

“Passionate Ignorance”: Literary and Pedagogical Implications of Lacan’s Style

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Abstract *Departing from Jacques Lacan’s influence on literary and pedagogical studies, this article explores how his conceptualization of “style” informs literature and pedagogy in addition to psychoanalysis. The article suggests that Lacan’s theorization of the human subject as the “letter” of psychoanalysis shows the interminability of reading and teaching due to his description of the “letter” as the literality of the human subject. This literality points to the construction of the humans as social subjects in the symbolic register and thus marks language an indispensable element of style. Dwelling in the function of language in style, the article traces the paths Lacan takes in order to disrupt the idea of the psychoanalytic connection based on the analyst’s mastery. It concentrates on transference and what Lacan calls “passionate ignorance” in a transference relation for the purpose of explaining how this disruption is realized. Moreover, Lacan’s own style of learning from Freud as well as his own style of teaching is discussed to further emphasize that education, like psychoanalysis and literature, should alternatively open a space for “passionate ignorance” to create the possibility of dialogic interaction.*

Keywords Lacan, literature, passionate ignorance, pedagogy, psychoanalysis, style

*Even if you do not understand it very well, reading what I have written
has an effect... (Lacan, 2008, p. 62)*

Introduction

Shoshana Felman’s *To Open the Question*, an article that appeared in the special issue of *Yale French Studies* (1977) on literature and psychoanalysis, adopts a critical position founded upon the necessity to “reinvent” the relationship between these two fields. Arguing that literature and psychoanalysis are mutually inclusive, she challenges the conventional understanding that deems literature an “object” to

be interpreted by psychoanalysis. Whereas the traditional sense conceives of literature as a “body of language” and psychoanalysis as a “body of knowledge,” Felman’s challenge offers a new approach to this relationship by disrupting the authoritarian position of psychoanalysis and initiating a dialogic connection (Felman, 1977, pp. 5-10). Since Felman’s article, numerous books and articles have been published on the implication between literature and psychoanalysis, indicating her success at opening a question (see for example, Gallop, 1985; Ragland-Sullivan, 1986; Mellard, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Stoltzfutz, 1996).

These studies have raised new questions many of which have been related to the problem of reading because of the dynamic combination of the bodies of knowledge and language. Literary aspects of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic aspects of literature have been highlighted to underscore their dialogic interaction, which, in Felman’s words, “has to take place outside of the master-slave pattern, which does not allow for true dialogue, being, under the banner of competence, a unilateral monologue of psychoanalysis *about* literature” (Felman, 1977, p.6). In other words, the challenge initiated by Felman regards psychoanalysis and literature as bodies implicated by each other, making an intervention into the predominant status of knowledge represented by the former and the subordinate status of language represented by the latter. This challenge has a direct relationship with the problems of education basically because teachers share the same position with psychoanalysts vis-à-vis their interlocutors. Both students and analysts expect their teachers and analysts respectively to transmit knowledge to them. While this expectation posits teachers and analysts as masters of pedagogical and analytic relationship, Felman’s critical stance offers an alternative approach to these connections.

In this intervention Lacan appears to be the underlying reference especially with his conceptualization of transference in relation to knowledge: “As soon as the subject who is supposed to know exists somewhere [...] there is transference” (Lacan, 1978, p. 232). Transference, referring to the unconscious restaging of the past experiences in the present, points to the importance of dialogue in the construction of knowledge starting with one’s knowledge of himself or herself. In fact, the interrelation Lacan finds between transference and knowledge draws on his conceptualization of the human subject as formed in language. Lacan describes the human subject as the subject of the unconscious whose knowledge of himself or herself is in fact a mis-knowledge. Since the human subject is constructed in the “discourse of the Other,” which is primarily the language to which one is born, knowledge is replaced by style in an analytic connection. Departing from this replacement one can look for an educational alternative in a world in which knowledge is often commoditized and the hours spent in class are viewed as the basic criteria of quality. Foregrounding style, on the other hand, may result in the valuation of what is shared in class together with the past and the future that teachers and students bring to class unconsciously.

Style, which Lacan describes as “the man [to whom] one addresses [oneself],” points to one’s sociality (Lacan, 2006b, p. 3). In other words, since “the discourse of the Other” marks the symbolic register, in which humans are formed as social subjects, what needs to be done in analysis is not the decipherment of “man” but rather the reading of “style” which is shaped through the dialogic interaction between the analyst and the analysand. The subversion of the idea of psychoanalytic knowledge as something possessed by the analyst brings forth the importance of transference in which the revival of the past in the present indicates the presence of an analytic connection.

This article aims to explore the nature of this connection, especially as it appears in Lacan’s conceptualization of imaginary and symbolic transference, in order to understand how the importance of knowledge is replaced by the importance of style in psychoanalysis. Informing not only psychoanalysis, but also literature and pedagogy, style highlights the inseparability of these fields. Inspired by *My Teaching* (2008), which is composed of the three lectures Lacan gave in 1967 and which recaptures all these dialogic relations in a concise manner, the article will try to reach the crossroads where psychoanalysis, literature and pedagogy meet.

