

PSYCHIC SPACE, ANALYTIC PLACE, *MAKOM*.<sup>1</sup>

An overview of the report

**SUMMARY**

INTRODUCTION

- I. Spatial representation – space and place
  - a. Spatial representation, why?
  - b. Vicissitudes of the spatial representation
- II. Psychic space
  1. A spatial conception for Freud?
  2. The model of Didier Anzieu
  3. Kinds of spaces
  4. Bion and the post-bionians
- III. From the psychic space to the analytic place, from the analytic place to the psychic space
  - a. Potential space
    - a) The setting of a limit
    - b) Spaces
    - c) Miss Rachel, 1.
    - d) Further developments
  - b. The encounter analyst – analysand
    - a) Transference
    - b) Acting out
- IV. The analytic situation
  - a. The setting
  - b. From the enigmatic place to the enigm-ethic place, the offer of analysis
  - c. Matricial space
  - d. Miss Rachel, 2.

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<sup>1</sup> In the following pages, we propose an overview of our report in order to enable those who will not have the possibility to read it extensively, to get some glimpse of the ideas we are proposing.

- V. The place where we work and... where we live
  - a. General considerations
  - b. Myriam
  - c. The situation in Israel
  - d. Tension in analytic places: “Three youngsters were kidnapped”
    - a) Ibrahim
    - b) A supervision
- VI. From atopy to *Makom*
  - 1. Atopy
  - 2. The question of the infinite in psychoanalysis
    - a) *Makom* in psychoanalysis and its infinite dimension
    - b) The analytic situation, *refuge city*
    - c) The analytic situation, *desert*
    - d) The analytic situation, *exodus*

While preparing for this 80<sup>th</sup> CPLF, the Congress of French Speaking Psychoanalysts, in this place of Jerusalem, we started thinking about these notions of space, place, topic. We were stricken by the fact that one seldom finds a psychoanalytic text which does not resort to spatial metaphors; mostly in order to be able to think about the psyche and psychoanalysis. We were stricken by the wealth and the diversity of these metaphors, either dealing with the psyche or with the analytic situation.

Obviously Freud gave the first impetus: in his *Studies on Hysteria*, he stipulates that “The psychological material in such cases of hysteria presents itself as a structure in several dimensions which is stratified in at least three different ways” (Freud, 1895, p. 288); a few years later, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he speaks of the psychic apparatus as a compound instrument constituted of systems that “may perhaps stand in a regular spatial relation to one another, in the same kind of way in which the various systems of lenses in a telescope are arranged behind one another” (Freud, 1900, p. 537). He proposes a few schemas in order to strengthen his thesis. Even more radically, when he names one of the metapsychology’s components as *topic*, and when he indicates the spatial layout of its three provinces, unconscious, preconscious and conscious, he asserts that the spatial apprehension of the psychic apparatus is self-evident. His writings abound in spatial metaphors, whether describing the psyche itself, its functioning, or

the analytic situation; we will not be able to list all of them<sup>2</sup>. And when Freud deals with the second topic – the structural model for the English-speaking analysts – he says: “The super-ego, the ego and the id – these, then, are the three realms, regions, provinces, into which we divide an individual’s mental apparatus...” (Freud, 1933, p. 72); afterwards he compares the id to a cauldron (*ibid.*, p. 73). In order to clarify his conception of this new second topic, he makes recourse to a schema which became classical: there he marks the boundaries of the *space* of the psychic apparatus by a line; a continuous line (Freud, 1923, p. 24) or a discontinuous one (Freud, 1933, p. 78) illustrating graphically a feature of the spatial boundary of the id, id which is either closed or open towards the soma.

Without wishing to be exhaustive, some of the metaphors for the psychic apparatus one finds are: telescope, province, realm, territory, contact barrier or stimulus barrier, vesicle, crypt, psychic envelopes, limits, boundaries, container and contained, triangulation etc....; or, for the functioning of the apparatus and its mechanisms: repression, displacement, isolation, projection, introjection, turning upon the self, horizontal or vertical splitting etc.... and even the concept of transference which combines displacement in time and in space. All this leads us to deal with the analytic place. Concerning the latter, we will explore the terms of site, setting, scenes, and will elaborate on the notions of intermediate space, transitional space and matricial space.

