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The Psychoanalyst's Money

Summary:

The author stresses the extent to which analytic literature represses the issue of money and how its significance to the analytical relationship ought instead to be analyzed. Starting from a widespread fantasy among analysands, where the analyst is felt to be a prostitute, the author expands upon the limits of the analytical setting, which has been suffering from a sort of phobia of the gift since the days of Freud. To the concept of psychoanalysis “of the answering” by the analytical establishment, the author opposes a more living concept of “psychoanalysis of the questioning”. [1]

In a conference dedicated to the topics of sexuality and politics [2], speaking about money seems to me to be both legitimate and necessary since it's an embarrassing fact for many people, myself included, and at the same time of interest to everyone. Looking over the list of titles of the interventions, I realized that no other paper mentioned money. They are all titles that pay honor to those who thought about it; not one dishonors it. This should raise some suspicions, especially since everyone, with no exceptions, handles money every day; almost everyone thinks about it every day; and many turn it into a real passion. In this conference that officially addresses sexuality and politics, and unofficially prestige and power, one can make out something resembling the obscenity of money, which for some people in certain respects is a respectable contrast to the sexual obscenity of recent years. While one can easily find family magazines with images of couples having sex displayed on the front cover, one of the richest men in Italy organized a simple aperitif in the countryside for his daughter's wedding. Or is this irrelevant? Here is a first point for discussion. In any event, something similar to what normally occurs in analysis, at least today, is taking place in this conference; namely, once the cost of a session has been established, the analyst never again, or almost never, speaks about money, about his money, while the analysand talks more frequently and more easily about the most secret details of his perversions than about his monthly salary. If he does talk about it, it's when his income declines to the point of making it difficult for him to continue analysis.

The reasons for this silence, which is periodically interrupted by proclamations, seem to be related in the two cases. In the analytic relationship, considered from the economic point of view, one is dealing with a sales contract, we will later see in what sense, even if what is bought and sold isn't visible. As a result, the buyer—regardless of his economic position, which is sometimes higher than that of his analyst, generally equal, and at times lower—tends to keep quiet about the economic terms of his situation that might place him in a disadvantageous position with respect to the seller. Clearly, the economic position can later worsen along with any other type of presumed extra-economic disadvantage. But this disparity of positions in the analytic contract, this conflict, is played out subtly and continuously. The absence of money in the presentations at this conference may correspond to the age-old, and in some respects illustrious, cultural amnesia regarding its role and position in the social context. But does it then make sense to talk about politics and sexuality? In any case, however, money has been quite present—in the entrance fee to this conference. The majority of those now listening to me decided to pay the fee, and they're now probably thinking, in a silence soon to be interrupted by proclamations, that it was worth it. To the few who objected and tried to enter without paying,

the implicit response is, I assume: If you don't pay, the business will go under. Just as one does in concerts overrun by crowds of young people: If you don't pay, there won't be any more concerts. Precisely the same thing holds for analysis: If you don't pay, the business will fold up.

It's perhaps superfluous to note that the total amount of money received by a (classical) analyst more or less corresponds, apart from exceptional cases, to the amount made by any other professional, such as doctors, lawyers and journalists. What magnifies the analysts' earnings out of all proportion in the eyes of most people, and causes it to be seen as unfair, often exorbitant and always privileged, is that the earnings derive from a small number of patients. As you well know, we're not talking about three or four sessions a year, but three or four sessions a week. Here lies the difference with the conference: this hall, though full, would immediately thin out as soon we began analysis.

There are and most likely will be many attempts at reform regarding this situation, whose premise and condition of existence is the presence of money. It's worth rapidly listing the various modes of modification of the current money contract, beginning with the

- * imperial mode in which the analyst dictates his "conditions". These are in fact Freud's own words from the private account of the Rat Man: "After telling him my conditions, he said he had to speak with his mother, and accepted the next day". This sentence has been removed from the published account, but is nevertheless still practiced today by the majority of analysts. Against this kind of request, the analysand may adopt a kind of predatory behavior if he intends to continue with analysis. I've known those who have turned to more or less legal theft and others who have more subtly, but with less success, taken to gambling.