Style of the Human Subject

Felman constructs from Lacan’s conception of transference an analogy between the analysand’s perception of the analyst as “a subject presumed to know” and the reader’s perception of the text as the possessor of the authority. Similar to the role of the psychoanalyst as defined by Lacan, the text is viewed by the reader “as the very place where meaning and *knowledge* of meaning reside” (Felman, 1977, p. 7). The master-slave duality here is deconstructed, she argues, when psychoanalysis submits itself to the literary perspective. She defines this submission as a “shift of emphasis,” which would result in an “undecidable” border between literature and psychoanalysis. Each field is involved in each other as its “*otherness to itself, its unconscious*” (Felman, 1977, pp. 7-10).

Peter Brooks complicates this transferential process by explicating how according to Lacan, the analyst needs to renounce the analysand’s perception of him as a master, which would also mean the renunciation of the foreclosure of meaning. In Brooks’ reading of Lacan, the analyst needs to offer his position as a vacant place to the analysand so that the analysand himself can listen to his own desire that he wants to make heard (Brooks, 1994, p. 70). Thus, the undecidable border between literature and psychoanalysis appears to denote at the same time the undecidable border between the analyst and the analysand along with the reader and the text. When Felman proposes to reverse the conceptualization of psychoanalysis as subject and literature as object, she means to remove the strict opposition between the fields. However, it should be noted that the human subject, which is the study object of both fields, appears to be the most important element that problematizes

this opposition. The importance of Lacan's theory for subverting the master-slave relationship finds its source in this problem. Since Lacan defines the human subject as a subject of the unconscious, being formed in language, the human subject is a signifier displaced in an intersubjective relation. As existential affirmation depends on his dialectic relationship between him or her and the Other in Lacan's theory, the one who speaks of himself or herself is not the same as the one of whom he or she speaks. This symbolic construction explains that the style is the projection of one's imago on others. The subjects undergoing this unconscious process do not "know" themselves because their discourse cannot be identical with its knowledge of itself. This is what Lacan calls the problem of "the material signifier," or "the letter" (Lacan, 2006f).

Lacan designates "the letter" as "the material medium [*support*] that concrete discourse borrows from language" (Lacan, 2006f, p. 413). That is to suggest that psychoanalytic experience discovers the structure of language in the unconscious. Language cannot be explained only with psychical and somatic functions in it, while the unconscious is not composed only of instincts. This formulation amounts to Lacan's suggestion that the human subject is the slave of language. Prior to psychical and somatic functions, language exists in a subject with its structure. The human subject's experience of society is based on this discourse while the master discourse establishes a tradition upon which culture is structured. The structures of culture, Lacan maintains, "display an ordering of exchanges which, even if unconscious, is inconceivable apart from the permutations authorized by language" (Lacan, 2006f, p. 414). Reducing culture to language, Lacan emphasizes that human society is distinguished from natural societies such as those of animals by language.

The human subject is literalized here since he or she is constructed in society as an effect of language. As Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe discuss in *The Title of the Letter*, this literalization implies on the one hand the existence of the structure of language prior to the subject's entrance into it, and on the other hand, the material support borrowed by the subject from the structure of language (Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, 1992, p.27). This interpretation highlights Lacan's conception of the human subject as a material signifier, which is a crucial step towards an understanding of psychoanalysis as a science.

Lacan's appeal to Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics in *The Instance* to theorize subject and the materiality of the letter aims at enabling language to attain the status of a scientific object. The primordially barred signifier and signified constitute the basic theme of scientific psychoanalysis, which claims to destroy the illusion that the signifier functions to represent the signified, and the signifier needs to fulfill its function in terms of signification (Lacan, 2006f, p. 416). Disagreeing with the understanding that reduces text to meaning, Lacan writes that "no signification can be sustained except by reference to another signification" (Lacan, 2006f, p. 415). Lacan goes on to problematize the notion of meaning that is assumed to be inherent

in the text by employing mathematical algorithms as “they are considered to be devoid of meaning” (Lacan, 2006f, p. 416). According to him, an algorithm as a function of the signifier reveals the signifying structure, where one can find the articulation of language composed of “*phonemes*.” The letter is present here, in the synchronic order of the *phonemes*, as an essential element of speech. “Differential couplings” in this synchronic system constitute what Lacan calls “signifying chain.” Meaning insists in the signifying chain as language [langue] signifies something different from what it says (Lacan, 2006f, p. 421). Linguistic philosophy of signification is interrupted by the algorithms that consistently override the sign and let the signifiers divert.

The letter’s materiality lies in this perversion. The sign is present but overridden while the letter’s insistent dis-placement includes placements. As Lacan shows in *Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'* the letter’s displacement requires placements. The letter which is “*not in its place*” does not mean that it “will (not) be” in its place: “...we cannot say of the purloined letter that, like other objects, it must be *or* not be somewhere but rather that, unlike them, it will be *and* will not be where it is wherever it goes” (Lacan, 2006d, p. 17). The italicized “and” in Lacan’s sentence intimates the letter’s materiality and oddity. The relations between the letter and place are “*singuliers*,” Lacan suggests, “they are the very ones maintained with place by the *signifier*” (Lacan, 2006d, p. 38). Therefore, the letter’s diversion in the signifying chain reveals its odd materiality through a repeatedly deleted signification and consistent dis-placement.

The letter’s consistent dis-placement necessarily implicates education not only because it deals with human subjects, but also because reading, writing, meaning, signification and interpretation are indispensable components of educational activities. The subjects determined by their socialities are further complicated by the perversion of meaning. If language signifies something different from what it says, as Lacan suggests, then many educational practices are based on assumptions or illusions. Being aware of this situation may lead the pedagogues to reflect on the possibility of learning from performance or style. That is to suggest that what matters in teaching is not the transmission of knowledge or message, but the natural performance of how teachers themselves learn.

