in an effort to protect himself from the danger that they incarnate. The letter embodies a menacing father figure. We find, in the history of these children, something that has not been assumed in the father's relationship to his own name, and more precisely in the writing of this name. The child's writing deformations can be considered the mark of a paternal law, made up of what failed in the father; in other words a law of desire, and not a legal law.

Let's take Luis as an example. This child, when speaking, left out certain consonants and had great problems in writing, with multiple deformations in the spelling, the form, and the placement of letters. These deformations were not to be considered as coming from a learning deficiency, but rather as an invention of writing. In this way he would write the word "freedom" as "3dom" (pronounced "threedom"), thus reinventing the notion of a rebus. He would also say 'rab for crab. He often had nightmares of a crab who tried to eat him up, and this crab was part of a series which, through association, led to his father. Luis would eat a letter of the crab (saying 'rab instead of crab) for fear that the crab, a father image, would eat him. There was precisely, as regards this father, a certain failure in the transmission of proper names: when writing his mother's name, he made a slip of the pen, confusing it with that of his wife.

I mention these problems because I wonder whether the same problems exist in Chinese, and, if so, how you treat them. I am sure that in France, we would have a lot to learn from Chinese in tackling this problem.

Psychoanalysis is not a fixed, rigid science, with ready-made answers to the diversity of clinical problems. Each case is particular. Freud was the first to demonstrate this. He maintained that every particular case could call into question the whole theoretical grounding. Psychoanalysis is not only concerned with a therapeutic aim. To survive, it must be continuously invigorated by research and teaching. As in other domains, psychoanalysis makes progress through its own impasses, provided they are recognized as such.

Language and the sexual

There is one point, among others, where research in psychoanalysis is not finished, namely in the articulation of language and the sexual. Psychoanalysis is devoted to unconscious desire. The unconscious is structured like a language, made up of signifiers that refer to other signifiers. But there is also a referee; we do not live in pure ideality. The signifiers do not signify things, but do not erase them either. They encircle them, and the circles tighten around one precise, distinct thing, the sexual. For, although psychoanalysis came into being through science, its center of interest was precisely that which science rejected; the sexual subject and its appearance in symptoms. Psychoanalysis treats this articulation between the sexual and language through words and not through sexual initiation. Experience has shown that it is effective, but do we know exactly how it works? How can we define this articulation between language and the sexual?

Lacan put in a lot of time before beginning to set down the paradoxes of this articulation. It can be expressed in this way: language acts as an obstacle to the writing of a connection between masculine and feminine enjoyment, and at the same time provides it, taking for each a part of this enjoyment, which is phallic enjoyment.

There is no inherent predicate to designate the essence of masculine or feminine, to guarantee that each man belongs to a group of men, each woman to a group of women, and that both form the object of what we call an "application," in the sense of a set theory. In other words, there is no law of universal sexual attraction. The obstacle to a formalization of such a dream connection is conditioned by the phallic function that is common to both sexes, but in a non-complimentary way. It acts, rather, as a supplement. It does not separate the sexes into the haves and the have-nots; rather, between two ways of expressing their respective division between being and having. Man is not without having the phallus, and a woman is the phallus (unconsciously for man) without having it. Not having a pre-established indicator, each of the sexes, in his relationship with the other, is reduced to a declaration of sex, that is to say, to asserting an enunciation, an authorization, without any final normative statement representing a standard.

In his own way, Freud had already come up against this problem, without however advancing his theorization any further. It is interesting to re-examine the terms, as they can serve as a point of departure for listening to demands that occur among children in therapy.

For the child, the sexual question has two entries: the Oedipus complex, and the recognition of sexual difference. At a certain moment the junction of these two entries creates a problem for the child, and the person listening to him. Freud gave this junction a name : the castration complex. But at what level does this junction happen for the boy and the girl? Is it the same for both? What is the end result of this junction? So many questions for Freud to dwell upon.

The "Oedipus complex" means the ideational representative (Vorstellungrepräsentanz) -- partly unconscious -- of tender feelings, love, for the parent of the opposite sex, and hostility, indeed a death-wish for the parent of the same sex. Freud also included in the Oedipus complex the ideational representative of the opposite feelings. Sexual difference is everything that concerns the recognition of this difference between the little boy and girl, the stages of this, the lifting of misunderstanding, sexual curiosity, sexual infantile theories (about where babies come from, parental coitus...) elaborated from drives, the trauma of the awakening of first sexual sensations.

