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Punctuation in Formation

Institutional reality is one of the major sources of resistance to analytic discourse and to transmission: a fact that has proved to be the case almost everywhere. In North America this takes on a particular character, since here, sooner or later, everything gets institutionalized. Faith in institutions is a USA cultural trait.

According to local tradition it is implicit that to do an analytic training you have to be enrolled in an institute requiring a specific course of study towards a professional certification. The analyst receives his license and a power guaranteed by the fact of belonging. North American psychoanalysts have not sufficiently questioned the consequences on the formation of the analyst of this fact, a cultural fact that is taken as though it were "natural." The psychoanalytic institute is viewed as a professional association meeting a social need. You decide to become an analyst the way you decide to become a lawyer or a dentist; and in fact, you potentially become one the day you enroll in an institute, following the rules and the timetables preestablished by the *curriculum*, together with the will of the instructors. Under these circumstances, what is the condition *sine qua non* for an analytic formation, personal analysis, can easily become a secondary matter: far from being a condition – which distinguishes the wish to become an analyst (one symptom among others) from the effect of the analytic act – it becomes an accessory. This sets the gauge on the implications of a radical misunderstanding regarding the singularity of the time proper to an analytic formation, in no way comparable to the linearity of an academic course or of a technical apprenticeship, and reveals an astonishing ignorance of the conceptualization of the logical time inherent to psychic causality. An ignorance that is at the basis of the difference between training and analytic formation.

It is in this cultural context that Après-coup Psychoanalytic Association has sought to create a place for analytic formation that would give priority to analytic listening and one's personal analysis¹ and respect the times of the individual psychoanalytic path, logically independent of preestablished courses of academic study: a place where to gain exposure to rigorous teaching and participate in the activity of a different form of listening to texts and styles, in order to steadily unravel the thread of one's own formation.

According to tradition, formation implies personal analysis, teaching, active participation, supervision. Needless to say, personal analysis claims central place. Teaching is carried out through seminars, lectures, working groups and clinical groups. It is one of the particularities of Après-coup that every participant can organize his own course of studies, determined by the point reached in the trajectory of his analysis and in his relation to texts and theory: a reality which implies respect for a singular temporality.²

Supervision has always occupied an important role in our association. From the outset, one of the significant and most encouraging effects of the teaching at Après-Coup was that of generating requests for supervision, some of which turned into requests for analysis. The work of supervision highlights aspects related to various logical moments of the formation: on the one hand transmission of the framework for the cure, with an accent on analytic technique and the elements that belong to it; on the other hand, listening to the position of the analyst in the direction of the cure. The latter aspect sends the analyst/analysand in supervision

¹ No need here to return to the question of the paradoxical distinction between personal analysis and didactic analysis, a distinction which in itself betrays a profound misunderstanding of what the analytic act is. If, coming from the Greek *didàsko*, didactics is the theory and practice of teaching, the very notion of « didactic analysis, » separated from a personal analysis, reveals a conception of analytical education in contradiction with that of formation. Analytic formation is the effect of the formations of the unconscious, the effect of the subjective experience of separation between knowledge and truth. An analysis, if brought to its conclusion, can produce an analyst. The expression « personal analysis » indicates here the analysis that produces an analyst.

² To complete the *Formation Program* of Après-Coup a certain number of credits are needed, corresponding to a number of hours of seminars, courses, and so on, which may be done over six, seven, or more years of study, depending on each person's pace. The duration of the program is subjective. Symptomatically, recognizing the diversity of individual time is intolerable for anyone who wants to impose an academic grid over analytic formation, and it sets analytic formation in contrast with legislative impositions.

back to his own analysis, raising the stakes of the analytic work in a multiple and fertile way. It is not by chance that the word 'supervision' could be given the name of 'control analysis,' which underscores its transferential quality – despite the infelicitous connotation of both terms 'control' and 'supervision.'³ Supervision is an essential part both of analysis in intension, and of transmission.

