

P.L.A.C.E

Interventions

Open Letter to Badiou [9/2004]

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o - From Psychoanalytic Classicism to the Topological Baroque

Badiou's readings of Lacan are sufficiently important to have elicited a recent series of conferences in 2003 at UCLA entitled: **Lacan and the Real, Lacan's Anti-philosophy,** and **The Mathemes of the Real.**¹ Most recently, in the summer of 2004, Badiou was scheduled, but declined to present his views on psychoanalysis at UC Irvine. Owing to the unusual perspicacity of the commentator as much as to the exceptional difficulty, if not incomprehensible nature of the Lacanian corpus, his readings give rise to several problems.

1- one need ask what is Badiou's contribution to the comprehension of Lacanian studies as distinguished from the practice and theory of Lacanian psychoanalysis itself;

2- one should also ask what is the place of Badiou's readings of Lacan in his own philosophical work, and to what extent have they been influenced by its development;

3- finally, Mr. Badiou's method requires attention.

The three questions are related, but undeniably, the third question ties the knot between the first two. Badiou's exegetical method comes directly from the premises of his philosophy; it is inseparable from it to the point that one can speak of 'method' in the formal sense of the term: of Badiou's thought in relation to mathemes or "formulas of the real" written in set theory.

During one of the finest examples of a university discourse speaking about psychoanalysis, Badiou has rendered homage to Lacan in commenting and clarifying his texts. Can it be said, however, that both he and Lacan are speaking about the same thing? The value of his contribution to Lacanian psychoanalysis can be determined by the validity of a relation between his thought and his method, which he has admitted (see *L'etre et evenement*) is

an ontology and not psychoanalysis. The interrogation of his method is a necessary introduction to Badiou's notion of the psychoanalytic cure, which, as we will show, is diametrically opposed to Lacan's.

1- From First and Second Classicism to the Topological Baroque

To explain the university scholar's reception of Badiou's essays and conferences, we must bear in mind the special circumstances of his work in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis in Paris, while Lacan was alive and after his death.

As editor of *Cahiers pour l'analyse* with the Lacanians Jean-Claude Milner and Jacques-Alain Miller, Badiou was part of a public clarification of a Lacanian discourse whose thought had begun with a programmatic statement in Lacan's *Discours de Rome*. This discourse had begun in 1953 and closed in the 1970s with an attempt to integrate its transmission in the form of the matheme and install psychoanalysis in the university. Beginning with his departure from St. Anne, the post-psychiatric Lacan first awakened a university following of marxist-philosophical-linguist students at *Normale Supérieure* who soon became concerned with the institutional problems of transmitting a psychoanalytic discourse. For a long time in France this was the authoritative interpretation of Lacan, and it is the one that Badiou brings to America in the form of a university discourse. The considerable influence this style of reading Lacan has exercised on Lacanian scholarship, first in the universities of France, then in England and America, is well-known, and can be stenogrammed under what Jean-Claude Milner has called the '**first classicism**' of Lacan. Adopting this periodization of Lacan as a guide, at least as an initial probe, we follow Milner when he writes "*The program for the Cahiers pour l'Analyse is not due to Lacan; he did not make it his, but he did not disavow it either (cf. Discours a' EFP, Sc., 2/3, p.17). One can use it to reveal things; one recognizes it as a more adventurous form and, from this fact, more readable...*" (L'Oeuvre Claire, p.111)

It is this "more readable" Lacan which would later in fact find its formal realization in the desire for an integral university transmission of psychoanalysis in the form of the matheme. Following Milner's account here to schematize our argument, let us agree to call this rupture Lacan's '**second classicism**'² — as such, it denotes the institutional will in which Lacanian psychoanalysis opens with a certain notion of the matheme — and closes — with the university formation of the *L'Ecole de la Cause Freudienne*.³

