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Applied Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis in the institution

What place does psychoanalysis occupy in an institution like Courtil? Without its being exhaustive, I will take up three points.

Firstly, it has a place at the level of the team where its function is to make of the intervenants, enlightened or civilized analysands, as Eric Laurent has said. For it isn't enough to be an analysand to produce an effect in the institution; one must be a civilized analysand. In this place, psychoanalysis concerns setting to work analytic concepts to construct the clinic. The clinical elaboration is not a simple reference to psychoanalysis as doctrine. It is a constitutive reading of this very clinic itself. Far from being reduced to the vague plastering of theory on a case, it transforms the work.

I will give a personal example of it. Arriving a certain number of years ago at Leers-Nord -- Courtil didn't yet exist, its foundation being anterior -- I discovered a mode of organized meetings that were called synthesis meetings. Today, at Courtil, we haven't even the foggiest idea that they exist, but it must be stated that a good number of institutions continue to function in this mode, whatever name they might give it. Such a meeting aims at gathering together all those who know something about a child: teachers, doctors, psychologists, socialworkers, parents. The function of each one must be distinguished because that is the only thing that specifies a bit what gets said. This meeting called synthetical is thus a meeting in which everyone says what he or she knows so that everyone knows everything that everyone else knows. It is a meeting to take care of

information, which, without being utterly useless, is however perfectly dangerous because very often one also makes supposedly informed decisions there, which only amount to the team passing to the act in relation to a lack of construction.

Thus, quickly enough after my arrival, I decided to simply no longer participate and to organize clinical meetings, which have existed henceforth and still exist, now under the name of Courtil. To the taking care of information in synthesis meetings, I opposed a taking care of formalization which can take place even without all the elements of a case or with part of the participants not knowing anything about the child. It doesn't necessarily take a psychoanalyst to make this transformation. At the time, I wasn't one. The presence of an enlightened analysand suffices. By enlightened, I don't mean an analysand enlightened by psychoanalysis, but an analysand enlightened in the sense of The Enlightenment, in other words, by reason.

The importance of being enlightened doesn't need to be emphasized in a case evoked many times here, that of paranoiac children and adolescents. One mustn't put oneself in the position of the Other persecutor, one said. This is indeed true. But the construction of a series of beacons -- which, for the subject, would be a dangerous encounter -- is nonetheless required in order to not put oneself in the position of persecutor. One simple example will show that the trap is inevitable and that, even on guard, it happens regularly that one or another of us finds him/herself in the position of the persecutor. The whole point of teamwork is to see how the dialectic of the work allows us to retreat from this position, or to locate it quickly and avoid falling into it.

At dinner time, a particularly agitated child is invited to eat. Visibly, he doesn't want to. Shortly, an intervenant says to him (think what you will of this intervention, I don't see any problem with it), «Listen! If you want, you can skip dinner.» From that very evening on, the child gets the idea that this intervenant must really have it in for him because he wants to prevent him from eating. One sees well how the risk of the persecutive encounter must be avoided. But to avoid it, a series of beacons must be constructed. And this, no commune of the totality of information on the child will construct. A few elements are sufficient, but they must be in series.

A second place for psychoanalysis in the institution is that of its work in the cures within the institution, or, as is the case for Courtil, in the work of the intervenants, which is not, as such, a cure. We have asked whether we worked the cure at Courtil, or whether we might not call our work a cure. The founding documents of Courtil, as do those of Antenna

110, state that we do not work analytic cures. Then, do we today? Evidently, we have to be in agreement on what one calls an analytic cure.

The decision at the start not to work analytic cures is a clear choice to refuse to practice analysis by prescription, automatically, so that the institution would become essentially a big waiting room. It is also an objection to the idea that the cure of a child is administered so easily. If there are many obstacles to a cure, there are also many possibilities of one, but on the condition that the offer is clear. And only the conditions of the request can be the offer. It is the offer that creates the request. So we have agreed not to work the cure to avoid the experience becoming rigid.

Today, I would willingly say that there are occasional psychoanalytic cures worked at Courtil. But they are not typical cures. These diverse forms of possible cures in institution, variations on the typical cure, as Lacan said, variations on the preliminaries of the cure since, often, we cannot take these things very far, are nonetheless situations before which we cannot retreat.

