

Difficulties of access to knowledge in child psychoanalytic clinic

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Abstract: This paper investigates the child's relationship with knowledge. Clinical practice and analytical research with children with difficulties to access school knowledge revealed the unconscious dynamics in which knowledge occupies a place in the family symptom. A theoretical discussion will be presented considering that access to knowledge bears a structural dimension of impediment, which is the impossibility of knowing in the face of castration. Therefore, we will investigate two paths to discuss what prevents access to knowledge. The first addresses the relationship between demand and desire and how it affects children. The second discusses the relationship between knowledge and truth, exploring the relationships and boundaries between both, adding to this discussion a third essential term: jouissance.

Keywords: knowledge, child psychoanalysis, child's symptom, demand and desire, truth.

Introduction

This paper presents a reflection about difficulties of access to knowledge in child psychoanalytic clinic. The analysis of two clinical cases led us to consider the relationship between the child's symptom, which is manifested in the field of knowledge, and the family dynamics. To carry out this discussion we chose two theoretical paths: The relationship between demand and desire, from Lacan's seminar 9, *Identification* (1961-62/2003), and the disjunction between knowledge and truth, from Lacan's seminar 17, *The other side of psychoanalysis* (1969-70/2007).

From the psychoanalytical perspective, difficulty at school considers that the subject's relationship with knowledge involves the unconscious dimension. Since Freud (1905/2016) we have also come to understand the existence of a structural non-knowledge that acts as an impediment for the subject – the impossibility of knowing about castration – but which, nevertheless, drives the subject in search of other kinds of knowledge.

We believe that clinical practice is a source of research for psychoanalysts. Therefore, we have chosen to present two clinical fragments in which we identified difficulties in the children's relationship with knowledge.

In one, the child does not learn anything that is taught at school and continually repeats that she “doesn't know things.” In the initial interview with the mother, she reveals that the child had a twin brother who died after birth, but that the child “knows nothing” about it. In the other case, the child starts “unlearning” everything she had learned at school. According to the mother, this regression started after the father's arrest,

a scene witnessed by the child, and she adds that she “didn't want to know” the reason for her husband's arrest because she fully trusts him and his claim that he did nothing wrong.

Both cases suggest that the child is unconsciously prevented from knowing, by the mother, about the brother's death or the husband's transgression. The impediment is related to the actual mother's difficulty of dealing with the loss, which triggers the child's refusal of school knowledge as a subjective response.

The kind of knowledge that interests psychoanalysis is unconscious knowledge, knowledge “that is unknown” (Lacan, 1969-70/2007, p. 35), but which is entwined with the subject, slipping through discourse and overflowing in words. It differs from the acquisition of knowledge through education, as it cannot be taught, but is transmitted.

In this paper we will draw on elements of Lacanian theory to discuss what prevents access to knowledge, referring to the clinical fragments that motivated this work. We will start out by considering that access to knowledge bears a structural dimension of impediment, which is the impossibility of knowing in the face of castration. Therefore, we will investigate two paths to discuss what prevents access to knowledge. The first addresses the relationship between demand and desire and how it affects children. The second discusses the relationship between knowledge and truth, exploring the relationships and boundaries between both, adding to this discussion a third essential term: jouissance.

Demand taken as desire

This section seeks to answer the question that prompted our research: Why don't the children – presented in the clinical fragments – access knowledge?

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To begin this reflection, we will resort to seminar 9: *Identification* (1961-62). In this seminar Lacan highlights the function of the signifier and its relationship with the process of the constitution of the subject. The author resorts to the three categories of lack – privation, frustration and castration – and relates them to need, demand and desire to address the constitution of the subject. Lacan analyzes the threefold identification of the subject – with the father, with the unary trait and with the desire of the Other – through the topology. From his earliest elaborations on desire, Lacan relates it to need and demand. Lacan emphasizes that from the operation of demand on need results a remainder. This irreducible remainder is captured as object. Object a, in its function of cause of desire, will correspond to the lost Freudian object.

Lacan discusses the exchange “produced in the dimension of the Other between desire and demand” (1961-62, p. 199)¹ and affirms that the demand of the Other is taken by the neurotic as desire. Lacan (1961-62/2003) uses a figure of the topology, the torus, to show the dialectic between demand and desire. To illustrate the demand, a circular movement, repeated several times, is made to represent the always repeated demand. The inner empty circle created by the outline of the repeated circular movement characterizes the unconscious desire (Figure 1).

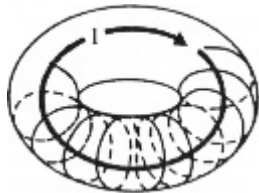


Figure 1. Torus 1.
Source: Lacan, 1961-62/2003, p. 200.

It is important to consider that the subject is constituted in relation to the field of the Other, and, therefore, the two toruses – of the subject and the Other – intertwine in the constitution of the subject (Figure 2).

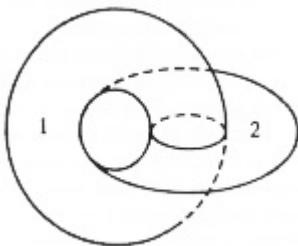


Figure 2. Torus 2.
Source: Lacan, 1961-62/2003, p. 200.

