

[The following outline of the Berlin School project was drafted between spring and winter 2025 by Katrin Becker, Marcus Coelen, Camilla Croce, Thomas Diesner, Nadine Hartmann, Eva-Maria Jobst, Judith Kasper, Susanne Lüdemann, Karl-Josef Pazzini, Edith Seifert, Katrin Seifert, and Mai Wegener. It served as an invitation to the first meeting to launch the school on January 31, 2026.

On the one hand, the work on *this* version is complete. However, many of the formulations and elements of the outline will be revised, critiqued, supplemented, and altered as the school takes shape. The school does not have a “founding text.”]

BERLIN SCHOOL FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS AFTER FREUD AND LACAN

The Berlin School for Psychoanalysis After Freud and Lacan is open to anyone interested in psychoanalysis. It brings together people invested in psychoanalysis, particularly those engaged in clinical and other practical forms of analytical work, facilitating exchange and development in these areas.

The Berlin School sees itself primarily as a place for the transmission of psychoanalytic experience and the formation of psychoanalysts. It aims to enable psychoanalysts to *explain* themselves as such in several ways: *first*, by *declaring* their practice before others; *second*, by *producing* knowledge about what enabled them to adopt the analytical position based on their own analysis; *then*, by *elaborating* on the difficulties and possibilities of clinical and practical work; and *finally*, by publicly *defending* psychoanalysis as a practical and theoretical commitment, exercised with the greatest possible freedom, independently of state, academic, and ideological determinations.

Formation of psychoanalysts

The School endorses the idea of *formation*, which must be understood differently from *training*, *education*, *study*, or *teaching*. Freud and Lacan spoke of “formations of the unconscious”—symptoms, jokes, dreams, slips of the tongue—that is, manifestations that are to some extent legible, albeit distorted, whose analysis and interpretation, as well as

suppression or transformation in the case of symptoms, constitute the specific task of psychoanalysis.

Even if psychoanalysis itself cannot be said to be a formation of the unconscious, the logic of the formations mentioned can nevertheless be found in it. To become a psychoanalyst is precisely to allow oneself to be (in-)formed by the unconscious and by the encounter with the real of the drives – and not by rationalized intentions (the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about the psyche), requirements (mastery of practical skills for therapeutic application), images (a goal to be achieved, such as a state of health or a way of life), or ideals (a figure of the psychoanalyst with whom one identifies in order to imitate them). All of this is also present, but should not obscure the essential.

We start from the principle that the formation of the psychoanalyst essentially comprises five elements of different dimensions. The school allows these to be articulated, brought together, and developed:

Firstly, personal analysis that has led to a stage where the repetition that dominates us can be displaced by transference and associated with the desire to occupy the analytical position ourselves, so that it then becomes expressible.

Second, a place and a procedure that allow us to develop this expression of the analyst's desire and to declare ourselves analysts in front of others, as well as to connect this act to elements of knowledge drawn from the history of psychoanalysis and thus become part of the transmission of psychoanalytic experience.

Thirdly, a continuous and differentiated confrontation with parts of this psychoanalytic knowledge through one's own work and in discussion with others. This last point can be achieved in seminars or other forms of collective work (working groups, cartels, conferences). These forms can provide a space for work where specific readings are combined with the (re)invention of theoretical and practical elements. While it is essential to examine the essential features of Freud's inventions and postulates, as well as Lacan's return to them, this reflection is open to the work of other psychoanalysts and to numerous other research projects and texts. On the one hand, the choice of subjects depends heavily on each individual's interests and how they position themselves in the fields of knowledge, thought, and action. On the other hand, it is essential to acquire an understanding of the forces, structures, and discourses that determine contemporary forms of pleasure and suffering, as they are encountered in particular in analytical practice.

Fourthly, practice-oriented discursive work, which allows us both to trace how we position ourselves in transference and to form an idea that can support and challenge

listening, interpretation, conduct, and behavior in analysis. This work—generally associated with the somewhat problematic terms "supervision," "interviewing," or "control"—aims to question and modulate transference so that the unconscious, desire, and drive can be expressed, and so that drive, repetition, and jouissance can be set into motion without being determined by normalization. The forms of work presented here also aim to bring out as precisely as possible the specific "object" of psychoanalysis—this hybrid object composed of sexual, linguistic, and half-illusory elements—without preventing possible secondary therapeutic effects. This also applies to work with forms of life and suffering described as "psychotic."

