

The Life and Death of Psychoanalysis

Ethics in Adorno, Lacan, Badiou

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Clinical Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2009

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**This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Clinical Psychology in satisfaction of the
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Abstract

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After over a century since its inception, psychoanalysis as a clinical discipline is facing a crisis of legitimacy. The response to this crisis has increasingly been to suture the discipline to more academic, more scientific, more cognitive, and more popular inroads, with a proliferation of methods, techniques, terms and, in general, emendations to the original canon. This dissertation seeks to reject these solutions and address the legitimacy of the crisis of legitimacy; a crisis inherent to any discipline centered on a radical notion of the unconscious. The life of psychoanalysis depends on always standing at the edge of this crisis, the horizon from this vantage point always threatening its very extinction. If one accepts the concept of the unconscious as Freud conceived of it and the clinical work of the analyst as centered only upon its progressive elucidation, then the discipline of psychoanalysis is one that must resurrect itself ethically rather than epistemologically. The unconscious, both theoretically and clinically, challenges the value of knowledge and aims towards what Lacan calls, its fall. By maintaining the ethical position of the analyst in the face of the transference love of the patient, one moves in the direction of a re-centering of subjectivity around the hole that knowledge had previously filled with the neurotic symptom. Testing a clinical ethics through an encounter with three

contemporary thinkers who center their discourse on ethics, Theodor Adorno, Jacques Lacan, and Alain Badiou, I will challenge the concept of knowledge. In particular, this challenge will be evoked by the writing itself whose movement is framed by the ethical constraints of a psychoanalysis within a transference.

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By Way of an Introduction

In a conversation with Alain Badiou and Simon Critchley the joke of the 3 second Lacanian session came up and Alain said that he would write the equivalent 3 second book- Being, Subject, Truth- finished. That was all that needed to be said. Perhaps he is right. As I would also prefer to be hastily finished rather than just beginning, I found that as I was working, the structure of this work itself appeared to be implicitly divided in the same way. I had determined the structure through a series of dreams which punctuate it and so one could also say it was determined in advance, or predetermined if you will. To be predetermined however does not mean that the work is closed-in and just as the cutting short of a session brings it to an end, however quickly, it is also meant to provide or provoke the place of an opening. So it was in the process of writing about these dreams that I realized that they had some equivalence to what was a passing joke between myself and two people I greatly admire. Sometimes jokes between those one loves most can be the best of all possible interpretations- a lasting effect that for a time you know little about. As Badiou has said, those who love well know very little about it.

So, if the first dream, that of the vase and the letter, is trying to situate being and its suture, then it is true that the second dream concerns the place of subjectivity and its rare appearance from within that structure. In actuality the first dream was dreamt second and the actual first dream, the September 11th memorial, was radically misinterpreted by me for many years during the work of my analysis. As there aren't any misinterpretations in the unconscious *per se*, it was an important misinterpretation. It situates the dream of being as void, the place of possibility and impossibility, so important for an

understanding of the relationship between a subject and the unconscious. These dreams also situate the refusal of this opening and a subjectivity that falters in and through misinterpretation and the wish propelling it, much like the original Freudian corpus on dreams, jokes, and errors. The retroactive force of meaning, the *nachtraglichkeit* inherent to the structure of our psyche, is the impetus behind reversing their presentation to you and perhaps one must begin to elucidate that which thinks the void before one can learn how to locate this elusive subject.

For Badiou, his redefinition of these concepts, his foregrounding being, subject, and truth under the influence of Lacan, meant one could finally, hopefully, confront the problems of nihilism. So it was as a result of the dream of the vase that I began to rethink the first, a process which changed not only my understanding of the memorial but also my memory of that time as well. And it is in the last dream, the ‘Instructions on How to Fell a Tree,’ after this movement back and forth, open and closed, through progress and failure, that I was able to imagine the possibility of psychoanalysis. It was the last dream to take place within the time that I was in analysis.

These dreams speak to the place of unconscious desire, precisely as it plays out in any conceptualization of being, subject, or truth. Desire presents itself in the dream image as a formula, indeed even formally in the purity they take on as dream objects that are also dreams *of* objects. This may have something to say about these categories which have been formalized by philosophers for thousands of years since Plato. It is Badiou’s feeling that he must return his own work there where it began in order to resuscitate philosophy as philosophy. That he wishes, as you will come to see, to do so by excluding the category of desire adds an extra twist to our ‘friendship’ in this work. Nevertheless,

the extreme formalism of his philosophical system- the desire to have it extend as far as the pure mathematical formula- is the desire that paves the way to the joke of the three second book.

Unconscious desire, as the Lacanians have understood it, is what creates the combinatory formula that structures the dream, or the joke as the case may be, which is always more 'formal' than meaningful. Dreams were to take us beyond the object world to the very limits of the human which meant that, in a way, desire was equivalent to that desire for transgression and formal consistency- without which it would not be possible. Moreover, one must give up their fascination with the object, or perhaps, this is the very transformation of the object for a subject in the work of an analysis precisely as a question about one's desire.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to structure this work based on the series of dreams coupled with the transference to important figures, Adorno, Lacan, Badiou. I do so with the hope that this provokes the kind of reading of desire that will grasp its most elusive formal mechanisms. The concern with the life and death of psychoanalysis comes from a feeling that this way of understanding desire, this way of working with it, indeed at times even glorifying it, has been lost; even further, that the felt danger of working at such an extreme limit, particularly that of the 'human', is exactly what is being purposefully refused in today's psychoanalytic discourse. This would mean, in a way, that we have forgotten its value, and even more so, the difficulty, the time-consuming and careful work, of locating it in an analysis.

Serge Leclair in his book *Psychoanalyzing*, has an astonishing reading of Freud's imagery, language, and the formal mechanisms, inherent in his dreams, screen memories,

and the biographical material of his life at the time of his self analysis, particularly the letters with the object of his reverence at that time, Wilhelm Fliess. He charts out the subtleties of Freud's desire in its linguistic and phantasmatic components- the closeness of the word loaf in his screen memory to the word body in German, acoustically indistinguishable; the people with bird's beaks that carry his mother, her face the image of both death and beauty, whose cause Freud no doubt imagines himself to be; and, the centrality of the book torn to shreds at the bidding of his father, like the flower he ripped from his first love's hands, or, the devouring of his favorite flower the artichoke, all of which culminate in his desire to write the book on the secret of dreams precisely as a fulfillment of it. Leclaire finds circulating again and again, the formula of Freud's desire- to rip, tear, reveal, pick, pluck.

If Freud wanted to tear or rip the veil off the secret of dreams, the phantasmatic portion of that desire- by which I mean its impossibility, for the end of desire would be death itself- means we cannot follow Freud there. He reveals to us the secret of dreams as unconscious desire which taken in itself is not necessarily equivalent to revealing as in lying open like a book to be torn apart; what Leclaire calls the substitute that Freud's father offered to Freud for his Oedipal phantasm. We know the difficulty with books he got into subsequently.

Even further, the discussion about the scar left on his jaw from an accident at a young age, that Freud repressed, is connected by Freud to his anger at the birth of his brother Julius who died around that time. Leclaire feels this to be close to the Oedipal consequences of the phantasm- Freud's "greediness that knew no obstacles"- in relation to his mother, against his brother, books, and, cigars. The last, cigars, would return him to

the scene of this original scar and be his final undoing. As he would write to Fliess-
 “moderation is the hardest thing for the child, as for the neurotic” (Freud, 1985, p. 365).

It is from this constellation that Leclaire iterates a series of consequences for
 psychoanalysis based on this reading of desire with Freud’s. I take these consequences as
 my own throughout this work:

To grasp what psychoanalysis imposes on us, then, as Freud never tires of saying,
 we still have to get rid of many prejudices. And especially here we must rid
 ourselves of two major habits: first, the way of considering the tension of desire
 on the model of the appeal to a need turned expectantly in the direction of an
 object that would be the proper one to gratify it. Obviously, psychoanalysis
 proposes no such thing, for *unconscious desire appears there as a formula*,
 surprising in its oddity, often absurd, a composite like the figure of an Egyptian
 god... It is a formula, cipher, or letter that aims more at insisting, at repeating
 itself enigmatically than at saturating, gratifying, or suturing in some fashion.

The other prejudice that psychoanalysis leads us necessarily to renounce is... the
 notion of the distinction between a deeply hidden and truthful reality, on the one
 hand, and a deceptive appearance, a directly accessible surface, on the other. To
 be sure, the didactic opposition between manifest and latent content allows for a
 limited interpretation, thereby sustaining this prejudice. Yet, notice how in the
 course of our reading *one and the same term* turns out in fact, upon analysis, to
 support the truth and its veiling... We cannot insist too much here on this fact,
 which is coextensive with the whole possibility of psychoanalysis, namely: *there*
is no truth either before or beyond unconscious desire; the formula that
constitutes it at the same time represents it and betrays it. This is the very truth of
 unconscious desire, which is constantly reborn to reality by the perpetuation of
 transgression.

Finally, oddly enough, what appears at the end of an uncompromising analysis is
 unconscious desire itself as a formal construction and, as such, devoid of meaning
 but easily couched in a figure... in its phantasmatic composition... in its
 hieroglyphic concision. We therefore find at the end of the analysis a formal
 composition analogous to that of the rebus with which we began. But this formal
 composition also turns out to be the very essence of the latent thoughts that
 nothing, or almost nothing distinguishes from the manifest content, either in its
 terms or its organization. There could be no better illustration of the fact, crucial
 for analysis, that there is nothing beyond the text, or better yet, the letter (Leclaire,
 1968/1998, p. 36-37).

Freud's dream of self-dissection and his anxiety about having exposed himself so extensively in his book of dreams is a partially present anxiety for me. I am well aware of the reversing and traversing phallic imagery in these dreams, themes of castration, death, vaginal cavities, and the like. While this populates my imagination, it is at the foundation of the work I do with patients, and provides markers in any process of association, I am using these dreams less as a reductive, interpretable, indeed dissectible entity, and more as a provocation to thought, which, like the Lacanian cut, may be of use to gain some ground with respect to unconscious desire. Maybe I could have done without them. Less revealing in any case. But, the dream written about is transformed, close to sublimation, out of a hallucination, which is the process of thinking. The possibility of writing rests on this.

If we take this further to include what Leclaire says about the nature of desire -- it always supports the truth at the same time as it conceals it -- then revealing as knowledge is never the truth of desire. It is my hope that like the rebus, these dreams provide some kind of key, and some way beyond a knowledge whose stasis is contrary to the intended object of the work. "As you know, a beautiful dream and no indiscretion- do not coincide" (Freud, 1985, p. 315).

To the psychoanalysts, I ask, give me this leisure. To the philosophers, I ask, tolerate a little intimacy. These dreams are bound by intellectual figures which may or may not give you the space you seek in knowing. But I am too acutely aware at points in time, at all points in writing, that too much distance renders any truth arid and ineffective:

The pincers of Truth, which link and sublimate, have a duty to seize truths. The relation of (philosophic) Truth to (scientific, political, artistic and amorous) truths is one of seizing. By 'seizing' we mean capture, hold, and also seizure, astonishment. Philosophy is the locus of thinking wherein (non-philosophic)

truths are seized as such, and seize us... The effect of seizing taken in its second sense drives philosophy with a singular intensity. This intensity comes from love, but love without the quandaries of object love, without the enigma of its difference (Badiou, 1992/1999, p. 126).

It is not just the dreams then which possess this 'seizure' and 'intensity'- they cannot but in their very structure- but the writing that surrounds them as well. While articulating what I mean by an ethics of psychoanalysis that rests on this understanding of being, subject, and truth, I also wish to include the precariousness of this seizing, the difficulty of letting oneself be seized, and the intensity which becomes too much or too little present, foreclosing each one of these categories in a unique way. It is my contention that this process takes place in articulation, be it writing or speech, and just as one listens to patients with a strained ear, can remember the multiplicity within one's voice when speaking to an analyst, so writing, like reading, can never be accomplished simply and with firm footing.

So my voice is present. There is a degree of intimacy. But that voice makes its appearance as readily as it disappears under the weight of an academic dialogue; an obsessive undertaking of another's thought. Because one must truly love those they seek out to know, the presence of a demand will again make itself felt if not at the very least in the sheer frustration and fatigue of having to involve oneself so personally with another who remains a text and an intangible presence. A matter of love and hate, but in either case a passion for being and truth.

Do I fail to be scholarly because I cannot quiet my hysterical disappointment? Fail because I cannot divest myself of this underside of discourse? Yes, I would say that I do fail, but, that what is scholarly is another matter. Critchley (1997) will say after all that philosophy begins with disappointment and that to philosophize may be to learn how to

die. For my part, I hope that truth emerges none-the-less; or to be less pessimistic and more forthcoming emerges directly as a result of giving oneself over to this play and this failure. To learn how to live. *The Life and Death of Psychoanalysis*. To all of my readers, I ask, give me your patience and tolerate a little dislocation. As in love perhaps something will come of it.

“What we cannot reach flying we must reach limping. The Book tells us it is no sin to limp.” –Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

First off, Fatigue

I am tired for now. Psychoanalysis makes me incredibly tired. I have spent a greater part of my time hating psychoanalysis. I can't read another paper. I want the whole thing to collapse. I see it teetering on the edge of the abyss, and think I'm done, it is done. And yet somehow I know that it could do nothing else but that- it is precarious, it has been from the beginning. What did I expect? What could I have expected?

Apparently a whole lot- constant disappointment, constant hope. I have never allowed this the label of pathology, I will never, better yet. Label nevertheless implies stasis. So does my never. I hear the voice of David Rappaport (1967) on therapeutic action- 'that only amenable to a very slow rate of change'. Psychoanalysis is in too much jeopardy for this kind of stasis. Never say never then also.

Nothing is without its pathos. I am myself too slow for this structural pathos which catches up on you faster than you can imagine. So how about it then, structural change? I want it more than you. I want whatever it takes.

It will be precarious. I often think that we, as a profession, are doing our best to back away from what has always been the precarious place of psychoanalytic truth. Science isn't going to seal up that hole- remove the abyss. Neither will any recourse to a folk psychology, self help books, and interpersonal *savoir-faire*. I'm sure my theories won't either which is what I am beginning to suspect that I have constantly expected as well. Pathos is quick, like fantasy arising in the place of any disjunction. So is closure.

We should not be so hasty to get out and be done with it. In that situation there would be nothing to write, and since I have to write a great many pages, I would be in

quite some trouble. What a way to begin. But this is about beginning and ending. The life and death of psychoanalysis.

The First Dream

Let me tell you about a dream I had. I was searching in an attic and I found a vase. Inside the vase, in its empty cavity, was a letter sealed into its edge, the internal periphery. The letter turned out to be from my maternal grandmother, sometime in the 1970s, from the Philippines, addressed to no-one in particular. This is, of course, to say also that it was written specifically for me. And so, in the letter she states that she had read a book, Laplanche's *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, and that it had not yet been translated, but that it would come to be a very important text. This is the scene, now what was the wish?

This undistributed letter granted me the authority as analyst that I am constantly looking for. Here, a wished for matrilineal inheritance. That was it, there was no ambiguity. It was written in the stars. You were born to do this kind of thing, one often hears. I could be done with myself and with my nagging questions about psychoanalysis. Both are transparent. All was revealed in the secrets of my history. I wish analysis itself would work this way. So I think did Freud. In any case, if it did, I would not be where I am- dreaming of empty cavities, full of imagined histories, and in the end very, very tired.

Lacan, in his seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, speaks about a vase:

[The vase] has certainly always been there; it is perhaps the most primordial feature of human industry. It is certainly a tool, a utensil that allows us to affirm unambiguously a human presence wherever we find it. This vase which has always been there, and which has long been used to make us conceive the mysteries of creation by means of parables, analogies and metaphors, may still be of use to us...

Today I simply want to stick to the elementary distinctions as far as a vase is concerned between its use as a utensil and its signifying function. If it is really a signifier, and the first of such signifiers fashioned by human hand, it is in its signifying essence a signifier of nothing other than of signifying as such or, in other words, of no particular signified... it creates the void and thereby introduces the possibility of filling it. Emptiness and fullness are introduced into a world that by itself knows not of them... And it is exactly in the same sense that speech may be full or empty...

Now if you consider the vase...an object made to represent the existence of the emptiness at the center of the real that is called the Thing, this emptiness as represented in the representation presents itself as a *nihil*, as nothing. And that is why the potter, just like you to whom I am speaking, creates the vase with his hand around this emptiness, creates it, just like the mythical creator, *ex nihilo*, starting with a hole...

The introduction of this fabricated signifier that is the vase, already contains the notion of creation *ex nihilo*. And the notion of creation *ex nihilo* is coextensive with the exact situation of the Thing as such. It is effectively relative to this that through the ages, and especially the ages that are closest to us, those that have formed us, the articulation or the balance of the moral problem is situated (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 120-122).

This is the closest statement to Lacan's ethics- to dream up this vase, human *par excellence*. The vase seems to introduce dreaming as a possibility, as a mirror of this creation *ex nihilo*. The letter, my letter, comes with the introduction of emptiness and fullness. That this signifier has no particular signified creates the dream of a wished for authority. It closes in that space. And since we dream, since we desire- we are confronted with a moral dilemma pointed to by the presence of this authority and his commandments, just as the Lord after six days contemplated the whole and decided that it was Good. This vase concerns the very possibility of psychoanalysis, perhaps as ethics, but at the very least, its life and death.

The Ethics of the Dream

What is one to do? Where are we going? What is the promise of psychoanalysis? I want answers to these questions. Without them, I am constantly wishing for

psychoanalysis to be something more, something that it is not, that it doesn't seem to be at the present moment. I cannot know the past, and yet my feeling is that nevertheless, something has been lost. Perhaps this is pathos, but this much I think I know. Let weariness be the first step on a path towards an ethics. We may shed a little pathos then.

In the case of psychoanalysis, we could say that at the beginning one had to go to sleep in order to begin dreaming and as Lacan always likes to point out, why are we always so sure that we have woken up. It is an old proverb and an old provocation, but, psychoanalytic work, as I want to understand it, *is* fatiguing in its near impossibility and forces one to work there, where the line between dream and reality, between the human and the inhuman, is one that comes seriously under question. If psychoanalysis settles us in an untenable place without premise and without promise, we will have to figure out what to do with our fatigue. Blanchot, I think, had one solution, "I don't ask that weariness be done away with, I ask to be led back to a region where it might be possible to be weary" (Blanchot, 1993, p. xx). This is the ethics of the dream.

Jack of All Trades

My reverence for Lacan is clear. For the others it will also become clear in time. The presence of the letter in the vase points to the fact that I am susceptible to this kind of reverence. Just as there can be a command for mastery, a dispassionate or absent voice, tributes, conformity, there can also be a command for its opposite. The commandment which was intended as a symbolic one, lapses into the imaginary once it takes on any aspect of this dimension of the command.

How does one distinguish a law that holds the place of a limit, from one that is an imagined authority to whom one submits or defies? Can it be symbolic more than less? Is there a limit which escapes injunction, escapes the command? This is the dilemma left to us by modernity and a moral dilemma hangs in the balance:

‘Modernity’ means not being able to choose reasonably in what concerns the relation between mastery and truth. Is truth disjoined from the master? If so, we have democracy. But then truth is entirely obscure. It is the transcendent machination of technical and capitalist organization. Is truth conjoined to the master? But in this case, it becomes a sort of immanent terror, an implacable erotic transference, an immobile fusion that joins the subject’s trembling to the state’s police power. In any case, whether the master is sacrificed to an anonymous power or whether it demands we sacrifice ourselves for the love of him, it is the possibility of choice that vanishes” (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 53).

Another conception of choice and subjectivity is required. Psychoanalysis has not escaped this dilemma nor has it confronted it entirely either.

Freud consistently points to this dilemma when he takes up the question of masochism which, like a wall he keeps accidentally banging his head against, won’t go away. Indeed one might even say that it is what we inherit in our advanced state of civilization- the internalization of authority whose consequence is the traps of conscience in the form of psychic impotence. As Badiou puts it, “the inability to make a reasonable choice” (ibid., p.53). The modern subject for Freud is a masochist. A child is being beaten stands as the hallmark fantasy for men and women alike and is held in place by the hysterical relation to authority. I will return to this dilemma again and again. For now I would like it to be marked as a starting point.

Lacan (1970/2006) was one who tried to begin his discourse from this location which he formulates the minute he constitutes the mirror stage as the necessary failure of narcissism and the development of the ego. What distinguishes man from animal? The

constitutive relationship we have to images and words. This would begin to unfold into an entire system. There are always three, and there is no hierarchy- he said in way too many words in one seminar. This was about his symbolic, imaginary and real, what would become his holy trinity. He was trying to show structurally the possibility of another way of thinking about the subject.

Insufferable Knowledge

I haven't figured out how to work with these concepts and I cannot keep the distinctions between them very clear in my mind. To others they seem almost perfectly differentiated, and one works with each together and separately at different points in the treatment or theoretically when writing. I don't understand, but I am also quick to not understand. This is perhaps the consequence of the commandment, its seduction, my problems with reverence.

It is this difficulty that gave us hysteria as centered on the mythic primal scene- knowing, seeing, and understanding nothing and all too much. Knowing and not knowing are always simultaneous despite the fantasy that at some point it may be otherwise- absolute knowledge. There is for Freud, we must remember, always something missing in knowledge which has consequences for a subject. Or, as Lacan will show, there is a virtue in this 'something lacking' which means that the question of whether or not I am to escape my problems with reverence is not quite what is at stake. The passion of the hysteric is not the problem, and for Lacan, it may even be the solution.

So, which route to take- all or nothing. Here are the imagined extremes of sadomasochism which was always centered in a relationship to knowledge even if that is

what can hardly be articulated by the sado-masochist. Indeed the psychoanalytic relation to mastery has obscured these problems in a substitution of mastery for genuine questions of epistemology. They have delinked these categories.

What can we know? One might say that any subversion of sadomasochism, the move from pre-oedipal to so called ‘genital’ sexuality, or, perhaps even more simply the possibility of sublimation, requires a change in the subject with respect to his relationship to knowledge, which, one could rightly take to mean that there is an inherent relationship between sadomasochism and knowledge as mastery. I don’t think I’m the first to suggest such a thing and one might remember that Socrates himself professed to know nothing as an attempt to get around this dilemma.

