

Love, Knowledge and Truth

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For Freud, the “only really serious difficulties [...]”¹ in a cure are encountered in the management of the transference, this “*genuine* love” that “seems to be second to none [...]”² If, as Lacan notes, “love manifests itself in the real through the most inconvenient and depressing effects”³, how does this appear in the transference?

Love addresses knowledge

The analytical situation, inaugurated by the romantic encounter between Breuer and Anna O., is described by Lacan as “formidable”, in that it supposes that the analyst teaches another, what he is lacking and that he “will find out what he is lacking insofar as he loves [...]”⁴ Lacan shows that the transference is addressed to an analyst, who then finds himself “in the position of he who contains *ágalma*, the fundamental object involved in the subject’s analysis [...]”⁵

In *The Symposium*, this “*ágalma* effect”⁶ occurs in Socrates, who, for Alcibiades is a subject supposed to have “knowledge about truth”.⁷ Lacan deduces that the place of the analyst is the one “where we are supposed to know.”⁸ J.-A. Miller specifies that “it is Socrates’ refusal to appear as *erastes*” towards the one who loves him, “which allows Lacan to see in him an anticipation of the psychoanalyst.”⁹

Negative transference

Freud, who demonstrated that “hate, [...] is older than love”¹⁰ however, was surprised to discover the occurrences of hostility in his analysands. He describes them as “negative

¹ Freud, S., “Observations on Transference-Love” (1915), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume.XII, London: Hogarth Press, 1958, p.159.

² *Ibid.*, p.168.

³ Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, livre XIV, La Logique du Fantôme*, Paris : Seuil, 2023, p.144.

⁴ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII: Transference*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans.B Fink, Cambridge: Polity, 2015, p.15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.193.

⁶ Miller, J.-A., « Les deux métaphores de l’amour », *La Cause freudienne* N°18, p.123.

⁷ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore*, trans. B. Fink, New York/London: Norton, 1999, p. 91

⁸ Lacan, J., *Transference*, *op.cit.*, p. 269.

⁹ Miller J.-A., « Les deux métaphores de l’amour » *op.cit.*, p.121.

¹⁰ Freud, S., “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” (1915), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume. XIV, London: Hogarth Press, p.139.

transference” and evokes an “ambivalence of feeling.”¹¹ Lacan prefers to speak of “hainamoration”¹², noting that the positive transference is when the analyst has “a soft spot for the individual concerned [...]” and the negative transference is when “you keep your eye on him [...]”¹³ He specifies that this modality constitutes “the inaugural knot of the analytical drama,”¹⁴ which J.-A. Miller clarifies by saying that the negative transference is nourished at the level “where the analyst presents himself as a being, as an agalmatic object”, because “this fact alone justifies hatred.”¹⁵ He also mentions that the lifting of repression can be paid for “with an aggressive intention”,¹⁶ adding that “any interpretation can deliver a demeaning message, to the extent that to interpret is to say to the subject *You don't know what you are saying.*”¹⁷

Lacan clarified that “far from attacking it [the experience of the passions] head on, the analytical maieutic takes a detour that amounts, in the end, to inducing in the subject a guided paranoia.”¹⁸ He also fought against “the insistence on the suggestion of acquired knowledge to the patient”¹⁹, which crushes desire and generates a resistance that is in fact that of the analyst.

Freud emphasized that if the transference constitutes the strongest resistance to analysis, it is “in so far as it is a negative transference or a positive transference of repressed erotic impulses.”²⁰ Too much love or an “erotic transference”²¹, as found in hysteria, is an obstacle to the cure. Lacan also warned the clinician who treats a paranoid subject, that he must “accommodate” the fact of being placed “in the position of object of a sort of mortifying erotomania.”²²

J.-A. Miller notes that “when the negative transference is triggered, one cannot fail to wonder whether a mistake has been made”²³ and he cites the breakdown of the analytical link in

¹¹ Freud, S., “The Dynamics of Transference” (1912), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume. XII, London: Hogarth Press, p. 106.

¹² Lacan, J., *Encore*, *op.cit.*, p. 90

¹³ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan, London: Karnac, 2004, p. 124.

¹⁴ Lacan, J., “Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis”, *Écrits*, trans. B. Fink, New York/London: Norton, 2006, p. 87.

¹⁵ Miller, J.-A., *Le transfert négatif*, Navarin, Paris, 2005, pp. 33-34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁸ Lacan, J., “Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis”, *op.cit.*, p. 89.

¹⁹ Miller, J.-A., « Le transfert négatif », *op.cit.*, p.58.

²⁰ Freud, S., “The Dynamics of Transference”, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²² Lacan J., “Presentation of the *Memoirs* of President Schreber in French Translation”, *Analysis* N°7, trans. A. Lewis, 1996, pp.1- 4.

²³ Miller, J.-A., « Le transfert négatif », *op.cit.*, p.99.

Elizabeth von R., Dora and “The Young Homosexual”, “cases in which Freud himself admits to having been wrong.”²⁴

We must add to this series the “negative therapeutic reaction” that Freud speaks of regarding patients who “refuse to surrender their state of illness.”²⁵ Lacan evokes it in connection with “the final malediction expressed at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*”²⁶, but also with “subjects more or less characterized by the fact of having been unwanted children” and who manifest an “irresistible inclination towards suicide.”²⁷

A more worthy love

With the end of the analysis, the vicissitudes of the transference cease. The subject “leaves to the analyst [...] all the old objects of love”²⁸ and, even, if there is no *sexual rapport* that can be written, the subject can manage to do without it, in order to “make love more worthy.”²⁹

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.100.

²⁵ Freud, S., “The Economic Problem of Masochism” (1924), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume. XIX, London: Hogarth Press, p. 166.

²⁶ Lacan, J., The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II, *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli, New York/London: Norton, 1991, p. 232.

²⁷ Lacan, J., The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book V, *Formations of the Unconscious*, trans. R. Grigg, Cambridge/MA: Polity, 2017, p. 228.

²⁸ Miller J.-A., *Le transfert négatif*, *op.cit.*, p.92.

²⁹ Lacan J., “Italian note”. *Autres écrits*, p. 311. See also “Note to the Italian Group”, trans. R. Grigg, *Analysis* 7, (1997).