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## A Slip of the Signature

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self-hatred found its treatment in analysis. What remains is living in a world where, if I consent to let myself be, I will become an object of the hatred of some others who will want to make me disappear. And there is no longer a fantasy to hide it from me. This hatred, I can neither hide, nor dissolve. It is this hatred, this real, that must be gotten used to. To see where the hatred is allows one to combat it better without playing the victim, without turning it into a malevolent Other.

Translated by Julia Richards

## A SLIP OF THE SIGNATURE

*Dalila Arpin*

**F**rom the perspective of the unconscious, parapraxes are successful. In my case, it was on the occasion of a signature, and the parapraxis was not mine.

During a PIPOL Congress, my analyst was signing his latest book. I went over to ask him for one and he told me he hadn't slept very well. I was somewhat baffled: Was he really telling me this? To an insomniac? Once I had his signature, I left with my copy of the book.

When I got back to the hotel room, I "read" my analyst's dedication to my roommate: "To Dalila Arpin, who knows how to orient herself using her relation to her unconscious." But, once back in Paris, I showed it to my husband who read it as it is and said, "He didn't write your first name." I took another look and to my great surprise realised that he had written the name of a very close friend. This friendship was the expression of an old symptom: to have "a best friend" from whom I was inseparable, just as my mother and her sister had been. I would often find some feature this friend had in common with my aunt, such as light-blue eyes. It is not uncommon for colleagues in the School to get my name and the name my analyst had written mixed up, due to their similarity, and colleagues often take one for the other. At the beginning of my analysis, this confusion made me morose, for it was often to my detriment. But on this occasion, I burst out laughing. As Freud indicates in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, the transformation of a traumatic situation into a *Witz* is in itself a manifestation of the unconscious.

As I was leaving the session during which I had been talking about this, I walked past “The Kooples” shop. For the first time, I realised the ambiguity of this name in French. The signifier is never far, because not only was I putting together a book on *Famous Couples*, but the couple, if not friendship, appears to me as the solution I have found for the solitude that haunted me when I was a child. Just then, an idea crossed my mind: “Behind the Other lies an other.” But how did this association come about?

In my analyst’s dedication, he presented himself as a barred subject: he hasn’t slept well, he commits a slip of the pen on the first name of his analysand... It is thus through transference that the relation to the Other is affected. And my laughter is a sign of a distance towards this Other, it being the result of my analysis. The relation with a partner has occupied an important place in my analysis. I had always found leaving my partners difficult. It had something to do with separation, as I was caught in the nets of a fantasy in which I was abandoned. I felt obliged to stay with my partners, whom I placed in the position of Others too. I followed their wishes, which was an alibi for the expression of my desire. The dissatisfaction I sustained in this manner made me morose. Thus, the partner was for me an Other that was not barred. It follows that with this “failed signature” the possibility of a different relationship with my partner was made possible. Two years later, two dreams were to mark the fall of the transference and my analysis was to come to an end.

In the first, I dream I am going to supervision. *The supervisor hosts me in my parents’ living room. I am distracted by a teacher who passes with children from the school. When I try to get back to the case I am talking about, I find myself in front of a door. When it opens, the supervisor has been swallowed up along with his chair.* In the second dream, *I go to my session and have fun with the other analysands who are in the waiting room. When I leave, I realise I neither saw nor heard the analyst.*

In my case, the *Witz* that sets off the fall of the subject-supposed-to-know anticipates the solution I had found to my symptom in the cure: if I had started an analysis because I was morose, humour now enabled me to treat this real.

Translated by Nicolas Boileau

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Testimony delivered at the NLS Congress, Paris, April 2017. The author is a member of the ECF.