The Other enters the void, the empty core of the subject, in the place that concerns the desire, and therefore becomes the object of desire. The subject and the Other intertwine, and this movement creates confusion between the desire of the subject and the demand that comes from the Other. As Lacan states (1961-62/2003), “desire in one, demand in the other; demand of the one, desire of the other, which is the knot in which is trapped the dialectic of frustration” (p. 120). The demand of the Other is confused with the actual desire of the subject, since the demand expresses the assumption that the subject makes of what the Other wants from him. Frustration is involved in this process, for the void of desire can never be filled. The torus illustrates the impossible harmony between desire and demand.

Lacan (1961-62/2003) stresses that desire is structured by the Oedipus, which is essentially “a relationship between a demand that takes on such a privileged value that it becomes the absolute commandment, the law, and a desire that is the desire of the Other, the Other involved in the Oedipus” (p. 206).

Lacan (1961-62/2003) defines desire in relation to the Other’s desire based on the impossible. He stresses that desire is defined as the intersection between two demands, that of the subject and that of the Other. The subject is the sign of nothing, since the signifier is defined as representing the subject for another signifier, which leads to an indefinite referring on the meanings. At the same time, the Other gives no response. The impotence of the Other to respond is rooted in an impossibility. Thus, desire is viewed as the intersection of what, in both demands, that of the subject and that of the Other, is not to be said. For the author, desire is initially established as that which is hidden in the Other by structure. It is the impossible for the Other to become the desire of the subject: “Desire is established as the part of the demand that is hidden in the Other” (Lacan, 1961-62/2003, p. 215). Lacan (1961-62/2003) explains that this Other who guarantees nothing becomes the veil, the source of concealment of the very place of desire, “and that is where the object is going to conceal itself” (p. 215).

This discussion is also developed by Lacan in the graph of desire. Lacan began to elaborate on the graph of desire in seminar 5, *The formations of the unconscious* (1957-58/1999), continued to do so in seminar 6, *Desire and its interpretation* (1958-59/2016) and resumed its schematization in the text *Subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the freudian unconscious* (1960/1998b), in which he presents the complete version of the graph. It is from the graph of desire that Lacan (1960/1998b) begins to operate with the concept of “a signifier of a lack in the Other” (p. 832), introducing a difference in the approach of the Other, previously presented as “the treasure of signifiers” (p. 820).

In this text, Lacan (1960/1998b) uses graphic forms to represent a series of elements involved in the dialectic of desire. The author gradually adds elements to the graph of desire, making it more complex. We will begin our

¹ This seminar has no official translation. We will use in this paper an unofficial translation (Lacan, 1961-62/2003) to reproduce direct quotations and figures.

discussion with a quotation from Lacan that addresses the transition from sign to signifier in the relationship of the child with the Other:

the child, in one fell swoop, disconnecting the thing from its cry, raises the sign to the function of the signifier and elevates reality to the sophistry of signification, and, through contempt for verisimilitude, unveils the diversity of objectifications to be verified of this very thing. (Lacan, 1960/1998, p. 820).

The child cries (when in pain or hungry, for example), and the Other, hearing the cry, interprets it. The cry that hitherto indicated a biological need, when interpreted by the Other, is transformed into demand. The Other will respond to this demand according to the assumption of what might supply that need. In this sense, the subject receives from the Other his own message, only inverted: "It is from the Other that the subject receives the very message he emits" (Lacan, 1960/1998, p. 821). We have, therefore, the transformation of the cry of need into demand when it is introduced in the field of the Other, the field of meanings. As Lacan stresses (1960/1998):

Yet is it impossible, for those who claim that it is through the welcome given to demand that dissimilarity is introduced into the needs supposedly lying at the origin of the subject, to ignore the fact that there is no demand that does not somehow pass through the defiles of the signifier. (1960/1998, p. 826).

At birth the child does not speak, naturally. It will then be spoken by the Other. The child will be alienated to the field of the Other, who will give meanings to her manifestations, a structuring moment of subjectivity, in which the child will be alienated to the mother, who embodies the primordial Other. Lacadée (1996) stresses that:

If we take the child as a signifier, a child alone does not signify anything. She can only give meaning to her being or to what actually happens to her in her body in the relationship she will establish with the Other, the mother in the case. (p. 75).

The alienation to the field of the Other, or the signifying alienation, is described by Lacan as "the first essential operation on which the subject is founded." Something stands out in this signifying alienation, object a , which in the text "Subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the freudian unconscious" (1960/1998) is presented as "voice." Thus, not everything that is of the nature of the real can submit to the signifying order. Something escapes symbolization, which Lacan calls object a . Laurent (1997) explains that "the subject cannot be fully represented in the Other, there is always a remainder" (p. 37); the voice emerges as a real rejected by signification.