My maternal grandmother, the same one who wrote the letter, used to say to me “jack of all trades, master of none” because, as the story goes, I would never finish projects before I was on to the next. Maybe I was lucky despite my grandmother’s consternation. What frustrates me is a question concerning education, pedagogy; that assumptions must be made that one knows, has something to give, has been given something, performs the outcome of this exchange, and so has made certain progress. Once questions concerning the value of this exchange are raised, it puts the possibility of writing in jeopardy. It is here where the discipline of psychoanalysis generally suffers.

The Problem of Writing

It has often been remarked that Lacan was afraid of writing- that is of course if you do not accept that it was a deliberate act on his part not to write. For him there was a question about transmission in psychoanalysis, especially acute when reverence,

transference love, is in the air, along with authorities, judgment, and knowledge. He indeed refused, but, as he says at the end of Seminar XVII, this refusal is the only form of collaboration (Lacan, 1991/2007). He slashed and burned his institutes in the same spirit- ‘there is a problem at the école.’ Like a good analyst his moves clinically and institutionally were always designed to take hold of the transference, the love of his disciples, in a way that dispenses with its paralyzing effects to the benefit of those which keep the discourse moving.

Movement is always what was important for Lacan and defines what many call his ethics of the drive. In this way his ethics has a relationship to love, but is one that uses it, in order to go beyond it. Again, the place of love in relation to ethics, an ethics that finds the place beyond the ‘limits of love and knowledge’ as Lacan (1975/1998) called it, is what this work will take up. Loving psychoanalysis then concerns this dilemma of how to write in order to get beyond mere loving, and an ethics that will address this question of its life and death.

Adjustments to form with the intent of grasping elusive content, even provoking it, or using it as a way of demonstrating a structural principle, have long since found their way into philosophy and literature since the advent of modernism. Lacan was no stranger to such tactics and this was, perhaps like this work itself, his greatest virtue and his greatest failing. One takes that risk. For Adorno, one could say the same thing. For both, it was, failure or not, a necessity. The continuation of the work was always under a threat that had to be seized by the work itself- be it the end of philosophy, the trauma of the Second World War, the moralization of the Freudian corpus, positivism, ideology in

general, and so on. The writing absorbed this crisis and transformed it in its very act. There could be no other antidote.

For myself, the feeling that the death of psychoanalysis is imminent has for too long plagued its discourse and its written word which has eschewed such experimentation. If I obviate this question of death, indeed, place it in an act of near repetition as the governing title of this work, it will be in the hope that one can finally subvert its petrifying grip. This question guides the form this writing takes. For Derrida (1983) this was of course also on the minds of philosophers for decades now- eschatology- and somehow we had to get away from their obsessions with death. Derrida writes in such a way so as to provoke this end of the end, or, as Lacan provocatively titled one of his seminars, simply, *Encore*. What must continue then is the kind of writing in psychoanalysis that carries into its form its form of ethics. A writing that refuses not to dispense with the aporia that it currently finds itself in- that between the universal and the singular, its human and inhuman elements, the gap between knowledge and truth- as the only way out.

Promises, Promises

To return to the question of weariness then, it is in this fatigue that I find a way to slow down. This is an important moment. It is the moment of ethical responsibility, calling to mind Derrida in *Writing and Difference*: “A community of the question, therefore, within that fragile moment when the question is not yet determined enough for the hypocrisy of an answer to have already initiated itself beneath the mask of the question...in which the question has not yet found the language it has decided to seek, is

not yet sure of its own possibility within the community... this is very little- almost nothing” (Derrida, 1978, p. 80). One *must* be fatigued with the current state of the discourse. It is the necessary first step. It is one that takes into consideration how radically threatened we are as a community and so begin to form itself around a question.

It is undeniable that psychoanalysis is facing a crisis, of legitimacy for sure, and one that extends into the very foundations of the ethical responsibility of its work as a clinical endeavor. To ask questions about the foundations of our work and the form of its writing indeed threatens what is already under threat externally. Only in taking this threat further, rather than backtracking to what will always be a pre-Freudian psychology, can we escape this ‘hypocrisy of an answer’ as Derrida puts it.

Answers from our Father, Questions from Afar

I will do my best now to insure that I provide a place from which you are invited to respond. Is this the letter in the dream addressed to no one, one in particular, in the end un-circulated and unopened? It is a matter once again of what one does with the place assigned to the one who knows, which always begins with a question of authority. For psychoanalysis, this is always a question of the Father:

This absence of the father results in the Name-of-the-father failing to operate as a substitute, a point to be grasped in terms of an appeal with no response. This is fundamental for understanding the absence here. Someone is invoked and does not appear... we can posit this as an alternative to what Lacan reminds us of again and again, and not uncritically: namely, that for Freud everything is sustained by the function of the father; in fact, by precisely an eternal love for the father. By, contrast, what Lacan advances... aims to do without the Name-of-the-father under the condition that we put it to use” (Harari, 2001, p. 346-347).

How do you put to use this love of a Father? I think that is a very important question that strikes at the heart of a discipline that has always maintained one.

To promise is inherently romantic. Critchley quotes Stanley Cavell (1979), “they dream revolution, and break their hearts” in his book *Very Little... Almost Nothing* (Critchley, 1997, p. 113). Promises invoke this love of the Father. Lacan understood very early that this relationship of truth to a knowledge which only functions in detour, knowledge that can only be left aside or left behind, forces psychoanalysis to try and conceptualize its action, confronted with this ambiguity. As much as these questions have been radically separated by philosophy, clinically we find that they are completely intertwined psychoanalytically. In order to put to use a father, the relationship of a subject to knowledge has to be transformed, and this transformation is an ethical act with respect to that subject.

Even further it is bound up with a moment of passivity, a fragile moment of submission, in a psychoanalysis that promises that this leads somewhere else than the heartbreak of propping up a father and the revolution which closes the circle. The king is dead... Long live the king! as the joke goes. Such was what Lacan wanted to show in what he called the analysis of the hysteric and the traversing of the fantasy which opens the path of psychoanalysis as a radical practice.

Radical here is taken to mean ethical. Only in an intimate knowledge of the hysteric, just as Freud with Dora, can the knowledge of psychoanalysis progress in this fashion. Remember her final dream- in the place where she expects to find her father instead finds that he has died and settles down to read her big book on sexuality. In the hysteric’s love of fathers she shows you the place of the abyss which allows the analyst to find their way towards the neutrality of the analytic position. It requires that one submit

to this reverence of hers, as much as in my way, I am asking you, the reader, to do the same.

Impossible Discourse of the Patient

Psychoanalysis must be patient. It asks the impossible- what to say about what seems impossible to say, what to write about what internally resists being written, what to know about what is marked by non-knowledge, how to know the truth when its locus is elsewhere. For Lacan these impossibilities are the power of what can be said, analysis which only works by virtue of the 'power of the impossibles,' and so locates a limit or absence which can be put to use. This is how he used what he called the ethical truth of castration- the consequences of his reading of Freud's Oedipus, or, that 'something missing' from knowledge.

Lacan's teaching which lasted some 28 years was riddled with impossibility in the form of puns, enigmas, and jokes which forced the audience to listen much like an analyst. So Lacan was patient. There is nothing else outside of the power of the impossibles for Lacan except the accumulation of knowledge; and since psychoanalysis is not that, it must start with this impossibility which is not a lament- at least not all the time.

Impatience or Impossibility

I feel like I can say to you the thesis, just as my grandmother said it to me, but I will reverse the negation into an affirmation- Jack of all trades, master of none. And I'm done. I was always hasty. Perhaps with this one too, right off the bat. I can't get away

with it. But if it was simply a matter of stating it, a matter of commandment in fact, affirmative or negative, then we would all be out of business. Freud understood this much. At times though, he shared my sympathies and my haste.

One should marvel at his radical impatience with himself and with Fleiss in his letters at the time of his self-analysis: “the time for hypnosis is up... In all haste, your Dr. Freud” (Freud, 1985, p. 22). His great irritation and confusion when he feels “incapable of mastering it all” which makes him “beaten and disenchanted” are the vicissitudes of haste. He concludes that letter “I now feel a void.” If, Freud’s letter expresses his desire to “catch a *Pater* as the originator of neurosis” thereby putting an end to his “ever recurring doubts”, it is not the fulfillment of this wish that in fact makes Freud work, but a putting to use of the wish (ibid., p. 150-151). This is precisely what he does using his transference to Fleiss- his love, his most cordial friend, his tyrant- in order to finally not back away from transgressive discovery as he did earlier with the cocaine experiment.

Failure

In his interpretation of dreams we can also see this dilemma particularly as one that bumps up against the inherent failure of wish fulfillment- Freud’s questioning and search for his own authority, his mausoleum of shit and the better cure, Irma’s injection. He was still, nevertheless, able to say without knowing exactly what it was that he was saying, and that is Freud’s gift. Amazing when you realized that he dreamed the *Interpretation*. From there you cannot but watch the book fold in on itself. This folding unleashes into an opening, like the very movement and work of any interpretation. That *this* is what was meant by interpretation hasn’t been fully realized.

The failure to do what one intends is so important, especially with respect to interpretation. In Lacan's seminar, *The Non Duped Errent*, the question would be about a certain kind of failure- being a master, a non-dupe or being a dupe, perhaps even a Jack of all trades (Lacan, 1973). This will hold for Lacan in the case of ethics as well- it circles around this issue of failure. What is imaginary is not illusory and so is not failure pure and simple with the moral implication that can be attached therein. The equivalence of this has brought us psychoanalysis as mental hygiene. To resist this is how he returned to Freud.

One cannot get a better sense of this failing with respect to a particular kind of object than Freud's feeling of failure with respect to Fleiss- for a time he is always ashamed and incommensurate. It is the working through of castration. It is also the support, or lack thereof seen from another perspective, that offered to him the possibility of writing something new.

Love of the Impossible

Lacan, in his *Variations on the Standard Treatment*, states, "the symptom is the return of the repressed in a compromise formation and that repression, here as elsewhere, constitutes the censorship of truth. Ignorance must not, in fact, be understood here as an absence of knowledge but, just as love and hate, as a passion for being- for it can, like them, be a path by which being forms" (Lacan, 2006, p. 297) This is again, his placing the relation to knowledge at the center of hysteria and the action that takes place from there in a psychoanalysis. Thus ignorance, like love and hate, has a relation to knowledge

and it is the transformation of that relation which is the path by which being is transformed. It will follow that this passion structures the analytic situation.

Lacan will say later in the same work, “the positive fruit of the revelation of ignorance is non-knowledge, which is not a negation of knowledge but rather its most elaborate form” (ibid., p. 297). Where one in fact goes in analysis is toward a love of the unconscious which is the most elaborate form of knowledge as non-knowledge.

This love, to say it once again, is not illusory. Whatever its form, it is not in question. But it begs the question of what one does with it. Serge Leclaire writes:

Not denying the nature of true love is only a careful way of stating that one recognizes love, and this, of course, is the least one can expect of an analyst. This is not the time to yield to philosophical or aesthetic temptations and think of love as a winged cupid or a concept. What we need to recognize is the love of a woman... What do we mean by this, if not that our answer will depend, eminently so, on this inescapable recognition? But how?... Recognizing transference love as real means first of all that we somehow wished for it. Seducers in our own way, we have invoked the infernal powers and conjured up *hic et nunc* the demons of love... What she expects from analysis... is the recognition of the essential truth of her words as a woman... I refuse to believe that an experience of truth can ever be erased: transference is such an experience and so is transference love... My accepting her into analysis is an invitation to speak, and she is going without detour to the end of what she has to say: her *jouissance* in suffering. In so doing, she loves the person who invited her to speak and lets her speak... Now let us suppose that, following Breuer's example, I indulged a reaction of withdrawal in front of a woman's love and labored to convince her of its illusory or pathological nature. My interventions, even if pertinent and sober, could only be taken for what they would in fact be: a blunt refusal, a way of telling her that, even in analysis, a woman's words of *jouissance* have no place (Leclaire, 1975/1998, p. 64-66).

What to do with the love of our patients? Of course there is a slipping here, between the patient's love and the love of the analyst, which can, nevertheless, abide by the principle of abstinence. It was this idea of abstinence and neutrality which first brought about the question of ethics in psychoanalysis. However, it is more complicated than the mere

refusal of our patient's love in which the question of ethics has been derailed. Serge Leclaire picks up this refusal as a refusal of the unconscious.

In loving the unconscious the analyst knows how to address the love of the hysteric, and it is never by way of knowledge. It is most certainly not a refusal of the unconscious message which is often cloaked in the vicissitudes of love. To find this path is to work ethically. Conceptualizing ethics and the particularity of the psychoanalytic encounter is necessary in order to understand analytic neutrality. Ironically, these are the most neglected conceptualizations.

From this one might hear that what is required is to understand how interpretation has effects outside the realm of knowledge and enters into the domain of the ethical. Doing so means to meet face to face with the hysterical demand: for transparency, unconditional love, her high ideals which include a demand for mastery. Notoriously difficult, a hysteric forces the position of the analyst into the narrow straits between knowledge as mastery and knowledge as truth, prompting the ethical considerations of the analytic position.

Again, this was the progression of Freud's letters to Fleiss. The confrontation with knowledge in the form of medical authorities, being thrown into periodic depressions from reading endless books on a given topic, and finally the transformation of this into a passion for a psychoanalytic truth which must stand outside of this. Fleiss as a transference figure was used to give him the courage. That we must find this same courage is the impossibility on which this work rests.

From Love to Ethics

This path from love to ethics cannot take place merely through conceptualization. It must also occur in the very writing itself which cannot but be tied directly to my voice. Perhaps it moves by virtue of that- from the universal to the particular- trying to locate what is singular. Perhaps it tries to provoke that kind of truth. What I will say, and what an analyst must begin from, is the fact that truth is such that it does not partake in knowledge in an immediate or immanent sense. Convincing as interpretation, as interpreting away, enters in through the domain of knowledge in fact aimed at denying truth in one's words. It is the refusal of this structure and the opening onto the path where one "can go without detour to the end of what one has to say" (ibid., p. 65) that is the injunction of a psychoanalytic ethics.

This ethic structures analysis, guides one, through the patient's love and its impossible relation to the knowledge of the analyst. If psychoanalysis is on the verge of death, it will have been because this passion was lost in a knowledge drained of love in order to pledge the future which, as Lacan (2006) says, belongs to no-one. Psychoanalysis was always a hollowed out promise, mere words, which cannot sustain themselves without submitting to this passion for being- it was always that fragile moment between a promise and an articulated question. The articulation of a question is the end of an analytic cure, not its beginning. This means the analyst has never provided an answer.

Interpret the Dream

Herein resides the space of my invitation. This invitation carries with it, the possibility of its demise, its double. If the vase was this invitation, it brought with it the

letter and the commandment. The letter mirrored this promise but one whose pledge brought certainty and closure. Certainty always comes in the form of objectified knowledge. My Grandmother's commandment fulfilled in its inverted form- not master of none, one master, one memory. And so if I am writing about ethics, it is because what I want to do most of all is write about love. A funny displacement I agree, but if it did not merely occur out of sheer embarrassment, perhaps it occurs for a reason. With love one can slip- too much haste, too great of a demand. These demands bring me, if not others first, to the point of radical fatigue. With ethics it is perhaps the matter of a limit which gives love all the more its validity in being and settles one in that space.

It is my hope that through ethics I can fulfill my promise to give love its due. This is a promise of necessity without an object. The promise that I hold out to you is such so that you will follow me although I haven't quite told you where we are going, and perhaps you wonder whether I even know myself. Is it enough to know that I love psychoanalysis above all else to insure that you will try to hear out what I have to say and what on that basis I will try to write?

Disenchantment and Love

After all of this talk about love and ethics I am returning to someone as cranky and at times authoritarian, as Adorno. I do not think he mentioned love once. Adorno who knew what was good, bad, tasteful, degraded, the right questions, the ways of rigor, what is necessary, what is impossible, and never for a moment positing what is. I have always been able to see in the most extreme disenchantment, of necessity pointing to the very problematic disenchantment of the world, a powerful hope and an unrelenting love. What does it mean to hold on to love through writing it in almost total negation? Does it not mirror the very act of disenchantment as the most powerful enchantment? As Cavell (1979) said, romantics dream revolution and break their hearts.

I have loved Adorno more than any other, even Lacan. My reverence lasted almost a decade. I am not sure I can love in the same way anymore. I am not sure I even know why that has come to pass or whether I should be grateful for that passing. Nevertheless I know it has occurred and I fault my analysis of almost exact duration. I turn back to him and his writings which captivated me in a passing moment that was all too long.

Adorno makes an irresistible promise to his readers. In his last lecture from *The Problems of Moral Philosophy*, he states, “On the question of whether moral philosophy is possible today, the only thing I would be able to say is that essentially it would consist in the attempt to make conscious the critique of moral philosophy...More than this, I believe, cannot in all decency be promised. Above all, no one can promise that the reflections that can be entertained in the realm of moral philosophy can be used to

establish a canonical plan for the good life *because* life itself is so deformed and distorted that no one is able to live the good life in it or to fulfill his destiny as a human being” (Adorno, 1996/2001, p. 167). Here it is said, a consciousness of impotence, a reflectivity that can lead to no prescription for action or redemption. The circle is closed. I love him for closing it. I love him for the impossibility. I love him for so fully shrouding any hope. And yet I, just as he, never let go of the object upon which this hope is attached however much we render it opaque. Keep it inaccessible in fact. That is the way to be rigorous. It is perhaps his very methodology of negative dialectics.

Through a philosophy of disenchantment and the stated impossibility of transformative action or revelation, one buried the object of hope in order to bring about a fuller awareness of material conditions in all its contradictions. Idealism bad, materialism good, I was taught. Nevertheless, “shared and contested in academic disputes, its object may not exist; it is not for that matter a lost one. On the contrary, the knowledge corresponding to it has the ever thickening consistency of an imaginary whose very obtuseness usurps the place of truth” (Muller, 1985, p. 4). The ‘lost object’ in psychoanalysis stands as the condition for the subject of speech; Adorno’s knowledge of impossibility stands in direct opposition to this subject.

In Adorno’s ‘*because*’ establishing the why of the impossibility of moral philosophy, we can see the force of his certainty and the way it holds onto this object through negation. Why does Adorno assume here that he knows with so much certainty when he allows almost nothing the same claim? This certainty fulfills the promise of impotence. It is true that reflection cannot be used to establish a canonical plan. It is as well true that life is deformed. But the causal link is not certain. It may have as much to

do with reflection as with deformation and what the two have to do with each other is not clear except that there is a ragged gap. And who in any case asked for this canonical plan?

Adorno will go on to say, “we may not know what the absolute good is or the absolute norm, we may not even know what man is or the human or humanity- but what the inhuman is we know very well indeed. I would say that the place of moral philosophy today lies more in the concrete denunciation of the inhuman, than in the vague and abstract attempt to situate man in his existence” (Adorno, 1996/2001, p. 175). This denunciation holds onto the object of its reverence from which all else is lost or degraded. It is declared inhuman. This is why it is not for all of that a lost object. The knowledge of this object held in absentia follows. As such, this is not the same as the promise I held out to you earlier which despite its own negativity, hesitation, anxiety, functions a bit differently. Rather than denounce the inhuman I think it aims to go straight to the heart of it. Such was Lacan’s claim about the space of the hole inside the vase, the vase itself, human as he said, *par excellence*.

So it is again a matter of the vase and the letter. The risk and uncertainty involved in any act of love is eradicated as knowledge gives over to the object its quality as good. It also stands that this knowledge increases the more the object is negated.

Adorno knew very well the problems of reason, as well as, of a relativism which wants to dispense with reason- both grow absolute. Nevertheless his certainty itself is absolute and I think it is for this that I loved him without question. He promised nothing and yet in a very subtle way he promises almost everything. Is this not the love of every hysteric?

The irony will be that in acting out his love in this way, he will lose it through trying too seriously, too tragically, to have it and hold on to it. And so he did. His game wagered on a return which is perhaps to go too far. One could also state that it is to not go far enough. Lacan says loving is giving what one does not have. The inverse surely applies. Having is to love what cannot be given. And the converse, giving is to love what one does not have, is where he should have centered his discourse. In that case, it is in the love of the inhuman, where we give what ultimately cannot be had.

Adorno's gift is to think thought in contradiction, aporia, and failure. The problem is that while he declared that one could not escape failure he likewise made constant demands that one, at some point, be able to. This failure of his was always external and too real, no matter what and however much it was internalized. There was always a posited linear temporality, a relationship of uni-directional causality- and internal division was a subsequent factor. As such any hope had to find its way underground- degraded to an impossible conviction, deadly responsibility, and negated love- subordinate to a reflectivity that *had* to grasp its own failure *only* as a failure to do anything in the world. One cannot live rightly or justly and yet must also never try to transcend that failure because to do so would be to somehow fail all the more.

It is simply pathos, said with negation not affirmation. Adorno, not master of none but master of one- one life, one object, one faith, one failure. Good that he's got it under his control. Terrible that this was exactly what he wanted to avoid.

And so when I think of this more of his, it's hard for me in this to imagine what more there could possibly be- what more *he* imagined and became terrified of. And, if I

accept that more why then would I back away from that depth of negativity? The irony will be that Adorno's system gave him over to endless, impotent, oscillation.

The subject for whom there is no true life in the false one is relieved of responsibility for action, not reflection. Yet, despite reason's violence the path of reason was never abandoned. What Adorno never found reasonable was any consideration of the transformation of the subject. While he stated again and again the impossibility for social transformation, he clung to it with silent desperation as the only hope and the only possibility. This object's quality as good was given substance the more its failure to be realized was. It follows that for Adorno there was a good and that this good was elsewhere.

“Closed upon itself the advancement of learning hangs on... this cultural subject-object is Nature-in-progress—the truth remains unreached and repressed: a beyond... This omission sustains the demand for an existing essential relation beyond the discourse unable to write it “ (Muller, 1985, p. 6). This subject who thinks but cannot act, grows violent. It rests on impossibility and yet vehemently refuses it. The discourse unable to write it and the impossibility of an essential relation beyond it are what is at stake in an understanding of failure as that impossible relation between love and knowledge.

So it is that in the end, for Adorno, one is impotent in the face of uncompromising master. The hidden idol and the declared wound create what is the greatest paradox in Adorno's very own work- out of the most extreme debt to the human through thinking the inhuman, his thought becomes inhuman itself and the debt remains. He ends up offering nothing, I would say, rather than almost nothing.