There was, however, a third generation of Lacanian analysts, post-matheme, and post-normalian, which grew out of Lacan's complaint that those who were now reformulating his discourse institutionally were presenting an obstacle to psychoanalysis and the practice of the analytic cure.⁴ With this third generation, Lacan's matheme had taken on a form that to the classicists of the 1st and 2nd generation could only have seemed **Baroque**: as it included a topological formalization of the impossibility of the integral transmission of the matheme. Unlike Milner, who situates this third topological intervention of Lacan as a "deconstruction" of his first two classicisms, and unlike Badiou who considers topology outside the analytic cure, the psychoanalysts of the third generation could not follow the professors in calling this a de-construction or a simple theoretical refinement,³ for it was

precisely in a topological construction that Lacan achieves his first public presentation of psychoanalysis in an open forum at the Pantheon in 1969, beyond the strictures of the university. From this moment onward, the public, not to mention the private, transmission of Lacan's psychoanalysis was implicated by the problem of a topological presentation of the knot. A presentation whose effect was to resituate the place of the 'sayable' in a psychoanalytic transmission, not by reducing it to silence in the formalization of the matheme, but in a problematic of the 'showable' and a real of formalization intrinsic to the knot.⁵

Digression

Although it may be pedagogical to situate Lacan's topology as the outcome of a rational history or a sociological movement, a more rigorous exposition would have to follow its problematic in a re-examination of the (w)hole of the Lacanian corpus in a way that its structural questions are independent, though not arbitrarily so, from their linear sociological and historical facticity. Through the addition of graphs, schematic re-drafts, topological re-footnoting of the *Ecrits*, Lacan not only revised his previous work but was revealing a truer, more correct mode of its expression which seemed to resist a linearization of his work. Reading Lacan in this way, we can present the initial attempt at periodization:

First Classicism	Second Classicism	Baroque
Graphs	Surfaces	Knots
1953	1961	1969
		1981

in correspondence with and as the effect of a more structural problem of topological presentations. Reading Lacan in this way, it not only becomes possible to revise his earlier seminars in the addition of historical and philological annotations, but necessary to topologize the problems found therein in their structure.⁶

Everything rests, then, on the crucial problem topology poses for the presentation of psychoanalysis, not simply, or even primarily, to the university student, but to the general public — thus opening up the question of the place of the cure. Far from being a mannerism or periodization, it is incumbent to examine this **Baroque** of analysis and to determine how it defines the limits and the beyond of the classicisms of Lacanian psychoanalysis today.

1.1- Thinking and Speaking of the Psychoanalytic Cure

Badiou, the university philosopher and Lacanian scholar, knows the corpus well and proceeds in his honest and sensible way to provide a coherent picture of Lacan in the discourse of the university. But it cannot be denied that his interpretation bears the mark of its classicism, in particular the notion that there is an integral transmission of psychoanalysis in the form of the matheme.

The matter becomes, however, more complicated insofar as he tries to transpose this

same classicism, this same desire of a formalization, into the analytic situation. Firstly, Badiou schematizes the cure into 3 stages: 1) situation of the impotency of the analysand; 2) elevation of the impotency into a logical impossibility; 3) the conjunction of the subject and the real in a "correct symbolization" or formalization. Leaving aside for the moment the validity of this staging of analysis, it must be observed that to accept his method is to accept its consequences, for he then declares "in his opinion" that this formalization would not be topological, and that "topology is only part of the theoretical (w)hole of psychoanalysis" and "in his opinion, it does not have a part in the cure".

Unlike a university discourse, contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis engaged in a practice cannot follow the philosopher in his "opinions" about the cure and then disavow Lacan in the name of a methodology which is pre-topological. Badiou's "opinions" on psychoanalysis, are not arbitrary for a lack of rigor, but because they rely upon a method and idea of formalization that permits, or even requires this arbitrariness in the public transmission of psychoanalysis. For commentary and 'thinking of', which is the preservation of the philosopher's Being, ultimately relies upon the very sense that Badiou claims is 'ab-sens' in the discourse of analysis and the transmission of its knowledge. This may explain why in the conferences, in a tactic not fully conscious, he feels the need to 'speak of' himself among the 'we' of Lacanian psychoanalysts and often refers to the philosophers as 'them'. Or again, it may explain why he prefers to 'think of' a correct formalization in the analytic cure (stage 3 above) as encompassing an intuitive use of ordinary language and literature, and not as a more direct formalization of such intuitions in a topology. No doubt, his schematization and good-hearted commentary may suffice, in the first instance, as an inroad to the fantasy of analysis, but it would, as yet, afford little help as to how to found its traversing in a construction of the drives.

In the apparent excesses and reversals of sense, which invites a parody of Lacan, but within Badiou's method is necessary, the ambition is not only to 'speak of' Lacan, but to 'think of' the analytic cure in the psychoanalytic tradition. The audience need know only how to listen to the word and ask questions to install themselves in this thought, and ultimately, to make sense of his thought about the Lacanian matheme. This 'thinking of' is his method and its transcription into a *matheme-atics* is his ontology.

