

# Australian Centre for Psychoanalysis

## Psychoanalytic Training

A psychoanalysis, whether standard or not, is the treatment that one expects from a psychoanalyst.

Jacques Lacan<sup>1</sup>

The training of psychoanalysts is the condition of possibility for psychoanalysis. The questions regarding the appropriate form of training for psychoanalysts always evoke the definition of psychoanalysis and vice versa. The psychoanalyst is that specific function in a praxis which isolates the specific object of psychoanalysis, the unconscious.<sup>2</sup> In the dialectic between theory and practice the analyst is at the juncture of the two: psychoanalysis cannot be reduced solely to a technical application.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that Freud's major text on the matter of the training and qualification of psychoanalysts, 'The Question of Lay Analysis' is also a statement of the principles of psychoanalytic treatment.<sup>4</sup>

Each analyst develops his or her own practice by drawing on a coherent body of theory derived from the works of Sigmund Freud and by undergoing the experience of psychoanalysis. The Australian Centre for Psychoanalysis follows the specific orientation given to this work by Jacques Lacan. However the ACP also recognises the common origin of the various psychoanalytic movements in so far as they themselves recognize their point of departure in the experience that Freud created and in his writings.

The specificity of each analyst's position in relation to psychoanalysis implies two further responsibilities. The first is that an analyst is able to sustain the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis in the development of his or her particular praxis. Secondly, this ongoing development requires that an analyst take on the responsibility for the transmission of psychoanalysis through his or her practice. This responsibility never ceases.

There can be no standardisation of the practice of psychoanalysis. Similarly, there can be no complete standardisation of the training of analysts. The regulation of training by quantification of its procedures and content is of necessity minimal and somewhat arbitrary, and it bears only a pragmatic relation to the definition of psychoanalysis or the psychoanalyst.

## **The psychoanalyst's desire and psychoanalytic knowledge**

The nature of the knowledge acquired in the psychoanalytic experience is particular. It is not a permanent knowledge; it cannot be accumulated as in other scientific disciplines, and it must be renewed in the experience which created it.<sup>5</sup> Therefore training is not simply the acquisition of a qualification but includes an encounter with unconscious knowledge. Thus, the acquisition of knowledge in psychoanalysis always calls into question the subjectivity of the practitioner, and the difficulty of specifying criteria for training rests on the impossibility of objectively assessing the subject's status with regard to his or her knowledge of unconscious desire.

While it is necessary for psychoanalysis to exist in a culture, to operate in its laws and to acknowledge its demands for legitimacy and guarantees, psychoanalysis is also in a unique position to submit the demands of its given culture to a critical analysis. Rather than centering the training of analysts around conformity to a set of quantifiable or other criteria external to the psychoanalytic discourse, the fundamental principle of the Lacanian orientation is that a psychoanalyst is defined by his or her desire. The psychoanalyst's desire is an 'experienced' (Lacan's term is *averti*) and analysed desire which is at the heart of an analyst's pursuit of psychoanalysis.<sup>6</sup>

## **The training function and the transference to work in the ACP**

The Lacanian orientation is characterised by a number of concepts which aim to found an appropriate institutional operation. These concepts are derived from a critique of the effects of idealisation, homogeneity, standardisation and annulment of creativity, which are possible effects of the life of a human group, as described by Freud.<sup>7</sup> Of particular relevance is the concept of a School which aims towards working on the essential problems of psychoanalysis and its relations with other fields of inquiry. In line with the Lacanian orientation, the School "intends to accord its space not only to a labor of criticism: to the opening up of the grounds of our experience, to the questioning of the manner of life to which it leads."<sup>8</sup> The form of this labour cannot be predetermined, but its effects become apparent in an analyst's analytic thinking and in the testimony she or he gives of his or her clinical practice. What guides our training is the knowledge that although "the teaching of psychoanalysis can be transmitted from one subject to another only by way of the transference",<sup>9</sup> it is not the teaching which creates psychoanalysts but a transference that becomes a transference to work in all areas of the School. Lacan's proposals concerning a School of Psychoanalysis are the guiding principles for the organization of our Centre.

