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Teaching and Psychoanalysis: A Necessary Impossibility.

Paul Verhaeghe

"The strange behaviour of patients, in being able to combine a conscious knowing with not knowing, remains inexplicable by what is called normal psychology."¹

However different the Freud biographies may be, they are unanimous on one point: Freud wanted to know. From the outset, we see an ambitious man at work whose goal is to reach a Master position through knowledge. When he takes his first steps towards psychoanalysis -- he is at that stage middle-aged -- his goal is still the same, and this colours both his initial theory and practice. The analytic cure is a search for lost knowledge, lost as a result of it becoming unconscious; the aim of the treatment is the re-inscription of this unconscious knowledge into Consciousness. The implicit expectation is that the therapeutic effects will follow automatically. In this respect, Freud reveals himself as an inheritor of the Enlightenment, in his belief that the mere transmission of knowledge is enough to induce change. Nevertheless, beyond this Enlightenment, we meet Socrates with his insistent questions: what is knowledge, and how can it be passed on or taught? These are the two questions I want to address in this paper.

With respect to the first question, I have to specify that the knowledge concerned is rather particular: it is the knowledge that is searched for by every subject right from the start. The Dora case study illustrates the insistency and gives us the gist of this search: through her symptoms and dreams, Dora continually asks what it means to be a woman and a daughter in relation to the desire of a man.²

This particular illustration receives a general characterization when Freud begins to study childhood and thus discovers the generality of what he calls the infantile sexual researches, i.e., the original quest for knowledge. Just like the hysterical patient, the child wants to know the answer to three related questions. The first concerns the difference between boys and girls; the second question concerns the origin of babies; the last question is about the father and the mother: what is their relationship? The child, says Freud, proceeds like a scientist and will forge genuinely explanatory theories, that is why Freud calls them infantile sexual *researches* and infantile sexual *theories*.³ The recurring problem with the knowledge produced is that the answers are never definitive, with the result that the questions persist. This was also the case with Dora, whose second dream

¹ S. Freud, S.E. XII, p.142.

² S. Freud, *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, (1905e), S.E. VII.

³ S. Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905d), S.E. VII, pp. 194-197

mentions that "Sie fragt wohl hundertmal", she asks a hundred times.⁴ According to Freud, the infantile sexual researches falter on two specific points: the role of the father ("the fertilising role of the semen") and the female sexual identity ("the existence of the female sexual orifice"), and this failure, says Freud, ends "in a renunciation which not infrequently leaves behind it a permanent injury of the instinct for knowledge".⁵ Instead of a correct knowledge, the child must content itself with the primary fantasies, combining true, false and lack of knowledge into imaginary constructions. This, of course, will strengthen Freud's conviction that neurosis is either the effect of an incorrect knowledge in these matters, or the effect of a lack of knowledge.

Consequently, the first therapeutic solution proposed by Freud consists of providing patients with what he considers to be the right knowledge, thus putting the therapist in the position of the Master. A perfect illustration can be found in the construction produced for the benefit of little Hans: "Long before he (i.e., Hans) was in the world, I had known that a little Hans would come who would be so fond of his mother that he would be bound to feel afraid of his father because of it...". Hans's reaction is very revealing: "Does the Professor talk to God, Hans asked his father on the way home, as he can tell all that beforehand?". This little interaction is very revealing: it shows the analyst in the position of possessing, teaching and guaranteeing the correctness of a knowledge.⁶ Again, the Dora case study demonstrates extensive clinical applicability. Freud assumes the role of the master who knows in matters of desire and jouissance, and who, by way of treatment, teaches this knowledge to the patient; the patient must accept these insights; and so on. And again, the generalization of this conception can be found in his ideas on sexual enlightenment. In 1907 he writes enthusiastically on the subject: the adult may not withhold the necessary knowledge, on the contrary, he has to inform children correctly, in order that their incorrect, fantasmatic birth theories may become superfluous.⁷ For Freud, it is obvious that a general enlightenment will result in a drastic drop in the numbers of neurotic adults.