We are far from the psychoanalytic concept of the matheme as an abbreviation of what lacks sense and is impossible to think and pronounce as words — therefore necessary to write and show. For today, the cure of Lacanian psychoanalysis has passed from one still lodged in the Classical "talking cure" and "talking seminars" to that of a Baroque "writing cure" and "topological presentations".

2- The Inverted Cure of Badiou's Being: Lacanian Philosophy or Badiouian Psychoanalysis?

Badiou's need for a witness to the Other of philosophy is comprehensible, but why must it be Lacan? Indeed, no other psychoanalytic author, modern philosopher, or anti-philosopher has become for Badiou as welcome an interlocutor as Lacan? Why?

There are surely reasons of nationalistic and cultural concern, but there is a more primary reason which justifies this choice: it is the fact that Lacan says exactly the opposite of what Badiou makes him say. Such an assertion is only paradoxical in appearance (it is the rule when a student seeks to interpret the discourse of a master or a peer in the form of a commentary — for instance, in the transmission from Socrates to Plato⁷). To make this problem evident is no easy task, since to distinguish between a proposition and one that says just the opposite without a proper formalization of the operation of negation is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Yet, once such a correct formalization is established or implicitly agreed upon, to state the opposite is still to talk of the same thing though in an inverse sense: thus, the celebrated Lacanian formula "*one receives their message inverted from the place of the Other*". It is already a certain advance in symbolization to produce a dialogue in which two interlocutors suppose themselves to be speaking of the same thing with only an inversion of sense. But, it becomes a more difficult but urgent task to show how one text is saying two different things: that is how can there be an intrinsic double lecture⁸ without the hope of a dialectical reversal of sense or a synthesis of opposing viewpoints. Beyond whatever reproaches one may have, Badiou's conferences and writings have the great merit of making Lacan readable, thus bringing out many of the fundamental concepts, and in this they go beyond other university studies. Nonetheless, such readings systematically invert their sense, which allows one to conclude that they symptomatically neutralize themselves by avoiding a more primary reading of a psychoanalytic double lecture. In the end, it may well be Badiou's resistance to reading psychoanalysts psychoanalytically, that has been his strength and ultimate weakness from the beginning.

A monstration of these propositions formally would require more time than we have in this essay, but let us continue to informally disengage these inversions.

For Badiou, Lacan is a part of a problem that has tormented not only thinkers but poets: how to preserve the transmission of the truth of the One and Being. Yet, Badiou, not residing in the Heideggerian conception of the Poeme, rarely situates this as a writing or formalization of truth and language, and instead comes to side solely on a thought of the Lacanian Matheme and the transmission of knowledge. Briefly, for Badiou to comment on Being and the One is to account for the One's absence in a distinctive regime of *savoir*, one in which the 'truth' of Being can only present itself as paradox, the *surnumery*, or at the level of *extase* — while this paradox itself is never given a place, that is to say, never modeled intrinsically in a mathematical logic or topology.⁹

Yet, for the promise of his philosophy to be realized, this truth must still have a place; if it had not, how could we speak of its presence or absence? In the absence of a construction of the topos of truth and knowledge, this place becomes authorized and occupied by not just anyone, but someone named Lacan: "*Moi, la verite' qui parle*". With respect to himself, Badiou, except in certain slips of speech, never presents himself as having a practice of psychoanalysis, nor of having an experience of the place of truth outside of the paradoxes it poses to knowledge in art and the discourse of the university. Yet, he does not simply give up his discourse since it is still his ambition, as a thinker, to "think of" this

place and not regulate the Being of the One to a form of mysticism. Thus, this place for the Being of the One must be submitted to a regime of the thinkable, sayable, and be transcribable in a formal ontology. That there must have been really a place of someOne then — at least One — for the presence of truth to have entered into a language, the regime of knowledge, and the categories of being, is the condition for his thinking about psychoanalysis. Not just any language, but Lacan's language, is the witness to this truth of the absent One and the problem of his Being establishes the occulted basis of Badiou's philosophical system.