## **Self-authorisation**

The Lacanian precept, held by the ACP, that psychoanalytic training is never complete is not contradicted by the notion that, at a certain point of his or her personal psychoanalysis, an analysand passes to the function of psychoanalyst.

Since it is produced within the experience of analysis, this passage cannot be regulated from without, but is an act for which each analyst bears responsibility and is to be arrived at according to the logic of each treatment. Lacan said that "the psychoanalyst derives his authorization only from himself"<sup>10</sup> to assert that it must be regulated by the ethics derived from the analysis of an analyst's desire. The self-authorisation which follows completion of this task of analysis is the first logical moment of the passage from analysand to psychoanalyst.

The analyst's self-authorisation is a moment derived essentially from the analyst's personal analysis. It is a transference to the work which has a direct significance for the psychoanalytic institution. The fact that self-authorisation is fundamental does not preclude that the institution provide a guarantee that the training it offers is reflected in the analyst it has produced. The responsibility for the analyst's self-authorisation is his or her own, while the responsibility for any form of guarantee belongs to the institution. The guarantee of the institution testifies that an analyst has undergone a training and has presented his or her work to the scrutiny of supervisors and colleagues and is deemed to be a competent practitioner.

## **Training Committee**

The training procedure of the ACP is administered by a Training Committee comprising a minimum of four members, none of whom is a member of the Register Committee. It is composed of the Coordinator of the Program of Theoretical and Clinical Studies and three Registered Practising Analysts, one of whom must also be a member of the ACP Committee of Management. The Convenor and Secretary of the Training Committee are elected from these members. Where possible members of the Training Committee take up their position for two years.

The function of the Committee is to administer the application and evaluation procedures of the Training Program. This includes: receiving and assessing applications for candidature as Practising Analysts, maintaining a data base, communicating decisions made by the Training Committee, organising annual interviews with Practising Analysts, and taking responsibility for all other administrative tasks.

The Committee will be responsible for evaluating the progress of Practising Analysts annually by way of an interview and candidates completing a written report. In the course of the training period, candidates are asked to submit two written case reports chosen from cases treated under supervision. These reports are evaluated by the Training Committee in accordance with the expected functioning of a psychoanalyst.

In conjunction with the Coordinator of the Program of Theoretical and Clinical Studies, the Committee will evaluate that an adequate program of study has been undertaken by Practicing Analysts. The Committee will be responsible for the annual production of a report to the membership at the Annual General Meeting of the ACP. The Committee's report will include a conceptual evaluation of the progress of the program, as well as any practical recommendations derived from the evaluation.

### **Procedures for training**

Applications for candidature as a Practicing Analyst can be made at any time by ACP members actively participating in the activities of the Centre. Guidelines for application are available on request from the Secretary of the ACP. There are no restrictions to entry by profession or previous training.<sup>11</sup> A candidate must satisfy the Training Committee that he or she has in place adequate arrangements to pursue all three components of psychoanalytic training. Upon acceptance as a Practicing Analyst, a candidate's name will be added to the list of Practicing Analysts and he or she will be expected to fully participate in the training program. Those registered as Practicing Analysts with the ACP are subject to its code of professional conduct and complaint procedures.

Application for candidature as a Practicing Analyst is made in writing to the Convenor of the Training Committee outlining the reasons for the application and the candidate's history of training. Following receipt of the application, a personal interview will be arranged at which the application to the training program will be discussed with the Committee.

### **The psychoanalytic training in the ACP**

The ACP adheres to a Lacanian conception of psychoanalytic training. The basic and indispensable components of the training are: personal analysis, clinical supervision and the study of psychoanalytic theory. It is also essential that Practicing Analysts actively participate in the work of the ACP, attending and contributing to seminars, cartels<sup>12</sup>, workshops and conferences, and presenting their theoretical and clinical work before peers. As a rule and as it is feasible, given the differing duration of its components, these activities will be carried out concurrently. The Training Committee will consider each analysand's training program in its own right and has the power to determine exceptions to the rule of concurrency.

