



CAPSA Report

Le transfert et l'attente

Almost three years ago, we had envisioned organizing a conference on a topic central to psychoanalytic clinical practice and theory: Transference and Expectation. We invited Catherine Chabert, a well-known French psychoanalyst who has published extensively on this topic and a training analyst from the Association psychanalytique de France (APF). Experience teaches us that it is always rich to establish a dialogue with psychoanalysts from a different region. In order to broaden the discussion, we also had in mind to invite a colleague practicing in Montreal with severely handicapped children: what would be the very meaning of “expectation” in such a context: for the child? For his or her parents? For the clinician?

Due to pandemic conditions, we postponed twice the conference and had to finally resolve to rely on a zoom format. In order to fully benefit from a dialogue with Catherine Chabert, we decided to focus exclusively on her and to re-center the discussion around her two papers. That proved to be an excellent decision that allowed more room for in-depth discussions of the topics.

As a consequence of these circumstances, the costs required from the CAPSA are less than anticipated. The only cost we are requesting is for the publicity brochure: the brochure itself (862.00 CD\$ = 664 US\$; and the modifications associated with a change of dates (221 CD\$ = 170 US\$): 834 US\$.

Speaker

Catherine Chabert, is a full member (member titulaire) at the Association psychanalytique de France (APF). She is also emeritus professor on clinical psychopathology at the Institute of Psychology at the Paris-Descartes University. She has co-edited the Journal *Libres cahiers pour la psychanalyse*, until 2015. She is the editor of the collection “*Psychanalyse et psychopathologie*” with Dunod Editions.

She presented two papers at our conference: *Les belles espérances*; and *Perdre, abandonner, se quitter*.

A local psychoanalyst engaged the discussion with her after each of these papers, before opening the discussion with the floor: Ellen Corin and Jacques Mauger. The dialogue with the audience was rich and challenging.

Content

Les belles espérances : On the basis of a clinical case, Catherine Chabert discussed the various levels, conscious and unconscious, of expectation surrounding a demand for a psychoanalysis: on the side of the patient but also on the side of the psychoanalyst. She identified several challenges and traps associated with a work with transference and countertransference. The clinical case exemplified the intense psychic work underlying her analytical listening. One of the questions raised in the discussion was the respective role played by a reference to Freudian meta-psychology and by the singular aspects of the case, the way to interweave them.

Perdre, abandonner, se quitter. Catherine Chabert’s talk was entirely devoted to the analysis of a clinical case dominated by “loss” and separation, by an interweaving between psychosexuality and death. She discussed the case on the background of “Grief



and Melancholia” and indicated the degree to which a “transference dream” was a turning point in the clinical course. This provided grounds for contrasting Winnicott’s and Freud’s perspectives on the early stages of life.

Publicity

The event was broadly advertised through internet. A brochure announced the title and the argument of the conference, presented the program, and introduced Catherine Chabert and her work. It was sent several times during the months preceding the conference, through our own mailing list and through various groups and associations in contact with us. This gives us the opportunity to enhance our links with a range of professionals having a clinical practice and interested by psychoanalytic perspectives. We had to announce twice that the conference was postponed due to the pandemic. Fortunately, this did not alter the participation and the persons present at the conference expressed their high appreciation of the event, its importance for orienting and enriching clinical practices.

Public

We had a beautiful and diversified participation to the conference: 68 colleagues from the SPM, 10 analysts in training, 60 non-members and 40 students. This is a sign of the good impact that the meeting had not only for psychoanalyst colleagues but also for a broader milieu. This was in line with what we had in mind when planning this event.

Impacts

The impacts of that event were extremely positive. On one side, several seminars – including one seminar involving analysts in training – had begun before the meeting to read and discuss Catherine Chabert’ books and papers dealing with transference and expectation. That supported exchanges and discussions about a topic central to psychoanalytic clinical practice. This continued after the event itself, as an echo to what was discussed.

On the other side, and that is a very important by-product of the conference, Catherine Chabert accepted on the day following the conference to have a two hours long discussion with analysts in training who had submitted her one clinical case that she agreed discussing and commenting. The echoes of this meeting from the analysts in training, even if by zoom, were extremely positive.

Recommandations

Once again, the decision to begin the discussion with having a local analyst discuss the paper has several advantages; it allows participants to rely more deeply with the presenter through their identification with the discussant. It also serves as a kind of “ferry person” between the speaker and the audience and facilitates the participation of the public to the discussion.

The choice of the speaker, who also happened to be an important figure for clinicians in Quebec and students in psychology, was excellent. An atmosphere of positive expectations and a kind of intellectual excitement paved the way for a fruitful encounter. The skill of our guest for interweaving clinical material, metapsychological references and original and sensible reflections were without doubt largely responsible for the success of the event.