We can find this configuration in the foreground of the graph² of desire, according to the following image:

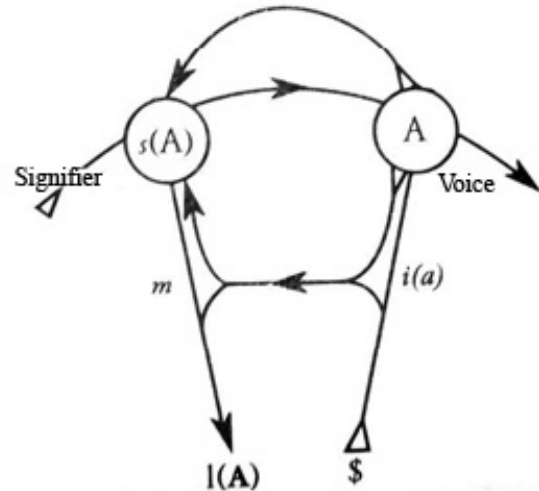


Figure 3. Graph of desire – part I.

Source: Lacan, 1960/1998, p. 822.

This first level of the graph shows the relationships between imaginary alienation and symbolic alienation:

Take just one signifier as an emblem of this omnipotence, that is, of this fully potential power, this birth of possibility, and you will have the unary trait, which, by filling in the invisible mark that the subject derives from the signifier, alienates this subject in the primary identification which forms the ego ideal. (Lacan, 1960/1998, p. 822)

For the constitution of the Ideal ego, which will confirm for the subject his own image, the subject needs symbolic support, which he places in the field of the Other. The subject is alienated not only to the signifiers from the field of the Other, but also to the image of the Other. Laurent stresses that "alienation is the fact that the subject, having no identity, has to identify with something" (1997, p. 43).

The message, like the image, comes from the Other, inverted. The child expects the Other to confirm that that image she sees is her own, thus making of the Other an anchorage point, a symbolic support that confirms the identification.

In his thoughts on identification, Freud (1921/2011) describes three kinds of identification. The first is identification with the father, which precedes the choice of object. The second addresses the field of choice of object. The third identification is that based on the desire to be in the same situation as the other.

2 The terms present in this graph are: $\$$ – subject; A – big Other; $s(A)$ signifier of the Other; $I(A)$ -Ego Ideal; $i(a)$ image; m - moi.

The second identification, identification with trait, is privileged by Lacan (1961-62/2003) when he develops the single trait described by Freud (1921/2011) into a unary trait, marking out identification symbolically and going beyond the imaginary bias. Identification will provide the separation between the subject and the Other, for, through identification with the trait of the Other, the subject internalizes the Other and thereafter can break away from him.

Alienation leaves as inheritance a subject that is connected with the signifying chain, inserted in the symbolic order, and, as such, demands from the Other the truth about his own being: What am I? The subject turns to the Other due to his function of “treasure of signifiers” and makes a demand. The subject resorts to the Other in search of the truth about his own being, but is faced with the fact that he exists only from the desire of the Other. When the subject demands this truth from the Other, he comes up against the Other’s desire. He is faced with the riddle of the Other’s desire, that is, the demand is linked to the desire.

Lacan (1960/1998) explains that every demand implies disproportionate space because it is a petition of love. It is as the desire of the Other that the desire of man takes shape, but preserving a subjective opacity, which constitutes the substance of desire: “Desire take shape in the margin in which demand is torn apart from need” (Lacan, 1960, p. 828). The question “*che voi?*”³ is the one that best leads to the path of actual desire.

The child seeks to know the truth about herself and comes up against the enigmatic desire of the Other. She then asks herself: What does the Other want of me? What is my place in the Other’s desire? “*Che vuoi?*” This question links the subject to castration, to the lack in the field of the Other. There is no signifier in the field of the Other to fill in the lack of being.

The subject turns to the Other for answers, but instead of answers he encounters the question of what he is for the Other. Lacan (1960/1998) shows the exchange between the desire of the subject and that of the Other, stating that “the desire of man is the desire of the Other” (p. 829). According to Lacan (1960/1998):

That is why the question of the Other, which comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply, formulated as “*Che vuoi?*” – “what do you want?” – is the one that best leads him to the path of his own desire, as long as he sets out, aided by the skills of a partner known as a psychoanalyst, to reformulate it, even without knowing it very well, as “What does he want of me?”. (Lacan, 1960/1998b, p. 829)

The subject’s query regarding the desire of the Other, represented by the question “*che vuoi?*” is part

3 From the Italian expression “*che vuoi?*” (What do you want?), used by Lacan in *The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the freudian unconscious* (1960/1998, p. 829).

of the formulation of the graph of desire in its “graph 3” version (Figure 4):

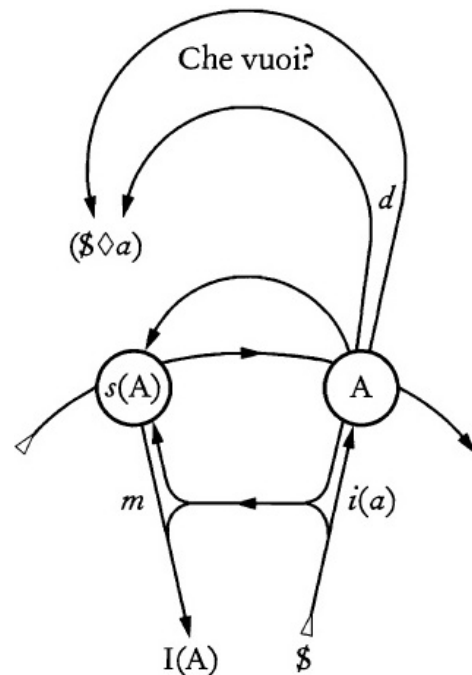


Figure 4. Graph of desire – graph 3

Source: Lacan, 1960/1998, p. 829.