Heidegger's jargon of authenticity was too much and in the end betrayed Heidegger's own fundamental betrayal. But this is a betrayal that comes with risk, any imagined possibility. It was too much for Adorno and like the obsessional he preferred to keep his desire mired to impossibility- a fantasy of fulfillment that is always deferred.

Perhaps it was the Nazis. No poetry after Auschwitz. He never really maintained a faith in language, in the possibility of speech, perhaps just silent resistance, isolated reflexivity, at best conscious non-participation, which is why in the end I think his only consolation was music. There too he buried his hopes and his dreams. And there too he became the most ferocious culture monger, his authoritarian side peeking through from the most desperate hope out of the most disavowed pain. This is Freud's failed neurotic rebellion. I always forgave him his essay on Jazz when I would never forgive others for so much less.

For the Love of Hegel

Love has that power because for Lacan it is what joins the three rings and makes possible their correspondence as well as their slippage. And so Adorno (1963/1993) at his best, something I only realized now, is in a strange essay of his, *Skoteinos, or How to Read Hegel*. His love for Hegel manifests itself in his pure desire to have you read his words- huge quotations without explanation. They go on for pages.

If one has read Adorno for so long it is uncanny to encounter these endless citations and his almost said, "read, it's good, I promise, keep reading, it'll be worth it, wait, be patient". We can hear Hegel's affirmative and nevertheless imperative hope- 'Essence must appear!' Adorno's wish too is that Hegel appear in the very formation of

his sentences and the march of his thought, something more than just failure, bad equivocation, as marked by his critics. Hegel, he will say, lets go of something, akin to systematization, but Adorno is trying to understand how it is also something more than just that. Also, what that more had to do with language and with writing.

Adorno is patient. Failure, equivocation, in writing and reading- the play of language- come together to illuminate the object but without so much of a mention of the torrid inhuman capitalist external reality which renders such work the aporia of bourgeois bad conscience.

He becomes interested in the “suspended quality associated with Hegel’s philosophy” (Adorno, 1963/1993, p. 91). The moment between that is at stake in Hegel’s writing and Hegel’s dialectic. This is also the moment before he lapses into his greatest falsity according to Adorno, when the *Phenomenology* concludes on the note of absolute spirit. This is the reason why one has to make so many allowances according to Adorno. Every sentence is unsuitable to its aim, exceeds it in fact. To allow for this is to read with a generosity of spirit not an absolutism of it. To say it again, Adorno is patient.

There is work to be done. There is an intention, of the whole, but it is not this but the work done in that direction which makes up the moments of understanding. In this the whole becomes the untruth which does not render the work false. If anything it gives it its truth all the more:

Hegel makes himself inaccessible to anyone who is not familiar with his overall intention... At every point one must bear in mind, however provisionally, what Hegel is after; one must illuminate him from behind, so to speak... But if one stakes everything on this one can falsify him again. One then easily creates what has thus far been injurious to interpretation, namely, an empty consciousness of the system that is incompatible with the fact that the system is not intended to form an abstract higher-order concept with regard to its moment but rather to achieve its truth only in and through the concrete moments” (ibid., p.92).

To illuminate from behind is to play without injuring the possibility for an interpretation, without the stakes becoming too high, too concrete, too essential. This play between a demand which forces one to go to work in tension with false intentions, is the play of reading Hegel contained within Hegel's own writing. There is something in excess of Hegel and it forces Adorno to try and evoke Hegel's very person in his speech.

He picks up a dual demand- "to float along, to let himself be borne by the current and not the force the momentary to linger" as well as, "develop an intellectual slow-motion procedure, to slow down the tempo at the cloudy places in such a way that they do not evaporate and their motion can be seen" (ibid., p. 123). The reading, just as the content read, is split into extremes. Right away he contrasts this with a fetishistic demand that the work one is delivered be done. An imperative that one finishes and finish well enough. This latter is false consciousness. It leaves out the necessity of time articulated in the distinction between what is familiar and what is not yet familiar, what already exists and what is new- a temporal organizing in a dialectic of 'retroactive force' and 'retrogressive consciousness'. This is to listen with a "speculative ear". This is to be bound by speech and the language one hears, not the imperative of knowledge or claim that can be made on another's intent.

What this listening refers to is an openness to the dialectical process- the contradiction of demands for clarity along with the possibility of giving some object other than myself voice. Sensuous aspects of language whose movement comes close to the sensuous particulars demand to be given voice and yet resist language and conceptualization. This is the movement- before and after, open and closed. He will say that Hegel's ideal:

is non-argumentative thought. His philosophy which, as a philosophy of identity stretched to the breaking point, demands the most extreme efforts on the part of thought, is also dialectical in that it moves within the medium of a thought freed from tension. Whether his philosophy is followed through to the end depends on whether this relaxation is attained or not (ibid., p. 141).

In wanting to keep things absolutely closed or open- freed from time's articulation- in the disappearance of mediation or its inexorable presence, the speculative ear runs deaf. One cannot follow— through or to the end. One cannot stand this place between structures that provide points of recognition.

Yet, he'll say, with Hegel, that there are flashes of illumination which cannot be extinguished. He manages it and so defeats his critics and their demands for clarity.

Adorno stumbles upon Hegel's words, the language, and it is through that that he'll develop a theory of expression before he will write his *Aesthetic Theory*. This reading of Hegel will form the basis of his argument of the play of forces at work in the art object. "In evoking the speaking person of Hegel, Adorno practices his own self-divestiture... [here] philosophy is the expression of spirit, which is the negation of self in the matter at hand... the life of spirit has a kinship with mortality and death" (ibid., p. xxx).

If one gives voice to the inexpressible and thus gives it life, it is given back its mortality in a kind of resurrection. But it was never dead in the first place, only thereafter. This is the lost object never re-found brought to light through a conception of the possibility of something new. This is a far cry from the impossibility of moral philosophy or the good life.

So a question remains for me. How can Adorno understand the necessity to put aside demands upon language for clarity, identity stretched to the breaking point, when he demands all along and shortly thereafter, clarity from language through a

correspondence with actuality? Traversing impossibility in the direction of possibility he manages to end where he begins. He grows argumentative. Through Adorno we witness his untruth- that opposites collapse into the same.

Adorno notices in Hegel a slip but fails to see how he does so in the exact same way. He says, he makes do with declarations, “theses that say that something is so when the work has not yet been done” (ibid., p. 94). Like father, like son, Jack of all trades, master of none. Adorno declares that Hegel would not allow something into his own language, he sided too much with objectivity. He says about Hegel, “what gives it that air [of sovereignty] is the preponderance of quasi-oral delivery over the written text. Vagueness, something that cannot be eliminated in dialectic, becomes a defect in Hegel because he did not include an antidote to it in his language” (ibid., p. 100). But, it is the same with Adorno also, who while creating an antidote in his writing style, dictated to his wife *The Aesthetic Theory* during the last years of his life back in Germany. Such a strange scene this man, this philosopher, and his stenographer wife. It is almost unreadable. He will say about Hegel that his dialectic is the contradiction between the labor of thought and the nature of language. His labor would come to overshadow.

And in a moment of great irony Adorno writes, “the art of reading him should take note of where something new begins, some content, and where a machine that was not intended to be a machine is simply running and ought not to keep doing so” (ibid., p. 95). And so I will read Adorno in this way because I loved him as much as he continued to love Hegel. To love with the force of repetition that wants desperately to slow down the movement to the moment between beats— near silence and with pause.

This is the moment before I will lose him and his time will have come to pass. I cannot slow it down enough. From this after moment, it is also true that I could not have precipitated the crossing fast enough. And when I read Adorno I see that he wanted to stay in this before, this silence, because he knew it would lapse. It is the closing that he fears most of all. He cannot accept this inherent failure and so he fails in becoming certain that it is in this before moment, objectified, where truth resides. All else is impossible. He was, in the end, terribly romantic.

Hegel's thought makes a demand for the thing-in-itself and so is grounded in the Thing as an impossible demand for unconditional love. Yet, through "a playful element" in language, the Thing was given expression- both as indebted to every other, as non-identical, and yet also taken as a whole, free of debt, identical. How can these exist side by side? Hegel's phenomenology is divided into a set of moments- that are real, when mediation vanishes, that are also false, since this absence of mediation is a fiction produced by the work, and so are also essential only in the play followed through to the "furious disappearance of being into nothing" (Muller, 1985, p. 20). It is the last moment, the third turn, that Adorno forgets.

At the very end, in this third moment, Adorno declares, "it says, with pathos, nonidentity... The dialectic could be consistent only in sacrificing consistency by following its own logic to the end. These, and nothing less, are the stakes in understanding Hegel" (Adorno, 1963/1993, p. 148). That is the risk that is here taken in order to relieve the debt.

Without language, without the pathos that says it, there is only objectified failure. Here Adorno declares that Hegel is inconsistent in attempting to achieve a consistency

without true sacrifice of it. So it is pathos- one cannot but say it without it actually being so. True sacrifice is a fantasized exchange. Sacrifice is nothing but a signifier that momentarily takes on the character of an act in relation to an individual such that he pays with a pound of flesh in order that something may begin to take place. It will never be enough for Adorno. And so he raises the stakes- nothing less. With him we will end with less than nothing.

Generosity and certitude are the extremes. In creating these as the poles of his play he fell short of Hegel's ideal of non-argumentative philosophy. This was also the way in which classical analysis fell short of non-argumentative interpretation. The demand wanted its object now for gratification without having to know anything about it- unconditional love. The promise held out by the other was certain of its knowledge about this object and made a judgment on the demands for gratification- conditional love. Short of the immediacy of a gratification to one's demand, one declares impotence as virtue-eros of castration. Objections to the knowledge concerning gratification and implied wishes would be argued as resistance and heresy- absolutism.

The project and the work are closed in on themselves. The unconscious as ethic is lost which is the play between these two natures. "It would be another gospel of castration for love... They fall prey to their own unilateral criticisms- the self abolishing nature of a frustrated demand" (Muller, 1985, p. 20). The play loses all of its fragility as a promise made between uncertainty and action, between what Adorno called the drifting along and slow-motion before evaporation, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the old and the new. What would exceed the ultimate false claims upon reality, the language and work itself which exceeded these intentions, was brought to a halt. This excess is the

unconscious which succeeds the division between the human and the divine, absolute knowledge and forced ignorance, freedom and obligation, conditional and unconditional love. It likewise overcomes impotence, as speech becomes action. It is subject to the temporal movements of desire which is exactly that movement the obsessional cannot tolerate. Paralysis feels much more secure. Inhibition rules the day.

The excess of desire points to the fact that “where one knows one does not enjoy and where one enjoys one does not know” (Muller, 1985, p. 23). I would add that where one knows one does not speak and so does not write. What is the relation between enjoyment and action?

Knowing has everything to do with gratification in reality precipitated into a future. Haste towards return. Debt declared in advance of necessity relieved. Guilt whose crime is known. Survival under the auspices of an enemy evaded in reality. Inherited authority. Analysis will proceed to the letter- one master, all the rest its slave. Your only choice, not as subject, nor as human, is to “hurl yourself at this all powerfulness.” This is to assume that you “have not taken it up yourself” (Safouan, 1993/2003, p. 63). Here is the forced choice between knowledge and ignorance. This is the potential in the vase for the wish granted by the letter. Enjoyment will be something else.

So it is that while I read this essay of Adorno’s, I hear in him as he reads Hegel the movement of analysis as I have come to understand it through Lacan. Adorno with Hegel, out of love for Hegel, allowed himself momentarily to be a dupe. Otherwise he would refuse. In this last moment, I hear the dangers of analysis taken too far. While Adorno ends in a place that I have come to criticize, before and after that moment of objectified failure denounced in the name of a Good, he embodies nevertheless the

patience necessary in any reading and any listening taken on without (yet, any) certainty. And I take up his demand as an actuality- his demand that it be so in reality, clinging to its object with desperation. Likewise I refuse this demand (how can I but not). I promise him that while there may not be an immediate return, or a future guarantee, there is a promise that can be made.

This is a promise to listen to what he has to say with generosity and love. I will be patient. The ethic that inscribes this promise resides in an understanding of the pathos inherent in this and does not for all that declare it unfit. "Language both grants these objects- its 'human' nature- and takes them away- its 'divine' nature. Both sides are necessary for humans to live. The two sides taken together constitute the unconscious; that is why it is ethic rather than ontic. The unconscious is a vital condition for the subject to exist as human and for humans to exist as subjects" (Muller, 1985, p. 22). In this ethic the good vanishes. It is not relegated to an elsewhere or given status in the beyond. The beyond as ethic in fact relegates it as a no- nowhere else, in as much as one comes to know this object as undesirable which gives one access to language and so to speech.

This is the analyst after the fall- the furious disappearance of being in nothing. The irony being itself that you need the analyst to know that you do not need them any longer. You have to desire them to find out that to have them is to lose them. I had to assume at first that Adorno knew without question in order to take up my position as a subject allowed knowledge in her own right. I needed Adorno in order to say to you now that I do not need him any longer. Perhaps if there is anything we know about ethics at this moment is that it functions through a reversal- we need it in all its impossibility in

order to figure out what we can have in it. That it is somehow both the risk of love and the bearing-out of disenchantment.

So it stands that where I failed for all these years with Adorno was to refuse to know where Adorno disappointed me. Our mutual failure had everything to do with love-love which cannot but fail to know and knowledge which fails to love. I think I can say to you that my love erred in faith not bad conscience. It left the place of knowledge open so that it can take place after the fact- hysterical ignorance out of hysterical reverence. I never got as far as my own certainty, just an identification with his, an imagined authority. So one has to wait, hope, for the passing and the fall. The letter was but a dream and a wish that can be brought under question.

This is just as it is in any treatment. Adorno the supposed subject of knowledge but who didn't know how to resist taking up this position in the transference. This would be the death of psychoanalysis. He would not be a dupe. I cannot blame him, I think he was terrified. His escape was too close. Benjamin didn't make it, and after all of that how can one love again? Adorno's weeping without tears. In the face of his silence and his certainty, I would remain utterly ignorant. So I had to read him as he read Hegel. Looking for what is new out of what is old and should not continue running.

Once again, as Lacan points out, this ignorance is not a lack of knowledge but just as love and hate, a passion for being and a path by which it is formed. Now there are two. I am better off with both of them, my reverence split between Adorno and Lacan. Adorno who I loved without question before, and now the form it takes after, through Lacan. My mother, my father. As Badiou states:

For the continuation of philosophy. What is ultimately at stake here can be formulated in terms of the following question which weighs upon us and threatens

to exhaust us: can we be delivered, finally delivered, from our subjection to Romanticism?" (Badiou, 2004, p. 22)

The separation of the new from the machine that continues to run happens at the moment one is delivered from romanticism, just as, for Freud neurosis develops out of sentimentality and sentimentality needs to be transformed into something else, the exit from the family complex by way of desire.

Sentimentality, Semblance, Sublimation

One might venture the word sublimation out from under all of this. Lacan (1975/1998) will say in *Encore*, in rather Adorno like grammatical structuring, that knowledge dreams of a pre-discursive reality. Listen to how wonderfully the predicate and subject reverse themselves here- prediscursive reality dreams of knowledge and knowledge dreams of a prediscursive reality. Transitivity is of the essence in this structure. In this I see the child, unable yet to articulate, copulate surely, and so who longs for knowledge and mastery. The drive outruns biology which puts the epistemological need at the center of desire. We learned as much from Freud's *Three Essays* (1905). What it is that one is really looking for is enjoyment- the failure that propels our diphasic sexuality; the failure that lays bare the necessity for whatever is meant by sublimation.

Knowledge is founded on the wish which stands in for the lost object. To aim for knowledge of that object means that one must know more and more in a realm which has nothing to do with a subject discursively mediated. Such activity is futile which is why the hinge of a psychoanalytic cure is the fall of the supposed subject of knowing. But one has to pass through that wish for absolute knowledge.

How can you if you constantly negate it? It is here within this movement, between an attachment to impossibility and its subversion, that we may once again be able to find our way through Adorno back to psychoanalysis. His relentless pursuit of non-identity, his sensitivity to listening, process, for the slightest glimpse of it, whatever it is, is not unlike what it takes to listen for the unconscious.

Of course Adorno longed for nothing else which often forced his discourse into one of sheer demand, but this is a place to begin. With Adorno there was an acute attentiveness. Everything was mere appearance, essence always at a distance, but the possibility of the new, for non-identity to erupt from within appearance, was what he sought both in works of art and to capture via his aesthetic theory. We only have appearances as analysts and if we do not limit our listening to the consulting room, someone with as stringent an ear, someone who knew how to listen to music, how to read transformations in artistic form, may have something to say to us.

There has always been this question as to whether Lacan read Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or whether there is just a curious correlation with *Juliette and Enlightenment Morality* with his *Kant Avec Sade*. Such speculation has a long history (see Rudinesco, 1997) and which I find uninteresting to the current dilemma. Rather I prefer the collapse between the two discourses- where Adorno leaves off in raising to its apogee the question of the revolutionary character of the power of semblance and Lacan takes up the question of 'what is woman' and 'what does she want' is the important site of this interchange. Adorno states in *Minima Moralia*, "if today the subject is vanishing, aphorisms take upon themselves the duty 'to consider the evanescent itself as essential'" (Adorno, 1951/1974, p. 16). It was Lacan's genius to describe this

evanescent moment in a curious equivalence between the unconscious, as non-identity, and woman, as Other. This is of course a rather strange equivalence but perhaps with Adorno we should admit that “in psychoanalysis, nothing is true except the exaggerations” (ibid., p. 49). Rhetoric for Adorno is the closest we will ever get to content and the feminine for Lacan holds likewise a rather privileged position with respect to the unconscious, pleasure, and castration.

Adorno had little faith in psychoanalysis, not unlike most philosophers who rarely enter the consulting room, particularly because of our reified notions of history and imperialist groping after content with a capital C. They have, for a time, known better than this. Adorno says, “psychoanalysis itself is castrated by its conventionalization: sexual motives, partly disavowed and partly approved are made totally insignificant... The last grandly conceived theorem of bourgeois self-criticism has become a means of making bourgeois self-alienation, in its final phase, absolute, and of rendering ineffectual the lingering awareness of the ancient wound, in which lies hope of a better future” (ibid., p. 66). While it is true that the wound bears out this hope, particularly for Adorno, it requires a further turn lest it lapse into that ever thickening consistency of an imaginary, as Muller pointed out. One step away from the festival of non-dupes, as Muller put it.

For Lacan this step was always first a kind of hystericization of discourse which splits it right down the middle like a massive gash, and finally then the possibility of the analysis of the hysterical wound. Against Adorno, he renders that wound in a space caught up in the middle between his three registers, one part symbolic, one part imaginary, one part real. It is his 28 years of rigorously trying to bring to bear the conceptualization of a hole.

If for Adorno psychoanalysis just played into the hands of the market he nevertheless was able to pick out this problematic when he states that, “between delight in emptiness and the lie of fullness, the prevailing intellectual situation allows for no third way... The circulation sphere, whose stigmata are borne by intellectual outsiders, opens a last refuge to the mind that it barter away, at the very moment when refuge really no longer exists. He who offers for sale something unique that no-one wants to buy, represents, even against his will, freedom from exchange” (ibid., p. 68). Here we are with Adorno in the polarized opposition between the *jouissance* of the wound in the hysteric-her delight in emptiness (in particular how uncomfortable it can make others perhaps in particular men) and the *jouissance* of the thinking obsessional- the lie of fullness. And of course some way out of this deadly opposition, the elusive third way, as the key to a freedom from the logic of mere exchange and fungibility.

How can I not see the particularity inherent in the analytic situation between patient and analyst as that something unique that no one wants to buy? Philip Rieff (1959) points out that if the principle of the modern market is time turned into money, psychoanalysis holds out the opposite- to turn money back into time. And if one has time, then one slows down enough to, as Adorno would put it, realize the impossibility of living the good life and perhaps manifest a real demand for it. This would be a demand for the thing-in-itself but it begins as an object not quite lost before its furious disappearance. So here we are with Adorno at the precipice. We should be grateful for what can only be termed a ‘demand for analysis.’

Are we ready to move beyond the problematic essentialism of the demand for the lost object? Postured thus our demand stretches into the question concerning the very life

and death of psychoanalysis itself. With Adorno we must bridge rightfully this concern over the lie of Enlightenment morality. As Dany Nobus puts the question in his aptly titled book, *Knowing Nothing, Staying Stupid*:

Legitimacy crises within Lacanian psychoanalysis and, indeed, within the psychoanalytic community as a whole, invariably revolve around the same old issues concerning the relationship between knowledge and truth, the installation and exercise of a particular social bond, the attribution and adoption of the roles, functions and positions, and the delivery of a product whose surplus value is optimal...The awareness of conflict, as a potentially productive experience, within psychoanalysis, and *a fortiori* within Lacanian psychoanalysis, does not guarantee better strategic plans for dealing with it. Or, to put it more provocatively, if the psychoanalytic community wants to preserve and guarantee its epistemological basis, as a knowledge in failure, it can do this only by avoiding the installation of a knowledge universe and by maintaining the existence of a knowledge 'multi-verse', yet the latter task is likely to imperil the subsistence of community life as such" (Nobus, 2005, p. 103).

Psychoanalysis as a community has to risk the Hegelian third turn, the furious disappearance of being in nothing. At the very least it has to face up to its disappointments, its failure for having missed the vain realization it hoped for.

Thus the exhaustion of psychoanalysis and the current crisis facing it is the necessary moment whereby it may emerge as something other than the lie of the contemporary marketplace; beyond the continuing elaboration of alienation by virtue of demands for adaptation, self-criticism, and interpreting away as the mode of exchange.

Lacan proffers an answer. If there is no good life in the false one, there is possibility of a private life, a curious term indeed:

Private means everything that preserves on this delicate point of what is involved in the sexual act and of everything that flows from it, in the pairing of individuals, in the 'you are my wife, I am your husband' and other essential devices on another register that we know well, namely that of fiction. This is what allows there to hold up in a field in which we analysts introduce an order of relativity which, as you see, is not at all easy to master; and which can be mastered on a single condition, If we are able to recognize the place we hold in it, we, as

analysts, not as analysts who are subject of knowledge but as analysts who are instruments of revelation (Lacan, 1967, Lecture XV, p 18).

Psychoanalysis, despite a relativism it brings to bear, allows fictions to be preserved as authorized only by themselves, in themselves. Such is the semblance that has bearing as the thing-in-itself, the very foundation of the analytic stance on representation and its relationship to drive. Is not this semblance the hysteric herself, does she not appear as such a thing? The problem is she just refuses to know as much, there is always another with more solidity.