To the imperial mode one notes a symmetrical correspondence with another form, much like the institution of charity that flourishes at times of uncontrolled capitalism; namely, the

- * ascetic-sacrificial mode in which one or more individuals are analyzed without payment. This is once again the case of Freud, who found himself in the curious situation of having to analyze the same person but in different situations: first as a wealthy man and later as a pauper. He was treating a Russian patient when the revolution intervened... These days, the ascetic-sacrificial mode at times takes the form of a "mission" among the natives, i.e. those of the inner-city, the blue-collar workers in the outskirts of town, etc. Whatever one might think of this, and I try to think the best possible of it, it remains that this mode has a fundamental role: to establish a balance with an essentially imperial practice.

From these two symmetric modes one passes to the* mode of bilateral, union, or advanced capitalist discussion. Here, the analyst carries out a summary socio-economic diagnosis of the applicant-this is one of the diagnoses that, unlike others, doctors almost never get wrong-and on this basis sets, by more or less common agreement, the price of treatment. This mode apparently has no defects. Yet, it has the shortcomings of union negotiation: namely, it favors the strongest groups-in our case, the most "interesting" individuals, according to the "interests" of the analyst, whatever they may be, and the most economically solid. Exclusion continues and, faced with the enormous increase in requests, one arrives at the

- * collective welfare or generalized dependence mode. Here, the money problem is assumed by a public institution that first covers the analysand's needs and will later probably cover those of the analyst as well. This is the situation that corresponds to state capitalism. Money doesn't disappear; rather, it's shifted to the side and upwards becoming like God-invisible though ever present. In the years to come, it will be rather interesting to see analysis carried out in this way.

There arises a question at this point: And how do you make your living? In the past, I made my living in the imperial mode. Today, I'm forced to do so in the advanced capitalist mode. For lack of ascetic inclinations, I've never practiced the ascetic-sacrificial mode, though I've often been asked and invited to do so. I have no direct experience of the generalized dependence mode.

I repeat: these are all modes of reform within the circle permanently circumscribed by money. But what gives rise to the constant presence of money? I'd like to begin with a certain fact of analytic experience that's just as constant. There is no analysand, whether in individual or group analysis, rich or poor, neurotic

or psychotic, who does not at some point compare the analyst to a prostitute. Clearly, the moments and meanings of this comparison can greatly differ; the ways of stating it-directly or indirectly, backwards or forwards: I'm the prostitute or he's the prostitute; introducing or not the basic figure of the pimp; in a dream, a slip of the tongue, a fantasy, a series of behaviors-all these modes could provide the basis for a collection of vieux jeu psychoanalytic anecdotes or a book. This constant, basic, univocal aspect, which in psychoanalytic terms someone might be tempted to trace back to an ubiquitous fantasy of prostitution-or another more subtle, primary form-can instead be attributed to the framework of analysis itself. In analysis, someone, the analyst, provides a service-or assistance-for a fee, something that essentially belongs to the category of work, while someone else, the analysand, seeks, in exchange for money, something that always belongs to eros and its history.

As you see, the essence of this relationship (eros-money-work) is exactly the relationship of prostitution. I don't want to present a metaphor, but a striking resemblance of position and role in the social context. In both analysis and prostitution there is a partial access to eros, grasped in the unique and individualized point of its historic course. Didn't Adorno speak of prostitutes as the saviors of pre-genital sexuality? There is a particular promesse de bonheur that's continuously frustrated and that continuously arises anew. There is a "social welfare" role that, in the case of prostitution, government has always recognized and regulated and that, in the case of analysis, it now seeks to regulate and administrate. And there has recently come about a convergence of roles in which theoretic lessons, psychoanalytic- and behaviorist-inspired techniques, pornographic films and assistants from the field of prostitution have been united in a "therapeutic" approach. I'm referring to the "sex therapy centers" in North America that, following the publications of Masters and Johnson, rapidly spread, reaching nearly 5,000 by 1974. A psychoanalyst will object at this point, "But we don't touch the body"! Yet, their not touching the body, and above all the body of love, involves a special perversion, at times grotesque and at times pompous, a bit vaudevillian and a bit confessional, that deserves examination. Some time ago, while taking part in a psychology conference in Padua, I said that psychological therapy, understood broadly, was assuming the position of an auxiliary parental system in society, that is, an ensemble-at various levels-designated to assume the tasks and roles that once were performed, or not performed, by the family. Given the loss of the historic and symbolic importance of the family institution, some of its basic functions have been taken on, in a generalized and differentiated way, by a new institution whose linchpin is psychoanalysis. The auxiliary parental system doesn't only involve the production of psychologists at university level-whose orientation is clearly influenced by psychoanalysts-but tends to encompass traditional and non-traditional systems of sexual pedagogy and systems of social control of sexual deviance, including prostitution. The recent conferences of prostitutes in America, France and Germany, risk "unionizing" prostitution when they're unable to find an outlet for the radical protest on which they're based, thus introducing-clearly in a partial manner, and after certain cosmetic retouching-into this a new, emerging erotic institution of the future where, if analysts turn out to be prostitutes, prostitutes risk becoming analysts.[3]

