

Guiding Principles for Any Psychoanalytic Act

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First Principle

Psychoanalysis is a practice of speech. It involves two partners, the analyst and the analysand, brought together in a single psychoanalytic session. The analysand speaks about what brings him there, his suffering, his symptom. This symptom is hooked into the materiality of the unconscious, made out of things that have been said to the subject, that have hurt him, and things that are impossible to say and cause him suffering. An analyst will punctuate the words of the analysand and enable him to weave the thread of his unconscious. The powers of language and the truth effects that it enables, what is called interpretation, is the actual power of the unconscious. Interpretation is apparent on both sides, analysand and analyst. They do not both have the same relation to the unconscious, however, since one has already carried this experience through to the end whereas the other has not.

Second Principle

A psychoanalytic session is the place in which the most stable identifications by which a subject is attached can come undone. A psychoanalyst will authorize this distance from one's customs, norms, and rules to which analysands constrains themselves outside of sessions. He will authorize a radical questioning of the foundations of each one's identity. He is able to temper the radical nature of this questioning by taking into account the clinical specificity of each subject who addresses himself to him. He takes nothing else into account. This is what defines the specificity of a psychoanalyst's place when he upholds this questioning, opening and enigma in any subject who has sought him out. He therefore does not identify with any of the roles that his interlocutor wants to make him take on, nor with any place of mastery or ideal that already exists in civilization. In a sense, an analyst is one who cannot be assigned to any other place than the place where desire is in question.

Third Principle

An analysand will address an analyst. He will attribute sentiments, beliefs, and expectations as a reaction to what he says, and he wishes to act upon the beliefs and expectations that he anticipates. The deciphering of meaning in the exchanges between analysand and analyst is not the only thing at stake. There is also the speaker's intention. It is a matter of recuperating something lost from the interlocutor. This recuperation of an object is the key to the Freudian myth of the drive. It founds the transference that binds the two partners together. Lacan's formula that the subject receives his own message from the Other in inverted form includes both the deciphering and the wish to act upon whom it is that one is addressing. Ultimately, when an analysand speaks he wishes, beyond the meaning of what he says, to reach the partner of his expectations, beliefs and desires in the Other. He aims at the partner of his fantasy. A psychoanalyst, enlightened by analytic experience about the nature of his own fantasy, takes this into account. He restrains from acting in the name of this fantasy.

Fourth Principle

The transference bond presupposes a locus, the "locus of the Other", as Lacan puts it, which is not ruled by any other in particular. It is the locus in which the unconscious is able to appear with the greatest degree of freedom to speak and, therefore, to experience its lures and difficulties. It is also the locus in which the figures of a fantasy-partner can be set out in the most complicated of their mirror games. This is why a psychoanalytic session does not

permit of any third person, with his gaze external to the actual process that is underway. A third person will be reduced to this locus of the Other.

This principle therefore excludes the intervention of any authoritarian third parties seeking to assign both a place to everyone and a pre-established aim for psychoanalytic treatment. The authority of the evaluating third party, who fits into the series of third parties, is affirmed from outside of what is at stake between an analysand, an analyst and the unconscious.

Fifth Principle

There is no standard treatment, no general procedure by which psychoanalytic treatment is governed. Freud used the metaphor of chess to indicate that there were only rules and typical moves at the beginning and the end of a game. To be sure, since Freud the algorithms that have made it possible to formalize chess have grown in power. When connected to the calculating power of a computer they make it possible for a machine to beat a human player. This does not change the fact that, contrary to chess, psychoanalysis cannot be presented in the form of an algorithm. We can see this in Freud himself who transmitted psychoanalysis with the help of particular cases: the Rat Man, Dora, Little Hans, etc. With the Wolf Man the case history entered a crisis. Freud was no longer able to contain the complexity of the processes unfolding within the unity of a case. Far from being able to be reduced to a technical procedure, the experience of a psychoanalysis has only one regularity: that of the originality of a scenario through which all subjective singularity emerges. Psychoanalysis is therefore not a technique but a discourse which encourages each person to produce his singularity, his exception.