I will distinguish a third place, which is, this time, a place which psychoanalysis must in no case occupy in the institution and that is the place of idealization. If psychoanalysis questions the subject's prejudices, his/her symptomatic points of identification, his/her idealizations of the Other, if it can bring these things into question for the subjects in an institution (and in this sense there are cures), nonetheless it doesn't operate on the institutional level as if it were a subject. We know that certain communal utopias have made reference to psychoanalysis. These experiences, which tend to consider the institution as a subject, always end in failure. Certainly, the ideals of the institution must be questioned by the presence of psychoanalysts, but in no case should psychoanalysis take their place. That is not the place the reference to Freud and Lacan should take up.

Work in institution on psychoanalysis

After the question of psychoanalysis' place in the institution, I would like to pose another: what is the place of psychoanalysis for the work of analysts in institutions? In other words, does working in the institution come from a certain non-essential contingency to the orientation of psychoanalytic debate, or is it a necessary element to the advance of

psychoanalytic discourse? Do psychoanalysts work in institution from a personal necessity or to support the Freudian cause there? Is it even necessary to support the Freudian cause? Or yet again, is the introduction of psychoanalysis into therapeutic work in institution a compromise on pure psychoanalysis? I would thus invert the question of psychoanalysis' place in the institution to that of the necessity, in psychoanalysis, for the sort of work carried out in institution.

To answer these questions, one might start by stating that the Ecole de la cause freudienne and the Freudian Field have made a place for this extension of psychoanalysis. RI³ has been mentioned several times, and one can add the clinical sections as well as the creation of several ACFs which focus on work in institution.¹ But beyond simply noting the existence of habitats for these questions, one can try to articulate the logic of them.

We know that Freud broached these questions in a text dated 1919, «Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy.» He evokes the work of psychoanalysts in institutions as «a situation which belongs to the domain of the future.»² I add...of psychoanalysis.

Lacan returns to this question and articulates it in his Foundational Act of the Freudian School of Paris in 1964. In this text, which was republished in the first directory of the Ecole de la Cause freudienne, Lacan constituted three sections when he founded his school: the section of pure psychoanalysis, the section of applied psychoanalysis and the section for taking inventory of the Freudian Field. What was this about? The pure psychoanalysis section was defined as «praxis and doctrine of psychoanalysis properly speaking, which is and is nothing but -- something to be established in its place -- the training psychoanalysis.»³ Secondly, he denoted the applied psychoanalysis section, «which means therapeutics and clinical medicine.»⁴ And thirdly, the section for taking inventory of the Freudian Field will not be important here.

Note first of all that the first two sections distinguish between pure psychoanalysis, which is nothing less than the training analysis and applied psychoanalysis, which is the therapeutic. Training and therapy, the great classical binary of post-freudian psychoanalysis, still today organizes the access to status in the IPA. It constitutes a sort of fundamental principle of hierarchy: first one does one's therapeutic analysis, then after a few years, on condition of being admitted, one undertakes one's training. One might be astonished that Lacan kept this binary, since he was always opposed to this hierarchy of cures when he was in the IPA. Did he brusquely rejoin the theses of the International Association? Certainly not. Moreover, the Founding Act in 1964 is the moment of his definitive rupture with the

IPA. His opposition to the hierarchy of psychoanalyses implying the cleavage between training/therapeutic here finds its correlate in the fact that none of these sections is worth more than another: «This in no way implies an inverted hierarchy, but a circular organization...»⁵ In other words, Lacan knotted together this binary without a hierarchy of values.

I would also like to stop a moment on the use, in this text, of the term «applied psychoanalysis.» Eric Laurent, in his course of December, 1990 in the department of psychoanalysis, broached this passage rarely commented on. He remarked that Lacan here uses the term of «applied psychoanalysis» to speak of the therapeutic when, typically in the analytic literature, this term is used to speak of the application of psychoanalysis to anything that is exterior to it -- for example, art, literature, etc. Thus, I remind you of Lacan's wording: the applied psychoanalysis section is that of «therapeutics and clinical medicine.» What Lacan says after this about the people who will be admitted to this section indicates the orientation of the work that will be undertaken there: notably, what would be organized a few years later in the clinical sections and also the sort of work that tended to be carried out in institution:

To which will be admitted medical groups, whether or not they be composed of psychoanalyzed subjects, to the extent that they are capable of contributing to the psychoanalytic experience; through the criticism of its indications in its results; through the testing of the categorical terms and structures that I have introduced as sustaining the undeviating course of Freudian praxis, this in clinical examinations, in nosographical definitions, in the very position of therapeutic projects⁶

One remarks that, firstly, applied psychoanalysis not only concerns psychoanalysts, but also those who are capable of contributing to its clinic. This is what has happened in our institutions, where, obviously, one doesn't have to be a psychoanalyst, or even in analysis to work there, even if this is the case for many of the members of my team. Secondly, by what means and in which field does Lacan propose to operate? In the clinical examination, nosographic definitions and the position of therapeutic projects. This is what is also carried out in institution when one tries to elaborate the clinic. Thirdly, what is the goal? To critique the indication of the analytic experience in its results. Thus, it concerns putting to the proof psychoanalytic concepts in its clinic in order to measure and in measure of its results. This is also the goal of the clinical and theoretical seminars at Courtil, as well as conferences.

The three sections Lacan distinguishes in the Founding Act of 1964 correspond to three ulterior foundations. To pure psychoanalysis corresponds the pass (1967) -- the pass in intension. To applied psychoanalysis corresponds the creation of the Clinical Section (1975), in the domain of extension. And for the connections, to the section for taking inventory of the Freudian Field responds the foundation of the Department of Psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VIII. But if the applied psychoanalysis section thus gives a framework to the clinical sections, this doesn't situate our work in institution any less. Clearly, this means that the work of psychoanalysis in institution is not a vague therapeutic work with a psychoanalytic orientation. It is psychoanalysis applied. But if we want to take this seriously and above all not reestablish a hierarchy of values between training and therapeutic, then we must take into account the necessary bond between psychoanalysis in intension and in extension. In intension, that is the work of the pass, the verification of the «there is something of the analyst here.» In extension, this is the critique of its indications in its results.

The knotting of intension and extension

To conclude I am brought back to the second return of the question. Thus there is a place for psychoanalysis in the institution and there is a place for this clinic in psychoanalysis. To hold this place, there have to be psychoanalysts who work in the institution to maintain the knotting. And maintaining the knot has consequences for our work in institution.

First of all, the institution cannot, all by itself, make up a school of psychoanalysis, as had been seen before when one, in a certain sense, spoke of the school of Maud Mannoni, or Oury, or Bettelheim, for example. These institutions taught, certainly, but to cut oneself off from the quick of the debate of intension can only be a failure. This means that for institutions like ours, if we don't want to repeat this mistake, it isn't enough to think we must be modest -- and it's never a bad idea to be too modest -- in saying: Warning! Courtil is not an ideal model of the institution, it's just an experience. This is true, but it isn't enough. We still need to persist in situating our debate in a school of psychoanalysis, which puts to work the questions of intension in the procedure of the pass to give us the ECF. That is the reason moreover that I rejoice in the bonds between Courtil and the Ecole, especially in Belgium and with the Study Group of Lille. In other words, for an institution to be crisscrossed by psychoanalysis, it isn't enough to chose psychoanalysis as a reference. Those who work there must, themselves, be crisscrossed by psychoanalysis, including in its effects of intension.

There is a second consequence. It is that if subjects who are not psychoanalyzed and a fortiori not psychoanalysts can be allowed to work there, as Lacan proposed, it is only in the measure that they participate in the critique and setting to work and this without in any case participating for recognition.

But a third consequence must be added, without which an institution's reference to psychoanalysis would be almost inoperable. It is the obligation of transmission.

¹ RI³ (Reseau International d'Institutions Infantile) is a network of three institutions working in the field of childhood mental illness. Clinical sections are educational extensions of the Ecole which focus on case work. And the ACFs (Associations du Champ Freudien) are the more regionally specific work-groups of the Freudian Field. [trans. note].

² Sigmund Freud. «Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy.» SE XVII: Hogarth: London, 1961; pp. 157 - 168.

³ Jacques Lacan. «Founding Act.» *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, trans. J. Mehlman, ed. J. Copjec, Norton, 1990; p. 98.

⁴ *Ibid.*; p. 99.

⁵ *Ibid.*; p. 98.

⁶ *Ibid.*; p. 99.