This core movement, its basic premises in the overall capitalist development, its apparent necessity, the perspectives that it opens up-all this deserves being questioned. Because in increasingly open and also unpredictable ways it's guiding each of us and relativizing differences that until not long ago appeared quite radical: Freudian and anti-Freudian; Lacanian and anti-Lacanian; those attending this conference and those absent; friends and enemies-we are all candidates for a position in the new institution of the body which, as is clear, is also the institution of the soul.

At this point, someone might be tempted to exclaim, like Karl Kraus, "They have the press, they have the stock market and now they have the unconscious"! Actually, the new institution, which is put together in pieces, in fragments, like a puzzle, is at the same time subject to unforeseen breakdowns and partial collapses. What emerges turns out to be an unexpected disaster. At each step in its construction one finds weaknesses, deficiencies and oppositions, including:

1. The institution and the need that underlies it are new, but the institution's knowledge was developed earlier. That's why a gap is established from the very outset between the requests for explanations and

presentations made of the institution and the responses that, on the basis of its knowledge, it is able to provide. It is more capable of solving old problems, upon which its knowledge was developed, than new ones, from which it emerged as an institution. Recently, an upper middle-class, well-mannered little girl calmly killed her family while they were watching a comedian on TV. The newspapers ask: Drugs? Money? Sex? The old constitutionalists pull “menstrual madness” out of their hat. And from the side of the psychoanalysts, Oedipus enters the scene, but with a limp.

2. The new institution, as such, is forced to use generalizations, pigeonholing and categorizations, though discretely and flexibly. It thus establishes the practical exercise of its knowledge (already given preference) upon the passivity and immobility of the objects of this knowledge. When these begin to speak and to know for themselves, it finds itself completely unarmed. A clear example of this is what happened earlier to psychoanalysis with the student movement, then with women’s, homosexuals’ movements, etc.

3. The new institution is wholly constructed, whether directly or indirectly, within the money/work circle. It’s here that a typical essay of Freud historically intervened-his phobia of the gift, his radical inability to live the dimension of the gift, of which I could provide an illuminating example.[4] Something intervened at which Ferenczi’s anecdote hints: A man says, “Doctor, if you cure me I’ll give you everything I own”. When the doctor replies, “30 crowns per session will be enough,” the man unexpectedly asks, “Don’t you think that’s a little expensive”? Now, Ferenczi’s comment was as follows: “A typical example of the distance between the conscious will of sacrifice and hidden repugnance”. But perhaps there’s something else, a distance between the economy of the gift and that of money. In this case, both Freud’s phobia and Ferenczi’s common sense perfectly correspond to the capitalist ideal of an economy, of a reality, completely circumscribed by monetary exchange. And yet, this same capitalist development in the second half of the XXth century brought about a reduction, though partial and limited, in the coerciveness of money and work. One thus sees the new institution, made up of professions at various levels, flee from that very area of reality that, currently expanding, evades the money/work circle. If it is possible to establish new relationships in which money is at least partly excluded-and this is what many are now trying to do-then the new institution, based on money, will ipso facto be excluded from this development and will operate in an underdeveloped area.[5]

4. This is extraordinarily important for what concerns a central aspect of analysis, and hence the new institution, namely time: the conception, use and consumption of time. Enclosed within the money/work circle, this time is linear, monotonous and not surprisingly evokes the time of an assembly line, with the slow, gradual movement of pieces. I’d like to remind you of a prophetic slip of the tongue by Groddeck in the presence of Ferenczi: Psychoanalytiker-Paralytiker. The identification of reality as the reality of money/work implies a conception of change in terms of a slow, gradual modification that can be perceived from a great distance. When an area of reality free of the money/work circle makes headway into the collective, the time of non-linear change also expands: the unexpected takes the place of the continuous; intensity replaces extension; leaps substitute the march; and arrhythmic motion supplants the watch-like movement. At this point, the institution is able to grasp only the poorest and most backward aspect of reality, and one sees the richer, newer aspect of the future slip away when it is unable to control and “impoverish” it.