Lacan Learning from Freud’s Style

The human subject as a material signifier, then, is the letter of psychoanalysis. As a speaking subject, he or she may be called a phonetic letter whose style is the man to whom he/she addresses himself or herself. This intersubjectively determined itinerary marks also his sociality, where one needs to ask if Lacan’s psychoanalysis as a science of the letter evokes a social science. This question becomes important especially in the context of *The Instance*, which Lacan addresses to the *Fédération des étudiants ès lettres*, adjusting his exposition according to the literary

background of his audience. Informing his audience of this adjustment, he recalls Freud's designation of "the age-old *universitas litterarum* as the ideal place for its institution" (Lacan, 2006e, p. 413). His addressee in this speech is not the psychoanalysts but a "philosophy group." Lacan proposes here a new psychoanalytic technique that may disrupt the illusory nature of psychoanalytic knowledge. His later formulation that analytic discourse always gives a different reading to the signifiers than what they signify reflects this reinvention (Lacan, 1999, p. 37). This is a "reinvention" in that Freud before Lacan had already understood the importance of style in psychoanalysis. As Lacan himself acknowledges, Lacan's teaching "serves to promote something that happened and that something has a name: Freud" (Lacan, 2008, p. 97). This fact renders Lacan's reference to Freud in *The Instance* more significant for comprehending the relationship between Lacan's radical theory of psychoanalytic technique and *universitas litterarum* as an ideal psychoanalytic institution.

Lacan's reference to Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Instance* aims to illustrate the central importance of linguistic structure in Freud's theory. According to Lacan, a Freudian dream image has nothing to do with its signification as it gains its value as a signifier. This suggestion may be translated as the operation of linguistically structured dreams such as tropes, signifying something other than what they signify. As Freud argues in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, scientific theories of dream are not concerned with dream interpretation as much as with lay opinion, which conceives of dreams as a psychic activity more than a mere somatic process (Freud, 1900/1953, p. 96). Lay opinion, Freud suggests, believes that dreams have meaning. What Freud means by "meaning" here may be interpreted as the signifier's effect on the signified, manifested through dream mechanisms such as symbolization, condensation, displacement, and secondary revision. In other words, manifest content of dreams does not simply signify latent content, but rather tells the interpreter that the meaning of what is dreamed lies somewhere else. For example, when Freud describes a condensed dream as "brief, meager and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream thoughts" (Freud, 1900/1953, p. 279), or a displaced dream as "differently centred from the dream-thoughts" (Freud, 1900/1953, p. 305), he implies the shifting signifier, to translate Freud's description into Lacan's terms.

The topological nature of dreams also clarifies why Freud considers *universitas litterarum* as the ideal place for psychoanalysis. Lay opinion, which believes more in dream interpretation than scientific theories, has to be an important component of psychoanalysis. In *The Question of Lay Analysis* Freud asks:

...[h]ave you not noticed that every philosopher, every imaginative writer, every historian and every biographer makes up his own psychology for himself, brings forward his own particular hypotheses

concerning the interconnections and aims of mental acts all more or less plausible and all equally untrustworthy? (Freud, 1926/1959, p. 192)

Psychoanalysis must be “untrustworthy” for Freud since the truth can be traced in style rather than content. The analyst should read slips of tongue, interstices and inconsistencies in a way that is similar to the reader of a literary text. For that reason, literature and psychoanalysis are implicated by each other, which is an invention reinvented by Lacan. As Jane Gallop summarizes, “Freud formulated this psychoanalytic method, but Lacan has generalized it into a way of receiving all discourse not just the analysand’s” (Gallop, 1985, p. 303).

Violation of Distinctions between Humanities and Sciences

Nevertheless, one can find here a controversy between Lacan’s formulation of psychoanalysis as a science and the Freudian psychoanalytic method based on the interpretation of style. This controversy carries us to our question again: Is Lacanian psychoanalysis, which is a science of the letter, a social science? As long as we use the term “social” to define one’s sociality, the answer should be “yes” since style always includes more than one person. However, the concept of “social science” begs caution when we think of the literary aspects of psychoanalysis. Jane Gallop’s discussion revolving around the distinctions among hard sciences, social sciences, humanities, and letters is useful at this point to underscore this controversy. Gallop notes, “By allying psychoanalysis first of all to linguistics, that most scientific of the social sciences, but then to philosophy and literature, and yet nonetheless stressing its place as a science, Lacan violates our distinction Humanities/Science” (Gallop, 1985, pp. 303-04). She suggests here that one needs to rethink this controversy and thus the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis in the context of transference, which is the structuration of the authority of interpretation. In the structure of transference, which may be defined as the repetition of the past trauma during analysis, the psychoanalyst holds the authority from the patient’s perspective similar to the reader’s perception of the text. Both the analyst and the text are viewed as “subject[s] presumed to know.” According to Gallop, every psychoanalytic critic experiences transference onto psychoanalysis as they perceive psychoanalysis as a “body of knowledge” (Gallop, 1985, p. 306). In fact, Lacan argues that wherever there is a subject who is supposed to know, there is also transference, since transference is indistinguishable from love and one loves the person he or she assumes to have knowledge (Lacan, 1999, p. 67). Gallop, considering the psychoanalytic critic’s relation with psychoanalysis analogous to the analysand’s relation with the analyst, argues that “for any critic with such a transference onto psychoanalysis, the most potent antidote is an analysis of the effects of transference in reading. In the relation of transference, the critic is no

longer analyst but patient” (Gallop, 1985, pp. 306-7). Through this reading, which carries us from psychoanalytic practice to the register of academia and teaching, the “letter” of literature is not suppressed “under the guise of the Humanities” (Gallop, 1985, p. 307).