This generalization has a very strong impact on the treatment: the cure is transformed into didactics, the didactics become a cure. A perfect illustration of this confusion can be found in the famous Introductory Lectures on psychoanalysis, the *Vorlesungen*, - that is, literally, "What is read in front of the pupils". Both the treatment and the didactics amount to what I want to consider as a "didactical analysis of resistance". At that time, Freud became a real Master in discerning the resistances and antagonisms of his pupils/patients, even before they knew them themselves. Time and again, he formulates the critique of his pupils/patients himself – much better than they ever could have done themselves – and each time he takes the edge off the argument.

Such a strategy can only result in two possible reactions: either one is transformed from a patient into a pupil who says yes and absorbs everything, or one reacts as Dora did, by slamming the door and leaving. From a historical

⁴ S. Freud, (1905e), S.E. VII, p.97.

⁵ S. Freud, S.E. VII, *o.c.*, p.197.

⁶ Note the "professor"- form of address! S. Freud, *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy* (1909b), S.E. X, p.42.

⁷ S. Freud, *The Sexual Enlightenment of Children* (1907e). S.E. IX, p. 131.

point of view, this will give birth to the analysis of the resistance, i.e. the struggle to convince the patient. If she or he does not want to accept the presented knowledge, that is a matter of resistance. No wonder that Freud considers educatability to be the determining factor of fitness for psychoanalytic treatment.⁸

From a psychoanalytic point of view, both reactions represent a failure: the group that remains is transformed into obedient followers who take in knowledge; the individuals who leave remain unknowing; both of them are identical in that sense that neither of them surpasses the knowledge of the Other. It does not take Freud long to recognise this common point of failure. Indeed, whether the patient gives a categorical 'yes' or 'no' to an interpretation, both answers are suspect and amount to the same thing: the patient has not accepted the interpretation. Both of them are an effect of something different, something that will become more and more important: the transference relationship by which the analyst is ascribed or refused the position of the master.

Based on this experience, Freud will change his course drastically: knowledge must not be provided by the analyst, on the contrary, it is the analysand who has to produce knowledge, and the position of the teaching Master becomes forbidden for the analyst during the course of the treatment.⁹ Instead of teaching, the analyst has to be taught. Instead of the analyst's signifiers, those of the patient fill the scene; the patient is the one who knows, only he doesn't know himself that he knows. Knowledge coming from an external source is merely an inhibiting factor. This is clearly expressed in Freud's technical advice from this period: ideally the patient should not read analytic works, the analyst should restrain from giving precocious information and interpretation, etc.¹⁰ The distance separating the Dora case study from the Rat Man analysis is tremendous in this respect. In the latter case study, he confirms explicitly the futility of explicative interventions.¹¹ In matters of clinical practice, all attention goes to the creation of a situation in, and by which, the patient can produce as many signifiers as possible.

From a Lacanian point of view, this can be described as the operational character of the transference, i.e., the transference as driving force of the treatment. The analysand expects knowledge from the analyst; actually, at the beginning of the treatment, the analyst doesn't know anything at all about this particular patient, but he can use his position in such a way that it makes the patient produce signifiers, i.e., knowledge, for the one-who-is-supposed-to-know. That is one of the reasons why Freud stated that an analysis can only start where the transference is "positive", and thus entails an abundant associative production. A negative transference, on the other hand, results in silence and must be dispensed with as soon as possible.

This change in direction -- knowledge located in the analysand, not in the analyst -- is not a final one. A new stumbling block arises with this reversal. Freud

8. "The qualification which is the determining factor of fitness for psycho-analytic treatment - that is, whether the patient is educable...", S.Freud, *On Psychotherapy* (1905a), S.E.VII, p.264, my italics.

9. This change is expressed at its best in Freud's comment on the Irma-dream, cf.. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, S.E. IV, p.108.

