

The Object of Transference

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In her argument for the 2018 NLS Congress, Lilia Mahjoub invokes three states of transference: wild, political, and psychoanalytic². She marks the psychoanalytic state as the only one that can subvert the others³. Therefore it is the specificity of the analytic experience that allows us to speak of all three. What can we say about the role of object *a* insofar as it determines which state of transference is at play?

Following Lacan's development in "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principle of Its Power", L. Mahjoub points to the 'strategy' and 'tactics' of dealing with psychoanalytic transference, as paradoxical knot. From 'strategy' we can discern a *positioning* that indicates the analyst's discourse, where the analyst puts "object *a* in the place of semblance (...) to investigate the status of truth as knowledge".⁴ Executing this strategy requires a reduction of the Ego in all its manifestations and refusing to exploit the power one is bestowed through the function of the subject supposed to know. This power is what distinguishes psychoanalytic from wild transference and psychoanalysis from psychotherapy. Moreover the position of object *a* in the analyst's discourse is precisely what subverts knowledge (S2).

Once the 'strategy' is in place, 'tactics' follow. L. Mahjoub cautions that linearity of the signifying articulation is not a sufficient sign of psychoanalytic transference⁵. At this stage, one could merely be trading in wild transference. The analyst enjoys a relative freedom in his tactics, yet in "Presentation on Transference" Lacan emphasizes the importance of harnessing 'pure dialectics': "[for] 'truth' is the name of the ideal movement that this discourse introduces into reality...psychoanalysis is a dialectical experience, and this notion should prevail when raising the question of the nature of transference."⁶ He goes on to demonstrate that psychoanalytic transference is necessary for the dialectical reversals that lead the subject to subvert reality and encounter subjective division.

Wild and political transferences operate within the master, university, hysteric and capitalist discourses. Object *a* is not in the position of the agent as it is in the analyst's discourse. Consequently, S2 is not in the position of truth, so the social bond hinges on universal logic. Singularity is precluded and thus mastery and identification are the hallmarks of these transferences.

1. Member of the Lacanian Compass and *plus-one* of a Flash cartel in preparation for the 2018 NLS Congress.

2. Mahjoub, L.: "In a State of Transference: Wild, Political, and Psychoanalytic", *The Lacanian Review* No.4, 2018.

3. Ibid., p. 164.

4. Lacan, J. *Seminar XX: Encore*, Norton, New York/London, 1998, p. 95.

5. Mahjoub, L., *op. cit.*, p. 166.

6. Lacan, J.: "Presentation on Transference", *Écrits*, Norton, New York/London, 2006, p. 177.



Within the analytic experience, the emergence of wild or political states of transference signals a failure of the analyst (Following Freud, L. Mahjoub notes the analyst is “harmed” in wild transference). Yet in our cultural milieu, such transferences prevail. L. Mahjoub’s argument is a call for psychoanalysts to assert our place in society. The fundamental strategy of the analyst in occupying the position of object *a* taps the *not-all* logic, producing the demand that constitutes our psychoanalytic cause. Then with Lacan we can say, “I have succeeded in doing what in the field of ordinary commerce people would like to be able to do with such ease: out of supply [*offre*] I have created demand⁷”.

7. Lacan, J.: “The Direction of the Treatment and the Principle of Its Power”, *Écrits*, Norton, New York/London, 2006, p. 515.