The Inverted Cure of Badiou's Being

Badiou's commentary on the psychoanalytic cure begins by situating it in relation to Lacan's 1971 seminar '*Ou...Pire*' in which the symptom is defined therein as a form of pining (*sou-pire*) for the One. For reasons we will simply abbreviate here, he is right to see the analytic cure as homologous to a separation from the One as it situates both the 'Un' of the Freudian "Un-bewusste" and the Lacanian problem of the "L'Une Bevue". Indeed, this starting point is a good example of the fundamental worthiness of his philosophical commentaries on Lacanian psychoanalysis.¹⁰

But he begins to distort the theory and practice of psychoanalysis when he schematizes the cure into three stages:

- 1- impotency
- 2- logical impossibility
- 3- formalization of impossibility leading to the subject conjunction with object

There is reason to oppose Badiou's theses here, not so much in their philosophical conclusions — we will leave this task to the psycho-hermeneuts — but as for their psychoanalytic implications, which we will show are diametrically opposed to the contemporary practice of Lacanian analysis. In order to facilitate a reading of his inversion of the cure, we will begin by juxtaposing it linearly in regards to Badiou's own presentation in stages. Later, it will be necessary to present these oppositions more carefully in accordance with the scansions of their logical time.

Stage 1

Here, then, firstly, for Badiou, analysis begins with a form of "impotency" which we must assume, if we are to follow the logic of his argument, is to be found on the part of the analysand — and not the analyst. Yet, one may well ask, if the analysand is as impotent as Badiou would have us believe, how did the analysis begin in the first place? Or is it that we must split the patient in two in recognizing a partially impotent analysand and the partially potent one who made it to the door?

Lacan, on the other hand, knew well that such questions are deceptive insofar as they attempt to situate the suffering of the *Un-bewusste* within something like that of the Hegelian *Belle Ame*. For the attributes of the *Belle Ame*, whether that of impotency or folly, are those of a '*se faire tore/tort*' that prohibits, from the beginning, any possible

entry into the dynamic of the cure.

On the contrary, if one were to begin in this way, which is not at all necessary, it would be more true to say that an analysis can only begin in spite of the *Belle-Ame*, with a form of potency: that is, with an assumption of speech by the analysand. In fact, an analysis has always already begun with a temporality which is not a simple affair of stages, but in a delay of the future anterior: *there where it was, I will have become*. Consequently, someone who takes up an analysis is in the first instance not looking to begin an analysis, but to conclude one. Or again the analysand is not someone who is crazy or impotent who then becomes sane, for the very reason that the moment one has assumed responsibility for their speech in directing it to the Other, one will have already been committed to a progress in the cure — before the first knock of the door.

In regards to the psychoanalytic cure, it is only in this assumption of the analysis as such by the patient — and not simply by the analyst — which requires his or her role in the division of labor of the medical doctor/patient to be redefined in the properly psychoanalytic division of the analyst/analysand.¹¹

No doubt, the identifications with folly and forms of impotency cut through the Freudian field, but they should not be confused with that of psychic causality and the impossibility of the sexual relation; or rather, if they are, one reduces psychoanalytic treatment to forms of psychiatry or psychotherapy and sexology. From the beginning, psychoanalysis does not determine a place to go to be crazy or impotent, as an asylum or a peep show might, but a place where one cannot not be sane.

Stage 2

Badiou reduces the point of application of the analytic cure to an analysand presenting an impotency expressed in a diachrony of symptomatic scenes. In a second stage, these scenes will be "elevated" to forms of logical impossibility. By this we must assume he means, since it is never explicitly stated, that whatever is sensed as a form of impotency, can on a second look be given a logical form, and it is this structure which is impossible. By this we can assume he means that a woman who states of her husband that she cannot live with him and she cannot live without him, is stating a logical impossibility in the form of a scene of impotency. In Badiou's reading, this impossibility — once defined as the Lacanian real — situates a symbolic function which had only previously been lived as an imaginary form of impotency. Overlooking the fact that a precise syntactical form has never been given by Badiou in order to clarify just what he means by impossibility — does the statement above merely translate into the classical logic of propositions as (P and nonP)? Or must we modify its means of logical expression? We can still try to clarify exactly what is at stake here, leaving until another time a more precise definition of this impossibility in its logical armature.