10. S.Freud, *On Beginning the Treatment* (1913c), S.E.XII, pp. 139-142.

11. S.Freud, *Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* (1909d), S.E. X, p.181 n.1 and p.185, n.2.

experienced this in the epistemological domain when he studied the infantile sexual theories, which taught him the difference between knowledge and something beyond knowledge, something that belongs to another register, a register other than the Symbolic Order. It is at this point that the enlightenment -- indeed, the Enlightenment -- falls short.¹² The same goes for the treatment: there is something that cannot be put into words, something for which words are lacking; originally he considered this to be the traumatic experience, but later on he calls it the "mycelium", the "nucleus of our being", the "originally repressed".

Freud faces a second difficulty here that will take on more and more the shape of an impossibility. In the first half of his analytic career, he was more or less convinced of the fact that the "last word", the ultimate knowledge, could be found, provided the treatment went far enough; in a latter stage, he has to conclude that verbalisation is only possible up to a certain point; beyond that, there lies another order, the order of the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, meaning beyond the representations ("Vorstellungen", i.e., signifiers). Knowledge as it appears in the signifier, is not final, there is a beyond. With Lacan, we meet here the dimension of the truth, and in particular a typical feature of the truth: it can only be half said, "le mi-dire de la vérité".

Why do we call it "truth", how does it differ from mere knowledge? One could answer that truth always concerns desire and jouissance, but the same goes for the Freudian knowledge from the very beginning, e.g. his ideas about *Lust* (pleasure) and *Wunsch* (wish). The essential characteristic of truth is that it confronts us with the ultimate point where knowledge about desire and jouissance can no longer be put into words. Knowledge itself always stays within the realm of the signifier, truth starts within this realm but evokes a dimension beyond it, that is the main reason why we invented poetry. This ultimate dimension of desire and jouissance is the driving part of it -- and driving comes from drive. This dimension beyond the signifier is the Lacanian Real, or, to be more specific, the lost 'object a' that is forever lacking for the speaking subject, causing his ever shifting desire.

With this, Freud stumbles upon a second impossibility. The one discussed above concerned the fact that it is impossible for the analyst to assume the knowledge-producing and knowledge-guaranteeing Master position. The second one concerns something that applies to every speaking subject, namely, the impossibility of saying everything and of producing the final knowledge.

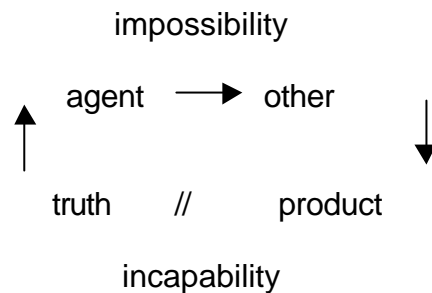
The first one finds its best formulation in 1933, when he enumerates the three impossible professions: mastering, educating, analysing.¹³ It is impossible for any person to impersonate the truth ("and only the truth, nothing but the truth") for another person, which is precisely what is required by those three professions. Freud knew very well what he was talking about, as he himself had even tried to combine them: in his early period, therapy came down to teaching from a Master

12. In 1933, he concludes that he has grossly overrated the prophylactic effect of enlightenment: although it installs a conscious knowledge, it does not stop the children from building up their fantasies. Knowledge is not enough, there is another factor at work. S. Freud, *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* (1937c). S.E. XXIII, pp. 233-234.

13. In the paragraph preceding this threefold impossibility, he states that analysis and the analytic relationship is based "on the love of truth - that is, on a recognition of reality". S.Freud, *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* (1937c), S.E. XXIII, p.248.

position.

The second impossibility will be elaborated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; the elaboration itself faces a fundamental difficulty, as it concerns something that lies beyond the dimension of the signifier, and thus beyond normal knowledge. Something keeps on insisting beyond the representations, the repetition compulsion is a desperate attempt to bind it with signifiers in order to Master it, but this fails time and again. This something has to do with the drive, albeit with that part of the drive that lies beyond the pleasure principle and that aims at another finality. Freud's first elaborations are situated both in the field of the traumatic neuroses (the present post-traumatic stress disorders) and in children's games, thus illustrating the general character of this "beyond".