When she enquires about the Other’s desire the child gets no answer, for there is no possibility of the Other answering the riddle of desire. In this passage of the graph, we find the disjunction between knowledge and truth.

The impossibility of an answer leads the child to the construction of fantasy ($\$ \diamond a$). The subject will construct a fiction, his own response to the riddle of the Other’s desire. The fantasy is this construction the child makes to respond to the enigmatic desire of the Other. Thus the opaque nature of the Other’s desire is interpreted by the fantasy. As Lacan underscores (1960/1998):

The graph inscribes that desire is governed from fantasy, thus formulated in a similar way to what happens in the relation between the ego and the body image, except that it still marks the inversion of the unknowns on which each one is respectively based. (p. 831)

In the absence of the answer that the subject demands of the Other, or of a signifier that closes the signifying chain, what stems from that relates to jouissance, since jouissance indicates precisely an impossibility of signification. Where a signifier is lacking, jouissance emerges. According to Quinet (1993), “this missing being is what his fantasy ($\$ \diamond a$) indicates to him as being the object with which he, as subject, is in

conjunction and disjunction – the object that condenses jouissance: object *a*” (p. 111).

Understanding the child’s symptom and its relation to the Other’s desire is important in analyzing the clinical fragments presented in this paper. Lacan (1969-70/2007) stresses that the role of the mother is the mother’s desire and that this always wreaks havoc. For the author, the mother’s function is translated into her care, which bears the mark of a particularized interest (Lacan, 1969/2003, p. 369).

The child will wonder how she might satisfy or not the mother’s desire (Lacadée, 1996). The child’s symptom is linked with the place she occupies regarding the mother’s lack of object. Lacadée (1996) adds that “the child, with her symptom, gives a meaning to this *x* which is the mother’s desire. We can interpret this as identifying with the mother’s symptom while the latter relates with the position of the father” (p. 77). The mother’s desire must be divided, it is important that the object of her desire is not single (Miller, 1996, p. 2014).

Disjunction between knowledge and truth

Access to knowledge encounters impossibility when the dimension of truth is brought into play. One cannot know the whole truth, since it can only be half-said (Lacan, 1969-70/2007). Therefore, knowledge and truth meet in a structural disjunction. Knowledge is limited insofar as it cannot respond to what relates to the subject’s truth.

In this section we will analyze the disjunction between knowledge and truth and its implications for the subject’s access to knowledge. To this end we will draw mainly on the Lacanian elaborations featured in seminar 17, *The other side of psychoanalysis* (1969-70/2007). In that work Lacan develops the notions of knowledge and truth from discourse. The author starts out by considering a certain opposition between knowledge and truth taken from Hegel’s *The phenomenology of spirit*.⁴ However, Lacan goes beyond the Hegelian pair by introducing a third notion in this discussion: *jouissance*.

In Lacan, knowledge as truth, as expressed in the analyst’s discourse, is unknown knowledge and therein lies a difference between Lacan’s and Hegel’s thought. According to Oliveira (2007), “for Lacan it is not a matter of *Self-Awareness*, but of *Unconsciousness*. In other words, Lacan is Freudian rather than Hegelian” (p. 275).

Lacan (1969-70/2007) asks what truth as knowledge might be and answers: “it is a riddle” (p. 36). Riddle and truth share the condition of being said only in half. Lacan (1969-70/2007) stresses that the function of the riddle is to be a half saying. We understand that truth is also sustained by a half saying.

From the idea of the riddle proposed by Lacan one can distinguish statement from stating, a necessary distinction to

understand the dimension of truth. Lacan stressed that “the riddle is the stating – and you work out the statement as best as you can” (1969-70, 2007, p. 37). We understand statement as what is said and stating as what one wants to say with what is said. Lacan thus brings stating closer to the riddle:

If I insisted at length on the difference of level between stating and statement it was precisely so that the function of the riddle may take on a meaning. The riddle is probably that, a stating. I give you the task of making it into a statement. Work it out as best as you can – as Oedipus did – and you will suffer the consequences. This is what is at stake in a riddle. (Lacan, 1969-70/2007, p. 37)

The stating bears the dimension of the truth. The subject who speaks, speaks more than he says, and that which is not said, that is, which goes unsaid, relates to the concealed dimension present in the stating. It is at the level of stating that the analyst must look for traces of the subject’s truth, albeit warned of the impossibility of finding the whole truth. The stating conveys the truth insofar as it encounters the limits of saying. The truth insinuates itself in the impossibility of saying everything. In seminar 16, *From an other to the other*, Lacan states (1968-69/2008):

What cannot be said about the fact is, however, designated in the saying by its lack, and that is what constitutes the truth. That is why the truth always insinuates itself, but it can also be inscribed in a perfectly calculated way where only it has a place, between the lines. (p. 65)

Although the stating bears the dimension of the truth, the truth cannot be wholly stated. The subject of the stating is that which lies in the interval between the master-signifier (S1) and the signifying chain (S2), and is therefore the effect of this relation.