If for the artworks “semblance disenchant the disenchanted world”, something about semblance is necessary at this turning point. The possibility of analyzing the hysteric (or as Harrari put it before as the paradoxical counterpart to analyzing hysteria is putting to use the failure of the name-of-the father) is in precisely this lack of a third way as the third way itself. Indeed for Adorno the revolutionary character of the work of art is its quality as a semblance that levels with reality, its power to heal the unhealable wound with the spear that inflicted it, a reference made to Parsifal. I can’t think of anything else more poignantly asked for by a hysteric. Art is the ever broken promise of happiness for Adorno, and perhaps to analyze the hysteric is to make her put to use this ever-broken promise rather than give in to “the ecstasy of sacrifice where delusion recognizes its own humiliation and becomes equal to the enormity of domination that in real life it is powerless to overcome” (Adorno, 1951/1974, p. 66).

If non-identity is the vain pursuit of the artwork, in vain it must manage. Removed from the constraints of self-preservation, room is made for some possibility within the impossibility of an artwork that has no supposed value in the world of things,

like a patient merely speaking to another off site, out of sight. The analyst must remain in the place of something radically Other which is, in the end, nothing but an act, a semblance, but nevertheless. This is the inhuman dimension of psychoanalysis whose counterpart is the inhuman nature of the analyst him or herself in the treatment.

Laplanche (1970/1985), the thinker of the enigmatic Otherness of the analyst, makes a similar argument about the radical nature of the Freudian drive in *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. Only with the analyst in this place of extreme Otherness, as a *provocateur*, can psychoanalysis transform the economics of the drive. The drive for Laplanche is propped up on and yet incommensurate with the language of instinct, need, and self preservation- the more human side. That it maintains this liminal space outside of the human produces a place of possible refuge for the subject in something entirely anonymous, something entirely Other. Like what the artwork demands through non-identity, an objectivity that springs nonetheless from a subject however thoroughly mediated that subject is, for Laplanche the manifestation of the drive in the appearance of desire always resists internally a total identity with the pressures of the biological tension system (in the beyond of the pleasure-principle), and, externally the colonization of culture and super-ego dictates.

Likewise, Philip Rieff (1959) will call Freud's concept of the drive dynamic and critical. For this reason he calls Freud the most populous, moral and intimate of the modern thinkers. In the Freudian system the drive takes what is biological and inserts into the sphere of subjectivity precisely by showing that it is only in this narrow realm that one can find a defense against repressive culture. What is most intimate- biology- is shown as wholly intimate. Thus sexuality (as the relation between desire and *jouissance*)

is not only a problem, indeed it is, but it contains the very solution to a subjectivity hemmed in on all sides.

In this relation to the drive, the external response can only but fail. In fact it must fail. The object, as we said before, is lost. There is a hole. But there is, in Lacan, a 'thank God for that'. It is only through conceptualizing this hole straight onto the concept of the drive, that we move from blaming society in a deluded liberal hopefulness to an understanding that subjectivity starts with an internal failure and only within that failure locates possibility as- to bring to the table one of the most contested terms of psychoanalysis (the most contested being the death drive)- sublimation. Any other conceptualization will run straight into the aporia of diluting sexuality in order to rescue either an eternal subject (Jung) or an eternal reality construed as utopia (Adler).

Sublimation requires this emptiness. Perhaps the link between sublimation and the revolutionary character of the artwork has some validity after-all. The object of the drive which, Lacan says, escapes domination through a kind of uncolonizable sexual enjoyment, is the *object a*. This object is also called by Lacan, charmingly enough, the semblant. It is through this special object that we get as close as we can to the thing for Lacan. It is for him to raise the object to the dignity of the thing which is so close to Adorno's notion of a work of art that pursues non-identity. The vanity is that this is always only a semblance, never real. But for Lacan, it nevertheless has its effects and for him that is all that matters. They may be singular- to the individual, to their desire- but it is an effect within a world where impotence is the psychic standard.

Non-identity then is subjectively held in place by the Freudian drive. In the *Aesthetic Theory*, for Adorno the pursuit of non-identity means that the art work must go

beyond itself, beyond its own limits, thereby threatening its internal consistency. In Lacanian terms, one risks death, one risks the liquidation of all anchoring points in identifications that shore up the subject: “the most enduring result of Hegelian logic is that the individual is not flatly for himself. In himself, he is otherness and linked with others. What is, is more than it is. This 'more' is not imposed upon it but what remains immanent to it, as that which has been pushed out of it. In that sense, the nonidentical would be the thing's own identity against its identifications” (Adorno, 1970/1997, p. 174).

He continues:

The reconciled condition would not be the philosophical imperialism of annexing the alien. Instead, its happiness would lie in the fact that the alien, in the proximity it is granted, remains what is distant and different, beyond the heterogeneous and beyond that which is one's own... It is up to philosophy to think the things which differ from the thought and yet make it a thought, exclusively, while their demon seeks to persuade the thought that it ought not to be (ibid., p. 191).

The power of the artwork to unleash a sublime shudder encapsulates a moment of non-identity. For Adorno it is an important risk that artwork must make. We should, I think, hear sublimation in this re-evocation of the Kantian concept of the Sublime.

The fright, pain and violence of the sublime exposes art to every risk, every anxiety, and every contradiction. For Adorno this holds the artwork out against the always available escape route whose fear of the ephemeral casts its lot with the demonic. Art, against the ersatz satisfactions of society and the culture industry, is experienced as a shudder, this time not as the primordial shudder against nature, but a second shudder against second nature as reified consciousness. The way up is at first a regression, a downward spiral within the work of the art. This movement provides no particular satisfaction to the I, separating art from desire like Kant, not to lapse into a castrated

hedonism as he did, but "as a memento of the liquidation of the I, which, shaken, perceives its own limitedness and finitude. This experience is contrary to the weakening of the I that the culture industry manipulates... To catch even the slightest glimpse beyond the prison that it itself is, the I requires not distraction but the utmost tension that preserves the shudder, an involuntary comportment, incidentally, from becoming mere regression" (ibid., p. 76). Thus in the moment of the very liquidation of the I, the furious disappearance, the I regains a kind of freedom from the constraints of reified consciousness.

While Adorno calls this a moment unleashed within semblance, it is a freedom bound to feel all the more guilty, all the more ashamed, for glimpsing a beyond which is everywhere non-existent. But it is a happening, it has its effect. It may even constitute an event. Such is the power of regression that isn't just merely that.

Thus, aesthetic experience is the experience of letting self-preservation, the site of banal repetition, fall away. Although it does not succeed in completely succeed in realizing this potential, the potential is experienced as actual, psychological reality, while realized as semblant, psychic experience. This movement shatters conscious experience of the self as ultimate and absolute. Thus, this sublime experience contains both the primal feelings of powerlessness, a weakness before natural beauty, and the demonic feelings of omnipotence; the first given back its existence in consciousness (as natural experience), as the second is stripped of its existence as consciousness (as unnatural experience). This is for Adorno the sublime trembling between nature and freedom, determination and will.

Sublimation becomes possible in the space between the total disappearance of the subject in psychosis and its absolute reinforcement in a kind of perverse and maniacal narcissism. Lacan points to this dilemma as one that transcends the universe that can do nothing but constantly slips back from Copernicus to Ptolemy. The question is not about locating the center, but to, as he says, move from it turns to it falls. “It is not a fact of changing the center. It turns. That fact still has a great value for us, as reduced as it may be in the final analysis... The subversion, if it existed somewhere, at some time, was not that of having changed the point around which it circles- it’s that of having replaced ‘it turns’ with ‘it falls’” (Lacan, 1975/1998, p. 42). To change our view from one that is always a circle that completes its own revolution by turning, to let’s say, that of an ellipse that seriously problematizes locating a center, means one has to drop down to an imaginary center. This is the power of semblance.

To shudder and tremble in a kind of mesmerized subjectivity is close to the power of a hysterical symptom. If it aims at naïveté rather than seeing this as its origin, than what is this other than the hysterical passion for ignorance whose aim is to critique predatory reason through the return of the repressed. But the symptom cannot merely be the last stop. The symptom has a center (the symptom in fact fills in the center that is empty like the vase) which is why the work of analysis is that it should fall after crystallizing in the transference. While the cure for sickness for Adorno was always the necessity that it grow worse, that the wounds inflicted by humanity continue to fester and torment our psyche- lest they escape into innocence- here we might see how the symptom builds up in tension in order to fall. It is the fall that Adorno fails to conceptualize.

So, oddly Adorno is left beckoning after aesthetic theory to transform this final moment into thought itself. Aesthetic theory, as philosophy, cannot simply continue to limp behind the arts. Yet it is never clear in Adorno in what way aesthetic theory as theory can achieve this end. The book was left unfinished, a sprawling dictation, symptomatic in itself. Psychoanalysis likewise cannot culminate in a thought, an insight, which are always more on the side of knowledge rather than an ethical act. Further, if integration is on the table, we are left with the most unlikely of words for Adorno and Lacan alike. One might say we stay with the ‘growing worse’ which has resonance with Lacan’s seminar ‘Ou pire’ - Or Worse (1971). The Worsening.

So with Adorno knowledge is surely left powerless, which while seemingly a virtue, perhaps does not find its way towards what Lacan will ask for in asking that it begin to function in the form of an act. If artworks act in producing this shudder, so do symptoms. If artworks level at a rationality turned absolute, certainly so do symptoms. Like symptoms they also participate in that which they seek to deny. Dora, Anna O., create through their symptoms the entire discipline of psychoanalysis which attempts to think them. They level with a medical rationale that cannot think the suffering subject nor unify a concept of mind and body. So Freud invents the Freudian drive. He also invents a practice and a cure. What is most interesting about symptoms and is forgotten in the banal morality that simply wants to do away with them (Adorno’s ‘imperialism of annexing the alien’) is that the symptom contains its very own solution. Its elucidation in analysis is its very unraveling. Repetition is at the heart of the analytic cure, and so is speech. The worsening then is something not unlike a transference neurosis as the cure for neurosis proper.

Adorno, in his way understood this when he proposed that artworks succeed when they posit their own end. The wound that is healed by the spear that inflicted it.

‘Rhetoric’ is the most powerful tool as mimetic comportment. Despite such power, art and aesthetic theory never achieves anything like a praxis, it only shows the entanglement of praxis with that which it wants to subvert bringing to light invisible suffering. But suffering is just simply the truth of what is without any possibility for being anything other. It is just the *jouissance* of suffering from within any symptom.

We are left with his fear of action, his fear of failure, once again. Adorno’s discourse lapses into an endless and dare I say banal entanglement of negative dialectical bravado begging for what I can only call a Lacanian cut. He sees with his critical edge what he has no power to overcome, like patients well aware of their own patterns they hardly but fail not to repeat. He says:

Fantasy alone, today consigned to the realm of the unconscious and proscribed from knowledge as a childish, injudicious rudiment, can establish that relation between objects which is the irrevocable source of all judgment: should fantasy be driven out, judgment too, the real act of knowledge is exorcised. But the castration of perception by a court of control that denies it any anticipatory desire, forces it thereby into a pattern of helplessly reiterating what is already known... Once this last trace of emotion has been eradicated, nothing remains of thought but absolute tautology (Adorno, 1966/1973, p. 123).

Adorno isolates himself off from the one source that has any power of judgment- fantasy and desire. To give such power to fantasy and desire was a step Adorno was unwilling to make. It seemed too irrational in his fear of the irrational, bound by his fear of domination. In Freud and in Lacan, desire is antithetical to domination which is bound up with its passionate refusal and so with the passion of the symptom.

What Does Adorno Want?

Sentimentality is the failure to take up desire and rather participate in lieu of it in the hysterical fantasy that one be borne along by love, unconditionally. As Moustapha Safouan will say in *In Praise of Hysteria*, the dream of a desire born of love “can only sharpen the antinomy between love and desire” (Safouan, 1980, p. 58). Love in the hysteric is the “fibers of being tending toward an object” (ibid). This object, as psychoanalysis has understood it, “brings no plenitude, no satisfaction” and love is this frustration, at its root it “is annulment and abandonment, to say nothing of destruction by the object” (ibid, p. 58). This love is equivalent to the demand for the master who is by definition beyond desire:

Always already caught up in a dreamlike third person (he will be a great man, she will marry a prince...) and in the seduction and bidding of a second person (will you answer my wishes? Are you coming?), the story starts only in the first person: no “I” is not that. The subject is born and reborn solely from a constant disentanglement of body and words, from a perpetually repeatable crossing of the grid of signifiers, from the ghostly, hallucinated reunion with the lost but immediately present object, right there, so very close to us. That object has no image nor any possible representation in the margin of figures and words, in what is forever closing and opening the doors of our body. It is the pulsing of desire (Leclaire, 1975/1998, p. 53).

Desire always brings with it a certain quantum of love. The first step out of the entanglement of a love that abolishes the ‘I’ (remember Freud’s definition that to love is to be crushed by the object) is to set out on the trace of the body through desire.

The love of a hysteric is equal to the accusation, usually of psychiatry and psychology, that they are liars. But in order to lie, one must know the truth, otherwise it would only be an error. It is precisely for this reason that Lacan loves the hysteric as surely as his followers praise her. She teaches us that truth is not the opposite of semblance, but continuous with it. It is for this reason that I turned in the end to Adorno’s aesthetics for a way out of his dilemma of trying to locate a new understanding of ethics.

The separation between the universal and the particular which is where the problem of ethics begins for Adorno, finds some resolution in Lacan. If love is addressed to what Lacan calls the semblance of Being (essence) then “love is always the love of a name” (Safouan, 1980, p. 59). The name (indeed for him of the father) has a kind of power when not sought after in an irrevocable manner and so can be put to use in a singularity, a private fiction, which has all the power of its own authorization. This is the ethical move that Lacan makes when he speaks of elevating an object to the dignity of a thing.

This naming or this act brings the hysteric back to the unutterable truth of her castration. The question will be if she can tolerate such a dislocation, such a threat to internal consistency. If the hysteric reaches pitches of anxiety in the face of the desire of the Other and retreats to dream of an answer to her unrequited love, the analyst addresses her shuddering in naming her desire through the use of the Law as a cut which breaches the surface of repetition. If it is true that ‘where it knows it does not enjoy, and where it enjoys, it does not know’ then this act of naming gives back the hysteric her desire through access to enjoyment. The object through the work of analysis is transformed into merely the cause of desire, a semblance of Being, and so *is stripped of its distance and power over the subject*. This is not to say that the subject remains powerless, quite to the contrary. Naming is nothing other than creation *ex nihilo*. Whatever holds out its own name is not exchangeable. That possibility should then exist as hers. Interpretation then is a legal transfer, a moment of paternal law.

So, let us ask once again. What does Adorno want? I would answer, a baby. He never had any. One has to wonder if Adorno was capable of that pure saying that Lacan always pointed to in the, ‘you are my wife, I am your husband.’ It is a saying which rests

only on one's desire, what Critchley (2005) following Wallace Steven's calls a 'supreme fiction.' It risks paternity. It inaugurates. I think he wanted that. Do we allow ourselves to wonder about his having replaced his father's name for his mother's- Wiesengrund turned W. Adorno?

What is a father, or a baby, other than a signifier, which is why we start by giving a name. Lacan commenting on the University riots of 1968, a student revolt he and Adorno were equally critical of, states, "truth is in labor in a town that is only inhabited by beings of the highest purity. This doesn't stop them from taking flight, and under the influence of a hell of a fear, when they are told that truth is like having a child" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 183). Everything else is a miscarriage of desire.

Adorno, as any other, falls prey to the uncompromising master of a hysterical nostalgia. In a moment of striking irony Adorno says, contesting the value of a poetic-theology, "if every symbol symbolizes nothing but another symbol, another conceptuality, their core remains empty" (Adorno, 1966/1973, p. 399). This is Lacan's affirmative turn. For Adorno it can only remain a frustration. Philosophy is the unrealized desire of a world impregnated with Being. Adorno's failure is the failure of she who buries her desire so the moment to realize it will forever be missed. The pregnancy fantasy, like Dora before the Sistine Madonna, is the return of the repressed in the symptomatic body impregnated with signifiers that refuse all satisfaction short of an absolute. It is the drive itself which is for Lacan the other side of the signifier.

The law of castration, the ethic underlying all analytic acts, means that one takes up these signifiers rather than abandon them for the sake of 'reality'. Philosophy, as analysis, should analyze desire, even be it a desire for a baby which does not preclude its

going ahead and having one. Quite to the contrary. If anything, psychoanalysis as the analysis of fantasy, is not an abortion. The work of analysis takes place precisely in what can only be called the pregnant moment, fecundity which is always a 'phallic forgery'. This happens just short of anything like a full term, the half-said, or, something like, the bathwater without the baby.

The analyst is an instrument of revelation, as Lacan put it. He summons. I suppose this is why Lacan likens the libido unleashed by analysis to a placenta, the lost object *par excellence*. In a way, in order to have a placenta (and so also lose it), one must risk also having a baby, which will go its own way regardless. It's the beauty of the gap between the generations and the sexes. As we can see desire is indeed quite precarious.

For quite some time it seemed natural for a world to be constituted whose correlate, beyond it, was being itself, being taken as eternal... Therein has always lain the impasse, the vacillation resulting from the cosmology that consists in the conception of a world. On the contrary, isn't there something in analytic discourse that can introduce us into the following: that every subsistence of persistence of the world as such must be abandoned? Language- the language forged by philosophical discourse- is such that I cannot but constantly slip back into this world, into this presupposition of a substance that is impregnated with the function of being. -Lacan, *Encore: Seminar XX*

Disenchantment Again and the Work of Angels

I have only had three dreams which center around an object that come under the scrutiny of my dreaming self. I would like to go so far as to say it is the closest we can come to the Thing, *das Ding*, these rare objects in dreams that force you into the sudden paradox of not knowing if what one sees is found or created. A pure signifier. Lacan will say that what designates what is most me in myself is this interior of emptiness and that I don't know if it belongs to me or to nobody. It is, for him, both overwhelmingly public and utterly private- the extimate made intimate as Rieff pointed out. And Adorno would be happy- for a second we overcome the division of labor. How nice. As I said, I am grateful for these dreams.

The vase and the letter you have already read. There was one before and there was one after. I return now to the one before, since it was this before moment that was in question with Adorno. The impossibility of that moment, the longing for openness without end, and the terror of objectified failure. In the end an eros of castration. By definition castration involves a renunciation of *jouissance*, so it is there where my question remains. Disenchantment and love.

I didn't know that this dream belonged to Adorno. It makes sense now that it of course always did. The landscape is barren, I used to say to my analyst. Who said, he would ask. Adorno, I would answer with pride. He has the full purchase on your reality, he would retort. Yes. And I would grin.

That it belonged to him isn't to say that it isn't mine, of course it is mine, I dreamt it, but there are always others. How do we use these others- reading them to the letter. My unquestioning love for Adorno. For the both of us then, the remains.

Here is the dream: I am on a panel that is judging a contest for the World Trade Center memorial about half a year after September 11th. I become furious at the entries. They all follow a similar line of thought- to contrast male aggression with feminine nature. It is a stupid dichotomy. I grow irate. What then would you propose? I am asked. It is easy to criticize. I find it. Or I made it myself. I don't know which. I remember not knowing in the dream.

It is a wall of concrete and entangled in the concrete are angel's trumpets. Twisted, bent, mutilated by the concrete encasing. Hundreds upon hundreds of them. It brings to mind the remains of the world trade center. More than that, I say to them, "nothing can be said and nothing can be heard." Nothing. It is a memorial to impossibility.

Angel's trumpets. I had to look it up. Their work in the revelations. The seven soundings. They were given their trumpets after the last seal was opened. There was silence. The silence signaled that God was moving into action. The angels were his emissaries. Their sound was his bidding. The trumpets signal judgment. With each sound of the trumpet a different woe upon humanity. Destruction and the impending birth of a new era. Life and death. Life out of death. And so the possibility of the resurrection.

St. Paul says: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:51-53). Angels,

it is said, have never experienced death. Mortals need them because we need salvation. They are the possibility of resurrection. They are also unsexed.

So what then of their impossibility, my encasing of their trumpets? No more life and no more death. No more destruction and no more creation. Nothing. What is the wish? It is a wish precisely for this nothing. Nothing said, nothing heard, nothing done, nothing new. The landscape is barren. I told you. I'm still grinning.

It is still difficult for me to understand what it means to wish for such a thing. It is not quite remembering is it, was said to me at the time. I disagreed. This is my memory. I have very little, but this is what I know.

I also know Adorno. I am close to his attachment to impossibility. Impotence becoming a virtue. The impossibility of acting, not least of all God himself. Try and make your judgments, your redemption, without the work of your angels. You need those who do not know death to do your work for you. I cannot work. Better, I will not. Refusal. No poetry after Auschwitz.

What a strange place to find home, that tortured memorial. It was a comfort. There was that feeling in the dream- this is it. No more exile. No more fatigue.

You cannot speak and you cannot hear. That was my judgment. It was leveled at everyone. It was a pronouncement to the world and it was a situation that had to be given representation. No false utopia. No maternal idolatry. No denunciation of all things male. It is a stupid dichotomy. I still agree.

But there is something stupider about a memorial to nothing said with a kind of retaliation. What kind of nothing? It is a nothingness that is given substance and is to be contrasted with the emptiness of the vase. The first is a parody of the consequences of the

void of Being. It is a silence which waits for a name but instead impatiently takes up inaction of every-kind. It is that silence in the moment before the trumpets were given to his angels in the revelations. This is false utopia.

I was the authority in this dream. The monument commanded my authority. I told you. Adorno is always right. His arguments were constructed in that way. The future anterior here in the guise of pedagogy has the force of stasis. This is not its meaning. It is a bastardization.

If there is any truth in this dream it is that the memorial is not real however much I wished it to be so. It is a signifier and in that sense is a properly human creation. It is the discourse unable to write it, impossibility, but with the demand for an essential relation beyond it. The other side of the discourse unable to write it for Lacan is that it does not cease not being written. If we can give up the demand for the essential relation, we can say non-identity without it actually having to be so. And so we say it with pathos, but still, in the face of it. Taken together, you have the impossible sexual relation and the yet the possibility of love, the impossibility of the symptom to completely vanish and yet the possibility of taking it up and using it. As we said before, we can do without the name-of-the-father on the condition that we put it to use.