For Badiou could have just as well, and more interestingly, begun by localizing the problem of impotency at the place of the psychoanalyst (the famous silence of the analyst only serves here as a reminder), if it were not for the fact that the virtues of his reading of

the analytic cure are based on an implicit notion of the cure centered on a medical notion of the doctor/patient relation. But there is a drawback to this very virtue: it assumes what it should set out to explain — the logical possibility of analysis itself. Localizing any impossibility to the side of the analysand, prudent therapeutic modesty, which takes for granted the possibility of analysis itself, has left unresolved a number of issues, namely, what Freud witnessed in the negative transfer (negative therapeutic reaction), and the non-transfer (psychosis and sublimation). Yet, a less interested reading of the psychoanalytic cure must go further in stating that if there is analysis then there is surely a transfer, but just because there is a transfer does not mean to say there is analysis — a lot more is at stake in stabilizing the place of analysis than a psychoanalysis of others and a regulation of their impotencies.

In Lacan's reading of the analytic cure, in which an impossibility of analysis is posed absolutely and not relative to such and such a patient, Freud is shown leading his patients just up to an analysis, but that the moment psychoanalysis proper begins, it has already ended in a negative therapeutic reaction, or at the limit, in an interminable reprise of the aborted cathartic cure. In either case, Freudian analysis, according to Lacan, was impossible. That is to say, it never was able to begin a psychoanalysis proper without compromising its theory and practice. This much said, it was precisely in not going beyond Freud, but in returning to these problems and resolving their theoretical and practical dead ends that psychoanalysis could claim, at least in principle, not simply to be possible, but to exist, or indeed, to take place. Yet, once the problem of impossibility is situated at the level of psychoanalysis itself, and not simply put on the back of a medicalized patient; once psychoanalysis is no longer a simple question of analysis of others, then it is indeed no longer the subjective transfer which can form the guarantee of the analytic setting, but its production of a fantasy object.

Stage 3

What Lacan proposed for the beginning movement of the psychoanalytic cure Badiou proposes as the end, that is to say, they both postulate the necessity of a correct symbolization of the symptom conjoining a subject and the real in the fantasy object, but Badiou states this results in the success of the psychoanalytic cure, whereas Lacan states that this moment is both a beginning and an obstacle to the cure. For Lacan, this scansion only makes analysis possible, and in no way determines that an analysis will have effectively taken place or determined a real. For what is required for the existence of the analytic cure, in the Lacanian sense, is a traversing of the fantasy and a construction of its object, not in a conjunction, but in a separation from the One. Indeed, how Badiou's initial affirmation that the cure is a separation from the One corresponds with his concluding remarks that the cure is the conjunction of a subject with a real, is never explained and left in a state of ambiguity.

And it is here Badiou's advance "beyond" the teachings of Lacan becomes apparent. For under the outward appearance of a simple linear staging of the analytic cure, Badiou develops a notion of the analytic cure that Lacan never wanted to consider: Badiou's proposal is only possible in an inverted fantasy of psychoanalysis, whose boundaries he

sets by reinventing the myth of a genuinely classical form of psychoanalysis that Lacan had definitively disposed of by 1970. Since it was precisely in the traversing of the phantasm that the method of Lacanian analysis changed from analyzing the fantasy's role in the interpretation of the transfer — as a conjunction to the real — to its traversing in the construction of the drives — as a separation from the One in the Sinthome.

Hence, the need here for a clarification of the function and field of the fantasy object in psychoanalysis is a preliminary to a more systematic treatment of the impossibility of analysis itself in the traversing of the fantasy — a clarification which results in the Lacanian formulation of the concept of the sinthome. We must, then, return briefly to a moment in the history of psychoanalysis where its method is about to change and its field extended significantly: that scansion introduced by Melanie Klein and the Object Relations School through an *analysis of the fantasy* and its transformation by Lacan into the *fantasy of an analysis*.

Digression

These questions have been gone over at length in the myriad histories of psychoanalysis. We do not have to repeat them here, except to indicate how contradictory the commentaries appear to be when situating the practice of Lacanian psychoanalysis. It is therefore not at all surprising that the strictly medical objections that have been raised to Lacan's short session, and his final achievement of topological non-sessions, have no merit, for it is manifestly by design that Lacan goes against the established canons which take for granted the possibility of a psychoanalytic practice. Yet, what has not been shown in any of the historiographies is exactly why this mode of practice does not constitute a transgression of the guidelines of psychoanalytic practice, but a generalization of its field and function in a proper elucidation of the *fantasy of analysis*.