The personal analysis must be carried to completion, but because of its nature its duration will vary from case to case and cannot be specified in advance. The other aspects of training are expected to continue beyond the duration of formal status as Practicing Analyst, but the Practicing Analyst is required to complete an agreed course of theoretical training which will normally be for a period of four years, and to report to a satisfactory level on two training cases.

## **Personal analysis**

A candidate is free to choose his or her analyst so long as the work is clearly defined as psychoanalysis to the satisfaction of the analyst, the analysand and the Training Committee. The duration of this analysis cannot be fixed: "...its length can only be expected to be indefinite for the subject."<sup>13</sup> Although the frequency of analytic sessions should not be taken as defining psychoanalysis, the typical practice recommended for training purposes involves a high frequency of sessions per week. The value of the personal analysis cannot be determined by the reputation of the analyst who conducts it, and in this sense no category of so-called 'training analyst' is recognised by the ACP. In principle, any analysis can come to have a training function, and its worth in this regard is determined by its results. The value of a training can only be determined at the level of the analytic act of which the analyst becomes capable. This act commences with self-authorisation. This is the means by which a Practising Analyst communicates to the analytic community that he or she is ready to continue the analytic act into the practice of psychoanalysis. That this analyst is so able can only be determined by his or her demonstration to the analytic community of an ongoing transference to the work of psychoanalysis. Because of this, the ACP has organised a sustained, critical and public presentation of psychoanalytic work.

The Training Committee assesses progress in training in discussion with each Practising Analyst but does not itself offer a guarantee or certification of the completion of training. This responsibility rests with the institution (the ACP), and is made when the psychoanalyst is included on the ACP List of Registered Practising Analysts. The act of self-authorisation leads to the possibility of this recognition as a Registered Practising Analyst of the ACP. Such registration is pursued by application to the Register Committee and is dependent on the Committee being satisfied that all the components of training have been carried out to the extent that the candidate can be recognised as an analyst. The procedure is described in the Register Document which is available on request from the Secretary of the ACP.

## **Supervision of clinical work**

The Practising Analyst is free to choose his or her supervisors so long as that supervision is clearly defined as psychoanalytic in orientation and recognised as such by the Training Committee. It is required that the Practising Analyst seek supervision from at least two different supervisors over the course of his or her training. There is no prior definition of what constitutes a training case. Cases can only be determined as having a didactic function retrospectively, and this determination is made by the Training Committee on submission of written reports<sup>14</sup> of two cases.

In addition it is recommended that Practising Analysts regularly present their clinical work to the ACP's Clinical Seminar. It is highly recommended that Practising Analysts avail themselves of a wide and substantial clinical experience in the course

of their training period. As stated above, two cases must be submitted to the Training Committee in the course of the training period.

### **Theoretical study**

The theoretical component of training is provided by the ACP's formal Program of Theoretical and Clinical Studies in psychoanalysis. The ACP program is aimed at engaging participants in a systematic study of the key concepts and questions crucial for the ethics, theory and clinical practice of psychoanalysis. It provides those who desire to practice as analysts with an orientation and firm foundation to their formation as analysts. It can also be of interest to others interested in exploring and researching particular topics and questions in psychoanalysis. Other means of studying psychoanalysis will be considered if equivalent to the program offered by the ACP as determined by the co-ordinator of the Institute for Training. All Practising Analysts, Registered Practising Analysts and other members are expected to participate actively in the different forms of theoretical study organised by the ACP.