Fifth, a forum that can be used to publicly defend psychoanalysis as a free and independent formation and "*sui generis* procedure," and as a specific exploration and treatment of the complexes of pleasure and suffering. The freedom and independence of psychoanalysis also lead it to distance itself from—and sometimes criticize—the decisive social forces that influence psychoanalytic work and constitute contemporary subjectivation: the political economy of the world of goods and services is taken into account here as much as medico-biotechnological systems of control and healing, the regulation and juridification of society down to its most intimate aspects, and sexual policies imbued with power on both a small and large scale. Psychoanalysis wagers that social bonds are possible even at a critical distance from these forces, and the school therefore wishes to support analytical work and protect it as much as possible from the grip of these forces.

***Après-coup*, terminal and interminable analysis**

While the analysis itself, its nature, duration, location, and choice of analyst are private matters and therefore not within the school's purview, as it has no influence in this regard. On the other hand, the place that enables and shapes the analytical act, that promotes the formation of analytical knowledge and allows for the elaboration of work on transference, as well as the public presentation and defense of psychoanalysis, specifically falls within the domain of a psychoanalytic association that defines itself as a "School." The precise forms and structure of the Berlin School derive from this (see below). It sees itself as an attempt and a gradual realization of an "ideal" of psychoanalysis to which can refer with non-cynical irony. Let this undertaking not be devoid of humor.

In all this, the Berlin School emphasizes the logic of *retroactivity* or the *après-coup* in psychoanalysis: it does not aim to establish conditions that would lead, in a more or less constraining or causal manner, to already known effects. It aspires to create a refuge that allows for something that can only be described as psychoanalytic invention after the fact.

The Berlin School also emphasizes other aspects of analytical temporality: here, formation is not a closed or unique process with a beginning and an end, but rather an intermittent, repetitive, and contradictory process; it is unachievable. The School takes this into account by emphasizing individual differences in their relationship to the analytical experience—particularly with regard to the act of declaring oneself an analyst—but without establishing a hierarchy. All those who declare themselves members of the School are *in formation*, contribute to it, and learn as much as they teach. They understand the School in the sense of the Greek *skolē*, as a place of leisure, rigor and precision in the study of psychoanalysis as a tradition and knowledge to be transmitted, and as a framework for playing with its elements.

The question of the end of analysis must be asked several times. So too must the question of the beginning of one's own work as an analyst. Analysis is both finite and infinite, accompanied by excessive continuation as well as contingent and dull ends, a paradox that pushes it to speak and represent the real in the sexual domain. The analytical act, in which someone explains themselves, is not linked to the beginning of a task or the end of a journey through knowledge, but only to the contingencies that—subjectively and objectively—make it possible to carry it out. Always too early, too late, or not even that. Rather the act takes place, always beside the point, at an offbeat moment, and analytical knowledge is generated from this timelessness. The School creates a space for this. That is why all those who wish to do so and who are active in doing so, regardless of where they are in their journey, are invited to use it. In return, the School proposes to make the accomplished act public and to display the names of those who have accomplished it.

Structure, dynamics, forms of the School [to be developed]

Structure

Anyone who declares that they wish to be part of the School belongs to it. Those who are part of it work to set it up, which will not happen all at once, but in stages of varying importance. There is much to do: proposing and organizing seminars or other events, joining the secretariat, etc.

The School publishes a list of its analysts. To be included on this list, one must be an active member of the School and go through the procedure established for the analytical act and its declaration, the details of which remain to be determined [see the idea below]. This would apply both to those currently working on setting up the School and to those who join later. If decided, we will follow this procedure and report on how it works.

Dynamics

The School has:

- a website
- a secretariat [six to eight people, the composition of which changes each year and/or partially?];
- a playground accessible to all, but which is only open once or twice a year for a long evening;
- [a library?];
- and *no* janitor.

Forms (of work)

A system for action and its explanation

Seminars / Cartels / Conferences

Practical forum

Psychosis clinic / Practice with madness

Elements of psychoanalytic knowledge [to be developed]

Freud

Lacan

Other names

Other things

"*Berlin School*"? A word about the name

The name "Berlin School" refers primarily to the place where the School was founded. However, this does not mean that its activities are exclusively linked to this city.