For if an analysis of the fantasy has always served as a means to resolve the logical impossibility of the symptom¹² it must also be observed that, at least since the work of Melanie Klein, a proper theory of the fantasy also extended the function and field of psychoanalysis in many ways that the more traditional forms of Freudian psychoanalysis had not foreseen. Melanie Klein and the Object Relations School have, for example, sought to establish the basis of analysis, not just on the possibility of the transference, but on the existence of an object relation which is specifiable and unique to its theory. Thus, they extended the field by constructing an actual clinical reference for many of the notions in Freud which remained non-analyzable or latent — that the Kleinian analysis of an actual infant is not the Freudian analysis of the infantile, is just a case in point. Yet, the promise held out in such extensions, of an analysis based on situating the convergence between the fantasy object and the symptoms of the patient, cannot, strictly speaking, materialize unless the fantasy is generalized to the analytic process itself — and thus, not reduced, once again, to being merely that of the patient's fantasy. The reasons for this are forthcoming.

It is true that the Kleinians have attempted to generalize the fantasy by extending it diachronically in an analysis of the infant. It is also interesting from a more synchronic

perspective that an analysis of the 'in-fant' as "the one who does not speak" also puts into question the classical conception of the "talking cure" upon which Kleinian analysis was implicitly founded (not only the pre-verbality of the infant, but the silence of the analyst must be situated here). Such extensions started from the premises that a theory of the fantasy is only an *analysis of fantasy*, and not a more disturbing, but primary, *fantasy of analysis*. The question of the impossibility of psychoanalysis can only be symptomatically avoided if the conditions for analysis are taken for granted; especially if the guarantee for the possibility of analysis is left at the level of an identification with the analyst in the transference, for then a negative therapeutic reaction or an interminable analysis becomes inevitable as a return of the real of analysis.

But even if its theory were on the point of being overtaken by a more rigorous approach, Kleinian analysis and the Object Relations school would still have made a considerable contribution. On the positive side, by fostering a refinement of analytic methods and didactic techniques that necessitate questioning the role of speech in the analytic cure they extended the reference of its field and determined its existence on the basis of an object relation. On the negative side, by confusing this problematic place of speech in analysis in a developmental or diachronic theory, they confined the object relation to the *pre-verbal* and the *premier*. Habitually, having situated the importance of something 'before' speech and language, the subject's fantasy relation to an object is reduced to an experience of what is *premier*, the infant, the pre-oedipal, sensations, raw feels, and so forth. The development of such a theory may well hold a premonitory value of a theory not yet able to distinguish between what is *primary* in structure from what is *premier* in development. In its own inadequacies, it brings the problematic relation between saying and showing to the surface, and thus leads to an authentic questioning of the role of the fantasy in analysis which stops just short of a topology. For Klein's *pre-verbal* and *premier in development* encounters a productive tension in Lacan's *hyper-verbal* and *primary in structure* that reveals the complexity of a psychoanalytic climate in which the debate between a diachronic and a synchronic conception of the fantasy has not yet taken place.

We are led, in conclusion, to a psychoanalytic history that differs entirely from the customary picture. In Lacanian analysis the fantasy is no longer being made to resolve — or symbolize — an analysis of the impossibility indicated in the *symptom of the patient*, but the fantasy is now a screen hiding the impossibility of analysis indicated in the *sinthome of the analyst*. Too little attention has been paid to this conflict of interpretation between a more traditional diachronic theory of the *fantasy-symptom-analysis* and its generalization in a synchronic *fantasy-sinthome-analysis*.¹³ Their routes may at times have differed, but psychoanalysts of both schools have come to recognize that their professional fantasies give rise to the same symptoms as that afflicting their patients. The phrase *analysis of the fantasy* abounds in the contemporary analytic literature, but without situating it in its properly synchronic dimension as the *fantasy of analysis*, it will never be able to gain an entirely ethical hold of its practice.

Writing clinically about psychoanalysts, then, becomes a way, not to critique other psychoanalysts or scholars — only the '*mechant*' would think so — but to situate the

fantasy of analysis as such in relation to an impossibility of theory and practice.¹⁴ This does not simply mean that prior to making any valid statement about the fantasies of others, the psychoanalyst is obliged to become as clear as possible about his or her own fantasy — clearly an interminable task — rather a similar, but more primary division of the subject already exists in everyday language in the impossibility of making the signifier coincide with the signified. As a consequence it is the distinctive privilege of analyst and analysand to be on the same side of the wall of language in analysis — there is no intersubjective relation or two subjects facing each other, but only a divided subject. That this wall would determine a real of language that is not a simple convention, and that this real — or impossibility — would invoke a fantasy relation as an organizing principle of an analytic practice, requires re-thinking analysis beyond the guidelines for the restrained analytic cure.