Sixth Principle

The duration of a treatment and the unfolding of sessions cannot be standardized. The duration of Freud's treatments varied. There were treatments that lasted a single session, as in the psychoanalysis of Gustav Mahler. There were also analyses that lasted four months, as in the case of Little Hans, a year as in the Rat Man, several years as in the Wolf Man. Since then the variation and the diversification have not stopped growing. Moreover, the application of psychoanalysis outside the consulting room in mental health settings has contributed to the variation in the duration of psychoanalytic treatment. The variety of clinical cases and the variations in the age at which psychoanalysis has been applied make it possible to consider that the duration of an analysis is now, at best, defined as "tailor made". An analysis continues to the point where the analysand is sufficiently satisfied with what he has experienced to end his analysis. The aim is not the application of a norm but an agreement on the part of the subject with himself.

Seventh Principle

Psychoanalysis cannot decide what its aims are in terms of an adaptation of a subject's singularity to any norms, rules, determinations, or standards of reality. Psychoanalysis has above all discovered any subject's impotence to achieve full sexual satisfaction. This impotence is designated by the term "castration". Further, psychoanalysis, with Lacan, has formulated that it is impossible for there to be any norm in the relation between the sexes. If there is no satisfaction and if there is no norm, it is up to each person to invent a particular solution, one that builds on his symptom. Each person's solution can be more or less typical, more or less established upon tradition and common rules. It may on the contrary wish to draw upon rupture or a particular clandestinity. It remains no less true that, at bottom, the relation between the sexes has no one solution "for all". In this sense, this relation remains marked with the seal of the incurable, and there will always be something that fails. In speaking beings, sex stems from the "not all".

Eighth Principle

Analytic training cannot be reduced to the norms of university training or of the evaluation of what has been acquired in practice. Analytic training, ever since it was established as a discourse, rests on three legs: seminars of theoretical training (para-academic); the psychoanalyst in training's undertaking a psychoanalysis to its endpoint (from which flow the training effects); the pragmatic transmission of practice in supervision (conversations between peers about practice). Freud at one stage believed that it was possible to determine a psychoanalytic identity. The very success of psychoanalysis, its internationalization, the multiple generations that have followed one another for over a century have shown how illusory this definition of a psychoanalytic identity is. The definition of a psychoanalyst includes the variation in this identity. It is this variation itself. The definition of a psychoanalysis is not an ideal, it includes the history of psychoanalysis itself, and of what has been called psychoanalysis in the context of distinct discourses.

The title of psychoanalyst includes contradictory components. It requires an academic, university or equivalent, training, deriving from the general conferring of degrees. It requires a clinical experience that is transmitted in its particularity under the supervision of peers. It requires the radically singular experience of a psychoanalysis. The levels of the general, the particular and the singular are heterogeneous. The history of the psychoanalytic movement is a history of disagreements over and interpretations of this heterogeneity. It forms a part of this Great Conversation of psychoanalysis which makes it possible to state who is a psychoanalyst. This stating is brought about through procedures in communities that are psychoanalytic institutions. A psychoanalyst is never alone, he depends, as does a joke, on an Other who recognizes him. This Other cannot be reduced to a normative, authoritative, regulatory, standardised Other. A psychoanalyst is one who affirms that he has obtained from the psychoanalytic experience what he could have hoped for from it and therefore that he has crossed over a "pass", as Lacan called it. Here he testifies to having crossed over his impasses. The interlocution by which he wishes to obtain an agreement over this crossing over occurs in institutional settings. More profoundly, it is inscribed within the Great Conversation between psychoanalysis and civilization. A psychoanalyst is not autistic. He does not fail to address himself to the benevolent interlocutor, enlightened opinion, which he wishes to move and to reach out to, in favour of the cause of psychoanalysis.