What does not become clear with Freud, is the link between these two impossibilities. They are linked in the sense that each of them tries to answer the other: assuming the Master position functions as a guarantee for the answer that covers the lack in the chain of signifiers, and, vice versa, the cover of the lack in the Symbolic corroborates the position of the master: "the father who knew long before the subject was born...". Lacan's theory of the four discourses makes it possible to chart those two impossibilities with their respective interdependence; moreover, this theory demonstrates the structurally determined interactions between them, through the four different discourses.¹⁴ Each discourse consists of the same formal structure: it starts with an *agent* driven by a *truth* to speak to *another* with as a result a *product*; nevertheless, it is *impossible* for the agent to transmit his message completely to this other; this impossibility is founded on an underlying incapability: each discourse is *incapable* of producing something that would embrace its very starting-point, i.e., the truth. Both the impossibility and

14. As we consider this theory to be a condensation of Lacan's evolution, any bibliographic reference to a particular part of his work is too limited. The theory itself was coined during the seminar of 1969-70, *L'Envers de la psychanalyse* (Paris, Seuil, 1991, pp. 1-246), *Radiophonie* (*Scilicet*, 1970, nr.2/3, pp. 55 - 99) and the next seminar: *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*. A further elaboration can be found in *Encore*, the seminar of 1972-73 (Paris, Seuil, 1975, pp. 1-135).

For a didactic exposition I refer the English reader to: P.Verhaeghe, 'From impossibility to inability: Lacan's theory on the four discourses', in *The Letter, Lacanian perspectives on Psychoanalysis*, 4, spring 1995, Dublin, pp. 76-100; and P.Verhaeghe, *Does woman exist? From Freud's Hysteric to Lacan's Feminine*, Rebus Press Ltd., London, 1996.

incapability are the effect of the radical heteronomy of the truth: part of it lies beyond the signifier and belongs to the realm of the jouissance.

The four positions of this formal structure can be occupied by four different terms, by which the particularity of each concrete discourse is determined.¹⁵ This theory enables Lacan to formalise the three impossible Freudian professions as three different discourses, each of them with a particular appearance of the impossibility. The impossible "regieren" is the discourse of the master; the impossible "edukieren" the university discourse; the impossible "analysieren" the analytic discourse. He even adds a fourth one: the impossible desire installs the discourse of the hysteric. These four discourses are closely related in the sense that there is a structurally determined shift from one to the other, as the impossibility of one discourse results in/is answered by the impossibility of the next discourse.¹⁶

The particular advantage of this theory for our subject -- knowledge and its transmission through psychoanalysis versus the transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge -- is that it focuses on the transference with respect to the relationship between knowledge (a term) and truth (a position), and this in a purely formal

15. The four elements are: the S_1 , standing for the master; it is the signifier with which a subject pretends to be complete, without any division at all, the S_2 , denominating the endless chain of signifiers and thus standing for knowledge; 'object a' is what lies beyond the signifier, the primordial object that is irrevocably lost due to the acquisition of language; $S/$ is the divided and barred subject, barred from the Real and divided between the signifiers.

16. The four terms: S_1 and $S_2, S/$ and a, stand in a fixed order. With respect to the fixed order, they can be rotated over the positions, with as a result four different forms of discourse. Indeed, with the fifth rotation, one returns to the starting point, due to the fixed order of the term. The discourse of the Master:

$S_1 \ 6 \ S_2$
 $8XX \ XX \ 9$
 $S/ \ // \ a$

shifts to the University discourse:

$S_2 \ 6 \ a$
 $8 \ XX \ \ XX \ 9$
 $S_1 \ //S/$

shifts to the Analytic discourse:

$a \ 6S/$
 $8 \ XX \ \ XX \ 9$
 $S_2 \ // \ S_1$

which in its turn gives rise to the Hysteric's discourse:

$S/ \ 6 \ S_1$
 $8 \ XX \ \ XX \ 9$
 $a \ // \ S_2$

manner, that is, independent from any particular content of any particular patient. Indeed, every discourse represents a social bond that elicits another social bond by its failure, that is, another discourse with another relationship to knowledge and truth. The application of this discourse theory will permit us to chart the relationship between teaching and analysis as a necessary one between two impossibilities.