“The thing involves the human factor- but this factor escapes us. In this connection the human factor will not be defined otherwise than in the way that I define the Thing just now, namely, that which in the real suffers from the signifier- man fashions this signifier and introduces it into the world in the image of the Thing whereas the problem is the Thing is characterized by the fact that it is impossible for us to imagine it. Here is the problem of sublimation” (Lacan, 1973/1981, p. 114). Sublimation, as art, as

any creation, is like the vase, created around inner emptiness, the emptiness of the Thing which cannot be written and resists imagination. This means that to attempt to give this real its place, its locus, is the orientation of a subject towards any possibility. By possibility we may begin to hear sublimation.

That wasn't how I wanted it. One can always hold on to an object. Protest. Banal melancholia. To try and understand these two dreams now: the inner emptiness, the nothing heard or said, set apart, by the letter and the memorial. These two set in tension with one another as a part of the inherent structure of the dream itself. But, between the first and the second there was already a great deal of work done. I recognized instantaneously the falsity of the letter. That letter was not my history, nor my memory. I could see the wish almost immediately. Here with this dream of the memorial, at the time, there was something so compelling about it.

So the capacity to say, even if in protest, even though it declares a kind of nothing- that is something else. Saying is of the order of a happening, "it is not a happening that over-flies, it is not a moment of knowing" (Lacan, 1975/1999, p. 38). Here the said nothingness is tied to the void created by the fallen towers. The work of angels: It is a miracle that we can say anything at all. I am trying to learn how to listen. How did Adorno put it? With a speculative ear. For my part, that is also the bearing out of disenchantment *and* the possibility of love. I misunderstood the dream at first. By the second I would no longer.

The misinterpretation takes place in looking for a third position, outside of the impossibility of man and woman, the absence of any possible sexual relation. Essentialism. The stupid dichotomy. The terrifying asymmetry points to the presence of

the void. Badiou will prohibit this third. “It engages an imaginary function” which he will call “the angel” (Badiou, 2000, p. 267). He goes on, “the discussion regarding the sex of angels is so important because its stakes are to pronounce on the [absolute] disjunction [between the sexes]. What is it, then, which makes it possible for me, here, to pronounce on the disjunction without recourse to, or without fabricating, an angel? Since the situation alone is insufficient, it requires supplementation. Not by a third structural position, but by a singular event. This event initiates the amorous procedure: we will call it the encounter (ibid., p. 267).” The encounter for Badiou is always a love that initiates a truth which is why it is synonymous for him with psychoanalysis.

That the analytic third, thirdness, or triangulation has been floating in the psychoanalytic ether for some time now, despite its present vogue, amuses me given this outright denunciation by Badiou. Beyond this one might begin to ask questions about where psychoanalysis might begin to situate itself without engaging this “imaginary function” of the angel. For Lacan, surely it is to begin with his permanent and absolute negation- there is no sexual relation. Adorno’s negativity, the impossibility of a true life in the false one, echoes as a similar kind of starting point. Surely this is true for the current work, but beyond this, is it not a starting point for any question as to where one is to go, what one is to do? It means seriously bringing to the forefront problems concerning the good life, the true life, and indeed, the ethical life. All begin in their negative possibility- they have not been realized and whether they will is seriously in jeopardy. History has been witness to this constraint and this failure.

While this may be a given for Lacanians (intrinsic to the way they read Freud), even for most critical theorists or philosophers who begin with reading Hegel in the

negative, it does not seem to be the route traveled by the psychoanalysts. Does an underlying positivism with respect to science inevitably put psychoanalysis on a different track than the one beginning to be outlined here? Is this angel the current function of any ideal of mental 'health' regardless of the way one breaks down a psyche into its various functions? Does psychoanalysis, whenever it forms an idea of its end, inevitably fall into the traps of an ideal? I wish it were not so.

Psychoanalysis starting with Freud begins with a phylogenetic perspective on the development of man's desire for love and work- to take the woman into exclusive possession and to band together in small communities with a division of labor. For Freud this is a kind of mythic moment which separates man from pure instinct and animal self-interest. Failure is the universal failure of neurosis with respect to the desires particular to man, which begins with an inhibition of satisfaction. Love and knowledge, or, love and work, are almost for Freud equal in necessity as failure. Sublimation is the most narrow and impossible of solutions, it itself coming at a great cost to the satisfaction of the drive. The prolonged period of infantile helplessness, the diphasic nature of sexuality, the strangulating effects of the family, and the subsequent personalization of disappointment in the realm of human relations coloring those relations sado-masochistically, is our lot. The words 'human condition', however cliché, come to mind. Psychoanalysis begins here and the solutions it provides, the 'cure', is to be dictated by the work of analysis alone. No positive conclusions should be sought. Theoretically psychoanalysis is descriptive not proscriptive.

Any good in an analysis then that is not the patient's own, or even further, one that does not spring directly from the passions of the symptom, is for Lacan an imaginary

function. We have psychoanalysis and we have orthopedic therapeutics. The disagreement about essentialism behind this split is so fundamental it practically seems irresolvable. For now, I would have to admit that this is painfully true, particularly to the extent that essentialism is read by Lacanians to be at the heart of the neurotic conflict with respect to mastery and the hysterical demand is always a demand for an essential relation- be it one of love, knowledge, or the place that the two intersect. If psychoanalysis takes up a position that deems this possible or even merely positive, even within its own theoretical apparatus, then it cannot submit a neurotic demand to analysis, at least not in good faith.

If Adorno was the place that I began it has taken me quite some time to understand, which is to say to overcome a blinding disappointment, that this is not the case for a great deal of the field encompassed by the words psychoanalytic. Oddly, if this was a feat in its own right, it took moving closer to Lacan, understanding his way out of this depth of negativity in a solution that didn't disintegrate into an impossibility whose flipside was always a romantic hope, to know this. This was to know what Adorno meant for me in particular so that I could situate his difference within a field of general meanings. So the strange conceit of this work is that it starts in a place whose premise is perhaps untenable for almost all but the converted for whom it was not written. Since it seeks neither to persuade nor convert in itself, I have to ask, has it been written for no one at all. Allow me perhaps to console myself by believing that at the very least in not being written for anyone it certainly doesn't ask to be sent an angel. One virtue is enough. On we go. Like Lacan then, I speak with no hope of being heard.

With an Eye for the One who is Vanishing

Beginning with Lacan is one of the hardest things to do. That his discourse even brings into question what it might truly mean to begin, which means that a whole lot of us never do, makes it all the more difficult because one starts to question themselves which is to go in the wrong direction entirely because in questioning oneself one is caught in the act of reflection that will never be an act in the proper sense of carving out a beginning, and is, in effect, just one more inhibition. In fact it may be inhibition *par excellence*. And if I'm already involving you in a dizzying set of logistics it is hopefully not for no reason, but certainly if one is Lacanian, the *not for no reason* has already grown quite suspect. With the double negation perhaps we arrive at something a little bit more than not.

So it is with Lacan that one is trapped between a something which always amounts to nothing, the object, and a nothing which nevertheless must be made something, a subject. About this, what does one say? Well, Lacan did that for the 28 years of his Seminar. And maybe then ask, what does one write? Well, Lacan surely did not do that, and I would say, neither did many of those who supposedly follow his wisdom. And if I am not to be just one more contribution to the secondary elaboration of a discourse that was never meant to do that, then I don't see anything other than the necessity that I make some extraordinary sacrifice. Those who take up the position of knowledge do so with an eye for the one who is vanishing. To reassure themselves that they are, not that, not there, with a gaze fixed on the horizon. My part, it shall be lost. It is in its way, a very feminine solution, which is a fine way to begin since the one thing I do know about Lacan is that he loved women.

Feminine Sacrifice: A child stares at the TV watching a nature show much like any other. The social behavior of a pride of lions. One scene in particular will be remembered. There is some determination at work on what would pique this child's curiosity, narrow the attentional field, and open into excitement: The father of the pride exiles himself. There can only be one and he is now too old to hold his place. From this moment on he will wander the plains in solitude. His work is done. He leaves without looking back. Sons were exiled from the pride once they reached puberty. There could only be one so they lived alone or in the company of others awaiting their chance to take over a pride. Now was their moment. The child, for a second, is allowed to wonder- How was this day chosen? By whom was it chosen? The new male enters. One by one he slaughters each of the cubs of the old rival. He announces both his arrival and dominion. Another question appears. Why? The other isn't a threat, having left willingly. Before an answer is found the females go instantly into heat. Head to neck they nuzzle. It marks a new generation.

Surely, analytically, we would begin to speculate. Primal scene. Indeed. Mothers are whores. Fathers are impotent. Children are sacrificed. Can anything else be said? Rather than this banal and easily made interpretation, hardly commensurate with the picture of a child's eyes laying claim to these images, all the keys to sexuality and its place in the subject are contained herein, not as deterministic but as a location mapped between a series of events. This is not an infantile fantasy to be overcome or dispensed with akin to some kind of an exorcism. It has something to do with logistics. In one instantaneous glance the constraints imposed upon our very being are captured in a series

of transactions. It is a moment much like any other filled with both wonder and horror. So, I would say, is the foundation of all analytic moments.

So how do we look at this scene? Analytically we have to follow a series of displacements. The intrusion of the unfolding sequence short-circuits the questions that arise. The father? The child has been killed. The dead child? The mother in heat. The primary father has been eclipsed. But wasn't it precisely his sacrifice that was necessary to secure his place, dare I say his name. At least in Oedipus something is renounced in the name of the future. Sacrifice works through a concealment that brings into play an unfolding sequence in the gap between the generations and the sexes. If sacrifice has something to do with establishing the space and time of a body it also is a story which goes awry, at least when one tries to remember it. However, in going awry it shows that something has taken place in another register. "A subject's non-identity without sacrifice would be utopian" (Adorno, 1966/1973, p. 281).

What we see is a kind of structure at work. To understand this, we have to proceed backwards like most analyses of symptoms which take place in two moments separated by a gap. This was the technical construct stemming from what Freud had already set up in his model of di-phasic sexuality and the effects of deferred-action (*nachtraglichkeit*). What is not remembered is always primary (yes also primal perhaps) in so far as it is before what would be the excitement generated in the virile identification with the ravaging father, the ravished child, and the insatiable woman. This primary moment and its secondary effects, hereby conceived as two kinds of sacrifice, sets up a disjunction in a field of absence and presence, silence and the fury of fantasy.

When Lacan returned to the question of hysteria, in particular through the Dora case, he read the case backwards to understand the function of this Father that set off the chain of events. It is this Father and the structure pertaining to him that Lacan says psychoanalysis has completely forgotten becoming absorbed in merely the secondary elaboration, the virile fantasy, the sadomasochism inherent in the mother-child scene, and the reading of sacrifice only from within that arrangement. It was evident to Lacan that this question was also the question Freud struggled with at the end of his life with the two Moses. Let's leave this for the time being. The logic has more to say about what couldn't be said when the child first stumbled upon this scene.

Moving on, a child is told the story by Hans Christian Anderson (1836/1992) of *The Little Mermaid*. She's the father's favorite. He covets her voice and so it is her voice she must lose. Better, it is without her voice that she must win the heart of a man. Sacrifice is the price of her beautiful white legs so that she can join the human world. Joining this world she has to seduce the impossible. "Pride must suffer pain" she was told by her grandmother as the condition of becoming a woman. In the end, the prince marries another woman that he misrecognizes as her. The mermaid princess is condemned to death. She cannot tell him of the pain of losing his love, nor indeed of the very mistake that he has made. Yet it is not clear that she would have told him even if she could. Given one last chance by her sisters, shorn of their beautiful hair, she can kill her prince with a magic knife and return home. She will not do it. She chooses her fate- foam on the waves and wind in his sails that carry his ship home.

Destiny hangs on the power of another. The prince of course, but even more so in the case of her father and her father's mother. They after all fated her with a life of pain

commensurate to her sexual desire. The oedipal interpretation: this is the bind of being an oedipal winner. You force the loss of what was most coveted in you. As punishment?

Perhaps. You should not have enjoyed that. Fathers should not be so seductive.

Renunciation is a moral lesson on how to live happily. The princess does not heed this lesson. 'The prince's happiness is my happiness'. She desires only through him. But a paradox emerges, has she repressed her desire such that it returns from the depths, or, has she not repressed it well enough? This cannot be resolved. Misrecognition, in the end, becomes the rule of the day. She leaves behind in her wake the enigma of woman's love.

But misrecognition is the rule of the day, winners and loser alike. Renunciation, far from being a punishment, can be seen as the attempt to find what can be had in love subject to the hazards of chance. Otherwise, it is a very boring and moralistic tale. It seems rather as if love, bound up with death at the extreme point of passage, indeed in suicide, is a confrontation with fate. Through sacrifice, life takes on, once again, the exigent character of a necessity. Life becomes, without the object, driven. I will have to insist that these stories, their constellations, expose the place of possibility within an impossibility that belongs to each of us in the impasses of an encounter between the sexes and the generations.

Tales of adolescent impetuosity surely, but love without impetuosity doesn't move. It is a question of circulation much like the oceans and winds which come to conceal the princess in order to bring her into the houses of men. The pretty white legs didn't stand a chance. Sacrifice is the price of being at the expense of having, certainly having her prince in a marriage sanctioned by a king and queen. Has not our mermaid

princess renounced every phallic value of having in order to gain what would truly be her place as a woman?

There is a circulation at work that defines both a subjectivizing movement and the play of femininity through sacrifice. How else should she desire? The little mermaid is one of those icons of femininity that no doubt feminists would rally against. A male fantasy? Why not. But by what limits does femininity work, and work against, if we call for this fantasies structural erasure, removal, or inauthentication? Here, the limits of both the merman kingdom and the human world are overturned in act which rubs up against both through silence, deafness, and stupidity. Through these, the princess' beauty is made to appear in all its brilliance. This is a tale, one might conclude, of the errant man who fails to be captivated by such beauty. His life becomes mere folly. This is inverse tale of the Siren's song. The mermaid cannot sing after-all. Such is her sacrifice and her wager.

There are always two women in these stories, the real love and her double. Life for this man is always more comfortable with the double. In fact, that life is secured by the sacrifice of the other. But this, as a fact about men, is of little consequence. That choice was necessary for her to make her final move in the game. If earlier we moved from sacrifice to virility, here we make the reverse move, from virility to sacrifice. This takes us into another register. Lacan, as we said, claimed that he speaks with no hope of being heard. Hearing with no hope of speaking somehow also put things back into circulation. I think the real threat would have come if this mermaid princess had succeeded in her masquerade as a human- her pretty white legs the sought after phallic substitute.

Let's move to another scene. A mother's sacrifice. In the movie *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) a woman bears a child that she knows with certainty will inherit from her a degenerative disease that causes blindness. In order to save this child's eyesight before her own is irreparably lost she must work to save money for his corrective surgery. She cannot buy him anything and he is deprived of all excessive material objects. The child is frustrated to which she just replies, "I'm not that kind of mother." She says that she sends the money back to a fictive father. The drama: the American couple they rent their house from are obsessed with the accumulation of goods. The husband spends all of his inheritance and is convinced that having nothing to give means he will lose his wife. She, fatally, discloses her secret to him one evening in an attempted act of compassionate understanding, the only one thus far in this movie. She betrays her desire to which she was so faithful. He steals her money. When she comes for it, he says to her that she must kill him if she wants it back for he's too ashamed to live and too cowardly to kill himself. And so she does.

She is sentenced to death by hanging, accused not only of murder, but also of seducing the American man. She continues to conceal the truth so the money is safe. The final scene: at her death sentence she screams and collapses, yelling that she cannot breathe under the mandatory hood. It is for her own good, she is told. Given that she is blind, why must she be hooded? They agree to remove it. Face bare to the audience, noose around her neck, and yet, voice unimpeded, she sings calmly, "this isn't the last song" and is hanged. Her son gets his operation.

This story begins with what is always the accusatory sin of a mother, her narcissistic desire for a child, perhaps in place of the penis she does not have. The desire

is condemned excessive. “If you knew he would be blind why did you have a child?” to which she can only reply, “I wanted to hold a little baby.” On the other side of the polarity- her deprivation of that child. “You give me nothing.” If we start here, we end in what we might assume to be the metonymic displacements of this ordinary crime- the mother as a liar, a whore, a cheat, a thief, a monster, and a murderer. ‘Your money or your life,’ echoes in the background as that perennial forced choice. Pick one and lose them both. The renunciation of choice lived to the very extreme is a dreamed of necessity- that of maternal sacrifice. Here the movement in the drama is made possible only through her willful acts of concealment. Whose blindness? Whose truth? And finally, whose crime? Love is to give what one does not have. Her mistake was to forget momentarily that another cannot be compensated. The act of compassion always misses the subject. The significance of the last song which isn’t the last song is that she makes her exit before the story ends, so that it can continue.

Continuing is what is crucial in each of these stories. It is rather well worn knowledge that exchange, debt, renunciation, guilt, form an Oedipal constellation around desire and prohibition. This is after all a story about blindness. But often, at least clinically, theoretically, and most of all, phantasmatically, we dream of alleviation from the entire set. What are we to be alleviated from? The conflict between generations? The excess of a woman’s sexuality? The feminine choice of concealing desire in the appearance of an almost purified object? A maternal sacrifice on the verge of the criminal?

Freud always spoke of an original terror of passivity. In every solution within these stories there is a moment where the long standing opposition between passivity and activity finds its mate in and through a sacrificial act. That act does not cover over that

opposition but finally makes it obvious, perhaps thereby prompting some kind of a solution. The solution can be read moralistically and condemned. It is a condemnation, in particular, leveled at women and children. There is also here the curious correspondence between this moralism and the virile identification. Sacrifice points to another logic than this one and rather than taking up the virile position, reads backwards from it.

I would at least expect that analysts would begin to pick up from this very point and point not to alleviation, condemnation, or indeed identification (which in this case is nothing but imagined virility), but something else. This something else consists of what Freud tried to construct with his notion of the ‘bedrock of castration’ and its relationship to sublimation. Both were our lot as humans- men and women. An analyst is consulted for a long sought after alleviation like the priests and physicians before him and what he offers them is this.

Something like a masquerade becomes central in this task much like in each of these stories- whatever response is given is done so in order to conceal the truth until the right moment. Truth is close to semblance as we saw with Adorno, not its enemy. Fiction, as mythology, takes on another value, one not readily available in the world view of positive science or liberal morality. There, this masquerade, is nothing but false pretence. After all, women are cheats, fakes, liars, and all the rest of whatever it is that you might include in the alphabet of female vices. But here, their story is one, not of ending, but of continuing, precisely by virtue of their desire which simultaneously reveals and conceals in its very movement.

Closer to the logic of sacrifice then is the way Serge Leclair reads Freud- this “unconscious desire, formalized.... [in a] phantasm, is not only an incestuous desire to

possess the mother, body, or breast and to take delicious pleasure in it, as suggested by the oral image... but, properly speaking, the desire to pluck (*pflucken*), to tear away (*entreissen*), to reveal (*enthullen*), which is to say, desire for a desire reduced to its essential dimension, *for a movement that goes beyond, a desire freed from the fascination of the object*" (Leclaire, 1968/1998, p. 33). The wish here is always a wish to transgress, as a going beyond a limit, which was precisely what Freud did in writing the *Traumdeutung*. It means that one must locate a limit through sacrifice of some object that allows one to step into a beyond. For Leclaire this is everywhere in Freud's imagery- tearing apart the book, ripping the flowers from her hands, opening the eyes, looking behind.

One more story. Anna O., the first analysand, became fond of a parable she found written by a woman in her family history, in particular in her maternal line:

During a storm, a nest of young birds was at risk from flooding. Papa bird brought his little ones to safety, one by one. While flying above the teeming flood with the first of his young, carefully held in his claws, he asked, "look at the amount of trouble I am going through in order to save you; will you do the same for me when I am old and weak?" –"Of course I will," the first replied. At which the father promptly dropped him in the water, with the words, "one should not save a liar." The same went for number two. When asking the question of the third and last one, he received the following answer: "My beloved father, I cannot promise you that; but I do promise that I will save my own little ones." The papa bird saved this young one (Verhaegue, 1999, p. 170).

Anna O who had nursed her father for years found in this parable a father who could save his brood precisely only in not needing to be saved himself. Furthermore, the *declaration* of sacrifice makes you a liar. It is rather the failure of sacrifice. Anna O's first analyst, Breuer, like the prince of the mermaid princess, withdrew from the scene in the face of her. He left her to Freud and went to Italy with his wife. The price he paid was that he didn't discover the Oedipus complex. Freud's price? He was left with a beleaguering

question as to what it is that a woman wants and his ever present frustration that they keep themselves shrouded, as he says in *The Three Essays*, in impenetrable secrecy.

This story echoes Anna O's fate. Her desire for a 'true' sacrifice was only realized in reality by the supposed sacrifice of any and all love objects. One realizes she was holding onto something. In one of the last poems she laments that 'love had passed her by' and yet she was known to be voraciously cruel to men. The misfortune here is that the sacrifice did not take place as an unconscious transformation of her relation to the object- so it was made real. In her repeated attempts of analysis, through her stories, her works, her poems, one can see the final but difficult step clearly within sight. But it was too much for Anna.

Let me make a leap to antiquity in one last detour. This exit-strategy of concealment and disappearance is linked to stories involving feminine sacrifice. Tragedy, at least in its classical dimension, has demonstrated this tie called to attention by the classicist Nicole Loraux (1991) in *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*. The deaths of women in Greek tragedy follow a precise logic- they are only staged in certain ways and very particular words are used.

Firstly, women are hanged whereas men die by the sword. In this hanging is an idea of movement as a combination of elevation, flight, rising up, as well as, throwing oneself down, falling into the depths: "the same word, *aiero*, which means elevation and suspension, applies to these two flights in opposite directions, upwards and downwards, as though height has its own depth: as though the place below, whether that be the ground or the world under that, could be reached only by first rising up" (Loraux, 1991, p. 18). For Loraux, a woman's death must always signify movement, but the more feminine the

figure the more the emphasis on flight, reaching its pinnacle in the flight of a bird which makes its escape.