The difficulties specific to the interweaving of the Oedipus complex with the recognition of sexual difference serve as a marker in child psychoanalysis.

An attempt to classify children's demands, and their interconnections

Child psychoanalysis is not a specialized branch of general psychoanalysis: it has its own full-fledged place within psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, it has certain specificities that cannot be neglected, and among them in particular the fact that it deals with several people at the same time who, themselves, have family and parental links; the child with his parents, on one hand, and the parental couple, on the other. The child's problems are to be situated along these two axes; one that is vertical, consisting of generational, hierarchical links, and the other, horizontal, non-hierarchical, concerning the relationship of the couple, the parents, to sexuality.

These two axes, determined by the laws of society (marriage, rights of succession ...) redouble two poles for each individual subject (the child, the father, the mother): the vertical pole of Oedipal relationships to past and future generations, and a horizontal pole of sexual difference and the sexual relationship.

If the psychoanalyst interprets a child's symptoms along just one pole, generally the vertical one, while neglecting the other, he is committing a serious error that reinforces the subject's defenses. This is what happens when recognition of the non-satisfaction inherent in sexuality, through its linkage to language, is overshadowed by the evocation of prohibition, or outside obstacles, connected to the subject's family or social situations. It is also the case when the axis of one's rights and the pole of desire are confused: the law of desire, amoral in itself, since it means nothing but a constraint of discourse, is confused with a legal law representing order or social norms.

Strictly speaking, analysis consists of differentiating the poles and the axes. From there, children's demands, depending on what they are related to, or where they come from, can be classified into three broad categories.

1- Demands formulated directly by the child himself, and dealing solely with him, without intervention, or parallel treatment of the parents.

2- The child's demands, indirectly attached to his parents.

A) The child's problem is the reaction to a problem in the couple of his parents or those who stand for his parents. The child is more or less included as a witness, a messenger, a confidant... but not as an object in their phantasy or their symptom (which could be that of a perverse couple). There is little point in treating this child, especially if his parents are not being treated. Often, what is necessary beforehand is something in the form of an act, undertaken by his parents, which can go as far as a split-up, a divorce not being the proof that this has taken place.

Such was the case for Thomas, who lived with his mother after his parents' divorce. He was brought to me because he refused to eat with her, and meals were never-ending. After about a month of therapy, this problem subsided, only to be replaced by another. Thomas began vomiting every time he came back from being with his father, at the exact moment when his father would return him to his mother. Of course, the father blamed the mother, and vice versa. Thinking about this curious symptom, about the moment (the junction) when it appears, I wondered if its source was not to be found in the child's question about this junction, the link between his father and his mother. This was later confirmed by a remark of his mother's about Thomas's regret that his parents were separated. As I had already asked to see the father, a consultation was arranged with Thomas, his father, and his mother together. I thus learned that the father let his son take his breakfast from a baby bottle. In this way, Thomas's "digestive" symptoms represent him for the couple of his parents, and more precisely, what they have in common in the oral sphere. After this consultation, where a reunion of the parents had been enacted, because of their child's vomiting, the vomiting stopped.

B) The child's problem is the reaction to a neurosis, psychosis, or perversion of one of his parents. If the child is treated, the parent concerned must also be treated.

3- The child's problem is directly connected to a phantasy of one of his parents, in which he is included in his own right.

Either it concerns the mother, who, for example, considers her child as a fetish object, a non-detached part of her own body, or, on the contrary, as an object of aversion, repulsion, and hate, indeed her pound of flesh. Or it concerns the father who, for example, behaves as a legislator-father (like Schreber's father), or who re-enacts, through his child, his own difficulty of being a father.