The relationship between analyst and patient forms the kernel of the analytic practice and determines this practice in a twofold way. First of all, the relationship must be made productive so that the patient produces signifiers; secondly, the relationship itself must be worked on. The first aspect induces knowledge, the second concerns truth.

The productivity of the transference relationship consists in the fact that the patient ascribes the analyst the position of the-one-who-knows, and that is why the patient produces signifiers, for this Other who-is-supposed-to-know. At this stage, analysis can be understood in terms of a *Master discourse*. Indeed, from the point of view of the patient, the analyst is situated at the place of the agent as a master S_1 , and that is why the patient at the place of the other produces signifiers S_2 , and so, produces knowledge:

$$S_1 \quad S_2$$

This first stage during an analysis results in a considerable growth in knowledge. That is why Lacan considered psychoanalysis an effective remedy against ignorance. An appropriate name for this first stage could be a Socratic discourse: the analyst functions as the proverbial midwife, enabling the patient to formulate a knowledge already there.

Inevitably, that is, structurally, the next step in this discourse is the production of "object small a ", beyond the knowledge that can be expressed in signifiers:

$$S_1 \quad S_2$$

$$S, / \quad // \quad a$$

This second stage implies the limit of the Master discourse, which means that we are faced with two possibilities: either there is a regression, or a progression from it to another discourse.

The regression brings us to the *University discourse*, where knowledge as such is staged as the agent.

$$S_2 \quad a$$

$$S_1 \quad //S, /$$

This regression was the Freudian choice for a very long time, where Freud hoped that knowledge as such would be sufficient to bridge the gap between subject and its object of desire. The result is exactly the opposite of expected, because the product of this discourse is an ever increasing division of the subject: $S_2 \rightarrow a \rightarrow S, /$. In this light, it is perfectly understandable that Freud's last paper *Die Ichspaltung im Abwehrvorgang*, goes about a generalised

splitting of the subject.¹⁷ The conclusion is quite clear: producing an ever increasing mass of knowledge, i.e., signifiers, intensifies the loss of "object a" for the pupil and leaves him all the more divided. To put it bluntly: the more you know, the more you will hesitate.

The path of progression, on the other hand, brings us to the paradoxes of the *Analytic discourse*. There we find knowledge, i.e., the body of signifiers, at the position of the truth. Lacan expresses it as follows: "What one expects from an analyst is that he makes his knowledge function in terms of truth". This is impossible, and thus he continues: "That is why he restricts himself to half-speaking".¹⁸

$$a \quad S_2 /$$
$$S_2 \quad // \quad S_1$$

This S_2 is the body of signifiers, produced by the patient in analysis, during its logically first stage.¹⁹ Indeed, the beginning of treatment does not consist in an analytic discourse, but makes it possible, because it obliges the patient to produce this ever increasing body of knowledge. With the analytic discourse, this body of signifiers gives rise to what lies beyond it, "object a", and turns it into the agent of this discourse, which causes the division of the subject and his desire. As a product of this discourse, the subject will be confronted with a S_1 of his own.

The difference between these two possibilities, regression and progression, is considerable. In the regressive solution, the analyst acts as the incarnation of knowledge, in the progressive one, he is nothing but a support of object a. The first solution is an attempt to keep the Master discourse going at a lower level, the second one is radically different, in the sense that the relationship as such, between the one-supposed-to-know and the one-producing-knowledge, ends in an exact reversal. Indeed, the Analytic discourse is a reversed Master discourse. The choice for a psychoanalytic solution requires this reversal of positions, that is, the working through of the transference relationship at the point where the analyst was installed in the position of guarantor of the truth. The net and always unpredictable result of this working through resides in the way a subject is able to tolerate the existence of the fundamental lack in the Symbolic, without a need either to fill it up, to disavow it or to reject it.