### **Recognition of training**

It is not possible to determine a priori that an analysis has a training function. There is no a priori guarantee of passing to the position of analyst from undergoing an analysis or working clinically under supervision. Personal analysis and supervision in themselves do not constitute a guarantee, and so cannot be used as a basis for any register of psychoanalysts. The ACP does not regulate the form and content of analysis and supervision, nor the qualifications of analyst or supervisor, since such regulation can only be justified if it can provide a guarantee of outcome. But this does not mean that the ACP's recognition of competent training and practice is without regulation. On the contrary, the ACP, through its Training Committee and the Program of Theoretical and Clinical Studies, requires demonstrations of the results of the training before it will confirm that the Practising Analyst has achieved a level of practice and theoretical formulation which can be regarded as analytic. The training offered by the ACP is assessed at an institutional level where its results are put under scrutiny.

### **List of Registered Practising Analysts**

The List of Registered Practising Analysts is a list of members who are recognised by the ACP as competent practitioners of psychoanalysis. Members of the list authorise themselves as Registered Practising Analysts and are confident to practice in accordance with this authorisation, in the direction of treatments, the presentation of cases and involvement in case discussions. Their psychoanalytic competence will be recognised by the ACP through their having fulfilled the components of a training; namely, personal analysis, clinical supervision and a course of theoretical studies, and through their having given an account of their work to their peers. All applicants for the List of Registered Practising Analysts are interviewed by the Register

Committee. This committee comprises three members (RPAs), none of whom are members of the Training Committee.

There are significant differences between the processes of applying for ACP membership, applying to the Program of Theoretical and Clinical Studies, applying for candidature as an Practicing Analyst and applying for inscription on the List of Registered Practicing Analysts. For the latter, the ACP is offering a public guarantee that the applicant has undergone formation and is able to practice as a psychoanalyst. At the annual renewal of registration, a review of the analyst's work is presented. In the review, the areas of analysis, supervision, training and legal and ethical complaints and professional development are addressed.

## The Pass

Lacan laid the ground work for the structure he calls The Pass in what has been published as, 'Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School', an English translation of which is available in *Analysis* 6 (1995), the journal of the ACP. Provision of the mechanism of the Pass to test the end of an analysis is particular to the Lacanian orientation and the many School's it has given birth to. The Schools which constitute part of the Lacanian Field and have established Cartels of the Pass continue to work and publish reflections and learnings from subjects who traverse the Pass.<sup>15</sup> The work of Cartels of the Pass provides essential learnings regarding the movement from analysand to analyst and the desire which arises at this moment. The ACP is linked to the network of the International of the Forums of the Lacanian Field, which may make it possible to access the Pass.

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### References:

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Variations on the Standard Treatment', in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 274.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Excommunication', in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (London: Tavistock, 1977), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Founding Act', in *Television: a Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment* (New York: Norton, 1990). On the concept of praxis, see Louis Althusser, 'On the Materialist Dialectic', in *For Marx*, (London: Verso, 1969)

<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', SE 20.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Jacques Lacan, 'Science and Truth', Newsletter of the Freudian Field No. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Jacques Lacan, 'The demand for happiness and the promise of analysis', in *The Seminar, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960* (London: Routledge, 1992),

300; and "In you more than you", in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*

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(London: Tavistock, 1977), 276. [The French term *averti* could be translated as 'alert',

'informed', 'knowledgeable' or 'warned']

<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, SE 18.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Founding Act', 104.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Founding Act', 103.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School', *Analysis* 6 (1995).

<sup>11</sup> '...one is admitted at the base [of a School] only with a work project and without any consideration being given to provenance or to qualification' ('Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School', 1). The same position was held by Freud. Cf. Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1953-57), 3:299.

<sup>12</sup> Belinda Mackie, 'The action of the cartel on the real of the group', *Analysis* 18 (2013)

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis', in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006) 255.

<sup>14</sup> Belinda Mackie, 'The status of the case history in psychoanalysis', *Analysis* 19 (2014)

<sup>15</sup> WUNSCH 17, 2016, *International Bulletin of the School of Psychoanalysis of the Forums of the Lacanian Field*.