Gallop’s discussion helps us underline the mutual inclusiveness of literature, psychoanalysis, and education. The materiality of the letter, that is, the support it acquires from the structure of language, and its repeating placements, marks the literalization of the human subject and the priority of the structure of language over his or her formation. The object of psychoanalysis, literature, and education thus becomes both human and language in congruity with this formulation. When the authority of psychoanalysis is disrupted, for example, the letters cease to be suppressed. If a critic becomes a “psychoanalytic critic” by virtue of his or her engagement with psychoanalysis, he or she needs to reflect on the transference interrelations in the process of reading. Likewise, a teacher analyzing students needs to be aware of how their interpretation is shaped by the interaction in class, or more properly the transferences occurring unconsciously. At this point, however, one needs to avoid producing another power-based pattern by bringing forth the authority of the analysands in psychoanalysis, texts in literary criticism, and students in education. In fact, the radicalism of Gallop’s argument is subdued by her comment’s possible restoration of the master-slave duality. In order to eliminate this danger, we need to understand the complex dynamics of transference, where the analysands’, texts’ or students’ placement in the position of an analyst does not grant them an absolute authority.

Interminability of Psychoanalysis, Reading, and Teaching

Freud’s initial engagement with the problem of transference is rooted in his search for an effective psychoanalytic technique. After his experience with his patient, Dora, Freud began to view transference as one of the analytic problems that need careful detection. “Transference is the one thing the presence of which has to be detected almost without assistance and with only the slightest clues to go upon, while at the same time the risk of making arbitrary inferences has to be avoided.” Freud concluded, conceding that in the Dora case he could not realize Dora’s identification of himself with Herr K., for whom Dora had sexual desires despite her counter accounts (Freud, 1905/1961, p. 116). Freud hypothesized that Dora’s transference on him aborted the analysis due to Dora’s desire to take revenge on Herr K. because of his inability to meet her sexual demands (Freud, 1905/1961, pp. 118-120). Freud’s failure to realize Dora’s transference and his consequent technical mistake, as a result of which Dora’s unconscious homosexual desire for Herr K’s wife is uncovered, led Freud to consider whether transference might be a major obstacle for analysis. Freud explains this obstacle in his later essay, *The Dynamics of Transference*, with the relationship between transference and

resistance. Although the analytic treatment endeavors to make libido accessible to consciousness and reality, as the precondition of a psychoneurosis is a decrease in this accessibility, during the treatment both the withdrawal of the libido into its “hiding-place” and the attraction of the unconscious complexes continue. In addition, they appear in the form of resistances against the analyst, since his analysis brings about a struggle between the forces working for recovery and the forces hindering it. This struggle results in what Freud calls “a puzzle.” On the one hand transference may be the most powerful resistance to the treatment, while on the other hand it may create a condition of cure, depending on the type of transference. If it is a negative transference, that is, the transference of the hostile feelings, or a positive transference of repressed erotic impulses that are not admissible to consciousness, then a resistance to the treatment emerges (Freud, 1912/1958, pp. 100-03). In *Observations on Transference-Love*, Freud goes on to speculate on the management of transference, once again describing transference as an analytic situation where “the only serious difficulties” lie (Freud, 1915/1958, p. 159). Discussing the practical and ethical aspects of the possible responses to the patient’s transference of love onto the doctor, Freud underlines the difficulty of interpreting the patient’s resistance and termination of the analysis as Dora did: “No doctor who experiences this for the first time will find it easy to retain his grasp on the analytic situation and to keep clear of the illusion that the treatment is really at an end” (Freud, 1915/1958, p.162).

The notion of transference continues to inform Freud’s reflection on terminability and interminability of analysis, at the same time hinting the surface on which Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory hinges. Freud’s later article, *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* posits the time limit as one of the fundamental problems of psychoanalysis and asks how one decides at which point psychoanalysis should be ended. This question relates on the one hand to the problematic nature of normality and on the other hand to the question of resistance and transference. In fact, when Freud opens the problem with the case of a young Russian man—Wolf Man—he explains Wolf Man’s stubborn silence with his transferences. According to Freud, the success of Wolf Man’s analysis was based on the technique of mastering his transferences. Even after the treatment, Freud writes, some of Wolf Man’s attacks of illness were caused by “residual portions of transference” (Freud, 1937/1964, p. 218). Freud complicates his search for the meaning of the end of analysis by discussing the interrelations between transference, resistance, psychic normality, ego, and defense mechanisms. This complication gives essence to Lacan’s theory of transference, which finds its initial construction in his criticism of ego psychology.