This theory on the four discourses enables me to discuss now the relationship between analysis and teaching in a structural way, by focusing on the elements of transference, knowledge and truth. The crucial difference lies in the different goals, which I would like to delineate as follows: separation for psychoanalysis, alienation for teaching. In terms of discourse, these goals imply that teaching

17. S. Freud, *Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence* (1940e). S.E. XXIII.

18. "Half-speaking" is an attempt to translate "mi-dire", a neologism in French. J.Lacan, *Le Séminaire livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse*, Paris, Seuil, 1991, p.58. A further elaboration can be found in: *Le Séminaire, livre XX: Encore*, Paris, Seuil, chapter 8.

19. Indeed, logically; as a "stage", it never stops.

aims at the transmission of knowledge, while analysis focuses on the co-optation of truth as the cause operating beyond knowledge.

First, teaching. Education always amounts to the process of passing signifiers, and thus knowledge, from the teacher to the pupil; this passing is only effective on condition that there is a positive transference: one learns where one loves. This can be understood perfectly in Freudian terms: with a primitive organism, the incorporation of the external world is limited to the pleasurable part of it, the rest is expelled/repressed (cf. "I could not take it in"); with the acquisition of language, incorporation takes place by way of signifiers and becomes an identification: the subject identifies itself with the signifiers of the Other, i.e., the knowledge offered by this Other, still on condition of a positive transference with this Other. From a Lacanian point of view, this identification is always an alienation: taking in signifiers coming from the Other turns the subject ontologically into a stranger for itself (Cf. Rimbaud: "Je est un autre", "I is another"). This alienation implies both gain and loss. First of all, there is a gain in knowledge, but the process goes much further than that, because the alienation is the very operation by which the relationship between subject and Other is established. Depending on the number of signifiers taken in by the subject, the corresponding external reality grows; even more so: this reality is thus *realised* because it is precisely determined by the Symbolic Order.²⁰ On the other hand, we have a loss, which is structurally determined and concerns firstly the Real, more particularly the loss-of-being, "le manque-à-être", and secondly the Symbolic, more particularly the loss of choice: one's own desire is always alienated to the desire of the Other.

These effects apply to the pupils for whom teaching always results in an effect of unification (group formation) in which each particular subject is drawn and drowned. For the teacher the act of teaching -- producing signifiers -- results inevitably in a confrontation with the limits of this knowledge, and thus with that part of the truth that lies beyond verbalization. This is the structural reason why teaching can be considered an impossible profession.

Next, analysis. Here, the process moves in the opposite direction, albeit also under transference: it is the analysand who produces signifiers and thus knowledge for the analyst who is on the receiving end. This time, he is the one who has to be taught, with the result that the alienation is situated on his side, entailing the risk that he identifies himself with the knowledge that is produced for him and ascribed to him. In contrast, on part of the analysand, the possibility of bypassing the alienation is created. Indeed, in so far as the subject keeps on producing signifiers for the analyst in the position of the one who knows, the subject is accordingly confronted with the alienating character of these signifiers with respect to 'his' identity as a subject: "For in this labour which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken from

20. The inspiration for this part of Lacanian theory lies definitely with M.Klein, especially her paper on: "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego", *I.J.Psa.*, 1930, 11. See Lacan, *Freud's papers on technique: Seminar I* ch. 6-7, and *The four fundamental concepts on psycho-analysis: Seminar XI*, chpt. 16-19.

