

Hysterisation at the entry into analysis

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Currently we speak of the hysterisation of the subject as the condition of entry into analysis, and my question bears in fact on the hysterisation of the hysteric.

The notion of hysterisation at the entry point could lead us to think that the step of entry into analysis is the passage to the discourse of the hysteric. But is that the case? Lacan calls the hysteric subject “the unconscious at work”, and indeed, the barred subject of hysteria is supposed by the formations of the unconscious: dreams, the lapsus, and beyond that, symptoms. Thus we conceive hysteria as predisposed to the transference in which the speaker addresses himself to the other based on the signifier of the symptom, $S \longrightarrow S^a$. We also consider that the structure of the transference itself is very close to that of the discourse of the hysteric, to the point that from 1970 onwards, Lacan wrote $\$ \longrightarrow S1$. This is a different structure from that of the analytic discourse, in which the subject is not in the position to question his other, but is himself submitted to “the question of surplus jouissance”, and thus called upon to produce a response and not to wait for one from the other. It is a significant change of position.

Now, the hysteric, masculine or feminine, wishes to put the other to work – “what do you say to that, Professor?” – the other that she certainly showers with her love, but in order to call upon and question his desire, and especially his desire to know what she, that lover, is. We cannot say that Freud was not unmoved to this.

On this point, Lacan’s thesis at Yale University in November 1975 is radical: it is because some hysterics affected Freud that he invented the rules of the dispositive, he said, as a healthy protection against this soliciting by which he could not but be affected.¹⁵⁵ We know these rules. The first among them, the fundamental one, is free association, which invites the uttering of “stupidities”,¹⁵⁶ namely signifiers, since the signifier is stupid. Thus it encourages the suspension of the aim of interlocution in order that one says just what is in one’s mind, what is formulated in the mind. Not to speak to, or to speak for, but to speak without thinking, to speak for no reason at all, which requires a sort of withdrawal of the ego in its relations to the other. It is this that Lacan calls the analysand’s work and on this point hysteria is rather resistant, above all when the first impulses of transference love start to weaken.

As for Freud, in spite of the rules of the dispositive produced in response to hysterics, one could say that he put interpretation to work, and it is this that Lacan, in the letter to the Italians in 1973, called “his love affairs with truth”. Putting interpretation to work consists in it not only being made the cause of the work of articulation of truth by the analysand $a \longrightarrow \$$, but interpretation itself working towards this articulation, which positions the analyst in the place of the S1 in the discourse of the hysteric, $\$ \longrightarrow S1/S2$. This is why Lacan could formulate, without disrespect, that the analytic discourse supposes the fall of the Freudian model. Freud’s love affairs with truth place him on the side of the articulable part of truth. But it is through the impossibility of articulating everything, that truth touches the real. When Freud took the measure of this other part, namely that which moved to the side of this ‘impossible to say’, what he produced is the death drive. This is a way of approaching what goes against the pleasure principle, what we call jouissance and of which there are multiple and very varied forms that do not allow us to suppose this single, moreover aporetic term, death drive.

However, it should be noted that hysterisation at the entry is necessary even for the

¹⁵⁵ Lacan, J., *Conférences et entretiens dans des universités nord-américaines*, Yale University, 24 de novembre 1975. *Scilicet* 6/7, Paris, Seuil, 1976.

¹⁵⁶ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Encore 1972-1973*. Ed. J-A Miller, trans. B. Fink, New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 1998, p. 22.

hysteric, and it is not produced without the analytic act, for this entry does a violence to the structure of the hysteric, which is at base almost the same as that of the transference. And contrary to what we think in general, in a certain way it is easier for the obsessional to withdraw from interlocution, for he is so pleased with his intimate thoughts that he has the habit of speaking to himself. However for him too there is a difficulty, for speaking to oneself is generally done in a low voice, and here, he must speak out loud, and when speaking aloud his habit is to let his ego speak and to inflate his narcissism. But even so, to speak for nothing, if I may say that of free association, raises the vector of intentionality which suits him very well, while the hysteric never wants her chatter to be for nothing, in spite of appearances, but rather, always to touch the other.

She got to that point with Freud; let us hope that after Lacan it will happen more often through the analytic act.

Translated from French by Susan Schwartz