When the question of how to formulate a term for our formation program was posed, it seemed logical to refer to our experience in supervision. How to conceive of a symbolic punctuation in formation, one that can be sustained in the social bond, without betraying the premises of permanent formation? How to take up and sustain the quality of the course a given analysand takes in his own formation? One possible response seemed to us to be a form of invention: a new procedure for completing the formation program, a “completion” that is understood as recognition of the path pursued in formation and as a *punctuation* in permanent formation.

An AF (*Analysand in Formation*) chooses supervisors from Après-Coup for his own clinical work;⁴ such work will follow the course of the personal formation, the progressive subjective opening up to analytic listening. At a given moment, a supervisor may be able to notice that the work with such an analysand is transmitting to him something significant about the analytic act. There is analytic listening and transmission of listening: in the analysand in the treatment, in the analysand/analyst in formation and in the supervising analyst. The transferential field has allowed for an opening in the unfolding of the cure, a change of position. If we agree with Lacan and consider as an "act" the entire unfolding of a cure – the change of subjective position that entails the very possibility of the end of a cure – it should be observed that such an act, in its uniqueness and entirety, in fact takes its pace from discrete punctuations, related to the logical time inherent in each session

³ The task remains to express this practice in a most suitable way.

⁴ Après-Coup has a list of association supervisors. In the case of supervision, the Analyst in Formation needs to choose among those supervisors. If an AF should want to work with an analyst who is not on this list, he can submit a request to that effect to the Formation Committee. The Committee will study the request in question; if the analyst proposed is recognized within the analytic community, comes from a Freudian-Lacanian formation and embraces the spirit of formation of the association, we propose to him or her joining the list of Après-Coup supervisors. In this way, the list of supervisors respects the transferential predisposition of the AF and, at the same time, extends the bond among analysts in formation.

and the logical times inherent in the course of a treatment. To the extent that they entail a shifting of position of the analysand or of the listening of the analyst, such punctuations are logical steps that close a time of repetition in order to open a new space in the treatment: steps conceivable as discrete elements of the analytic act, as its "representatives". They are steps in the act; a "*pas d'acte*" that is, at one and the same time, a "*pas de sens*"⁵.

One of the extremely laborious aspects of transmission in analysis is the challenge of transmitting the analytic act as such. We know quite well that the practice of presenting clinical cases nurtured by various training institutes has nothing to do with transmission of the crucial steps of the treatment; in fact, such presentations are limited to exhibiting the theories of the analysts who present them and to being indicative of their symptomatic positions. On the other hand, the difficult question remains of the very possibility of transmitting something of the logical step that transform a moment in a cure, extrapolating it from the transferential reality of which it is, precisely, an effect in act. How to convey the originality of a creation when the conditions for it – unique, precise, unrepeatable – are removed? For this to happen, it is necessary that the analyst who gives a testimony of it, still be seized by the effects of such an act, by the astonishment that has accompanied its unprecedented production – and thus be able to do a "step in transmission", as one might speak of a dance step.

We know quite well how crucial the dimension of astonishment is in the course of the analytic act. We often speak of it from the perspective of the analysand, since it punctuates the recognition of the formations of the unconscious, the manifesting of the subject of the unconscious in the transferential relation. Yet it is important to reflect also on the astonishment from the analyst's perspective; if the analyst's desire is based on the wager of the unconscious, this does not take away the fact that the emergence of the effects of such a wager do not cease to surprise. *To allow for surprise is the fundamental element of formation.* It is no accident that

⁵ A "step in act" that is, at one and the same time, a "step in sense" and "non sense". The form "pas de sens", which means at once "step in sense" and "non-sense", is used by Lacan to indicate, among other things, the particular switch occurring during treatment when the unconscious truth emerges and changes the course of the work.

analytic listening is evenly suspended attention, "*gleichschwebende Aufmerksamkeit*," where any preestablished knowledge is, precisely, bracketed.