him *by another*".²¹ In this sense, the analytic work is closely related to the work of mourning, and results in a desalienation or desidentification. This work confronts the subject with the irreparable lack that lies at the heart of the Symbolic. This is the same lack where the infantile search for knowledge came to a standstill for the same reasons: the symbolic sexual identity, the function of the father, the sexual rapport. The Symbolic can never embrace these aspects of the Real; as a lack, it opens the void for the subject, leaving him with two possibilities.²² In the first place, the analysand may recoil at this confrontation with the lack, and returns to the answer produced and guaranteed by the master; hence, he remains within the alienation and stays subjected to the desire of the Other and his knowledge: he remains a pupil. Consequently, he enters the group and shares the group's knowledge; to couch it in the linguistic terminology of F. de Saussure: he shares the conventions of the signifiers used by that group to cover the Real. In the second, the analysand can engage in a confrontation with the truth, that is, with the fundamental lack in the Other; hence, he will reduce *the* answer of the Master to *an* answer, by which the possibility of separation is opened. Beyond the dimension of knowledge, the subject has co-opted the truth: there is no guaranteeing Other. Consequently, the next step can only be indicated, but cannot be filled in. From this point onwards, the subject can come to the act of creativity, albeit a *creatio ex nihilo*, obliging him to make choices of his own. The determinism of the alienation is replaced by the semi-determinism of the separation; the time in which this takes place is the future anterior, the "I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming"; choices made now determine the future.²³ Compared to the process of teaching, which resulted in the homogenization of the pupils into a group (and left the teacher divided), analysis ends with the production of the radical difference between the analysands (and risks leaving the analyst in alienation).²⁴ It is no coincidence that Lacan discusses the *creatio ex nihilo* in his seminar on ethics: the choices one has to make beyond this point are arbitrary ones (there is no guarantee), and thus ethical ones.

Due to its structure, separation cannot be taught, but teaching is the necessary precondition for it: a sufficient amount of supporting signifiers has to be produced, before one can reach the point of lack of support. Once that point is reached, every signifier fails, I am reminded of an expression of my friend and colleague B.Driessens: 'trying to catch the truth with words is just like trying to catch water with a net: the only thing caught is dirt'.

Historically speaking, it is only the jester who is permitted, not to formulate but to evoke the truth; in this sense the analyst is the actual incarnation of the buffoon.

The difference between providing someone with signifiers and making

21. J.Lacan, Function and field of speech and language, in: *Ecrits*, a selection, W.W.Norton, New York, 1977, p.42.

22. In our opinion, Bion conceptualises the same inconceivable thing with his ideas on "O"; cf. *Attention and Interpretation*, London, Karnac Books Ltd., 1984.

23. J.Lacan, Function and field of speech and language, in: *Ecrits*, a selection, W.W.Norton, New York, 1977, p.86 . See also: *The Seminar, book I, Freud's papers on technique*, Cambridge university press, 1988, p.158.

24. This is expressed in the final paragraph of Lacan's XIth seminar, *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis*.

someone produce signifiers, i.e., the difference between teaching as a Master or being taught as a supposed Master, can be used to make a differentiation between psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Within the realm of the so-called supporting therapy, the treatment comes down to the fact that the therapist takes the position of the guaranteeing Other and provides the patient with the correct signifiers. Historically speaking, that is even where psychotherapy started, with the Greek theatre that demonstrated for the public their own drama, thus permitting them to identify with the players and resulting in what Aristotle called the catharsis. This kind of therapy permits the subject to elaborate a symbolic framework with which to tackle the Real. Psychoanalysis is a possible sequel, in which the subject has acquired enough signifiers in order to question the alienation and to come to the separation.

To conclude: transference can be used in a twofold way, either to pass signifiers on or to make someone produce them. In both cases, producing signifiers, whether in the position of teacher or of analysand, confronts the subject inevitably with the point of lack, and opens the possibility of an analytic process. In the first case, teaching is the main goal, it gives rise to alienation and transmission of knowledge, resulting in group formation around shared signifiers, i.e., a "doxa". For the Master, however, it provokes a confrontation with the lack in the Symbolic order and obliges him to question his own position as a divided subject towards this lack. In the second case, analysis becomes the aim, it gives rise to separation and co-optation of the truth, confronting the analysand with his own subjectivity, his other-ness. For the analyst however, it opens the trap of an identification with the Master position, from which he must stay away. The two processes are narrowly related. The discourse of the master instils knowledge, but produces the 'object a' in such a way that it cannot be related to the divided subject. The analytic discourse starts beyond this knowledge, with this 'object a' in the position of the agent in a causal relationship to the divided subject, who produces an S_1 of his own.

The internal antinomy between those two processes finds its clearest expression in what are called the psychoanalytic "schools" and their ever-present difficulty: how is it possible to form a group with people who have reached the pinnacle of their other-ness?