To analyze the relationship between riddle and truth, Lacan (1969-70/2007) adds the idea of myth. After establishing the half-saying as a function of the riddle, Lacan (1969-70/2007) adds that “the half-saying is the law internal to every kind of stating the truth, and what best embodies it is myth” (p. 116).

In seminar 17, *The other side of psychoanalysis*, Lacan (1969-70/2007) states that “everyone knows that in order to correctly structure knowledge one must abandon the question of origins” (p.17). Lacan claims that the myth considers and addresses the truth. So there is a difference between knowledge and myth regarding the truth. According to Oliveira (2007):

What Lacan shows here is that knowledge has an origin, the truth, but that it always tends to forget that origin, which means that it always tends to forget its truth, as if it were knowledge without truth. Myth, on the contrary, addresses that origin. Myth is its memory.

⁴ In this research we will not delve into the issues presented by Hegel. For such issues consult the bibliography: Hegel, G. W. F. (2002).

Like the unconscious, in Freudian terms, myth is the memory of what man forgets. And it is in this sense that myth has to do with truth in its budding state. Not forgetting it is its function, and that is where psychoanalysis comes closer to myth. (2007, p. 276)

In myth lies a kind of knowledge that, rather than forgetting the origin, seeks to address it. Mythical knowledge, therefore, involves the truth, it implies a residue of truth as we find it in the formations of the unconscious that are manifested through dreams, jokes and Freudian slips. According to Oliveira (2007), “as disjointed knowledge, mythical knowledge is no less than knowledge that comes from the place of the truth, knowledge as truth” (p. 278). Lacan (1969-70/2007) links knowledge as truth to interpretation: “a knowledge as truth – this defines what should be the structure of what is called an interpretation” (p. 37).

We must therefore reflect on the relationship between riddle and interpretation. Lacan defines that the riddle is stating – and what might interpretation be?

In clinical practice, interpretation is often established from a riddle. The analyst, as an interpreter, collects the elements stated by the subject and gives them back to him as a riddle that he will have to work out to produce a statement. Based on Lacan, Oliveira (2007) interprets the myth of Oedipus as follows:

For Lacan, it is the Chimera that interprets Oedipus, and not the other way round, as is commonly thought. Insofar as it proposes a riddle, insofar as it gives him a stating, it is Oedipus who is called on to make this stating into a statement. Oedipus’s statement ciphers the Chimera’s riddle and the latter dissolves in its own mystery. The Chimera’s interpretation consists of giving Oedipus a stating, not a statement. Only Oedipus himself can give the statement. For Lacan, the same thing occurs in analysis. (p. 280)

To take the subject’s speech as a riddle is to consider the dimension of the stating concealed in the subject’s statements. It is, therefore, to bring to analysis the traces of truth that appear in his discourse. Thus, it is the analyst who presumes knowledge in the subject; the analyst interprets, but it is the subject who produces the meaning, as Oliveira (2007) underlines when he says that “the analyst is there to make a presumption of knowledge as truth in his patient’s speech” (p. 281). It is in this sense that we can understand knowledge as truth, when the analyst presumes knowledge in the patient, knowledge that reveals some truth of the subject. Knowledge that only the actual subject can produce and state.

Oliveira (2007) adds that myth, beyond the dimension of truth – of knowledge as truth – presents the dimension of the real. He states: “As a stating, myth refers to the truth, but as a statement it concerns the real” (281). For him, myth bears the dimension of the statement

of the impossible, of pure statement, that which has no meaning, which is traumatic, and in this sense myth is established as a memory of such trauma.

Truth relates to the real, but is not confused with it. It comes close to the real and in it finds its limit. According to Lacan (1970/2003), “[the real] is not a truth, it is the limit of truth” (p. 443). Truth finds its limit in the real precisely because there can be no signifier for the subject’s truth. This impossibility – at the level of the real – is what limits the truth and prevents it from being inscribed.

The relationship between truth and the real leads us to the third element we intend to include in this discussion, therefore, beyond truth and knowledge, which is *jouissance*. What is the relationship between these three elements regarding access or impediment to knowledge?

Language is presented as an apparatus of *jouissance* (Lacan, 1969-70 / 2007). It exceeds the function of communication because it enables *jouissance*. *Jouissance* gives evidence that not everything is in the field of meaning. The field of *jouissance* pierces the field of language.

The subject turns to the field of the Other, the treasure of signifiers, in search of a signifier that closes the chain. However, what the subject encounters is a flaw in the Other’s knowledge. The Other does not have the answer to the question about the subject’s truth. In the face of this flaw, the subject will have to create a fiction about himself. His truth rests on a fiction. In seminar 4, *The object relation*, Lacan (1956-57/1995) already stressed that “the truth has a structure, so to say, of fiction” (p. 259). Unable to find the signifier that tells him about his being, the subject will never know the whole truth. He will know what he was able to construct as fiction through fantasy, represented by the formula ($\$ \ll a$), which establishes a form of *jouissance* for the subject.

Jouissance is related to knowledge. When the field of meaning proves to be insufficient to construct knowledge about the truth, the subject creates a phantasm, through which he enjoys. The moment the subject is faced with the impossibility of the Other answering about his truth, he is comforted by the castration of the Other. Castration indicates out that some *jouissance* is forbidden to the speaker. Flaws in the field of meaning open space for the field of *jouissance*, establishing an obstacle to knowledge, since *jouissance* resists symbolization.

