

Comment on  
"The two dimensions of interpretation"

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The paper gathers together an exacting formalization of the analytic theory and clarity in the exposition. From the conceptual richness of the text, I will only partially concentrate on what I see as true milestones in order reconsider our praxis with children. Such concepts decant by the end of the paper in the *"diferentes modalidades de intervención que operan como interpretación"*. A very fine reader of the work by Lacan, the writer displays a personal production which results from her own experience. She sets into work Lacanian ideas where the unconscious is placed as interpreter.

From the beginning, in the sections **"El trabajo del inconsciente es la interpretación"** and **"La repetición en el jugar"**, the author recognizes origins in the Freudian contributions on memory and what derives from there in terms of unconscious inscriptions, the transcriptions of letter 52 which she calls *"alfabetización de la letra"*. Based on these concepts, she proposes a central idea: *"el jugar en la niñez, consiste en el juego mismo de la estructura"*. A starting point that enriches child discourse and which becomes the goal of our listening in transference.

I understand that, from the beginning of life, such encodings are produced, interpretations that contribute to the birth of the phantasy. This always concerns "what was seen and heard" (Freud), to which I add the kinesthetic aspect, all of which is conveyed to the child through the voice, the gaze and the arms of this parental other-Other. The small "o" indicates the imaginary other, incarnated in parenthood, and the capital "O" points to its unconscious wish.

The author conceives of a dynamic situation where the structuring process of subjectivity implies a constant task of interpretation and, as a result, an uninterrupted succession of signifying articulations which constitute phantasies and, of course, the symptomatic fundamental phantasy.

*"El ciframiento como operatoria de la estructura"* is displayed through child discourse: gesture, play and word, offered to our listening. A discourse where the gesture submerges into the language, which antedates the subject, but in the Other. I believe that every area of a subjective structuring process, which implies primary and secondary repression, in a

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constant task of resignification, entails the work with a loss in order for an inscription to exist (thing representation in Freud, signifier in Lacan) and this inescapably implies the other-Other and his unconscious wish. Essential loss which accounts for a real-ization.<sup>2</sup>Playing is discourse in act, where the subject of the wish always real-izes with a deficit. I wonder whether the wish is represented as realized in the phantasy, in the unconscious formations, or rather, in these, we can listen to signs of the psychic conflict where resignifications (desymbolization and symbolization) follow one another. They are open channels for the realization of the wish that forms the phantasy, which always depends on the response and the recognition of the other-Other.

The analyst, who has to work with the effects of the transference, makes himself available for the signifying game that the imaginary of the body sketches in the scene, while at the same time he partly moves out of the position of the other in order to interpret, play, from the position of an other-Other who condenses the unconscious wishes of the child. I would say that playing, inasmuch as discourse in act, setting on stage by a wishing subject in transference, calls for a response from the other, for his presence. Psychoanalytic praxis is an action which, like the slip, the symptom or the transference, is bungled; they all have a side of fiction which masks them and consequently, the truth of the unconscious wish will only be revealed in the effects of the transference.

Discourse which appeals for the preeminence of the gaze, the voice and the gesture, where the analyst is ready to provide a space for his "analyst wish" in the coordinates privileged by the child discourse. He responds to (not satisfies) from his gaze, voice and gestures, recognizing there, the signifiers in the full power of their imaginary consistency (which he reads in the child's play) and from the symbolic that the analyst conveys, he makes it possible to string together, articulate, disarticulate symptomatic phantasies.

I believe play has a structuring quality, as Elsa Labos suggests, insofar as it mediates between the subject of the unconscious wish and the wish of the other-Other. Hence how arduous our task is since it also includes the analyst's "activity".