5. Years ago, during the 1969 Rome counter-conference[6] against the IPA one, I spoke about a psychoanalysis of the questioning, or of the query, as opposed to that of the answering. Over the years the latter has developed along the institutional lines that were then signaled. This enormous, bloodless zombie has spread out to occupy an ever greater number of positions and professorships. What’s become of the other psychoanalysis? Whoever expected an orderly, coherent development according to a clear platform, was mistaken. And it was quite right for it to happen in this way. Otherwise, we would have remained on the same ground as the other psychoanalysis-to use an image Franco Fornari is quite fond of-we would have cultivated it simply by beginning from the opposite side. It’s turned out instead that the trail was lost, that water was lacking, that wild brambles grew, and that many curious onlookers roam about who want to dig things up on their own. As a young friend of mine wrote, a great fan of overrun concerts and even more so of independently-organized concerts, “Great disorder under the sky/ the situation is excellent.”

Translated from the Italian by Marcel Sima Lieberman

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Notes:

[1] Original title of this article is: "Il denaro dello psicoanalista" in Verdiglione (1976, pp. 308-15).

[2] This text was read at the International Conference "Sexuality and Politics", organized by A. Verdiglione in Milan, 1975.

[3] Three days after this conference, one of the most prestigious newspapers of the Italian establishment came out with a background article that read: "How far can the government and legislators venture in considering, from a legal perspective, an ensemble of relations that revolve around the psychological dimension of a person, that is, his essence as a human being prior to his status as a legal subject? Could a legislator, for example, set an upper limit on the number of children for every family [...]? Could he provide legal recognition of non-heterosexual couples, assigning them to special categories [...]? Or yet again: is it advisable to tax income resulting from prostitution as is being proposed in France [...]?" (Negri 1975).

[4] It suffices to say that this involves Freud's relationship-that can be precisely deduced from his major work on the basis of certain details-with the figure of (absolute) power and consequently with death and/or the gift that result from it.

[5] It's no coincidence that the greatest opposition to psychoanalysis today comes from women. There comes into play here something that Freud had empirically noted as a tendency of women to *zahlen gleichim mit ihrern Anblick*--to pay, so to speak, with their looks (S. Freud 1901, GW, p. 175). This is the first mention of the female body-money equivalence upon which some feminist analyses are today based.

[6] In 1969 Fachinelli organized with other IPA analysts a counter-conference to protest against the IPA conference held in Rome. This counter-conference was also attended by Jacques Lacan

Bio:

Elvio Fachinelli (Luserna, Trento, 1928 – Milan 1989) was an M.D. and psychoanalyst in Milan where, in the 1970's, he established the journal 'L'erba voglio'. He published his witty 'psycho-political' articles there and in the popular weekly 'L'Espresso', establishing a strong connection between psychoanalysis and the emancipatory and radical movements at that time. Although he remained a member of the official Italian Psychoanalytic Society (SPI), member of IPA, in 1969 he led a public protest against the Italian psychoanalytic establishment, which he criticized for its conservative sclerosis. He authored the books: *L'erba voglio*, with Luisa Muraro and Giuseppe Sartori (Turin: Einaudi, 1971); *Il bambino dalle uova d'oro* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974); *La freccia ferma* (Milan: L'Erba Voglio, 1979); *Claustrofilia* (Milan: Adelphi, 1983); *La mente estatica* (Milan: Adelphi, 1989); *Freud* (Milan: Adelphi 2012). 'On Time on Psychoanalysis', EJP, 12–13, <https://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number12-13/fachinelli.htm>. 'The Psychoanalyst's Money', EJP, 18, <https://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number18/facchinelli.htm>. 'On the Beach', EJP, 24, <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/category/ejp/discussions/on-the-beach-e-fachinelli/>

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