Lacan (1969-70/2007, p. 17) stresses that the relation between *jouissance* and knowledge is primitive and lies at the foundation of the emergence of the signifier. Lacan (1969-70/2007) locates this primitive relationship in the unary trait. According to Lacan (1969-70/2007), “everything that interests us analysts as knowledge originates in the unary trait” (p. 48). Lacan describes the unary trait as the “origin of the signifier” (p. 48), explaining that “[knowledge] derives first, whether it knows it or not, from the unary trait, and then from everything that will be able to be articulated as signifier” (p. 52).

So *jouissance* and knowledge somehow relate in a special way to the foundation of the unary trait, at which

point the subject is constituted from the signifier. It is through the *One* that the trait comprises, the S1, that the signifying chain originates, that is, it is constituted from the relationship between S1 and S2. In the interval between S1-S2 the subject emerges as the effect of the signifying chain. The trait's mark splits the subject, who occurs as a divided subject, $\$$. Something is lost in this dividing operation, object *a*. Somehow, knowledge and *jouissance* are anchored to this opening moment of the subject's entrance into language:

Jouissance is precisely correlative to the initial form of the coming into play of what I call the mark, the unary trait, which is the mark for death, if you wish to give it its sense. Note that nothing takes on any sense before death comes into play. (Lacan 1969-70/2007, p. 188).

This new relationship between *jouissance* and signifier inaugurates a new way of viewing the signifying chain. According to Miller (1999/2012):

what had hitherto been addressed in terms of 'what is conveyed in the signifying chain is the impeded subject, truth, death, desire' is reinterpreted as 'what is conveyed in the signifying chain is *jouissance*'. (p. 31)

We see in seminar 17 that the emphasis of Lacan's (1969-70/2007) teaching is on the signifier as a mark of *jouissance*. According to Lacan (1969-70/2007), the unary trait commemorates "an irruption of *jouissance*" (p. 81). Thus, while introducing a loss of *jouissance* it also produces a supplement of *jouissance* (Miller, 1999/2012).

Also in this seminar (1969-70/2007) knowledge is addressed by Lacan as a means of *jouissance*. The splitting operation of the subject results in the loss of object *a*, which Lacan (1969-70/2007) will call the object of surplus enjoying, which cannot be signified. This loss will create a gap, which the subject will seek to bridge with various objects. The loss of the object will trigger the process of repetition, which aims to retrieve this lost object, that is, aims at *jouissance*. This object *a*, lost, is what Lacan defines as:

the *a*, as such, is properly speaking the result of the fact that knowledge, at its origin, is reduced to signifying articulation. Such knowledge is a means of *jouissance*. And when it works, I repeat, what it produces is entropy. This entropy, this point of loss, is the only point, the only regular point by which we have access to what is at stake in *jouissance*. In this there is expressed, completed, justified what regards the incidence of the signifier in the destiny of the speaking being. (1969-70/2007, p. 52-53).

Lacan (1969-70/2007) will borrow from thermodynamics the term entropy to describe the relationship between *jouissance* and the signifying chain: "When the signifier is introduced as an apparatus of

jouissance, it is no surprise to see appearing something that is related to entropy" (p. 50). Entropy conveys the idea of loss, of waste, as Miller (1999/2012) states:

From then on, access to *jouissance* no longer occurs essentially through transgression, but through entropy, through the waste produced by the signifier. Thus, Lacan can say that knowledge is a means of *jouissance*. The autonomy of the symbolic order could not be better renounced. Knowledge is a means of *jouissance* in two senses: insofar as it has the effect of lack and insofar as it produces the supplement, the surplus enjoying. (p. 32)

In addressing knowledge as a means of *jouissance*, Lacan opens up a new perspective of knowledge, which theretofore had been considered a barrier to *jouissance*. According to Lacan (1969-70/2007), "knowledge is what causes life to stop at a certain limit to *jouissance*" (p. 17). *Jouissance* conveys something of death. By establishing a limit to *jouissance*, by dealing with it, knowledge presents an alternative to this route of death. In this perspective, knowledge elaborated in analysis, albeit limited, restrains the *jouissance* of speech. From the new perspective of knowledge, introduced by Lacan, knowledge can both operate as a limit to *jouissance* and convey it.

Jouissance is also addressed by Lacan in seminar 17 (1969-70/2007) in its relationship with truth. In the chapter "Truth, sister of *jouissance*," Lacan (1969-70/2007) stresses that "truth is certainly inseparable from the effects of language taken as such" (p. 64), truth emerges as a sister of *jouissance* since it is linked to the interdicted *jouissance*, it occupies the place of that which is mortified, barred, nullified. Truth remains concealed behind what is said, there is something that protects it and this barrier of protection relates to *jouissance*. Lacan (1969-70/2007) explains that "truth does indeed seem to be foreign to us – I refer to our own truth. It is with us, no doubt, but without us being so concerned that we wish to speak it" (p. 60).