Playing, like other forms of discourse, reiterates, repeats itself, since repetition is inherent to the drive and, as a result, to the structuring process of subjectivity. Elsa Labos shows us the sublimatory and creative profile of play, because the staging of discourse, in any of its forms, is an attempt to apprehend the impossible of the real. Sublimatory side of repetition where new productions occur by means of the *deferred action*. The re-petition of

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<sup>2</sup> Note from the translator: separating the word in syllables in Spanish (*real-ización*), the author reveals the verbs to raise or hoist (a flag) izar (*una bandera*) that are hiding in *realización* and she conveys the idea then of raising or hoisting a real.

the symptomatic, when produced in transference, acquires a fresh slant. Through the signifiers, the iconic, indicial and symbolic profiles of which, *creative edges* in the words of Elsa Labos, sketch the demand meant to be listened to, and where the wishing aspect of the phantasy, its staging, becomes relevant. A wish at stake, preceded by the drive, where sublimation is only one of its five vicissitudes. Vicissitude of the drive which surrounds the object and is satisfied only in its source. Therefore, our gaze, our voice, our words offer themselves to be surrounded by the different movements of the drive and the wish in the transference.

There is a distinction here between *'juego creativo'* and *'juego en la dimensión fantasmática'* and/or *'symptomatic'*. I believe in both cases the wish leads- is led through the unconscious inscriptions.

Likewise, we cannot always discriminate the symptomatic from the creative in the adult discourse, as it is our listening that determines among words what has escaped the ego of the patient. Playing always has a creative side, where we infer the symptomatic phantasies or the psychic pain. I agree with Elsa Labos about those extremes where play is disorganization or stereotype which indicates an "outside" the field of neurosis.

The analyst offers himself to be placed as the other-Other of the history of the child, where the re-presentation of the symptomatic phantasy is articulated in transference. The analyst "enters" the ludic discourse of the patient, accompanies him in his manipulations, participates in play when the child suggests it and he thinks and talks from his analytic position, where refusal conditions his "analyst wish". This does not imply to stop playing, but rather to be attentive to the position we are attributed in play.

In **'El juego como interpretación: ciframiento de la estructura'** the writer discusses how playing sustains a staging where, on the one hand, the "a" object and, on the other, the signifying alternation are produced, *"función del objeto 'a' como soporte y condición de la estructuración del juego"*.

As I see it, in his creative manipulations, the child tries to enclose some of that real that caused the symptomatic loss of an "a" and the emergence of the subject among signifiers. The truth of the (unconscious) wishing subject, which settles in the symptom and the transference (pain and enjoyment), usually points to the way in which the loss that accounted for a signifying inscription implied in the phantasies that organize the symptomatic living of the child actually took place. Manipulations, gestures, movement meant to be watched, are not alien to the diverse snippets of phantasies which assemble and dismantle the wishing phantasies that emerge in the verbal discourse of an adult in transference. The factual quality in child discourse, much more than the only verbal discourse, maximizes the

referents of perlocution and illocution of language (Austin) (cited later on by the author) together with the body "talking".

The act of playing, product of the *'cifrado'*, installs the unconscious demand, Elsa Labos proposes. I think that the demand included in the triad need-demand-wish indicates effects of inscription, signifying interweaving, characteristic of the movement of the drive around its object, which is nothing other than the unconscious wish of the Other which brings about the oral, the gaze, the voice, the anal and the contact.

The author talks about a certain temporality, an essential time of repetition to allow *"dejar de ser el resto del deseo parental"*. I see the idea of the child as remainder "a" of the parents' discourse as a vicissitude of the structuring events, which every time promote moving into and out of the embracing parental discourse, where the unconscious wish of the parents exerts a strong influence. Dynamic situation of symbolization-desymbolization, where resignification progressively accounts for the structuring landmarks. Playing, as Elsa Labos indicates by quoting Lacan, *"es la forma propicia de la posición del deseo"*. The wish is what derives from the encoding, where while an "a" is lost, a subject who wishes what was lost emerges, and that is what his barring<sup>3</sup> consists of.

The child as "a", remainder of the parental wish (with the exception of the acting out implied in the "accidents" the child suffers and where he literally gets lost or eliminated), could be found in the form of "getting lost" of the parental unconscious phantasy. Ground, essential space-time that enables the interplay of presence-absence.