In his first seminar, *Freud’s Papers on Technique* (1953-54), Lacan considers *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* an illustration of Freud’s inability to accomplish an analytic success that is expected to bring about “normality” (Lacan,

1988a, p. 15). Despite his critical revision of Freud, this inability is implicated in Lacan's analytic theory that deconstructs the master-slave duality. Lacan rereads Freud's problematization of normality and possibility of attaining an ideal analytic success to pose questions on analytic technique. In the course of this reinterpretation Lacan explains the deconstructive process in relation to reading, which also informs his later arguments. Referring to Freud's *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*, Lacan writes:

This article isn't recommended reading for all and sundry, for anyone who knows how to read—luckily there are not that many people who do know how to read—it is a difficult one to digest if you happen to be an analyst—if you aren't an analyst, you don't give a toss. (Lacan, 1988a, p. 15)

Emphasizing the difficulty of Freud's article here, Lacan also belittles the possession of the knowledge of reading. As Lacan emphatically writes in *My Teaching*, psychoanalysts are the people who do not know what psychoanalysis is, in contrast to those who think they know it. In Lacan's words, "If [psychoanalysts] thought they knew straightaway, just like that, matters would be serious and there would be no more psychoanalysis at all" (Lacan, 2008, p. 8). The difficulty of understanding Freud's article refers to this kind of ignorance, which requires one to start reading it as if he or she knows nothing about the profession. Freud's innovative speculation in the article denotes both Freud's revision in his own work and his radical approach to psychoanalysis, which defies knowledge and mastery. The failure of the psychoanalyst follows his or her ignorance of the profession. Focusing on the context of Freud's suggestion that "psychoanalysis," "education," and "government" are impossible professions, one can see that this suggestion also implies the reciprocal relationship between the failure of the analyst and the ignorance of reading. Freud's realization of the interminability of analysis, as a result of which he declared it among the impossible professions is parallel to the impossibility of holding the knowledge of reading (Freud, 1937/1964, p. 248). The problem of reading is not peculiar to the published texts, but it is also a problem of analysis as the analyst recounts a narrative to the analyst.

Recognition and Identification

The impossibility of psychoanalysis, reading, and education in this context implies their interminability. Education appears to be as impossible as psychoanalysis because of the question of where to end. The problem of "normality" in psychoanalysis finds a direct reflection in education since every one needs a different duration to learn something. Hours, semesters, years that are determined as suitable or normal time periods by institutions illustrate to a large extent

assumptions and illusions. Furthermore the fact of resistance on the side of some students is a natural part of any class environment. In these cases, reading or analyzing students become an indispensable part of education. It is at this point that students' identification with teachers, regarding them as role models, and the problem of recognition in a pedagogical connection come to the fore, which are the questions Lacan traces in his reading of *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*.

Lacan furthers the connection he establishes between analytic technique and reading through his reinterpretation of the analyst's role in transference, also carrying us back to his criticism of Freud and ego-centered analytic technique. In fact, Lacan's reinterpretation of the analyst's role in transference in *Freud's Papers* draws on Freud's discussion of ego and its defensive mechanisms as elaborated in *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*.

In this article Freud first tries to understand the aetiology of neurotic disturbance for the purpose of exploring the possibility of its removal along with his investigation of the right analytic technique. His initial discussion revolves around the three decisive factors in the success of analytic treatment, namely the strength of instincts, which the ego is incapable of taming, the effects of early traumas that are not successfully treated by the immature ego, and the alterations of the ego from normality to abnormality at various degrees. Freud delves into the second one, highlighting it as the most difficult factor to master. He asks if the function of analysis is to enable a taming process that suppresses the recalcitrance of the instincts, thus making them act in harmony with the ego. Even if analysis is expected to accomplish this goal, he speculates, it may not always provide a strong ground for controlling the instincts, therefore the power of analysis to help the ego should be increased (Freud, 1937/1964, p. 230). The analyst's ego might be as unguarded as the immature ego of children when the instincts impose themselves strongly enough to hinder a complete transformation in the necessary defensive mechanism. As the defensive mechanisms are utilized by the ego to avoid unpleasurable experiences, the education of the ego in analysis is required to master the internal threat before it exerts its influence externally (Freud, 1937/1964, pp. 230-35).

Although *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* reflects Freud's questions with regard to the education of ego, putting forward the impossibility of both psychoanalysis and education, Lacan levels his criticism at Freud due to the central position of the ego in his quest for an effective analytic technique. In other words, the deconstructive nature of Freud's article does not prevent Lacan from criticizing Freud. In fact, when he establishes an analogy between the failure of analysis and the ignorance of reading, he also utters a provoking sentence: "Throughout his life, Freud followed the paths that he opened up in the course of this experience [the analytic experience], attaining in the end something that one could call a promised land" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 15). In the context of analytic technique Lacan defines the

path that Freud opened up as Freud's notion that the reconstruction of the subject's history is the essential and structural element of analytic progress (Lacan, 1988a, p. 12). Such reconstruction, according to Lacan, determines the basic concern of the analyst as singularity of an individual case. The nature of this singularity is at stake here in that due to the analytic setting it exceeds the limits of an individual. In other words, the analysand integrates his past into what Lacan calls "perceptible limits," historicising his past in the present, which is a process that owes a debt to the interhuman relationship between the analyst and the analysand. Even though Lacan does not deny the importance of this relationship for psychoanalysis, he does consider it necessary to add a new dimension to the analytic technique rather than repeating the conceptualization of the ego as the most important element of psychoanalysis.

In his interpretation of Freud's technical papers Lacan points out that Freudian language attained an intermediary role, rendering interhuman relations the fundamental path followed by the contemporary analytic doctrines. Lacan refers to Michale Balint's phrase "two-body psychology," which Balint borrows from John Rickman. Moving from the interhuman relations, and particularly from the concept of "two-body psychology" to the imaginary interaction between the analyst and the analysand, Lacan concludes that a third dimension—speech—should be added to this two-body psychology in order to better explain the analytic experience. With this addition, Lacan invites his audience to reconsider the function of the symbolic during the analysis. If the reconstruction of the past in the present is a more essential component of an analysis than the events that the subject remembers and narrates, then the analyst is the person who will prepare the conditions of this reconstruction.

