

Writing a psychoanalytic case - a question of ethics and not without castration

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There's no such thing as the big Other. I take this sentence as an axiom for my remarks. But between you and me, it's still hard for me to accept it, but I'm not saying it out loud anymore. Instead, I'm working in a cartel, looking for where I can find my orientation.

Even if there is no manual for *the* correct case representation, this does not mean that case writing is without rules, without legality.

Éric Laurent writes that each case is registered in its contingency within existing categories, in which the individual case is to be classified.² No big Other, but at the same time no arbitrariness. In approaching the case the important thing is to focus on its singularity. With respect to this, I like one sentence in Laurent's article very much. Namely, that it is the point of an encounter from which the analyst transforms the story into a case.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis the analyst is part of the symptom. He is part of it insofar as a symptom only occurs when I, as an analyst, am willing and able to hear something as a symptom and give what I hear the value of a symptom.

There is a similar phenomenon in case-writing. The person who reports the details of their life is also the producer of these details. In case presentations the patient is not present, the details are reported by the analyst. Here, too, the analyst is involved in the production of these details. If patients report that their father was an alcoholic and their mother did not leave her bed for days, how am I involved in the construction of these details of life as an analyst? On the one hand, this has to do with transference. Patients talk about such incidents because I am interested in them. On the other hand, it has to do with what I select as my cornerstone in the case construction.

Nothing relieves me of the responsibility of which moments and passages I regard as decisive.

Although no audience is physically present when writing the case, it exists in my imagination. Laurent refers in his article to Lacan, who describes the case as similar to a witticism. As with jokes, it needs the third and a common practice of language. I was surprised to read the latter. I associate this with two points. 1) Singularity can only develop in its singularity against a communal background. 2) To present a case in which the audience feels connected to another involves an ethical attitude similar to a joke. Well, it only works if the other gets it ... here the audience of colleagues are in this third position.

1. New Lacanian Field Austria - Initiative Vienne

2. Laurent É.; The Case, from Unease to the Lie, <http://www.amp-nls.org/nlsmessenger/2010/017.html>

At some point in my cartel work I came to the point where I asked myself why I was writing a case, for whom was I presenting a case. My first answer is, I do it for myself. Everyone probably knows the phenomenon of profiting from working on a case, for the work, but also for oneself. And beyond that? What about the analyst's desire in case writing? What does this consist of?

For the analyst, writing a psychoanalytical case is always a process of castration. I never succeed in presenting the work with a patient in the way I would like it to be. It happens to me that after a case presentation I have the feeling that the listeners have heard a different "patient story" than I wanted to write. Something never works, something always remains unsatisfied. This feeling of inadequacy does not easily give way, even if new aspects, questions, interpretations, come from the community of listeners.

In case-writing I balance between the effort to write the case well and the acceptance that this is exactly what goes wrong. Is it perhaps this failure that drives me to try again and again?

Every case, Laurent writes, if it is psychoanalytic, also produces a gap in existing knowledge.

Is it the hole in my knowledge that drives me to circle this - if not to fill it - over and over again?