Processing of structure where neurobiological maturation enriches the child's ludic availability, and where resignification is "in full swing" from the very beginning of life. In my opinion, the phantasy is born with the first inscriptions, the first and simplest signifying articulations. The delusion which is part of the experience of satisfaction (Freud 1895) initiates the phantasy. These articulations become more complex day after day, in a kind of summation of logic and chronologic times, where the *deferred action* assembles and dismantles phantasies where the wish of the Other plays central roles. Every phantasy mediates the wish with the Other, and therefore, the logical temporality, as Elsa Labos very aptly calls it, which I understand is established from the beginning of life.

Perhaps the child as remainder, "a", fallen off the parental wish, is a metaphoric and condensed form of referring to the vicissitude of the subjective structuring process. The object "a" is an inaccessible testimony, which "cannot be mirrored", "amboceptor" (something from the subject, something from the object, Lacan 1962-63), in order for the wish to exist. This is, every time, a founding loss of the wishing and phantasied structure; it is also the first

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<sup>3</sup> N from T: The Spanish "barramiento" refers to the barred subject (*sujeto barrado*) in Lacan, the subject split by repression, which founds the unconscious.

*Bedeutung* (Lacan 1966-67). He refers in this way to the primary repression implied in the father metaphor, where the successive repressions account for the individuality of every person. It is the quality of the experience of loss every time, that gives rise to the *neurosis choice* (Lacan 1959-60).

The material objects in the activity of play, "*soportes materiales del significante*", can be equated to the words which convey signifiers and constitute signifiers themselves, in the vicissitudes of phonation and syntax.

I understand that in the best possible case, the interpretation can promote a subjective removal, which implies a new fall of an "a" that articulates subject among signifiers in a different way. I think the object "a" can hardly be imaginized, but we can infer it from the signifiers which were constituted as qualities of the experience of loss (*Das Ding*), predicate of the experience as Freud indicated (1896) in connection with the Thing Representation.

We infer the real insofar as the Borromean articulation **of** the signifier and **among** signifiers is real-ized<sup>4</sup>. I mean it acquires value when the imaginary and the symbolic articulate a loss. Borromean knot where the iconic, in the fashion of the perceptive sign, constitutes an unattainable side, were it not for its articulation with the index/indexes from the Other (Casas de Pereda 2007).

I share the emphasis Elsa Labos places on the loss of the "a" as a support for the child's symbolic play, especially in transference, where the "a" getting lost, as an amboceptor, of the subject and the other-Other, indicates the analytic function in the transference act. The objects of play constitute themselves as a support for the signifier insofar as they provide image, sensation, feeling, which imitates, evokes and convokes phantasies always expressing a wish; work of *deferred* resignification through repetition of the symptomatic, the enjoyment of which is renewed every time.

Since very early in his life, the child plays with his hands, the gaze and voice of the other, where the identifications which integrate the signifying chain succeed one another, as an S1 ready to articulate with an S2 in the place of the *Vorstellungrepresentantz*.

Drive, demand and wish, a triad in a constant motion of constitution where the object "a" accounts for a successful "*encoding*" which is suitable for the subsequent resignifications, which leads us to the concept of decoding.

I think the object(s) of play, like words, are offered to constitute signifying remains which are ready to articulate. We play with words, we play with objects, because the pleasure lies in the re-presentation where connections and disconnections occur.

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<sup>4</sup> See Note 2

Creative play introduces the "*phantasied*" and "*symptomatic*" dimensions, which indeed do not exclude one another. Setting on stage of the wishing subject, who says without knowing, where we read the signifying, iconic and indicial values of the ludic staging, captained by the unconscious wish. The impossible quality of the real is always urging, in every discourse, be it ludic or verbal. The gesture or the word never covers the real which, for this very same reason, becomes knotted.