Silence is another adornment of women in tragedy, the maintenance of silence under threat, accusation, and, censure. This is linked to the sight on the body of death chosen for women. Through hanging or otherwise, it is always the throat. Women tear at their throats in moments of extreme grief. The throat is connected to both the voice and the breath:

In the gynecological thinking of the Greeks, one is caught between two mouths, two necks, where vagaries of the womb suddenly choke the voice in a woman's throat, and where many a young girl old enough to be a nymph hangs herself to escape the threat of the terrifying suffocation inside her body. Anyone at all familiar with Freud's work will remember Dora, the cough that was one of her symptoms, and the remarks of Freud on this "displacement from the lower to the upper part of the body" which invade the throat because "that part of the body had to a high degree retained its significance as an erogenous zone in the young girl" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

Loraux cautions this gynecological psychoanalytic baggage which has no place in the world of tragedy which remains silent on such issues. The only place given its allocation is death itself. We might also remember that Freud's oral-erotic interpretation linked Dora's symptom via his construction that she imagined her Father undergoing fellatio as the method of choice for a man without means. Many have pointed out this strange error for cunnilingus is clearly the sexual method for impotent men. That slip brings into the foreground the silenced figure of Frau K whose adorable little white body captivated Dora as the mystery of femininity.

Feminine death in tragedy must occur through asphyxiation, the sacrifice of virgins whose throats are sliced, all unseen on stage, leaving behind an eerie silence.

Loraux concludes that a woman's tragic death is the only thing that belongs to her. There

are no words in a language of male renown to denote the glory and nobility of a woman's death and her sacrifice as a wife, mother, or daughter. While men's deaths go down in the history books under a banner of glory, a woman's remains silent. Always taking place off stage, out of sight, through secrecy and concealment, also means that someone must announce it. It forces itself to be spoken and usually by the chorus. What is spoken of is her free will, which, as a submission to death must also paradoxically include a place for refusal.

This refusal shrouds the tragic killing of a woman- through secrecy, concealment, or, even merely the refusal to be treated as an inert body. They struggle at the very last moment, they even complain as in Antigone's final lament in the tomb which perplexed and annoyed so many. Couldn't she have remained steadfast in her will? Even the initial refusal must be refused for a moment. This forces the act to be an act of transgression. There must be a fall *and* a flight. Through this play of affirmation and negation, their death is the counterpart to an exalted, but other worldly freedom and equanimity.

Transgression is possible only in the face of an impossibility that holds the place of a limit: "Whatever freedom the tragic discourse of the Greeks offered to women, it did not allow them ultimately to transgress the frontier that divided and opposed the sexes" (ibid., p. 78). Liberty, and the powerful place held within it by constraint, is played out in the field of communal life only there where all paths lead to sacrificial death. The virgins, the hanging which evokes falling and flying up, the sacrifice of the mermaids pretty white legs, the monstrous vision of a mother, all point to the sacrifice of a kind of phallic value in order to establish the true "frontier that divides and opposes the sexes". The temptation of this sacrifice to bleed into a monstrous fascination with what Lacan called,

“the dark God,” evident in the ideological war games of the hysteric (e.g. Anna O.) is the failure of this sacrifice and the difficulty of giving up this direct tie to the phallus.

When it is finally held at bay and resisted in these stories, it is often through giving itself over to a silence which imposes the necessity of speech. Silence animates a faith that there is a limit which may shelter a beyond where a viable “temperate relation of one sex to the other” exists as a “desire to obtain absolute difference” (Lacan, 1973/1981, p. 276). This should be an opening onto the field of love, “outside the limits of the law, where alone it may live” (ibid). This abides by a certain logic: “that which you win you instantly lose” (Loraux, 1991, p. 45). We have to wonder, or at least hope, that the reverse may also be possible. Such would be the ‘delusional’ faith of feminine sacrifice.

Femininity, passivity, masochism, and sacrifice have formed a much disputed series. I’m willing for the time to accept these signifiers until a new one comes on the scene that isn’t merely a reversal in the direction of virility. If one wants to argue that these only come into play as the result of a phallo-centric fantasy, perhaps that argument participates in just such a fantasy itself- enforced equality. The limit for the Greek tragedians after all is not equality but the absolute difference between the sexes. The laws of one’s sex cannot be escaped. Only in maintaining that gap, in maintaining the negativity of the absolute difference (Lacan’s *‘il n’y a pas de rapport sexuel’*) can one even begin to conceive of freedom, justice, or liberty. In a world where women die monotonously by the throat and men’s whole bodies are subject to penetration by swords, what becomes clear is that what is safe is this limit. For the moment, that limit is

established only in these death scenes which reconcile for a moment the disjunction in obviating it.

The irreducible reality of the anatomical distinction between the sexes which gave us this horrid constellation of terms in the first place, is the only saving grace. But that grace only comes through a sacrifice whose specter, for the time, is death itself. There are three questions, we are told by Freud, that a child cannot master- death, the vaginal orifice, and the inseminating role of semen. Sacrifice becomes the act through which that boundary is made to appear in a constellation of women, fathers, and the parameters of living and dying.

Sacrifice is surely a symptom. Clinically we know all too well the field of renunciation, the position whereby nothing can be had or gained or won, which protects the object of one's tenderness through guilt and punishment of oneself. On the other hand there is the figure of omnipotence which rejects this pathological object not so much through sacrifice but murder. This murder has to be carried out again and again and again, *ad infinitum*. The misfortune is that this act never really holds a limit but gives one over to an infinite repetition as the terrible price of the pleasure principle. The logic of perversion can only be distinguished from neurosis by this hallmark repetition with oneself in the place of the Law. The neurotic merely repeats his subjection and dreams of becoming this perverse figure. Ravaging fathers and ravished children. They both pay a price. In the true act, which is only ever a product of the unconscious, the other register is made to appear often in the form of the Law.

Sacrifice then, at least in the way I am trying to render it here, not only bypasses the temptations of cowardice or perversion, but subverts them *in abiding by their very*

logic. One follows one's perversion as in analysis, one traces out unconscious desire. It is not a sacrifice that one must incarnate, as indeed it is for our abject figure, nor an acting out, but rather, here, in this way, it is a sacrifice transformed into a fidelity to the unconscious, a fidelity to desire. Something veiled, inherent to desire, is followed by analytic discourse. It takes on the varying characters of a kind of sacrifice- of all other rules of discourse, of the human relation, of cherished illusions, of one's virility, of money, etc. - as the only attempted path that leads to the new. Is this not how every story thus far has been structured?

The degree of charity we might bestow upon our neurotic and perverse brethren is that they are, in their symptoms, the failed attempt to realize this meaning of sacrifice. Instead they bleed into a material one and suffer (or enjoy as the case may be) as in the case of Anna O. If anything, the lot of humanity distributed between these poles, perversion-neurosis, one the negative of the other, was what Freud (1905) was setting up as the after-math of infantile sexuality in the *Three Essays*. Sexuality was to be reconciled by all, each in their own fashion, each by their very own symptom. One cannot do away with it. Lacan, like Adorno, with a faith in the work of a certain kind of negativity, will show no recourse to utopian ideals, sentimentality, or normative morality.

The task for Freud was always to do something then with what was given, particularly as an act of prolonging or continuing. Fixations, inhibition, stasis, like repetition, are the true enemies to be overcome. Nothing more. All life was just a detour on the way to death for Freud giving detour a meaning close to a kind of prolongation of life against death. The specter of death raises its head at the moment when the unconscious fails to be put to work. To put the unconscious to work is the pursuit of

transgression as the pursuit of unconscious desire. Defense is a defense against this unconscious act. Sacrifice, masochism, submission, passivity, are a form of refusal and are, as symptoms, a certain kind of putting to work of the unconscious. I don't really see another way around it, or rather, a way around it is not what is at stake. Sublimation is closer to what is at stake for Freud as its fragility and near impossibility, outlined every time he comes close to defining it, means it is a real wager. That it risks everything.

Why would we want to do anything else? The good marriage or success at work cannot form any part of this solution unless these acts somehow involve a similar wager- in particular one in which nothing at all is expected in return. The quiet self-delegated exile of a father, the mute princess' suicide in the name of love, the silence of a mother's sacrifice, and, all of those women hanged. In these acts we can read the act which sets up the limit and the space opened up by that limit having something to do with a turn in the relations between the generations and sexes. Each story culminates in a moment which refuses historical interpretation, sense, or meaning making. The moment of continuing, the moment that demands speech, is always one that will refuse the former for introducing a form of stasis. What is precisely delimited in these stories creates the possibility of the new which exists outside of historical truth or sense. It *ex-sists*, or, as Lacan terms it, is *ab-sense*.

Present in these stories are the potential displacements in the direction of violence and atrophy- the specter of death as stasis. Ideally the overcoming of this could be found in the exits hysterics make from the transference neuroses of their analyses.

Unfortunately this has more often not been the case. Anna O never got married nor seemed to have a sexual relation and spent her time trying to liberate prostitutes

potentially into her very same predicament, Dora returned to an identification with her mother as victim, and the female homosexual tried to commit suicide. But perhaps we have gotten a bit farther over 100 years hence. It is in hope of this that I take up again Lacan.

Any Thing for La Con

The idea of an all loving father. Then his castration. Here we enter the domain of knowledge which, as Lacan says, betrays an abyss. This father is the object of the hysteric's ideological war- the truth, which is always that, like her, the master is castrated. With her symptom she produces the analyst who has to learn that he can only respond to her suffering with words which take themselves as nothing more than that in confrontation with this '*jouissance* of the wound'. One might call this her love, her masochism, her failure. Like the fascinated child, the mute princess, and the criminal mother, the lesson is such that what you win by way of knowledge you instantly lose. She will retain herself as a question whose essence is one of refusal. So the analyst offers themselves to this. "It's as identical with the *object a*, that is to say with what presents itself for the subject as the cause of desire, that the psychoanalyst offers himself as the aim for this insane operation, in so far as it sets out on the trace of the desire to know" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 139). The *object a* is the pivot of analysis, it is what initiates the subversion, for Lacan, of what he calls the feeding Other to the sexual Other, from the autoerotic to the genital, from the masochistic subject to the castrated one, from the discourse of the hysteric to that of the analyst. It must meet silence with silence, and yet, nothing is to be refused in this discourse, not least of all her violent declarations of love.

Which is also to say that in order not to refuse, one must have nothing to do with knowledge. It is always to the disjunction between knowledge and truth that she aims, and this is, in her way, to aim for the law. We saw this in all those stories of feminine sacrifice, what the Greek tragedians understood as the law of one's sex. "The subject posits himself as sexual when truth shows its impotence when knowledge fails" (Lacan, 1967, Lecture XV, p. 13). Once again, Dora's father's death which led her to the big book on sexuality. This is the limit that analysis runs up against and upholds simultaneously.

That knowledge always fails with respect to sex we have known from the moment Freud posited the sexual child about whom we had done our best to know nothing for centuries. And yet, to know of this sexuality is also to know that knowledge is impotent with respect to it and that infantile fantasies abound in this gap. Castration is the *felt* impossible relation between the sexes and a language which is always incommensurate. Marriage, says Lacan, is at the center of the neurotic discontent of civilization because there is no knowledge, there is no material ground, which can suture the relation between the sexes. The discontent of marriage is the predicament, even the tragedy, of the laws of unconscious desire.

Here is the place where Adorno and Lacan's anti-essentialism meets. The symbolic step for Lacan, what he calls the 'you are my wife, I am your master', is not an easy one. For Adorno, it was impossible. Though they are mere words, the maintenance of those words is not one that is easy for the neurotic. These words appeal for Lacan to the Other in the other, the place where one would like for a desire beyond conscious

response to provide its own response. It addresses the place where knowledge fails, it is a call to the Other that situates the limits of love and knowledge.

The hysteric arrives on the scene to represent a discontent with this discontent- marriage and family- at times as a demand for something beyond its failure, at other times, perhaps more analytic, that one observe the law of this impasse as the condition for any overcoming. This is how her discourse locates that of the analyst.

Under this injunction ethics coincides with epistemology. Epistemology is the counterpart question of any ethics of psychoanalysis. Their coincidence is perhaps in their absolute divergence. Yet their coincidence speaks to the important question of the limits of psychoanalysis. That today we are faced with the most spectacular contradictions concerning the epistemological basis of psychoanalysis threatens the ethical foundation of our work. It displaces the question of ethics and replaces it with a question of mastery.

Lacan said in his Non-Dupes seminar, “one has to stop, one asks for nothing but that.” To escape Hegel’s bad infinity was the measure of success for Adorno. Within that economy there is no limit- affirmation and negation certainly didn’t provide that opening and rather found their way towards absolutism or impotent oscillation. Lacan describes this problem with respect to Freud (who was not short on problems particularly with what Lacan called his tart of a wife). Freud’s problem for Lacan was not scientific validity but another more problematic- hermeneutics, endless interpretation, endless slippage. Interminable analysis. Lacan accepted the fact of science, but hermeneutic slippage became in psychoanalysis the counterpart activity to a positivism which desperately began searching for validity. In either case, looking for a way not to slip. With Freud

slipping, rather than trying to get around it, was the solution. In fact, the analyst cultivates slipping more and more easily- the unconscious as his instrument.

The obsessional's dream- heaping wreckage upon wreckage to justify the avoidance of a catastrophe that is projected into an unknown future- is the avoidance for Lacan of this unconscious and its desire. He will not be a dupe. He turns to a compulsive activity. It is this form of activity which seems to absorb the current analytic scene. Like in all compulsions there is a little nagging enjoyment that remains despite all attempts at neutralization. No matter how fast or how condensed the rat man tried to render his prayers, something kept slipping in. He tried to invent a new one to replace all the others- *Gisamen*- which was the ultimate betrayal and gave Freud the key to his desire. Remember how he had tried to hide her name up until this moment!

It is this threat of enjoyment (*samen*) that has the potential to lapse into a hysteria for the purposes of analysis. We should be grateful for that. Enjoyment, because it is in the path of truth, can puncture a hole in knowledge and put an end to this ritualized destruction. Every one of those women sacrificed embraced this trace of enjoyment for which they were secondarily punished and denounced by a world that finds such a thing the problem to be overcome.

We can see the failure of this act- call it an act of sacrifice, an act of truth, of desire- in our current theories. I might rather crudely say it is a scene of moral cowardice, Lacan's rather dismissive definition of depression. Perhaps the psychoanalysts are depressed. Relational psychoanalysts make a virtue of intuition without being able to establish any criteria by which their theories would hold up against the charge of mysticism leaving them without a concept of an analytic act. In the end the analyst

always seems to know best, and intuition is given objectivity with a proliferation of terms- 'inter-subjective knowing', 'inter-penetration', 'the analytic third', and so on and so forth. They are still mourning for Mitchell.

In fact, the question of mourning becomes central for Lacan in reinterpreting the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. If the child has to reconcile himself with a narcissistic investment in his own body, auto-erotism, against a desire bound-up in the familial complex, then a work of mourning must take place. In the case of the boy, for example, to be the object of his mother's desire leaves him vulnerable to the threat of his father, to be the object of his father's desire leaves him likewise castrated since he is in the feminine position. To be the object of desire, the apple of your parent's eye, is precisely the problem. Thus for Lacan narcissism and Oedipal desire are mourned in mourning both the phallic 'whole' body and being the phallic object for the Other. One cannot have or be the phallus. The phallus is a fraud which forces us to reconcile ourselves with castration. Only then can we follow our desire. This is how Lacan reads the 'bedrock of castration'- impossibility and limit. 'Castration, I say it is real', says Lacan.

In his seminar *Desire and its Interpretation*, Lacan (1958) returns to *Hamlet* to understand these Oedipal dynamics. Hamlet cannot act and the entire play is a play of procrastination and impatience leading up to the moment when Hamlet can accept his castration in the confrontation with mortality and the limits of love and knowledge- most notably in the scene in the graveyard before he discovers the death of Ophelia. Jean-Michel Rabaté (2001) points out that Ophelia is nothing other than O-phallus and that

Hamlet proceeds to cry out that he be given his desire back only when he confronts mourning by losing her. Conscience does make cowards of us all.

To return then to the current scene- this problem extends to the ego-psychologists whose knowledge, while seemingly closed, knew no limits to its own power to ascertain the truth. The 'no' always means 'yes'. Being barred from the unconscious didn't throw into question the knowledge of the analyst. The last vestige of this dream was tied to the dream of a scientific foundation, now extending as far as images of the brain to validate the action of interpretation. I know that they palpably feel themselves on the demise. Between one and the other extreme, ego-psychology and the relational agenda, one moves between a position, open and limited, to one closed and limitless. Again, for Lacan the question was, can we find or evoke an actual limit. These psychoanalytic positions seem to refuse to confront the fact of castration.

With Lacan, to locate a limit is psychoanalysis at its best. The analytic discourse carries within it, this limit, its own. Psychoanalysis is the discipline that takes up the consequences of castration. The relativism that analysis introduces hinges upon the analysis of transference love, the demand for the subject of knowledge which opens onto another field, that of the unconscious. In understanding that there is no subject of knowledge, it perhaps posits the first real limit, one whose consequence is such that it opens the door to the unconscious as a knowledge distinct from the subject, a knowledge that the subject precisely, does not know.

Lacan traces this to Freud (1900) who, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, says that one can locate an end to interpretation particularly when the desire to master the dream, to know it in full, in effect, dies out. Does the dream create this limit or is the limit one

which allows us to truly get inside the dream? This is perhaps unanswerable. But what we do know is that the bedrock of the unconscious is castration. Once referred to by Freud as the *omphalos* of the dream, it evokes the cut.

With every analysis, every patient, the limits of the analyst's knowledge will be pushed. This means he steps out of the way as best he can. In this way the analyst does not push towards knowledge, but rather remains silent in a manner that forces something to be said that evokes a real limit. Again the logic is that of feminine sacrifice.

Knowledge is thus, as we have said time and time again, not the aim of a psychoanalysis, it is what is acted upon. This can be heard right back to the very beginning when Freud declared that if every analysis does not teach the analyst something new, then it was not an analysis. Every patient puts the knowledge of the analyst in jeopardy which is why he must be well with his castration. To accept this is to accept the precariousness of knowledge which may threaten any longing for a community of an ever thickening knowledge base. The analyst may have to remain a terrifically lonely being.

For Lacan, because of this there was nothing stupider than inhibition, the funny thing being that what is stupider than inhibition is the analyst's discourse. When one thinks of inhibition, of which we are all perhaps too ashamed to admit that we are up to our necks in it, it is only the analytic discourse that provides the way through. If what we have understood to be the radical character of semblance, the fall of knowledge brought about by analysis, what dawns on us analyzed elect is supposedly the character of the signifier. Inhibition is grounded in absolutely nothing but another signifier. There is nothing real in inhibition, just as there is no material object of it. The subject takes a leap that was always everywhere possible. Only a short shift in one's subjective position is

needed to overcome stasis. Such is the understanding of fantasy for Lacan as tied to an object which is no-where. This does not mean that there is no object- but it is a certain type of object- Lacan's *object a*, that must lose its privileged supports. This is the object upon whom the work of mourning is directed by the Oedipus complex. It is that object of Adorno's fascination, it is the object as the paralysis of fascination *par excellence*.

The hysterical refusal of disappointment, as was the situation with Adorno and myself, led to the stasis of an identification. This identification was unraveled as a fascination for an object whose quality as nothing was none-the-less given consistency. To cut out an opening from within this, to bring into question limits, in particular those of knowledge and love, is the beginning of an analysis. Lacan said that in analysis one person believes that something is impossible and it can never be the analyst. If the analyst refuses something, it is most likely the anxiety which the analysand demands of him as a way of avoiding castration. Like the demand for consistency, the analysand is rather brought in the direction of that which threatens it. This is always a logical move as "logic is defined in the field where the subject supposed to know is nothing" (Lacan, 1968, Lecture X, p.15). The analysand is progressively brought in this direction, which is for him, Oedipal in nature.

Logic for Lacan is always to see this Oedipal in the pre-oedipal. It is for him, always there. One waits. If that becomes too tedious, one provokes a cut and waits for the next session to see if there is any change. His to my mind rather refined sense of ethics allows him to make such seemingly belligerent moves. But they are moves always logical and ethical because of this tactic of going towards the place where the object is brought to nothing, the path of the transference to the analyst.

The logical and ethical Lacan is hardly the Lacan everyone thinks of. I think it was the Lacan he insisted on every time he proclaims his discourse to be aimed solely at psychoanalysts. Every seminar, once, twice, every session even, he says again and again- 'I am speaking to the psychoanalysts, they understand me, the rest of you, I cannot be held accountable. I am only a psychoanalyst, everything I know comes from there.'

Unconscious fantasy manifestly is always a stated impossibility that harbors its opposite. The analyst's faith in the unconscious is situated *as the direct inversion of this principle*. By virtue of this he slips into the place of truth. Further, the analyst cannot throw impossibility into the face of his analysands; they have to come to it themselves precisely in a putting to work of their unconscious. In any case, what is universal for Lacan (which would be a law or a limit) is discovered by psychoanalysis to be attached to what is the most particular- unconscious desire. We have little else that is truly ours.

Any subversion of knowledge then does not come about through the power of a mere declaration and never, ever, one coming from the side of the analyst. Can you imagine- "I am nothing"- he says to his analysands. He might as well say that he is "everything". I think many of them do. Both at once even, to make up for the mistake of the other- "You think I'm treating you like your Father did," or "perhaps you are defending against feeling close, angry, excited, whatever you like, fill in the blank,"; read here: "stop acting like that, feel some other way than what you are at present, and by the way, I'm not your father." Did the analyst forget how much the hysteric loves her father and what an extreme rebuff such a comment would be? The mistake of these kinds of interpretations, most of all about the transference, lies in the forcing in the position of knowledge.

So while Lacan is indeed quite belligerent, he is nevertheless, prudent. These two with respect to the unconscious are not necessarily antithetical. Josef Pieper quoting Aquinas (to go back to someone who knew how to work with the virtues of the Greeks) in his book *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, says of prudence, “the prime thing is that this knowledge of reality must be transformed into the prudent decision which takes effect directly in its execution... hence the difference between knowledge viewed as moral science, including ‘casuistic’ moral science, and knowledge as viewed by prudence” (Pieper, 1966, p. 12). What is important is the act that transforms, and knowledge as understood thus, is not that.