In generalizing the function of fantasy and extending its field synchronically Lacan not only determined a *beyond* of analysis in regards to the classical limitations, but produced the means for their traversing in the construction of a topology; leaving a place for those who would, in separating from the sinthome of the analyst, accomplish this task under the name of future and non-analysts. Without being excessively schematic, it remains for us to define this *beyond* of psychoanalysis as what establishes its guidelines, not simply of a possible analysis, but the existence of analysis as such, in the traversing of the fantasy and a construction of the drives.

Conclusion: For a Topology of the Cure

Whether in France or in America, the foremost characteristic of applied psychoanalysis is the tendency to expect something like art, literature, or poetry, to relieve the symptom and conjoin the gap that cleaves the Being of the One — or in less philosophical terms, to conjoin the divide of the subject of the unconscious. It is a tendency that digresses into a therapeutic hope shared not only by the title of Badiou's conference, "*For an Aesthetics of the Cure*", but by a psychotherapy desperately searching cultural forms of sublimation to supplement their ever growing reliance on pharmacological solutions.

But if what can be globally gathered under the name of aesthetics and art comes the closest to naming the symptom in its most chronic aspect, it appears as the furthest remove from the ability to account for the psychoanalytic cure. For it only reveals a desire that haunts the modern identification of the One in the being of the artist, the genius, the hero, etc. — that is to say, in a sinthome. It is evident, at least to some psychoanalysts, that one is far from the truth of knowing how to separate from the One of metaphysics — of which the artist is just one of the modern avatars — when one proposes sublimation as a form of the cure, or more in the more sophisticated versions, as a form of treating the 'incurable'. But one is also quite close to the border here, but inversely oriented, in the sense that an artistic **desire of recognition** (sublimation) is diametrically opposed to a psychoanalytic **recognition of desire**. For it is at the level of the drives and the sub-perversion of the subject that the artist constitutes the supreme wager of life and death. Since, one has however, wagered a passional entry into the Other — and not a construction of its desire — it is this substance or *jouis-sens* which is itself the abyss. As

long as this is the case, one is still left with the "pining", "or worse" (*ou pire*) for the One.

Therein lies the difference with the Lacanian cure insofar as it proposes to account for a beyond of psychoanalysis with a traversing of the fantasy which would result in neither a negative therapeutic reaction, nor a psychotic rejection, nor a cultural sublimation — all of which are today *sinthomes* — but in a topological construction of the drives.

Instead of saying that this construction would occur intuitively, that is to say, in an interpretative use of form and figure that goes beyond the concept in a work of art, we must speak of a construction in which the concept goes beyond an intuition in a psychoanalytic work, that is to say, in a topological construction of a psychoanalytic writing of the *sinthome*.

Instead of calling this writing a nosology, and confusing its place with a psychiatric writing of the asylum, we must determine it topologically at the place of a clinic. Instead of saying that the entry into this Other of the Un-conscious occurs in the **place of a psychoanalytic practice**, we must reorient its entry by a **practice of a psychoanalytic place**: the former, remaining at the level of an *analysis of fantasy*, doubles the patient in a transference relation to a doctor; while the latter, as a *fantasy of analysis*, de-doubles the analytic situation by unmasking the professional being of the analyst — separating from the sublimations of recognition — and constructing an object in its place.

Instead of analyzing the **symptom diachronically**, in scenes of impotency resolved by the analysis of the patient's fantasy relation, we must begin by constructing the **symptom synchronically** as a **sinthome**: that is to say, as a border signaling a beyond of the fantasy of analysis as such. In this respect, an analyst is not someone who analyzes others, but is a support of the Other insofar (s)he stabilizes a place for its construction. Instead of solidifying the *sinthome* by identifying with it artistically: Joyce, Holderlin, etc., analysis situates a topological construction of the drives in the likes of a Listing, Poincare, Brouwer, and Cantor.

Locating this place as the border "*between two deaths*", Lacan first gave it a topological modelization in the center cut of the mobius band in the theory of surfaces. On what does psychoanalysis operate in the cure today? — the *Sinthome* — the fourth round of a four-ring Borromean Lock. As such, this reaffirms the need, for what we have called here a *Topology of the Cure*.