Elsa Labos justly suggests the triad "*repetition, distance and difference*", as levels that are inherent to the subjective structuring process. Uniqueness of this space-time where the structuring function of play allows for the staging of what the subject ignores and needs to repeat his phantasied constructions, where the idealized and the persecutory make up constant scripts. In this way, there is a transit of love, attacks, defenses, which show the budding ego of the child which cannot experience but "love, hate and ignorance" (Lacan 1953-54). An ignorance that increases in infancy because of the preeminence of the structural disavowal of castration. However, I believe the father metaphor, since the occurrence of the very first inscriptions, indicates the fourfold structure: mother, father, child and phallus.

Elsa Labos talks about the detachment of the primary parental bonds which I understand as a long journey where the ideal parents, which need to be deconstructed, are part of the intensity of the structural disavowal which, running parallel to symbolic castration, develop side by side. We cannot deny the constant unconscious representational realization which points to primary and secondary repression and includes prohibition and castration in an intense task of resignification. Repression and identification shape the subjective structuring process and inhabit the signifying chain. The need for the *new psychic action* (Freud 1914), which gives room to the narcissistic structure of the ego, implies the parental wish imbued with *his majesty the baby*<sup>5</sup> to fight for the life of the child, with all the corresponding libidinal charge. And it is from the effects of structural disavowal that the infantile sexual theories emerge. I join Elsa Labos in her suggestion that the symptom reflects, at least partially, the truth of the parental couple. Elsa Labos rightly illuminates the metapsychological-clinical relation, in the pursuit of "*reordenamiento significante*".

In "**Sobre el valor performativo de la escena**" the author returns to an element which is very dear to my own developments (Casas de Pereda 1999, 2007), and she points out "*El valor de transmisión de la fuerza que se manifiesta al hablar*". She takes up again the idea of enactment, of the presentness of the drive, appertaining to the instant of its realization. This makes her investigate the discursive mode, the power of the illocution of discourse, the construction of the playing scene, the quality of the action, and the

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<sup>5</sup> N from T: in English in the original.

manipulation of the material elements. I completely agree with the importance she attributes to the face, the gesture carrying performative value. This refers to a certain conflict between denotation and connotation, which I usually appreciate and propose as not excluding each other, since both conjugate in the analytic act (ibid).

I think that although it is a *"puesta en acto fuera de la retórica"*, it wouldn't be *"una puesta en actividad de lo que no se puede decir"*, but rather that the child in his discourse, gesture, play and word speaks of his pain, his anger, his love; he says without knowing that he is saying, he speechifies with the objects. In the brief vignette the author offers, we have a clear example of the sensitivity of the analyst for the transference of the child, since, at the right time, she provides the mirror and other materials with which the movements characteristic of his discourse in act and word are displayed, partly responding to the acknowledgement by his analyst of his flaws and his need (demand) to create new stagings. This recognition concerns the triad RSI, where the libidinal environment enables signifying movements. Y would say, together with Elsa Labos, that we play and speak in transference *"como modo de respuesta a lo imposible de lo real"*.

Motor activity does not constitute the analytic act; it is only an essential element of child discourse, where the perlocution is reinforced by the gesture and the movement. The bungled actions in play constitute privileged unconscious formations. The child sets on stage different forms of discourse which gather together for the signification, which have neither an oppositional nor negative meaning; they are modalities that conjugate in order to "speak" of their affects and their symptoms. All of them signifying elements with diverse iconic, indicial or symbolic value, which promotes the display of different movements of the drive. Gestures can be read, in the same way as can the sounds which can stroke or hurt, where context and denotation meet. *"Lo gestual que incluye la imagen, no tiene el valor denotativo de la palabra; sin embargo, colabora con todo el valor connotativo que refiere al contexto y que es especialmente significativo en todo momento de subjetivación, así como a nuestra praxis."* (Ibid)

Our author emphasizes the importance of the expression on the face, *"pura apertura al Otro"*, she indicates. Unconscious wish conveyed by the gaze, the voice or the arms, all of which are elements integrating the *"materialidad simbólica del significante"*. There is no possible way of imagining all the subtle forms in which we can capture the indexes of the unconscious wish of the other offered to the child, during his first years of life.