Lacan (1970/2003) warns us that "of the truth we don't have to know everything. A little suffices" (p. 442). There is something that limits knowledge about the truth. The author links unknown truth to the unconscious: "there is somewhere a truth that is unknown" (Lacan, 1968-69/2008, p. 195). This place where there is a truth that is unknown is the unconscious. The subject's relationship with the truth is permeated by the impossibility of access to that truth. Truth and castration draw closer to each other since what this truth hides is castration, "the love of truth is the love of this weakness whose veil we have lifted, it is the love of what the truth hides, and which is called castration" (Lacan, 1969-70/2007, p. 54).

In the text "Radiophonie" (1970/2003b), when asked "How are knowledge and truth incompatible?" (p. 440), Lacan answers by referring to complementarity rather than compatibility. He says knowledge and truth are not complementary, both share the impossibility of

producing a whole, for the whole does not exist. The whole truth cannot be said and it is impossible to have access to the whole of knowledge. Lacan differentiates (1970/2003) between *savoir* (symbolic knowledge) and *connaissance* (imaginary knowledge): “the whole is an index of knowledge” (p. 440). The subject for psychoanalysis is the subject of the signifier, of *savoir*, not of *connaissance*, as it is for science. Thus, Lacan emphasizes that the notion of *savoir* necessarily implies the dimension of unknown knowledge, unlike the notion of *connaissance*, which presupposes the possibility of knowing everything.

The subject of knowledge and truth is also addressed by Lacan in seminar 20: *Encore* (1972-73/1985). This seminar has a chapter called “Knowledge and truth” in which Lacan (1972-73/1985) develops the relationship between knowledge and truth regarding analysis. Lacan stresses that:

Wherever truth presents itself, if it asserts itself as an ideal that could be based on speech, it is not so easily attained. As for analysis, if it rests on a presumption, it is this, that knowledge about truth can be constituted on the basis its experience. (p. 123)

To develop this assertion, Lacan resumes the discourse of the analyst, whereby knowledge occupies the place of truth in the discourse, to say that it is from the place occupied by the analyst, as the cause of desire, that the subject \$ is called upon to produce signifiers S1. These signifiers will help the subject solve “his relation to truth” (Lacan, 1972-73/1985, p 123).

From what has been presented up to now, we can conclude that knowledge and truth are disjointed, as it is not possible to know the whole truth about the subject, since truth refers to castration. This impossibility of knowing about the truth is structuring for the subject, who, on encountering the discovery of castration, steps back and constructs his fantasy to deal with it.

For the subject to be structured as such, a certain disjunction between knowledge and truth is necessary, since knowledge cannot grasp the whole truth of castration. The truth is never whole for the speaking being, there is a structural impossibility in the subject’s relation to truth, for he rejects it, represses it. From the repression are opened possibilities for the acquisition of other types of knowledge, as we saw in Freud (1905/2016).

Knowledge and truth present a formal heterogeneity, since they present different natures in the discourses developed by Lacan. Knowledge is an element that circulates among discourses, while truth is a fixed place. Although truth coincides with knowledge in the analyst’s discourse, they are not complementary.

Final remarks

Based on these elaborations, we will return to the question raised by the two case fragments: Why doesn’t the child access knowledge?

Knowledge passes through the Other, that is, the child turns to the field of the Other in search of knowledge. This process is described by Freud (1905/2016) in the text *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* regarding the manifestation of sexuality in childhood. In that period, which according to Freud (1905/2016) comprises the age group of three to five years old, the child resorts to the parents in search of knowledge, believing that they hold knowledge about everything.

However, in the cases presented here, the child, when seeking knowledge in the mother, finds a demand for non-knowledge. The children do not access knowledge precisely because they have transformed the mother’s demand for “non-knowledge” into desire, into a law they have to obey, because it is as the Other that the subject desires (Lacan, 1960/1998b). The child translates the mother’s demand for not knowing – about the child’s death or about her husband’s transgression – into desire and responds to it by refusing to know. As we have seen, Lacan states that the neurotic is that who identifies the lack of the Other with his demand (1960/1998, p. 838). In identifying the lack of the Other with the demand of the Other, he takes on the responsibility of responding to this demand, forging his desire as the alleged desire of the Other.

If the neurotic is that who identifies the lack of the Other with his demand, the child interprets what is lacking to the mother and offers herself, with her symptom, as the object of the mother’s desire. It is asking about her place in the Other’s desire that the child emerges as the object of mother’s love.

The mother’s demand for ignorance is answered by the child who, through difficulties in school knowledge, finds a way to respond to what she supposes to be the mother’s desire. The child thus seeks to find a guarantee of love in the maternal Other.

As subject, the child is affected and determined by both the effects of saying and the absence of saying. It is important to remember that the family is constituted around an unspeakable real. Miller (1993/2007) emphasizes that the family is essentially united by a secret, by the unsaid. The secret is about the parents’ *jouissance*. The real suggested by the parents’ form of *jouissance* makes the family a symbolic response to the impossibility of writing the sexual relationship.

Family myths border on the real, they are fictions that address and conceal *jouissance*. Thus, the presence of something unsaid about *jouissance* is a structuring condition of the family. In the cases discussed in this article, it is not about something unspeakable about *jouissance*, but something of the family history that cannot be accessed. The mother has problems recognizing knowledge that points to the truth of castration. For Lacan, knowledge is related to *jouissance*. There is *jouissance* in accessing and acquiring knowledge, but also in refusing it, in “not wanting to know” anything. Lacan stresses that what is detached from the symbolic returns in the real. The mother’s refusal to know has an effect on the child, who responds with a symptom.