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Santa Monica, CA
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NOTES:

- 1** The title of the last conference was changed. Originally entitled "*For an Aesthetics of the Cure*". »
- 2** Milner states "...in 1970 the process of transformation [of the second classicism] is largely engaged..." Our presentation aims to show that a certain notion of the matheme had almost already completed itself, for the discourse of Lacan, in 1969, had already changed its function and field in moving from *Normale Supérieure* to an open amphitheater at the faculty of law at the Pantheon. »
- 3** No longer that of the *Cahiers de l'Analyse*, the official journal of Lacanian Psychoanalysis became in this second period, *Ornicar?* created by Miller in 1968. Following one of the better histories of French Psychoanalysis, Roudinesco states "...[Miller] consolidated his power at the university with a clinical section where the matheme was still an instrument of a dogmatic new order..."; and again, "Finally, it is with a matheme always closed, and distinctly different from that of Lacan, that Miller composed his 'Discours du Rome' delivered the 31 of October 1974...Lacan scarcely appreciated the image that his son-in-law gave to him, but he gave him his complete support." Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan, Esquisse d'une vie...* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1993), p.468. (my translation) »
- 4** For one example among others in regard to this see Lacan's comments in "Position de l'inconscient", footnote in *Écrits*, (Editions du Seuil, 1966), p.850. »
- 5** "...there is no theory of knots. In regards to knots, to this day, there is no mathematical formalization". Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre XX, Encore* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1975), p.116 (my translation). No doubt, one must explain exactly what is meant here by "knot". »
- 6** One such topologization that had been suggested by Lacan himself was to view the "*Encore*" seminar as a topological re-edition of what is being said in the earlier seminar "*L'Éthique de la psychanalyse*" [private communication reported between Lacan and Pierre Sourry]. »
- 7** Another, perhaps more relevant example of this inversion of influence would be that between Marx and Lenin: the former constituting the theory and practice of Marxism, the latter precipitating it in a passage to the act through an institutionalization. »
- 8** Freud's discovery of the unconscious proceeds with a method not unlike that used by Champollion to decipher the Rosetta Stone. A method of interpretation that consists in comparing, at least two versions of the same text. »
- 9** After initially discrediting the use of intuitionist logic (see *Le Nombre et les nombres*) Badiou ventured into the realm of category theory (see *TOPOS ou Logiques de l'onto-logique*) as it is used in the theory of topoi. This much said, he has not attempted to use either in regards to the theory of knots; nor has there been an explicit attempt at a formalization of a theory which would take into account the specification of the language of a theory or its semantics (as in the manner of Tarski and the Polish School, for instance). This in itself could only be considered an oversight in regards to psychoanalysis as it leaves unanswered exactly how to render account of the problematic relation between categories of signification and those of being, as well as how to explain Lacan's use of the logic of propositions and predicates without reducing this to a '*logic of ontology*', i.e., an onto-logic of sets. »
- 10** One of more the direct examples of a philosophical discourse having psychoanalytic ramifications, Plato's Banquet, has been noted many times by the psychoanalysts. Lacan dedicates his "*Le transfert*" seminar to the problem of a conjunction-separation of the One in the impossibility of the sexual relation: Two bodies can never come together to make one. »

11 If the problem of separation lies in the Being of the One, for analysis the One is already divided and insists structurally, not as a simple opposition between the impotent analysand and the potent analyst in the phenomenon of the transfer, but as a division of the subject of analysis as such. It is precisely the procedure of the pass that requires an assumption of this subjective division and its putting into place through a transmission of the analytic act. [»](#)

12 For example, the proposition '*to have one's cake and eat it too*' is a logical impossibility, which could only be satisfied by a fantasy object that is only ever approached symptomatically, i.e., through a certain mental anorexia (refusing to eat cake) or bulimia (eating it then throwing it back up). [»](#)

13 The Lacanian concept of the sinthome is established in the unpublished 1975-76 seminar of the same name '*Le Sinthome*'. See for instance, *Lesson 10, April 13, 1976*, in which it is stated, "I believe that effectively the psychoanalyst can not be conceived other than a sinthome". [»](#)

14 The fantasy relation is not an imaginary relation to a possible world, but on the contrary, the fantasy situates an impossible as a certain screen of the libido. [»](#)

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