At this point, the problem for Lacan is the function of the analyst, who is expected to strengthen the ego's defensive mechanisms. Because Freud defines the "promised land" of analysis as the suppression of the instincts and the increase in the power of the ego, the so called interhuman relation also serves this purpose. The interhuman relation enacted by speech makes this process necessarily transference, as Lacan suggests in *Freud's Papers*: "Each time a man speaks to another in an authentic and full manner, there is, in the true sense, transference, symbolic transference—something takes place which changes the nature of the two beings present" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 109). When Lacan adds speech to the imaginary interaction between the analyst and the analysand, we enter into the realm of transference. In fact, despite the changes in Lacan's theory of transference in the course of his seminars, this early reflection foreshadows his late theory of transference, which may be considered a break from the master-slave duality in the analytic connection. In order to understand the role of the symbolic in this process, we need to elucidate the imaginary relationship between the analyst and the analysand.

The imaginary relationship in analysis is rooted in the mirror stage. When Lacan theorizes an infant's identification of his mirror image with himself in *The Mirror Stage*, he also underlines that this stage influences the subject's relation with reality in the future. The ego based on an illusory sense of wholeness is formed in the mirror stage as a result of the infant's "imaginary" mastery over his body. As Lacan's title reveals, the formation of the ego in the mirror stage exposes itself also in a psychoanalytic experience in the form of "identification." Both in the mirror stage and psychoanalytic treatment, the subject's assumption of an image results in a transformation that needs the subject's identification with the other. In the former, however, this process occurs under the shadow of what Lacan calls "primordial form" as the identification is preceded by the subject's socialization and independence. Lacan argues that as a "gestalt," which is more constitutive than constituted, this form is irreducible for an individual. In other words, the total form of the infant's body is given to him only as a gestalt in which the form of his body "appears to him as the contour of his stature that freezes it and in a symmetry that reverses it, in opposition to the turbulent movements with which the subject feels he animates it" (Lacan, 2006f, p. 76). The appearances that reflect in the mirror in various forms according to the body's movements symbolize the ego's recognition of itself together with its alienation. In the ambiguous relationship between one's body and its image in the mirror lies the function of imagos that establishes a relationship between an organism and its reality (Lacan, 2006f, p. 78). Nonetheless, because man is not a mature creature by birth, mirror stage has a function of preparing a "drama," as Lacan calls it, that causes the denial of fragmented images and the ego's formation through an illusory sense of totality. This sense is not independent from alienation, as Lacan observes in the dream images of the analysands. In fact, he suggests, the infant who identifies with the image of his body in the mirror perceives it as an "other"; therefore, alienation and aggressiveness become inescapable. In other words, under the influence of "primary narcissism" the infant experiences a conflict between identification with the other and aggressiveness towards it. The infant's conflict here acquires an importance as the basis of Lacan's conceptualization of the imaginary relationship between the analyst and the analysand.

Lacan underscores the exemplary function of the mirror stage, which illustrates some of the subject's relations with his own image. He explores this exemplary function in his first seminar in order to explain the function of the imaginary in psychoanalysis. The mirror stage is:

...the original adventure through which man, for the first time, has the experience of seeing himself, of reflecting on himself and conceiving of himself as other than he is—an essential dimension of the human, which entirely structures his fantasy life. (Lacan, 2006f, p. 79)

The mirror stage as the “original experience” is also exemplary for an imaginary transference. Lacan argues in *Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis* that imaginary transference stems from a narcissistic identification whose roots can be found in the mirror stage. In other words, the narcissistic search that results in both identification and aggressiveness in the mirror stage finds its corollary in the imaginary transference through the analysand’s perception of the analyst as a mirror image. The analysand identifies with the analyst, as a result of which the analysand may love or hate the analyst narcissistically. Aggressiveness is hidden as a strong possibility in the imaginary transference. In order to explain this possibility, Lacan asks his audience to imagine the consequences of the analysand’s perception of the analyst as an exact replica of himself, concluding that the analysand’s excessive aggressiveness hinders the manifestation of transference causing its useful effect to show itself slowly. He suggests that “If we imagine it, in the extreme case, experienced in the uncanny form characteristic of the apprehensions of one’s *double*, the situation would trigger uncontrollable anxiety” (Lacan, 2006a, p. 89). In terms of analytic technique, this doubling is detrimental to psychoanalysis. Evoking Freud’s discussions in the postscript of *Dora* case and *Observations in Transference-Love*, where Freud considers transference a dangerous and difficult technical issue, Lacan argues that allowing the analysand to see the analyst as a mirror image may prevent the reciprocal interaction between them due to the narcissistic nature of love and hate.