All in all, the notions of *psychic space* and of *analytic place* recur with a surprising regularity in the psychoanalytic writings. Freud did not elaborate a theory of spaces, even though spatial metaphors are abundant under his pen, and many are his followers who did elaborate a theory of places or spaces.

Firstly we will try to analyze the reasons of this ubiquity of the *spatial representation* and of *place as a metaphor*. The psyche is anchored in the body, and the thinking process leans upon the body itself, body which is deployed in space. This leads to the use of a topic layout for the representation of the psyche, its functioning and its states. In what we are developing, we wish to reflect upon the necessity of these spatial representations to apprehend the psychic apparatus, its functioning and its deployment in the analytic situation. It means reflecting upon the question of the *topic*, a *topic* always in danger of being scattered (Chervet, 2008); it means, as well, reflecting upon the analytic situation, its processuality or non-processuality, (Bokanowski, 2015) and upon the involvement of the analyst in the midst of this situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, the mere fact that the “first topic” (in German as well as in French) became for the English-speaking colleagues the “topographic model” demonstrates the measure of dependency of psychoanalysis on these notions of space, place, and on the displacements inside these places.

However, this spatial representation is not without *pitfalls*, mostly connected with the temptation to *localize* the elements of the psychic apparatus in brain structures (Freud, 1900, p. 610-611). Even so, we cannot avoid apprehending the psychic apparatus in terms of spaces in order to propose a theorization of its functioning.

Therefore we will next consider the various theorizations of the *psychic apparatus*: among the thinkers who contribute to these theorizations, we shall content ourselves in this overview to mention Anzieu (1994) and his notions of Skin-Ego and of psychic envelope, Green (1990) and his models which deal with the concepts of boundary and splitting, and Bion (1982) for whom mental space is a thing-in-itself, which stems from emotional events.

Then we will tackle the respective impact of *psychic space* and of *analytic place*: to what extent the psychic apparatus of the patient determines the analytic place, and to what extent the latter, in its part, has an influence on the patient's psychic space and modifies it. Starting from the concept of border, we will bring to mind the notions of intermediate space and potential space (Winnicott, 1971). The analytic situation establishes a place which, through the psychoanalytic process (Bokanowski, 2015) will enable the patient to define the individuality of his psychic space, of his psychic apparatus. The *agieren* (acting out) and mostly the acting out via speech (Donnet, 2005) stage a transference repeating in the analytic session.

Concerning the *analytic situation* proper, we will then bring to mind a number of classical theories. We shall insist upon the fact that for Laplanche (1987), the establishment of the analytic situation refers to the fundamental anthropologic situation, to the primal seduction due to the enigmatic messages emitted and compromised by the infantile *Sexual* of the parental unconscious. For Laplanche, the analyst, his/her containing, his/her holding, his/her attention provide auto-conservative needs of the patient. Going beyond his theorization, we will propose to conceptualize the analytic situation not only as enigmatic (because of its asymmetry which implies primal seduction) but as enigm-ethic; for us indeed, the fundamental anthropologic situation is also characterized by an ethical position, in which the analyst is affected by the patient using this input in his emotionally loaded responsibility for the other.

The very moment of offering analysis to the patient, arouses in the analyst in the same way as it does in adults taking charge at the beginning of life, an activation of his/her infantile *Sexual*. It arouses also an *ethical shock* which is transformed into a position of matricial space, and initiates the proliferation of enigm-ethic messages towards the patient (Chetrit-Vatine, 2014, 2018).

As for the patient, we asserted that the offer of analysis and the set-up of the analytic situation prompts not only a *filled in transference*, or a *hollowed out transference* (Laplanche, 1987b),

but also an *a-linear transference of matricial space*. The latter is induced by what the newborn and the infant (that this patient was) have met or should have met in the matter of the fundamental demand of ethics. For Laplanche, respect of the auto-conservative needs enables the analysis, but he does not seem to consider them as factors of change. For us, departing from Laplanche, the analyst's person as an ethical subject, is essential for the analytic process, and determines its transformative potential; the analyst's person is necessary in order to enable primal seduction. It manifests itself by the hollowed out transference and becomes a source of creativity.