"Berlin" refers to numerous nodes in very diverse networks, ranging from the most general to the most intimate, touching on multiple histories and languages that, for us, are linked to this School of psychoanalysis. Unlike "Vienna" and "Paris", names for the invention and reinvention of psychoanalysis, "Berlin" represents other indirect and offbeat ways of psychoanalysis's inscription into the world. Berlin was the place of residence of the physician Wilhelm Fließ, a close friend of Freud's, who engaged in extensive speculation about life. Freud's transference to Fließ and their correspondence paved the way for the formulation of analysis. Impressed by the "Berlin atmosphere" (August 1, 1890), Freud also saw the city as the headquarters of the avant-garde of medicine, the Helmholtz school, after having studied himself with the school's "envoy to Vienna," Ernst Brücke. Previously, it was Berlin Romanticism, and in particular E.T.A. Hoffmann, that had allowed the *uncanny*—the most spectral of the formations of the unconscious—to be expressed through literature and aesthetics. And today, an aesthetic of ghosts and hauntings shapes certain parts of another "Berlin School": that of cinema.

The first republican Berlin was also the site of the first psychoanalytic polyclinic, where the formation of analysts was intended to be associated with the opening up of analysis beyond bourgeois circles—but Freud wrote part of his "Question of Lay Analysis" in opposition to the demand, by the Berliners, to limit psychoanalysis to the

medical profession. As the capital of various political constructs, Berlin has generally shown official reserve or rejection of psychoanalysis, and much more. It was in Berlin that Freud's writings were burned, that the extermination of the Jews of Europe was planned, that murders and expulsions were ordered. East Berlin, capital of the GDR, as well as West Berlin, a satellite, and now Berlin as capital of the FRG, represent different ways of repressing and confining psychoanalysis within the official discourses of medicine and psychology. Still, psychoanalysis has always been present in Berlin's intellectual life, especially in the late 1960s, and it was there that a center for the reception, translation, and implementation of Lacan's return to Freud was formed. The Sigmund Freud School, which existed from 1978 to 1987, is part of this fabric, as are the 1992 Lacan and German congress and several formations such as Understanding Time, the Freud-Lacan Society, the Psychoanalytic Salon, and the Psychoanalytic Library.

Division, repression, appropriation, transference, marginalization, and resistance—Berlin is perhaps particularly representative of psychoanalysis precisely because psychoanalysis, which developed through Freud's desire for independence and Lacan's renewal of it, faces many difficulties there. The Berlin School attempts to articulate itself with this placement.

Idea of the “dispositive” for the analytical act and its explanation

The act of self-authorization is an exacerbation of the concept of the psychoanalytic act, whose other meanings must always be taken into account (interpretation, intervention, construction). We strive to provide a framework and a procedure for this exacerbation. For the time being, we propose to call it a "dispositive."

This is a playful idea that can serve as a suggestion and that takes up some aspects of psychoanalytic thinking of *the past—the episodic and indirect nature of speech and its transmission*—without taking up its political and social order; the transfer to an "object" is also at stake.

To be included on the School's list of analysts, one must have followed the dispositif.

The following procedure is proposed:

- Anyone wishing to go through the dispositive, whether they are part of the circle of people currently working on the creation of the School or are joining it, should inform [the School's secretariat];
- Three people will be selected at random, two of whom are analysts. Their names are taken from a lottery pot, which will initially be composed at the invitation of the group that formulated the school's founding text; all those who accept will be included; anyone who wishes to undergo the process has the right to veto the lottery; in this case, a new lottery will be held;
- Those who wish to do so may speak to the three people, who are required to say little about themselves, beyond pleasantries, to speak about moments or elements of their own analysis that connect them to the institution in the position of analyst; discretion and confidentiality are of course required;
- The three people then meet among themselves, but with a fourth person also chosen at random, and express what they have retained from the relationship

between the patient and the analyst; the fourth person's task is to listen to this articulation in turn.

- At the end of this meeting, the four people formulate a psychoanalytic question, an analytical concept, a text (or excerpt from a text), or something else, which may be a work of art, an image, a mathematical problem, literature, which, in their opinion, condenses something of these articulations or gives them a space for resonance, and could open up the question of psychoanalytic knowledge and its insertion into discourse.
- What they have designated is communicated to the person who made the request, who is thus invited to prepare a lecture or something else on the subject; they are free to decide to what extent they explicitly address their own analysis;
- This work is, ideally along with others from the same process, presented or exhibited at a School meeting, which is also open to the public. This meeting is specifically dedicated to these presentations. It could take place once or twice a year and would also serve to explain the procedure and how it works publicly.
- After several cycles of this procedure, it is possible to organize a working meeting on this subject, during which those who have participated, regardless of their role, will share their experience of this experiment, reflect on whether to modify or maintain it, etc.