The following is an example of a child who, unconsciously, occupies a place of reparation in his mother's phantasy, in the grip of her own history. The child has to restore his maternal grandfather to his lineage, both in his ascendants and his descendants; and this due to the latter's failures to occupy this position in the first place. The child was treated for behavior problems, and failure in school. Analysis of this child's mother revealed that her father had been disinherited, in favor of his brother, for being childless. The birth of a daughter, the child's mother, following an explosion caused by the father's brother, and involving the death of several women, enabled him to claim, once again, his part of the inheritance. Furthermore, the mother's parents had set up a contract, in which the mother would look after the daughters, and the father, the sons. They had only the one daughter, who was effectively looked after by the mother: the father never had any sons to look after. It was this daughter who later became the child's mother. In his mother's phantasy, he became the male child her father never had. The child's mother repaired her parents' unsettled contract, while at the same time ensuring her father's inheritance.

In such cases, the child is like a thing, a part of the mother's own body, and on which the father's words have no effect, his role of authority being reduced to clowning around. The child has no other recourse but to violence, in an effort to bring about a castration which he calls for. If he does not undergo analysis, the legal law will be powerless to produce the effect of separation that results from the recognition of the unconscious law.

In 1966, Lacan gave J. Aubry a note on the symptom of the child that applies here. "In the conception which Jacques Lacan elaborates, the child's symptom is set up to respond to that which is symptomatic in the family structure. The symptom -- and this is the fundamental fact of psychoanalytical experience -- is defined in this context as representative of the truth.

The symptom can represent the truth of the family couple. It is the most complex case, but also the one most receptive to our interventions (case 2-A of our classification).

Articulation is greatly reduced when the dominant symptom emerges from the subjectivity of the mother. In this case, the child is considered the direct correlative of a phantasy. (case 3 of our classification)."

The table we propose is oversimplified. It does, however, offer indications that prevent reproducing the original pathogenic situation in psychoanalysis, or creating a new one. This is the case when the psychoanalyst begins to take the place of a father who seems absent; a place encouraged by the mother because of the analyst's authority as supposedly-knowing subject.

It is also the case when the two meanings of the word law are confused: legal law, made up of rules or social norms, and scientific law (the paternal metaphor, for example), made up

of an articulation, itself amoral, of signifiers of desire. A discourse that uses this confusion is particularly perverting, and can only give rise to violence.

The pressure from public authorities to expose sexual and child abuse, on pain of sanction, sometimes leads care professionals to a point where they no longer distinguish between fears founded on their own phantasies and those founded on a separate reality. In the name of child protection, they can carry out abusive interventions, or set up networks of surveillance that are downright persecutory.

The cases of sexual abuse among children force psychoanalysts today to mark a barrier between legal law born of the master discourse (in the sense of Lacan's notations: $S1/\$-S2/a$), and the law of desire in the analyst's discourse. A father was suspected of sexually fondling his daughter, and preventive proceedings were already being set up. Actually, during consultation with this father, it turned out that he had allowed his daughter to fondle him in play. This was not, however, for the slightest sexual stimulation, but because he considered that his penis was as desexualized as any other part of his body, his finger, for example. Far from being prey to irrepressible sexual impulses, his problem, beyond his sexual anaesthesia, was more that of a failure of symbolization of the phallus, .

We need more than ever to correct clinical markers, sustained by theory and established in research, to prevent the destructive alliance of capitalistic market laws with the discourse of science.

The place and contribution of writing in clinical psychoanalysis

Abstract:

Freud made use of hieroglyphics (in dream analysis), while Lacan drew inspiration from Chinese writing. Having studied the basics of this writing, Lacan went so far as to say, not without a certain irony: "perhaps it is by having studied Chinese in the past that I can now call myself Lacanian."

Not only did Lacan find the same ambiguity in Chinese characters as in the signifier -- thus reinforcing the claim that the unconscious is structured like a language -- but he went further and placed emphasis on the particular dimension specific to the written word. He demonstrated (for example through Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter") how the instance, the insistence, of the letter determines the subject's wishes. Each individual is determined by the letters of language, whether poetic or scientific, related to his personal life story. Lacan himself was taken by the letter when he invented a form of writing specific to analytical discourse.

Recognizing the specificity of the written word in speech and language has led to a new clinical approach since Freud, used for example among children faced with learning problems in reading and writing. This specificity opens up a new approach to a question which has never been totally resolved: that of the link between the Oedipus complex and a child's curiosity regarding the difference between the sexes. This question raises problems for the child later on (it is the driving force behind his sexual theories), and is also an object of research for the psychoanalyst. Taking these issues into consideration, one can better identify care demands in child psychoanalysis.