What grows deadly for psychoanalysis then is the hoard of analysts who insist that they know. The ethics of psychoanalysis as it is rendered here would mean to constantly distinguish oneself from this. For Adorno, this was the maintenance of dialectical strife, to preserve the utmost tension. The action of the analyst must reside within this not forcing too much such so that we do not lapse into dogmatism, lapse into the demand for realization- what proceeds as a discharge of tension. This is Lacan’s understanding of the particularity of the psychoanalytic act that “issues imperatives, makes resolutions and decisions, however, fixes his attention precisely upon what has ‘not yet’ been realized, what is still to be realized” (Pieper, 1966, p. 17). Lacan was never shy of the imperative tone, particularly if he felt it was just one among many tactics that aims for what is new.

Let’s watch his logic once again: Lacan (1968) remarks in his seminar, *The Psychoanalytic Act*, that there has been an incredible contradiction in psychoanalytic literature which assumes the reflex arc to be at the origin of action, even the ground of

thinking, whereas it is at its core a passivity of the subject and in contradiction to any idea of a psychoanalytic act. Activity, as it is modeled here in terms of a reflex arc or a discharge of tension, is nothing other than a “consequence, indeed a flight, following on a more or less intolerable sensation” (Lacan, 1968, p. 13). If we are able to pass through a certain threshold, to put ourselves beyond the law, well, that would constitute an act.

If this smacks of the idea of frustration tolerance that is because it does, but by raising the bar to show that one must push oneself to the borders of the self in an act that doesn't mean one does what is right in the world, but perhaps what seems even to be wrong by the world, is to raise, as Lacan says, a much more profound questioning and concept of action.

This is why the crisis of legitimacy that psychoanalysis is encountering is a legitimate crisis. It is the necessity of situating the place of the psychoanalytic act. We should always be facing a crisis of legitimacy- a truth Freud must have implicitly understood in being wary of any immediate acceptance. Resistance is a virtue. This has extreme consequences for psychoanalysis as a theoretical body and a practice. Serge Leclaire in the chapter, *On the Ear With Which One Ought to Listen*, asks, “how can one conceive a theory of psychoanalysis that does not annul, in the very fact of its articulation, the fundamental possibility of its practice?” (Leclaire, 1968/1998, p. 15).

Using Aristotle, Lacan used the notion of the golden middle term that unites two opposites. This is what psychoanalysis aims at and is in fact always in fact a predicate. It is akin to the *object a* attached to the person of the analyst in the regression of the treatment. It is not something that enters but something that falls out when the subject properly speaking locates himself:

What is at stake is what I called the *object a* which is for us the true middle term that is proposed... of a more incomparable seriousness by being the effect of the discourse of the psychoanalyst and not by being on the other hand... what the psychoanalyst becomes. It is what ought to be the outcome of the psychoanalyzing operation, what liberates in it something of a fundamental truth. The end of analysis, namely, the subject being unequal to any possible subjectification of sexual reality... in other words the elimination from the map of this function of the subject supposed to know (Lacan, 1968, Lecture IX, p. 9-11)

While this idea that the elimination of the *object a* gives a subject back his desire which was situated *there* where it was, is old Lacanian hat (or Freudian as the case may be), what is often missed is the special character of the analytic act therein.

It begins with an act of faith that is affirmed by putting one's faith in what is put into question. Knowledge is invested in the analyst, just as the analyst invests in the patient's transference, and both are brought seriously into question. Here, like the interpretation of dreams, the work folds in on itself- it invests itself in what will come under question, indeed under attack even. This is also the case with the symptom. We have faith that out of it a discourse will be created, a discourse which is its very unraveling. This strange act of faith that functions as a vanishing point is the only act that causes the subject to appear. Just as logic arises the minute the function of the supposed subject of knowledge is put out of action, the analyst's work is engaged in a kind of self-divestiture. There is no Other of the Other, no true of the true, and so no transference of the transference. In other words, there is no meta-position for the analyst. There is only a logic which shows how to aim for this middle term of the *object a*.

Given this, I am a bit dissatisfied with psychoanalysis of the transference in contemporary theory reduced to transference interpreting away of the transference, or a propping up of transference interpretation as the heights of analytic work. Transference, says Lacan, *is an effect* of the kind of speech psychoanalysis demands, *not its cause*.

Finding causal explanation in a theory of the transference would mean that contemporary psychoanalysis cannot spell out with any rigor the place of truth since it sutures the aporia of transference to certainty about an illusion. This is an illusion which is sustained by an object whose presence is evidence of a failure to reconcile oneself with the fact of castration. Lacan argues, in *The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power*, that:

To be the phallus. Isn't that the final identification with the signifier of desire? That doesn't seem self-evident in the case of a woman, and there are those among us who prefer to have nothing further to do with this obscure discourse. Are we going to have to spell out the role of the signifier only to find ourselves saddled with the castration complex and- God spare us!- penis envy, when Freud, having come to this crossing, no longer knew which way to turn, perceiving only the desert of analysis beyond it? Yes, but he led them to that crossing, and the place was less infested than transference neurosis, which reduced you to chasing the patient away, begging him to go slowly so as to take his flies with him (Lacan, 2006, p. 251).

So the question of transference is such its use is that it leads to the crossing of the castration complex. To the bedrock of the unconscious. He says, 'it takes courage.' If the final signifier of desire is the phallus and the phallus is an illusion, it acts like a ghost whose haunting is the motor of transference. For Lacan, to cross the castration complex is much less infested than the neurosis that can be wrought with transference and the demand for the phallus.

And "readiness is all" in psychoanalysis, quoting *Hamlet*. In Lacan's winding discourse he tried to provoke this kind of readiness in his audience who seemed either up to the task, or left decrying that the man wasn't understandable, too intellectual. But this pit of transference neurosis, or the desert of castration, is hardly as he has conceived of it an intellectual enterprise. I think that is better said of the other forms of contemporary psychoanalytic discourse. In any case, as thousands began to crowd into his seminars he

proposed that as much as he disliked it, it proved that what he was doing was close to what he was trying to talk about, a teaching that is psychoanalytic in functioning like an act. They were coming because they heard that something was happening there in that room where Lacan walked back and forth on a stage saying things.

Adorno's students as well used to complain that they couldn't take a coherent set of notes in his lectures. His Lectures are rather extraordinary to read. He lets something happen there. His retort to his students was that if what he said was easily written why say it. There must be some particularity to oral transmission:

If I decline to proceed with 'firstly', 'secondly', and 'thirdly', and if I fail to give you a set of definitive statements, this bound up with the essence of what I stand for... I believe that it is good for these matters to be aired, for us to take a frank look at them, rather than letting them fester in the murky realm halfway between whispering and fascination... One has to be prepared to submit to the process of reflection, and to reflection, moreover conceived as free, without any spoon-feeding, and cannot expect to be provided the kind of solid subject-matter that is normal elsewhere... At any rate I think it is the task of philosophical discourse to express as discourse- in other words in the form in which it is presented- something of the content it wishes to convey... I would also say that the lecture, which came into being in an age when printing had long since been in existence is in a certain sense an 'archaic form'... That is to say, it has in a sense been superseded by the written form. Hence if this form is to be retained, if people are going to continue giving real lectures, this can only have meaning if the things that are said during a lecture, and the way they are said, cannot be found in printed form (Adorno, 1969/1997, p. 24).

So follows the question of psychoanalytic action which is stuck in the dilemma such that once articulated begins to outstrip itself, as Leclaire said, in both its written and spoken discourse. This might be the best dilemma to be stuck with in one's profession for at the very least it keeps one on one's toes. Between whispering and fascination, we prepare ourselves to submit to the process as free, just as our patients will. To be provided the kind of solid-subject matter that is normal elsewhere- that is the festival of the non-dupes, as Muller put it.

We cannot be certain as analysts almost de-facto, we can only orient ourselves as best we can towards the unconscious. When this orientation reaches a kind of illusory certainty, we are we are sure to hear it back from the symptom of the patient. If there is insurance in analysis, it is to be heard here, because it insures the patient against the possibility of suggestion. Hear Lacan's logic once again: Lacan puts resistance on the side of the positive transference. It's a marvelous reversal of contemporary psychoanalytic thought.

I'm tempted by this to believe that for the most part, psychoanalysis is not harmful, cannot be; but in the cannot, it also may never have been brought into existence. This is to say that the analysis that is initiated, is interminable, without a structure that knows how to hear the challenge of the patient's symptom. One might say this is harm enough. Fair enough. But it is an idea of harm that is not hysterical. For the hysteric one is always guilty of seduction, not inhibition and stasis. Lacan in orienting himself to the place of the subject by virtue of the semblance that is the *object a* has a hold on technique in a way I haven't grasped with other psychoanalytic theories.

For this reason I tilt responsibility toward the analyst who must take up this particular ethics. It is why the question of ethics has grown so central for me. One might find this a relief. It is after all then only up to me. How nice. Perhaps bearing that kind of responsibility propels that of the patients, giving them back their desire as it is given back to us to maintain it- the desire for psychoanalysis.

Why not define the autonomous ego this way? Why not? My first inclination is to say that it is because those who lay claim to that structure like to think everyone else is lacking in it. This may have started with his daughter, Anna, and the idea of our

providing an auxiliary ego, or an observing ego, or some other unfortunate name. I can't think of anything that would make one more paranoid. At the very least resistant. No wonder she had to take on the defenses. Shame. But shame on me as well. I should not point fingers. I should just state that this is what *I* mean by autonomy and try and understand what this has to do with an ego, auxiliary or not. *The ego is first and foremost a necessary failure (a body ego)*. This is what Lacan is pointing to in his *object a*, the one concept he said his discourse aimed to elucidate. And, if this is the case, Lacan, I will say, is in good faith.

Lacan Awry

I might say that I am Lacanian, perhaps because I don't even know anymore what it is to be Freudian from within the analytic scene here in America. If Lacan only wanted to be called a Freudian, then I will say that I am Lacanian in the only way that someone who stands so far outside a discourse can claim that interior for herself, with total belligerence. A predicate come ethical subject. If his ethics starts *ex nihilo*, is grounded on a faith in almost nothing, and loves with a particular reserve which empties the future of content, audacity is a testimony to ethics. The words reserve, precariousness, grace, arise from the attempt to conceptualize the place of an opening. But perhaps rather than a consequence, an effect of analysis, they are its driving force.

They are the analytic process. As Lacan at times defined it: the emptying out or draining of the signifier (the past), the pathos of suffering (present), and the overvaluation or idealization of the object of love (the future). The precariousness is handled by a voice that holds firm. For this reason Lacan called it an ethics of the real or of the drive- it has

the force of sheer immediacy, is formal, and is driven. It is the declaration that one “cannot live in any other way” mirroring an original symptom (I cannot live, and no doubt, in any other way) which made the same declaration but in the service of suffering rather than enjoyment.

So my feeling is that Lacan is acutely aware of these difficulties which are at the heart of the difficulty of his writing, of any writing about psychoanalysis. He wanted to return to the truth of the analytic enterprise. His wish, I fear, has gone painfully awry. This Lacan awry has something to do with the failure to uphold what is at the heart of his ethics. Should we say that such things are inevitable? He did at times. But he also began to invoke a figure of insurance. He even went so far as to say in *Encore*, that writing was necessary as insurance, which is, from the perspective of this ethics, not Lacan. The only insurance is that the symptom will protest any insurance, certainly an insurance which is aimed against it. All we have are symptoms. The debt that psychoanalysis engages in with respect to the unconscious must remain. It cannot be paid off. There is no insurance.

Remember what it is to give in to the anxiety of the analysand? To participate in their very fantasy and foreclose the possibility of an opening. It is an impudence that bypasses any prudence on the part of the analyst. One must always handle truth with a bit of grace, a lightness of touch:

To the modern science of psychology, we owe the insight that the lack of courage to accept injury and the incapability of self-sacrifice belong to the deepest sources of psychic illness. All neuroses seem to have as a common symptom an egocentric anxiety, a tense and self centered concern for security, the inability to ‘let go’; in short, that kind of love for one’s own life that leads straight to the loss of life. It is a very significant and by no means accidental fact that modern psychology frequently quotes the Scriptural words: “he who loves his life will lose it” (Pieper, 1966, p. 134-135).

We cannot secure our legacy in a system aimed at insurance. This seems to have been the fate of Lacan who in delegating his legacy to his son-in-law in order to secure it, lost it.

In truth, I have no memory about the cultural significance of any of this infighting, here or overseas. I've read books, but it is something that feels so much beyond my grasp. Such is my advantage. It is not what I have inherited. That doesn't mean that I escape transference.

I have always loved psychoanalysis from within a place of disappointment, an idea of it that has never materialized. But disappointment can go by way of desire, as we know, rather than the perversions of sentimentality, insurance, and reparation. This is that part of the hysteric Lacan always seized upon and indeed loved- woman and their particular brand of madness. This hollow in desire empties that future of content and relegates the past to the past. But that ultimately requires the analytic turn.

When you submit your life to the task of psychoanalysis, to its unfolding strife, you no longer have a private life according to Lacan, you live the psychoanalyzed life. In the end it reinstates the possibilities of a private life, perhaps even the good one, in what he calls knowing how to live life well- not *connaissance*, not knowledge, but *savoir faire*, know-how. To live by the good word and to speak well- *bien dire*, *bon mot*. I do not know if Lacan found his way here in the end and there is some suture taking place in the present discourse meant they have somehow lost at playing this game.

Funny enough, the new Lacanians sound more and more like ego psychologists. I cannot but somehow believe that what were lost was this degree of humility and the place of that humility within the analytic discourse which can be found in Lacan, signposted by the words failure, weakness, stupidity, the dummy, and the dupe. How does this disaster

happen? With Adorno it had something to do with terror, the Good, finishing once and for all; and so haste, impatience, an object given too much consistency in the face of a risky and uncertain desire. In the end his thinking grew argumentative under the weight of this excessive tension. A thinking that tries too quickly to realize itself.

Truth, Lacan says, has feminizing effects. He means this with a tinge of irony, but still, perhaps we accept this idea of the virtue of a kind of weakness. Perhaps we follow the path of all those women hanged. As Badiou says, the disaster is a disaster when truth becomes an asserting- “that this, which is, must not be, or that, what is presented in its being, is but nothingness, is an effect of terror... Philosophy, when it is driven out of its operation by the temptation wielded upon it by the idea that Truth is substance, produces terror” (Badiou, 1992/1999, p. 132). It is not an easy task to keep one’s eyes on the ephemeral. We have already seen how Adorno lapsed despite such a keen ear.

As analysts the cultivation of a lack of anxiety is indispensable, particularly of the castrating variety. We are supposed to be able to withstand a certain amount of tension. They call that here, ‘maintaining narcissistic equilibrium’ which would send Lacanians into hysterics because this is precisely for them what that analyst must risk in order to hear the patient. Is this an issue of substance or terminology?

To return for a second to the new breed of Lacanians, their anxiety about the importance of the Lacan has brought a certain kind of truth to very charge of intellectualism brandished against them from day one. They reify the notion of the signifier. The signifier, in other words, has become of a sign and the work says nothing but signifier, again and again. What they mean to say is always the same, it is the name Lacan, which has, rather painfully, come to mean very little anymore. With patients, we

know that there is nothing worse for the signifier than an invocation of the sign, particularly by a signifier hunting analyst. Again, the vase turned letter, the void given substance.

Lacan has said that the analyst can only “clear the ground in front of the door”. If he refuses this constraint, the patient will perhaps just lie in front of it. All hail her refusal. “After a very good analysis, let us say that a woman can find her feet”- one would imagine in order to walk through it. “If there is a little advantage won” it is in the fall of the *object a*. Otherwise she retains herself as “frigid” (Lacan, 1968, Lecture X, p. 12). Writing cannot function as insurance, indeed anxiety and the defensive moves which follow, make writing impossible. Psychoanalysis has not figured out a way to write itself since Freud. It has, should I say, lost its feet and become frigid.

Sublimation, wish fulfillment, symptoms, and hallucination, are founded on the absence of the object. “What is foreclosed in the symbolic reappears in the real. The Thing is not there originally. Sublimation brings us to it- this is the new” (Lacan, 1986/1992, p.145). The door is nothing but that. It is not on the side of the analyst to proffer it, he only clears the ground. As Lacan says, “as regards the door, I believe that we are not very competent” (Lacan, 1968, Lecture X, p. 12).

My letter from my grandmother functioned precisely as insurance. Matrilinal lineage is always a certainty (*mater semper certa, pater incertus*). Forcing is a way of delegating the future through a determined history. Such is the nature of wish fulfillment. Simone Weil says, “It is necessary to touch impossibility in order to come out of the dream world. There is no impossibility in dreams- only impotence” (Weil, 2002, p. 95).

The wish then is for this limit at the same time that the wish functions as the limit. All else, as she says is impotence- what Lacan calls a miscarriage of desire.

Lacan would have understood Simone Weil as he understood anorexics: they don't not eat, but rather eat nothing. Ethics is described as a situation in which one seeks to be deprived of something real in order to provoke a limit giving that real its place as beyond. Symptomatically then the anorexic tries painfully to accomplish this, particularly because someone has tried to stuff her full and this is how she retains her desire showing that the limit of desire can go as far as retaining one's death as one's own. Hopefully there are other ways. As for Simone Weil I have to admit I rather admire her. She had a lot of courage.

The Lacanian community cannot become the match to the International in its ridiculously titled, *World Association of Psychoanalysis*. The analyst falls from his place and why should it not be the case outside the consulting room? There is something here of the important magic of a disappearing act, like that of so many of the women we spoke about before. To be in the shadow of truth is take on its feminizing effects, the more feminine the deaths, the better. Knowledge functions in relation to truth as an act of subtraction, like the fall of the *object a*. It is not expansive, certainly not in a gathering around the world of the truth of Lacan.

Badiou discerns this problem from within philosophy. He sets up the subtractive dimension of truth with respect to the double, for him the sophist, for us what is conceptualized around a closure of the unconscious. Religion, for example, is for Badiou any form of thought which wants continuity between truth and sense. Philosophy he says is the logical science of the void and so is never this continuity. Subtracting thought from

any predication of sense or presence, indeed the progressive subtraction of the supports from the *object a*, culminates in a subtraction from knowledge of truth. This is, for

Badiou, related to four modalities:

The undecidable, related to the event (a truth is not, it befalls); the indiscernible, related to liberty (the path of a truth is not constrained, but risky); the generic, related to being (the being of a truth is an infinite set subtracted from every predicate in knowledge); the unnamable, related to the Good (to force the naming of an unnamable breeds disaster) (Badiou, 2006, p. 89).

These modalities of truth are asserted against a background of relativism which is the truth of the sophist. Badiou calls the sophist the perverse double of philosophy.

Philosophy is the breaking of the mirror between the philosopher and the sophist.

Lacan speaks about this sophist with respect to Plato's dialogue *Meno*. The sophist refutes the doctrine of *anamnesis*. The idea of Platonic reminiscence is linked by Lacan to the idea of the return of the repressed which means that there is something which *already belongs* to the subject which must make its appearance. Plato just clears the path, his dialogue obeys the subtractive modalities of thought. The sophist counters *anamnesis*, turning his doctrine into a teaching that is dispensed to someone who is situated as 'without it,' propping himself up as the subject supposed to know. Thus for Badiou, "the ethics of philosophy, staving off disaster, can be summarized in the constant reserve regarding its sophistic double, a reserve thanks to which philosophy is subtracted from the temptation of splitting itself in two (according to the void/substance couple) in order to deal with the first duplicity founding it (sophist/philosopher)... Philosophy in its history is but a desubstantialization of Truth, which is also the self-liberation of its act" (Badiou, 1992/1999, p. 144). Badiou, like Lacan, posits the first duplicity with respect to

a question of the subject of knowledge. This is the only possibility of self-liberation. Otherwise you are bound in the hierarchy of those who know, and those who lack.

What one can gather even further then from this rather obscure philosophical meandering are the consequences of realizing the transference wish, of taking up the hysterical desire for a master, of answering the demand for anxiety, both a materialization of her wound. It is, according to Badiou, a disaster whose effects run something like a re-instituting of the sacred, ecstasies of sacrifice, and terror. We know what happens to the hysteric when her wishes are granted. Think about the symptomatic explosion of Dora after the scene by the Lake with Herr K. It was she who showed Freud that transference must be handled with tact and one should worry about countertransference- in which case you receive your message back in an inverted form as the consequence of the mirror.

The word that strikes me as most important with respect to this strategy is 'reserve'. It is a reading of humility and prudence, evoked by Lacan in his conception of logic, which Badiou puts at the center of his ethics. The consequence of this word 'reserve' deserves to be drawn out. It is where I believe the new Lacanians have gone awry. There is only one virtue for Lacan, *pudeur*, which one may translate as one likes-shame, decency, humility, modesty alike.

Dear Prudence, Won't You Come Out To Play

"My strength", says Lacan, "is to know what it means to wait." One might say that I am entirely impatient as the case may be, and that prudence, while something I have come to admire, is not what I am. Prudence seems to be virtue that doesn't belong to me. I am still knee deep in suffering and I pathologize myself accordingly. Perhaps

genuflection will be my virtue. Perhaps as I bend down, on my knees, my head pressed against the floor, I can find that what I do is indeed to endure, always endure. Maybe I can endure with a bit of pleasure, maybe I keep it hidden. This isn't the image most of us entertain, at least not openly. But the prudent man is also penitent- he bows before god. To suffer and to endure in the face of dread is "objectively the only remaining possibility of resistance, and that it is in this situation that fortitude primarily and ultimately proves its genuine character... This possibility, we know, has been obliterated from the world view of enlightened liberalism" (Pieper, 1966, p. 128).

Against the weighty seduction of the hysteric, against the defensive angst of the obsessive, the analyst must be strong. But it is the strength of a feminine passive ideal which is never bound up with the immoderate nature of knowledge. Perhaps the repressions of the hysteric are a testament against this character of knowing. Freud, as Rieff (1959) pointed out rather strongly, never aimed at removing the bar of repression. Not because he thought man vile, but because repression is our saving grace. It is what makes us subjects, and of preserving anything sacred- the battle cry of the cultural conservative against the enlightened liberal.

The analytic discourse is a discourse of tact with respect to this structure of the psyche that for it will remain sacred. The unconscious is Freud's godhead. With that, all one has is tact, a tact, which, to quote Goethe, would mean we have a better knowledge of things in knowing how *not* to try and know them so thoroughly.

Interpretation, we hear on this side of the Atlantic, is all about the three Ts: tact, tone, and timing. Is this not properly Lacanian which means that interpretation is a

strategy of rhetoric with an unconscious that functions precisely like a language?