Après-coup's formation program foresees that a supervisor of the association can present the work done with an Analysand in Formation to a *Council*, a Council formed *ad hoc* – which comprises four analysts of the association and an AF.⁶ But such a Presentation (Presentation to the Council by the Supervisor) has a particular character. The supervisor will have to transmit to the Council something specific of the experience of the act; he will have to transmit what he has learned of the analytic act in the work with such an analysand, what new, unique thing he has learned in such a transmission. A testimony about transmission that aspires to being transmission itself. And the Council will express itself in this regard – affirmatively if transmission has taken place.

This procedure, in operation for some years, has proved to be fruitful. The experience of Presentation is often an occasion for surprise: the surprise of seeing a testimony produce effects while in progress, in the listening of various members of the Council and in their transference of work. In many cases this becomes an unprecedented experience and an any event an experience that retriggers a reflection on analytic ethics and on transmission. From the standpoint of the supervisor, the *challenge* of the transmission of the work of supervision becomes a punctuation that ties together analysis in intension and analysis in extension, and confirms the analyst's analysand position – which underscores formation as permanent. From the standpoint of the association, the procedure allows for a shift of emphasis, real and imaginary: we move from a value judgment of the work done by the Analysand in Formation to the recognition of an analytic position in act, which is acknowledged as such if there is transmission. At the same time, the procedure testifies to the fact that the formation of the AF whose work is presented and recognized has advanced in its relation to clinical work.⁷

⁶ A different AF, obviously, than the one whose work is being mentioned. The analysts and the AF who will make up the Council are chosen by the AF whose work is being presented by the supervisor.

⁷ The interest in this procedure is confirmed by the fact that there are analysts and supervisors who request a Presentation independently of the wish or need to obtain a completion of the Formation Program.

To complete the Après-Coup Formation Program, it is necessary that two supervisors of the association with whom the AF has worked, independently of each other, present the clinical work to two different Councils, which will make statements about it separately and at different moments. The affirmative response to such Councils will be the signing of a punctuation in formation: the end of the formation program and the continuation of permanent formation.

The end of the Formation Program *is not a nomination*⁸. The association assumes the responsibility for the quality of a formation within the social bond; but nomination is a matter that concerns the analyst as such, an analyst who vouches "*de soi même et de quelques autres*" ("for himself and some others"). Let us say that the nomination is part of the analyst's task. The association can foster the necessary bond among analysts so that the analyst can find "others," who are indispensable to sustain his own position as an analyst. There is a point of no return to this vouching "for himself and some others": an ethical issue, which alone "guarantees" any psychoanalyst worthy of the name – and which distinguishes psychoanalysis from any other discipline or "profession"; bringing it closer to the domain of art.

The analyst's desire sustains the analytic act; at the same time, it is sustained by the bond among analysts, in the transference of work that maintains the analysis in extension necessary to permanent formation. In this sense the analytic community never stops re-situating the analyst's position and the solitude inherent in the act. The bond among analysts is complementary to the ethics of analytic singularity, the analytic community being necessary to the renewal of the relation between clinic and theory.

At the point where we are, we think that the distinction between the end of the Après-Coup Formation Program and nomination is an essential point also for the life of our association. The history of psychoanalytic associations has shown to us the devastating effects of yearning for a guarantee and belonging; the risk of this is

⁸ Certificates attesting the title of analyst are not issued (as they are at all – *all* – the existing training institutes in the United States). If requested to, we will give a letter confirming completion of the formation program.

all the greater when the number of participants of an association is limited. Centripetality and proximity are harmful to the survival of psychoanalytic discourse and to its transmission.

Today there are those among us who are interested in the experience of testimony inherent in the *passee*. In keeping with the dissemination of working ties characteristic of the tradition of our association, we are today exploring the possibility of implementing an inter-associational *passee*, which would allow for an extension of the bond among analysts and a decentering beneficial to transmission.

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