We have seen in the theoretical framework presented above that there is a part of the truth that is impossible to know, that is protected by jouissance. How might we locate the relationship between knowledge, truth and jouissance in the presented case fragments?

Let us analyze the mother's relationship with the truth, since there we have located a key point in the formation of the child's symptom. In both cases there is a truth about which the mother does not want to know. But what does this "not wanting to know" relate to?

There is something that points to the mother's castration, whether the death of the child or the loss of the idealized husband. As we have seen, what refers to the truth of castration is found at the level of the impossibility of symbolization, so there is something that cannot be signified.

However, if what protects this truth is jouissance, we believe that there is something of this "not wanting to know" that relates to the mother's jouissance and blocks knowledge about its the truth. Therefore, our hypothesis is that there is a jouissance that impedes and blocks this knowledge about the truth. The mother enjoys in this place of not wanting to know.

What is knowledge for these children? If knowledge is something to be apprehended in the field of the Other, in these cases the mother poses an impediment to access to knowledge. The child assumes the impediment of the Other as her own. Therefore, she refuses to know.

Child clinic, more than any other kind, teaches us how the symptom emerges from the relationship of the subject with the field of the Other. Receiving a child in clinical practice, since "the child is a patient of analysis in her own right" (Petri, 2008, p. 43), is only possible when the relation of the child's symptom with the family is received, and, moreover, she is offered a place removed from the place of symptom that this subject occupies within the family.

Analysis also aims to contain jouissance. Thus, access to knowledge about the truth – about part of it, it is important to remember – is somehow made possible through the knowledge produced in analysis.

As we have seen, knowledge that refers to the field of the unconscious affects the field of school learning. In the cases presented, considering the function of the child's symptom in the family dynamics, we understand that the refusal of knowledge in the field of schooling is the child's reaction to the suspension of access to knowledge by the maternal Other.

Within the framework of psychoanalytic theory, which warns us of the unconscious dimension of knowledge, we consider the symptom in the field of education to be an elaboration of the subject in the face of lack in the field of the Other. The psychoanalyst, by accepting this symptom as an analytical symptom, allows the subject to construct his own knowledge about his truth, considering nevertheless that access to knowledge will always bear the dimension of an impediment.

Impasses no acesso ao saber na clínica psicanalítica com crianças

Resumo: Este artigo investiga as relações da criança com o saber. O ponto de partida é a prática clínica com crianças que apresentaram impasses no acesso ao saber escolar e, na investigação analítica, revelaram a trama inconsciente na qual o saber ocupa um lugar no sintoma familiar. Apresentaremos a discussão teórica considerando que o acesso ao saber porta uma dimensão estrutural de impedimento, que é a impossibilidade do saber diante da castração. Sendo assim, percorreremos dois caminhos para discutir o que impede o acesso ao saber. No primeiro caminho abordaremos a relação entre demanda e desejo e suas incidências sobre a criança. No segundo percurso discutiremos a relação entre saber e verdade, explorando as relações e os limites entre os dois termos, acrescentando a essa discussão um terceiro termo essencial: o gozo.

Palavras-chave: saber, psicanálise infantil, sintoma da criança, demanda e desejo, verdade.

Impasses dans l'accès à la connaissance dans une clinique psychanalytique avec des enfants

Résumé: Cet article examine les relations de l'enfant avec la connaissance. La pratique clinique et la recherche analytique avec des enfants qui ont présenté des impasses dans l'accès à les connaissances scolaires révèlent souvent la relation inconsciente dans laquelle la connaissance occupe une place dans le symptôme familial. Une discussion théorique sera présentée, considérant que l'accès au savoir porte une dimension structurelle d'empêchement, qui est l'impossibilité du savoir face à la castration. De cette façon, deux chemins seront abordés pour discuter de ce qui empêche l'accès à la connaissance. D'abord, la relation entre la demande et le désir et leurs incidences sur l'enfant sera abordée. Dans le deuxième chemin, la relation entre connaissance et vérité sera discutée, en explorant les relations et les frontières entre les deux termes, en ajoutant à cette discussion un troisième terme essentiel : la jouissance.

Mots-clés: connaissance, psychanalyse infantile, symptôme de l'enfant, demande et désir, vérité.

Dificuldade em o acesso ao saber em a clínica psicanalítica com crianças

Resumen: Este artículo examina las relaciones entre el niño y el saber. El punto de partida es la práctica clínica con niños que presentaron dificultades en el acceso al saber escolar, y en la investigación analítica se reveló la trama inconsciente en la que el saber ocupa un lugar en el síntoma familiar. Presentamos la discusión teórica considerando que el acceso al saber contiene una dimensión estructural de impedimento, que es la imposibilidad del saber ante la castración. Por eso recorreremos dos caminos para discutir lo que impide el acceso al saber. En el primer, abordaremos la relación entre demanda y deseo y sus incidencias sobre el niño. En el segundo, discutiremos la relación entre saber y verdad, explorando las relaciones y los límites entre los dos términos, añadiendo a esa discusión un tercer término esencial: el goce.

Palabras clave: saber, psicoanálisis infantil, síntoma del niño, demanda y deseo, verdad.

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