Lacan goes on to analyze this reciprocal interaction, or what he calls “subject-to-subject relationship” in his *Presentation on Transference* (1951) by delving into the complexities of the *Dora* case. Pointing out the irreducibility of a psychoanalytic experience to any objectifying psychology, he avers that the subject is constituted in an analysis through a discourse, where the presence of the analyst creates the dimension of dialogue. Moreover, the dialectical experience should prevail especially in the nature of transference (Lacan, 2006c, pp. 176-177). The series of developments of truth and their dialectical reversals demonstrate to Lacan that Freud’s failure lies in his succumbing to counter-transference caused by some erroneous dialectical moments. Defining counter-transference as failure Lacan implies that in congruity with Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, the analyst desires to be recognized as well. In fact, when he relates transference to counter-transference, which he defines as “the total sum of the analyst’s biases, passions, and difficulties, or even of his inadequate information” (Lacan, 2006c, p. 183), Lacan clearly states that the imaginary transference is motivated by the analyst himself. Transference, he maintains, may reveal itself in an “emotional guise,” which might acquire a meaning only as a component of the dialectical moment at which it occurs, but this moment alludes to an error made by the analyst. Lacan succinctly describes this error at the end of his presentation, concluding that:

...transference always has the same meaning of indicating the moments where the analyst goes astray and takes anew his bearings, and the same value of reminding us of our role: that of a positive nonaction aiming at the ortho-dramatization of the patient's subjectivity. (Lacan, 2006c, p. 184)

Thus in contrast to the Freudian concentration on the analyst's ability to handle transference, Lacan emphasizes the role of the analyst in preventing the emergence of an imaginary relationship. Proposing this role as one of the fundamentals of psychoanalysis, Lacan also diverges from Freud's argument that imaginary transference is, to a large extent, an inescapable phenomenon due to its affective nature.

However, prevention of an imaginary relationship does not necessarily prevent transference because, as stated above, Lacan adds speech as the third dimension of transference, where transference may become inescapable. In *Freud's Papers* Lacan discusses the function of speech in transference once again with regard to the analytic technique. The fundamental role played by speech in transference stems from Lacan's conception of analysis as a technique of speech. According to Lacan, speech is not simply a means but the basis of psychoanalysis (Lacan, 1988a, p. 261). Given this effect, we need to understand the function of speech that Lacan relates to truth. Since the sign's relation to what it signifies is ambiguous, the meaning of the signs of language comes from outside of the signs. The meaning emerges, in Lacan's account, "either through an inner truth which allows you to recognise what is borne by signs, or by the presentation of an object which is correlated, in a repressed and insistent manner, with a sign" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 262). The sign is placed in the dimension of truth when speech poses itself as true, but the truth here is ambiguous in that speech may also include deception and error. In fact, this point carries Lacan to the subject due to the presupposition of psychoanalysis that the subject's discourse unfurls itself in the register of deception and error. By revisiting Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Lacan shows how the meaning of slips originates from this register, which reveals truth in Freud's dream theory (Lacan, 1988a, p. 265).

In Freud's theory, the emergence of truth in the register of deception implies the revelation of speech in discourse. Speech reveals itself through various forms of expression such as body language together with verbal tone, saying more than what the subject wants to say. The speech remains in the limits of "speaking subject," in Lacan's terms, going beyond the limits of "discoursing subject" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 266). According to Lacan, we can understand condensation, refusal, and repression by means of the dialectical movement of speech beyond discourse, and we need

such an understanding in order to better comprehend the function of speech in transference.

Action of Teaching

In his seminar—*Freud's Papers*—Lacan draws a diamond with six faces on the blackboard, and wants his audience to imagine a median plane which divides the pyramid into two. This plane represents the real, in which words and symbols create a hole that Lacan calls “being” or “nothingness.” The symbolic, the imaginary, and the real are found in the dimension of being, in which three basic passions are also inscribed:

...at the junction of the symbolic and imaginary, this fault line, if you will, this ridge line called love—at the junction of the imaginary and the real, hate—and, at the junction of the real and the symbolic, ignorance. (Lacan, 1988a, p. 271)

By using this illustration, Lacan adds a third passion—ignorance—to transference, which he believes is usually neglected. Together with this component, the function of the symbolic becomes clearer. By locating the analysand in a position of someone who is ignorant, and describing ignorance as a “passion,” Lacan highlights the replacement of the ego by the subject. If being is realised when the upper part of the pyramid is constructed as speech moves forward (Lacan, 1988a, p. 271), then the passionate ignorance begins to be overcome unfolding the meanings concealed in the subject. When Lacan suggests that “Analysis is not the reconstitution of the narcissistic image to which it has so often been reduced.” (Lacan, 1988a, pp. 271-72), he alludes to the realization of being in the symbolic register.

An implication of the replacement of the ego by the subject in the symbolic transference in contrast to the imaginary transference may be posed as a shift from a certain fixity to a process involved in the realization of being. In other words, in contrast to an obsessive projection that is fixated to one's ego, the subject not only emerges step by step, but also changes according to the analyst's speech. As the analysand feels himself ignorant and regards the analyst as “the subject who knows,” there opens a possibility of dialogue. The analysand's “passionate ignorance” plays the key role in the creation of a dialogue, because this passion prevents the intersubjective relation from turning to be an imaginary relationship based on an idealization of the knowing subject. Ultimately, realization of being is a process that has almost nothing to do with the knowledge of the analyst.

The seeming controversy between the passionate ignorance and the possibility of a dialogue lets us reconsider the function of speech as well as the problems of letter and style. First, we need to remember that ignorance and knowledge are also pedagogical problems, which are often addressed by Lacan as problems closely

related to psychoanalysis. In fact, while writing on analytic technique, and rereading Freud, Lacan was simultaneously a teacher and a student. Furthermore, he expressed his belief that learning and teaching are indispensable basically because teaching is an action rather than a transmission of meaning. Lacan reiterates throughout his seminars that every signification refers back to another signification. When he states the same argument in the twelfth part of *Freud's Papers*, he reminds us of Father Beirnaert's recollection of a dialogue between Saint Augustine and his son Adeodotus. This dialogue dramatizes the questions of signification and teaching in Lacan's reading, which are epitomized in Beirnaert's description of the theme of the dialogue: "...language transmits the truth from without through words which sound without, but the disciple always sees the truth within." (Lacan, 1988a, p. 250).