Therefore, the transference of matricial space is not necessarily a reproduction. It refers, not as much to what took place or partially took place, but to what should have taken place, or to what should never have taken place and was not acknowledged as such by the human environment in charge of the infant. Lastly, we will speak of a *transference of ethical seduction*: induced by the offer of analysis, it combines the re-presentation of the primal seduction and of the matricial space-time. It is a hollowed out transference, which found a receptive hollow, to receive something which is a matter of the *Actual*: firstly, it is an obstacle, "something opaque, with a tendency towards acting out, discharging outside, or towards an inner discharge of somatization... [but secondly] it is the living source of a new impetus toward psychic elaboration, revitalizing the world of representations by carrying out an incarnation of the thinking process" (Scarfone, 2014, p. 1391). From the point of view of the *Actual* of the ethics, this is the means through which the transference may establish a bridge between two subjectivities, or even more, between two *subjectalities* (Amado Lévy-Valensi, 1962).

Jacques Press posited a relationship between "the unknown", "the intimate" and "formlessness". He distinguishes between two sides of the intimate; the one turning upon the *Traumatic*, the other upon formlessness (Press, 2013). For us the transference of ethical seduction enables us to disentangle the connection between the intimate and the *Traumatic*, enables an opening towards formlessness and the zone of infiniteness of the psyche (Vermote, 2013).

*The place where we live and where we work as analysts*, the ways and customs of the country, its socio-political context, the language of the analysis, the prevailing psychoanalytic theory etc.... have a capital impact on the analytic situation. Israeli psychoanalysts work in a country with borders which are uncertain, contested from within as well as from without, in a violent socio-political context; the country is a place of memories which are exported, imported, deported, contested, violated, buried. Many are the patients bearing "a transgenerational radioactivity" (Gampel, 2005), or who are dealing with a flayed psyche because of foreign

bodies which are both indigestible and unthinkable.

Finally, Israel is a country with ill-defined if not undefinable borders, a country torn up by wars and terrorist acts, a country whose population was directly or indirectly affected by the Shoah. Inspired by the place from which we speak, Jerusalem, a holy city and a bone of contention for the three monotheist religions, and altogether guided by our clinical experience in Israel – about which we will report – we shall propose the notion of “*Makom in psychoanalysis*”.

In order to do so, we will proceed from the notion of *atopy* to the one of *Makom*; we will deal with the possibility of an atopy in the psychic space of subjects who survived an individual trauma which occurred in the frame of social violence and collective trauma (Schneider, 2014). We will deal with the notion of the *infinite* in psychoanalysis, a notion that we will wish to integrate with the *Sexual* into the frame of metapsychology. It means trying to comprehend the dimension of the infinite in the *Topic*, its connection with the *Actual* of the ethic which is understood as an emotionally loaded responsibility for the other. *Makom*, which means place in Hebrew, is one of the denominations of God, expressing his *atopy* and his *achrony*. When using the Hebrew term *Makom*, we wish to propose the idea of a meta-place, more than a place, a space; more than a space, a space-time which is transformative of the analytic situation, in which the spatial dimension is overtaken by the dimensions of ethic and infinity. The term *Makom*, which qualifies the analytic situation as a space for the construction of a hetero-spatiality, designates for us an ethical space of emotionally loaded responsibility for the other, space-time of asymmetrical responsibility and truth for the subject analyst, space-time of truth for the subject analysand; this intrinsic characteristic of the analytic situation will enable moments of subjectivation, will enable transformations to occur in the patient’s psyche, will help him/her toward an enhanced life.

For Levinas, subjectivity is neither egotistical protestation against totality, nor anxiety in the face of death, but a quality based on the idea of infinity. In this way, we spoke previously of subjectalisation. This subjectivity presents itself as containing more than what it contains, receiving the other hospitably (Levinas, 1961).

The notions of *refuge-city*, of *exodus*, of *exilium* and of *desert* as they appear in the Bible and are developed by Blanchot (1962), Levinas (1982) and Hoppenot (2015) will enable us to illustrate as well as to develop our proposal.

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