In **'Otras consideraciones'**, the writer eloquently discusses the double condition of sound and word from the mother that founds the speaking human being. Elsa Labos's developments on the signifier and my own have an important common denominator: the abductive task in our praxis with children. Both of us try, in different but at the same time

proximate ways, to introduce “doing” into “saying”. Elsa Labos talks about the creative edges of the signifier and points out its performative non-semantic value. I talk about a threefold signifier - iconic, indicial and symbolic – where sound, gaze and gesture gather together in a Borromean articulation where the iconic is image, sensation and feeling, and the indicial points to indexes of the other-Other, which belong to the signifier in a semiotic range.

In **“El jugar, la interpretación y la función temporal”** she enriches the temporality of the unconscious resorting to central concepts like *“event”* (Badiou) and the *deferred action*, in a reciprocal relation which points to the space time of the unconscious, its production, repetition and phase shift, as she reminds us citing Lacan.

I think that, in his play, the child recreates, resignifies his division, rather than find it. He tells us about “doing” with the materiality of the signifier, sound, body and gesture, which he places as the inscription of the mother tongue. I think all of this contributes to the signifying history, the successive articulations of phantasies, and its symptomatic drift. Unconscious inscription, always an effect of the metaphor, and the successive and constant resignifications. The subject split among signifiers. The structure of the neurosis, where one “enters” in a better or worse way, and/or one also leaves in the case of the more serious pathologies. In this case, the analytic effort in order for something to “enter” so that it constitutes a loop becomes evident. The dark universe of psychosis is always a challenge and, besides, our work, even with the serious pathologies, still consists of offering inscriptions, articulations, through an analytic stance where an Other makes itself available to be called for or demanded from. The alteration of the mirror-like effect which is indicated at the right time with a troubled identification, related to the unitary trait<sup>6</sup>, shows a dynamic perspective where signifiers actualize and resignify. In the signifier S1 (unitary trait) that points to the primary identification, we suppose a lack of symbolic recognition by the mother or a filicidal phantasy which infiltrates. Therefore, our task consists of facilitating articulations from a different symbolic position.

Elsa Labos deepens into the intervention of the analyst in a triad of elements in order to facilitate the symbolic perspective of the analytic scene: “La construcción del espacio del Otro”, “el acontecimiento simbólico del cuerpo” and “el *acontecimiento del lenguaje o acontecimiento poético*”. She formalizes the position, the function and the mode of the analyst’s intervention in the clinic with children, where she gathers together the traumatic aspects of sexuality and death. In this way, she gathers together what is crucial in the analytic encounter with children.

I think of the wish of the analyst, which, as our author indicates, demarcates the real, as a form of indicating the privation that our refusal concentrates and which I usually see as a

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<sup>6</sup> “*trait unaire*” in Lacan.



neoformation of the unconscious in the analyst, which arises out of his personal analysis and his years of training. Whether we speak or play, we never fail to leave our wish "vacant" (Lacan, 1960-61) to offer space and time for the "analyst wish" which escapes the imaginary coordinates, acknowledging them and using them.

Finally, the author proposes three forms of intervention that I mentioned earlier in these notes. The names chosen, "*desciframiento, puntuación, ciframiento*", are in themselves eloquent evidence of the writer's perspective: dynamic and rigorous at the same time. In these words, we can recognize our practice, where we display the imaginary or we set limits to the uncanny in any of its multiple manifestations.

From her proposal, we can infer, besides, the assumption of a certain stance, widely shared, which is that our work with neurosis or with more severe pathologies is enriched by the same premises.

I leave the pleasure of reading this paper to the readers now.

I thank Elsa Labos for her generous text and *Controversias* for giving me the chance to share this dialogue with the author. I think it is in the writing of our coincidences or confrontations that we can dare face the enigmas of the real which any attempt of formalization convokes. It has been a pleasurable, and at the same time demanding, task, given the profoundness of the author's reflections and developments, which enrich the analytic listening in our work with children. A rich experience which shortens geographic distances and allows the libidinal contact of sharing the vicissitudes of our praxis.

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