The ambiguous role of language in the transmission of the truth, which seems to constitute the basis of teaching according to the above sentence, reveals itself in the dialogue through the interlocutors' controversial perspectives of the function of speech in teaching. While Augustine's son considers the function of speech as teaching or learning depending on the position of the speaker, for Augustine there is no strict dividing line between the teacher and the learner. Trying to show his son that language has a function of teaching in all cases because "one teaches the person one addresses what it is one wants to know" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 250), Augustine posits a philosophy of teaching, where language cannot be dealt with by deciphering the reference of each sign. In fact, speech becomes teaching by virtue of functioning at the level of truth instead of information. The difference between truth and information may be reformulated as the difference between the "exchange of interhuman speech" and "communication by signals" (Lacan, 1988a, p. 250).

Augustine's examples imply, in the context of Lacan's seminar, that teaching and analytic situation do not require a sign in order to show themselves. In both cases action itself may signify something without recourse to getting the help of the signs, as demonstrated in Augustine's example of the bird-catcher who shows off his intrepidity by catching the bird. The crux of the point here is presented by Lacan as the impossibility of the existence of the bird-catcher's art in a world that is not already structured by language (Lacan, 1988a, p. 259). Lacan's reference to Heidegger's sentence, "In language man dwells," in *My Teaching* emphasizes the same point: Language exists before man and hence "Not only is man born into language in precisely the way he is born into the world; he is born through language." (Lacan, 2008, p. 27). That is why the analyst is the one "who must know that he is neither knowledge nor consciousness, but is dependent upon the desire of the Other, just as he is on the speech of the Other" (Lacan, 2008, p. 113). In other words, as Lacan interprets Augustine's anecdote, we can recognize signs as words instead of signs as themselves, and this happens only when we know the signification of the words in language. Lacan maintains that we do not learn

anything in the manipulation of signs defined by each other (Lacan, 1988a, p. 259). As shown by the “action” of the bird-catcher, one can teach something without signs. Teaching without signs includes ambiguity similar to the speech that has both a semantic and subjective ambiguity for Lacan: “He [Augustine] admits that the very subject who is telling us something very often does not know what he is telling us, and tells us more or less than he means to” (Lacan, 1988a, p. 260). In *The Ego in Freud's Theory* (1954-55), he repeats Augustine’s suggestion that there is no teacher who cannot occupy the “minutes” due to a lack of knowledge, which leads him to think that true teaching is the one which awakens a desire to learn despite the measure of ignorance taken by the teacher (Lacan, 1988b, p. 207).

Conclusion

In a psychoanalytical and pedagogical situation, where knowledge does not occupy the central place, the relationship between the subjects needs to be understood by crossing the borders of the imaginary. The analyst or the teacher may still be perceived as the subjects who know, but the resistance of the analysand or the student described by Lacan as “passionate ignorance” destroys the idealization of knowledge and the person who grasps it. What is at stake here is the supposedly knowing subjects’ realization of the fact that their knowledge cannot be primary for the construction of their styles. Instead, ignorance, which is not simply opposed to knowledge, can play the key role in analysis and education.

The importance of resistance and style in psychoanalysis and teaching carries us back to Felman’s discussion on the reciprocal interaction between literature and psychoanalysis. In fact, education can easily be added to these two fields which are implicated in each other. Especially in the context of reading literature, this implication attains a special meaning, as teaching how to read literature has been one of the issues that occupy the agendas of educational studies. Felman’s article *Psychoanalysis and Education*, which challenges many common assumptions about teaching, targets also the presumed opposition between knowledge and ignorance:

[K]nowledge [...] is not a *substance* but a structural dynamic: it is not *contained* by any individual but comes about out of the mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches which both say more than they know. Dialogue is thus the radical condition of learning and of knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition through which ignorance becomes structurally informative; knowledge is essentially, irreducibly dialogic... (Felman, 1982, p. 33)

When knowledge becomes a dynamic out of a dialogue, ignorance does not any more oppose it. The interminability of learning and teaching encompasses the possibility of learning from the ignorant party who is in fact not a party but a

situation in a dynamic movement. Furthermore, the idea of a dynamic rather than a substantial knowledge informs the notion of self-forgetting reading subject, since one can be interminably transformed only in a movement that cancels static assumptions. Barbara Johnson's response to the criticisms directed to deconstruction about its "terroristic belief in meaninglessness" underscores the same "humanist" stance that deconstructionist reading performs (Johnson, 1985, p. 142). Even if the reader makes an effort to follow "the letter of the text," reading process emerges as a resistance to the letter, while during this struggle the deconstructor faces his or her humanism, which is shown by the text "in the blindness of self-projection" (p. 148). "Passionate ignorance" refers to this kind of blindness, which prevents one from idealizing the supposed masters of knowledge and going through a narcissistic process of recognition. Lacan's understanding of style presents an alternative to an understanding of teaching based on recognition and identification, offering instead the possibility of a dynamic change, which Lacan calls "action."

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