Remember, rhetoric for Adorno was the closest we could get to content:

The odor of truth in analysis is only an effect of the fact that it uses no other means than that of the word. Strictly none. Do not start telling me that it uses transference because transference for its part is not a means. It is a result that stems from the fact that the words, by its means, reveals something that has nothing to do with it, very precisely the knowledge that exists in language (Lacan, 1973, p. 50).

That the prudence of the analyst with respect to interpretation is all that the analyst has once he removes himself from the field of knowledge challenges the notion of interpretation as an historical objectivity, ‘meaning making’, transference dissolution, or any other such notion. It is a strategy:

If analytic experience finds itself implicated by taking its claims to nobility from the Oedipal myth, it is indeed because it preserves the cutting edge of the oracle’s enunciation, and I would say more, that in it interpretation always remains at the same level. It is only true by its consequences, like every oracle. Interpretation is not put to the test of a truth that can be settled by a yes or a no, it unleashes truth as such. It is only true insofar as it is truly followed (Lacan, 1971, Lecture XII, p. 13)

This cutting edge of the oracle is the enunciation that gets things moving. This is close to what is called ‘the beauty of the inexact interpretation.’ For Lacan however, since truth can only be half-said (like any decree from an oracle) all interpretations are inexact but beautiful. It is perhaps their beauty which is their most important feature- that they hide and reveal with exactly the right balance. How else would we allow ourselves to be led in the direction of our destiny which is always an unraveling, an undoing, a submitting to castration?

Movement, we saw, is what the tragic death of woman aims at in trying to manifest her death precisely as feminine, as that which cannot, but must be spoken, as that which in desire is beyond the object of fascination. Between the patient and the

analyst, it is the analyst who knows the rules of desire in the game (of speech) which the hysteric as hysteric has always keeps herself ignorant of, namely the fact that she plays. As Lacan says there is only a playing well, a speaking well, or a doing well. In a twist, Lacan adds that “nothing is impossible for man, what he cannot do he leaves. This is what is called mental health” (Lacan, 1973, p. 104).

I know many of you will balk at the equation between virtue, passivity, submission, and femininity, but the dupe for Lacan, was always a woman. Likewise, the word *pudeur*, the one he uses with respect to what he calls the one virtue of psychoanalysis, is also entirely feminine. The non-dupe, and the non-pude, are not what we are. One may translate that as the non-decent. Decency, for me, evokes the notion of shame which was for Freud always the affect of woman *par excellence*. You’ll see it everywhere in his writing, their modesty, their shame, the way they hide away, impenetrable, secret, and silent. Can you hear the position of the analyst?

This is what the hysteric gets wrong, where she loses the game. Her silence, like her words, wage war. “It is only when the hysteric renounces being what men fight over – we will have to precede her there- that she will be ready to conquer the truth” (Safouan, 1980, p. 59). She conquers this difficulty by giving up the claim of its fight, perhaps first by finding herself painfully ashamed of her previous immodesty- her *fait l’homme*. Rather than always having to outsmart the other man she allows herself to be a dupe.

We will forge for ourselves “a quite different ethic, an ethic that would be founded on the refusal of being unduped, of always being more strongly the dupe of this knowledge, of this unconscious which, when all is said and done is our only lot in terms of knowledge’ (Lacan, 1973, p. 16).

Who was a better dupe than Joyce who wrote a book to capture the blackness between dreams? It is not a surprise that Lacan turned to him towards the end of his seminars. He wrote in *Finnegans Wake*, “Its something fails us. First we feel. Then we fall.” The place of lack found first of all in the failure, second of all in the feeling, and lastly in the fall. Nothing comes closer to writing about the work of analysis. I love James Joyce. In the face of this I feel nothing else need be said. The 3 second book again. His books, to say the least, are anything but that, hearing his joke that he would keep people busy for 300 years. There cannot be a 3 second book. The work has not yet been done.

Our strength, for Lacan, is to know what it means to wait. To find a way to use the tendency towards haste, even if that means to deprive oneself of it. This deprivation is linked to the demand Badiou makes that philosophy re-entangle itself with an ontology that thinks the void as *matheme*, for Lacan as the real, for myself as the unconscious. This is the starting place from which we will then, and only then, be able to falteringly disentangle the subject.

I have suffered with Lacan. I tried to lay down his system, master it, explicate and retrace it, bit by all too painstakingly bit. This transpired. I let him pass through me. I found a way to amuse myself, belly laughs at his jokes, and annoyance with his forced puns. He gives almost nothing but in the almost one finds the trace of enjoyment rather than an anxiety which wants to fill in the gaps, suture the *aporia*, and invoke his ungodly presence at every turn. It is an opening with consequences which are far more reaching than that of romanticism or truth hunting which divides everything into too early and too late, as with Freud, Marx, and Heidegger. To which camp do you belong? Choose your allegiance- topography or structure, species-being or capital, *Being and Time* or *Letter on*

Humanism. Don't forget, Lacan of the symbolic or the real. What happened to the imaginary? There we don't have to make a choice. Our allegiance is such that where that is concerned we can be done with it once and for all.

Of course in what is discarded so blithely remains something of importance. This imaginary holds out something like pure potential. We've already charted this dimension with the term semblance which is much closer to the truth than we normally imagine. Language at its imaginary limit is precisely the power Lacan invokes with his signifier and one must handle it with tact. Adorno could not think the necessity of tact because the semblance was for him a disappointment, ultimately being tied to the imaginary. With Lacan there is a work of mourning which gives over to this imaginary the power of creation from nothing- a use of the imaginary.

Semblance disrupts an allegiance which merely seeks insurance against disappointment. To use Badiou's words, one has to maintain an absolute fidelity which always partakes in the imaginary. So I am faithful to Lacan. He joked that all of what he had been saying about the 'doesn't stop not being written' didn't mean that he didn't write plenty in order to get up and speak about it. I would like to demand a supplement. If it is true that what we do in analysis is follow through without detour to the end of what we have to say, why would this not prepare us to write?

The discourse of the university, for Lacan, only produces the discard, the heap, a pile of debris. Badiou called this the little style (perhaps in the little he is referencing the objet petit a) or scholasticism:

There is a technical term in philosophy for this kind of neo-classicist approach: scholasticism... We find a perfect example of this regional scholasticism in an intervention by Pascal Engel, Professor at the Sorbonne, in a book called *Mathematical Objectivity*. In the course of a grammatical excursus concerning the

status of statement, Engel manages to use no less than twenty-five classificatory syntagms. These are, in their order of appearance in this little jewel of scholasticism: Platonism, ontological realism, nominalism, phenomenism, reductionism, fictionalism, instrumentalism, ontological antirealism, semantic realism, semantic antirealism, intuitionism, idealism, verificationism, formalism, constructivism, agnosticism, ontological reductionism, ontological inflationism, semantic atomism, holism, logicism, ontological neutralism, conceptualism, empirical realisms, and conceptual Platonism. Moreover, remarkable though it is, Engel's compulsive labeling in no way exhausts the possible categorical permutations. These are probably infinite, which is why scholasticism is insured of a busy future, even if, in conformity with scholastic injunction to intellectual seriousness, its work is invariably carried out in teams (Badiou, 2006, p. 5)

I couldn't help but cite the entire passage for all of its absurdity. Psychoanalysis is likewise overflowing with terminology, new names for everything, broken down, built back up. But the names are terrible. "Why can he buy everything without paying for it? Because he has nothing to do with *jouissance*. That is not what he repeats. He repeats his purchase. He is by destination the re-bought" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 94). This is the other imperative as a perverse double of our ethics- to keep knowing, buying, producing in a realm which does not belong to you. It is the progressive exclusion of yourself.

If not nearly as arid, one might say the discourse of the hysteric is utterly drenched, her discourse ravished under the weight of the Other. She'll only invoke the prohibition and its will to discard her. The woman with ashes on her breath. Like the Hegelian slave at least she has her *jouissance* even if she is for a time suffocating herself in the process. *Jouissance's* "little sister is truth" (ibid., p. 150). She protests and yet, none but she could embody better this radical object of exclusion- the conclusive product of this discourse of the university.

So too much or too little. We would say these discourses are without tact. They constitute a writing that would never engender an effect of truth, that would never lead

towards the collapse of knowledge that unleashes truth. The neurotic defense is to attempt to exclude this perverse underside ridden with desire. In a dual movement- exclude nothing, the heap, exclude everything, wreckage- they hedge their bets. To be excluded is the essence of woman. They complain of nothing else, Lacan (1975/1998) said in *Encore*.

To allow for exclusion is to allow a minimal difference with respect to the impossible relation between the sexes. This makes the wager real. One can only love from within this impossible debt that doesn't stop not being written. "The displacement of the negation from the 'doesn't stop not being written' to the 'doesn't stop being written' in other words from contingency to necessity— there lies the point of suspension to which all love is attached" (ibid., p. 145). It means that one must risk everything and in this, one risks exclusion from everything.

I have learned through Lacan to always go by way of this radical debt. I take in more than I can possibly give back. The imaginary, my faith in semblance, can turn on a kind of radical debtorship- incurring greater and greater debt, as one does in love, giving and taking with what one does not have. It is only by way of this debt that one can situate the proper asymmetry of the analytic relationship which culminates in our eventual exclusion.

In effect this radical debtorship is nothing new about me, but it is cast in a new light. What I always wanted was a way out, but, perhaps once inside there doesn't seem anymore to be a reason to leave. My failure is where I finally succeed. So, I might, in the end, get out from under this disappointment with psychoanalysis after all. This debt may be the only insurance that one escape from the trap of believing that they have something solid to give- immoderate knowing, intrusive interpretations. The ethics of

psychoanalysis is a tricky business, but Lacan's ethics, it turns out, is an ethics internal to psychoanalysis, internal to its very theory. It requires nothing outside, and if this isn't a virtue, it at least gives me legs to stand on, with pleasure.

So my debt is much less difficult to manage if not for the very reason that I enjoy its incursion. One's relationship to enjoyment is work, Lacan said. Call this masochism if you will, a fantasy of sacrifice, enjoyment in submission. Indeed it is. Perversion cannot be dispensed with. If it is difficult to recognize in this something beyond mere pathos, not least of all in its apologetics, remember that it is at this exact point where I discover the greatest amusements. It is the only way to allow for a little leniency with oneself and others.

It was to Joyce that Lacan turned in the end- declared his debt. I'll take it up. Joyce laughs last, as always- "A, E, I, O, U". To Adorno and everyone else, I owe you. "I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath." My father, my mother.

Did not Joyce already always know that "the sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship of the thing done." And "he laughed to free his mind from his mind's bondage." And so I was freed to do with Lacan what I will, even at his will. The assault of the joker. This is how I have learned to think through Lacan. To find room to breathe under the weight of his voice and his eyes. With an eye for the one who is vanishing. Adorno said that "only in its thinking breath does philosophy participate in the idea of depth. To this Joyce adds, "On now. Dare it. Let there be life."

Well then the analytic discourse is specified, it is distinguished by raising the question of what the issue is of this form of knowledge which rejects and excludes truth. A first approximation- it serves to repress what inhabits mythical knowledge. But excluding it at the same time, it knows nothing more of it than in the form of what we rediscover under

the species of the unconscious, that is, as wreckage of this knowledge in the form of disjointed knowledge. ... When a slave, on the other hand, redeems himself, he is a master only in this- that he risks everything... This is where, in some way, the function of the analyst gives something like the dawn. -Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*

I Fell in Love

If whatever was so oppressive and tormenting in loving a thinker like Adorno, was repeated for the love of Lacan, at the least there it is was settled through an adherence to a debt. The failure in this debtorship giving something like the dawn as Lacan says. In that space one renounces the specter of unconditionality, of any eros of castration, and the push toward absolutism. Lacan can set it up and one can make the purchase. It is a difficult sale. I have already told you the ways in which I was suffocating. I had to learn to love this man through letting him go which is as much to say that he passed right through me like air that one breathes. Maybe one lets oneself laugh. On now. And if *I* am to write, then I lose Lacan through taking in the promise that he left behind—the possibility of writing despite the unfortunate burden of knowing. Dare it.

This abandonment of his only gave strength to his voice whose labor would come to overshadow too much and too many. Fascination. The very act of writing, finding a way to write psychoanalysis, disturbs this labor of speech whose omniscience can be brought down to a whisper in the play of the written word and the elusive authorial signature- a debt *universalized* everywhere and nowhere. Let there be life.

One desires he who speaks to us, knows, but one loves he who invites us to speak and makes possible the written word. Certainly this was what was so necessary for Freud in the beginning with the *Interpretation*. So it is that at first I would slip endlessly in Lacan's series of lectures.

Perhaps it was here that Lacan did not want to give in. Take care of his words, mind them. If one looks at his writing it bears his stamp through this putative tone. Not

that I do not enjoy it, “it is a type of invective ferocity, really terrifying which is that of Yahweh speaking to his people in a long discourse... a rite of sacred prostitution... a sort of invitation whereby he declares himself to be the spouse” (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 204). It is a tie that binds without the possibility of a love that moves through the traps of desire and an impossible demand for identification. His demand and our counter demand, on into infinity. But as we approach infinity, which is as much to say that one begins to vanish on the horizon, we may find a new possibility, another enjoyment. Such is the wager and the risk.

So it is between the first and the third dreams- my grandmother’s letter which is so close to her spoken voice, her command, and the last, a dream about a book that I found and read, clearly mine, but written with an anonymity that disturbed the search for authorship. *Instructions On How to Fell A Tree. You have to use your breath. Your eyes, hands and voice will be too disruptive to the rhythm necessary to bring it down.* That was it. The Real of the signifier. The fall of the analyst.

It’s rather funny this dream. I could chastise myself and say like a typical hysteric I mistake the tree for the forest. Plants are genitals as we know from *The Interpretation of Dreams* and certainly that would have some bearing on her making *this* mistake. The mistake of all her mistakes. And that she can barely do with one is to say nothing of what happens with a whole series of them.

We may have just fallen on something a little closer to the truth in setting off this chain of events. Even in the banal symbolism we are taken a hair’s breadth away from mere pathologizing. That may be the minimal distance necessary to get things moving, *to bring it down.*

I cannot suddenly help but see the hysterical wish to castrate the master and how it just barely succeeds in not being just that. In not being that, one would have to begin to see her virtues, to hear the *juste* in the just of just barely. The other side of failure, Lacan said, is this just barely succeeding which is the only way an analysis moves. The fall, even evoked by this kind of artifice, this leap through what is only the semblance of an instruction, a dream object, delimits a new starting point, constitutes a break. The other movements, the hands, voice, and eyes, were rather the force of stasis. This is the hysterical *a faire*, a to do with love, which holds out the possibility that she may find herself quite somewhere else after all is said and done.

Scales do not fall from his eyes, his eyes fall like scales...Isn't it this very object that we see Oedipus being reduced to, not to being subjected to castration but I would rather say, to being castration itself? Namely, what remains when one of the privileged supports of the object disappear from him in the form of his eyes –Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*

The Smile of My Master

If he smiled why would he have smiled?

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a proceeding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity (Joyce, 1922, p. 731).

Thought depends as Badiou says on the impossibility of angels. As much as he pokes fun at philosophers who want to shelter philosophy and save it from annihilation, it is his own agenda. I see him there in all white, his mysterious smile, his self avowed dignity. He is the announced master and the axiomatic nature of his work means, following Lacan, that it is only necessary that he authorize himself. He once said in conversation that he was the super-ego of philosophy. But what functions as the super-ego for a super-ego? His attraction to infinity, immortality, truth, militant subjectivity, and universality, is both Badiou's virtue and his failing. The enjoyment buried in the commands of the super-ego will lead not away, as is his wont, but directly towards annihilation.

It is at the limit of his work that this enjoyment creeps in and what could be the play of a semblance instead becomes a rather unfortunate pretence. For reasons that will have to become clear Badiou has disavowed the value of semblance and therefore he has disavowed its inherent play. What he is doing is always real. It is first off not aesthetics and not fiction. He must make absolutely sure of that. Otherwise he feels that his glorious system would be nothing but a sophistry. I learned this system of his, I took it in, it was important in learning how to rethink Lacan, to think against Adorno, to get away from the traps of nihilism. But what once (and still from time to time) evoked enthusiasm, his

belligerent rhetoric and the audacity of his formalization, leaves me, in the end, rather cold. It has less to do with his concepts and everything to do with the place from which one encounters his voice, his command out from within his discourse. Perhaps this is the place where one would assent to Badiou. Agree to follow him as master, indeed as truth. I for one could imagine such a thing while knowing that after Adorno it isn't any longer really a possibility.

Badiou allows one to use him which is an interesting fact of his work. With Badiou, my rather tenacious tendency towards hysteria is most useful to me because it locates the position of the master. And yet, because he is a self-declared master one doesn't necessarily have to work so hard to prop him up, and in the end, he will find his own way down. Badiou it seems will be his own undoing. It has nothing to do with me. While the hysteric is loath to know this- as Lacan says, she wants to be the price of his knowledge- perhaps here, for the first time I can see my own way through.

Badiou, one could say, is this real master that Lacan said everyone has forgotten about and so fails to understand, particularly the hysteric. It is also the most important figure for psychoanalysts to begin to comprehend again. This real master is one we have to read from Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*- the primal father with all the women. The myth for Freud is always aimed toward elucidating his structure. It is against this master that the real prohibition is leveled, particularly by psychoanalysis. There is no such thing as "all the women". We have come to think that the prohibition was always against the mother, the incestuous love of her, but, for Lacan, there was someone prior to her. This is why the father in the mother is of such crucial importance to Lacan.

‘To be deprived of woman,’ this is what castration means. One is enough. Indeed, Lacan jokes that she is already too much, which is why he would go further to say, that even if there is a ‘One,’ woman did not exist. I have likened the analyst to the sacrifice of a woman, a debtor, a dupe. These are different images of castration. What was the value of castration? Well, we said it rather ironically allows one to follow the trace of enjoyment. If Badiou is the master, does he enjoy?

I don’t think I know what Badiou enjoys after all is said and done. One might say that he rather enjoys himself, his laugh or his smile, you see, always originates from there but only to return there once again. I like his laugh. If you’ve ever heard him it is rather charming, disarming even, but it is, in its way, radically self-contained. It is different with Lacan. He initiates laughter because it addresses you. The true joke can only be one that knows how to follow the logic of desire.

Badiou, and it must be said, radically dislikes desire. That may seem a bit strong, but he links desire to individual or even animal self-interest, a trap in any case, that one must radically transcend or break free of. As we said before, for Freud, desire is the only possibility of transgression. Badiou, in *Philosophy as Biography*, describes the development of his thoughts on love and desire:

Just like everyone, in the 50s and 60s, we were tormented by sexuality. This torment is certainly still very perceptible in my first novels, *Almagestes*, in 1964 and then *Portulans*, in 1967. But literature is a filter here. In the end, this trouble is foreign to philosophy strictly speaking., in conformity to its great classical tradition. I would say that I learned little by little why. It is certain that sexual situations are fascinating, and it is also certain that the formalism of these situations, the erotic formalism is extraordinarily poor. And all its force depends on a repetitive injunction, with variations of little amplitude. I would say then that little by little in life a relation of charmed connivance is established with this formalism. Finally neither transgressive fascination, nor the repression of the superego are really at their place in this affair. All that is delicious, and, after all, without great consequence for thought. I have come to conclude philosophically,

that as acute as this pacifying charmed connivance might be, at least for me, desire is not a central category for philosophy, and cannot be. Or rather desires only touches philosophy - just as well as *jouissance* - as bodies are seized in love. That is why, from this long crossing through sexual torment the final result is, as I had already said for other reasons that love, and not desire, must instantly return into the constitution of the concept (Badiou, 2008, p.15).

Love is a central category for Badiou. He includes psychoanalysis under the generic truth procedure of love (along with mathematics, art, and politics). Psychoanalysis is a discourse that thinks the difficulty of the two- be it the unhappy coupling of life and death drives, or, man and woman. But Lacan, as much as he talked about love was always a theorist of desire, which was never reduced to being blatantly sexual. There was always a knot formed between, *love, desire and jouissance*.

Imaginary solutions to the complexity of this knot proliferate throughout history from divine love to courtly love. Faithful to Freud however the impasse is the impasse, it must be said, between love *and* desire. Psychological impotence being the psychic division such that “where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love” (Freud, 1912, p.183). And the tendency towards debasement in the sphere of love follows with a special-type of object choice- a taken one, one of ill repute, or, the continuous series of them despite the fact they announce their love to be a singular event whose “demand for fidelity” appears singular (Freud, 1910, p. 167). Freud says, “we have learnt from psychoanalysis in other examples that the notion of something irreplaceable, when it is active in the unconscious, frequently appears as broken up into an endless series: endless for the very reason that every surrogate nevertheless fails to provide the desired satisfaction” (ibid., 169). And the last word for Freud is that debasement of the love object was rather a result of an elevation of love above desire, and with a wry smile he says perhaps man should learn to think less highly of his wife and come to terms with the

idea of incest. Otherwise the fantasy stemming from the prohibition is such that desire, as sexual, is like a pollutant of the body.

Laughter comes from a body and a body cannot but be one that has a sex, however much it loves and remains faithful. I'm sure that Badiou gets hungry from time to time, much as Levinas said that it seemed to him that *Dasein* was never hungry taking aim at the lofty heights of Heideggerianism. Neither is this exalted subject of Badiou who has done everything in his being to attack Heidegger. It is the view from above that creates the trouble not necessarily desire from a Freudian perspective. My maternal grandmother always used to tell me that love doesn't put dinner on the table. I suppose that is why I'm always in debt. Badiou, in clearing away the mistakes of philosophy, the traps it has fallen into, seems to me to abhor debt as one must if one wants to rid themselves of this *trap* of desire- if one wants to de-pollute this body of philosophy.

Like the master then, and in fact quite like Adorno, he is blind to the extent that his work is a work that wants to exclude fantasy- to exclude what in knowledge is sexual. The sexual from this vantage point becomes a foreign and excluded horizon, notably the horizon of woman herself, of which he is always deprived as a master without quite knowing it. This is psychic impotence.

This lot, this problem of love and desire as psychical impotence, is as Freud says quite in the spirit of Badiou, our "universal affliction under civilization" (ibid., 184). And Badiou would like philosophy not to be so "flaccid", "defeated and limited", to stop acting like a "valet" that serves one master, and for philosophy to finally quit the "self-accusatory vacillation" in the face of the crimes of the holocaust. Thus like Freud, he tries to think through the modern aporia of psychic impotence, his solution a steady

rearmament of philosophy with its original weapons- systematic thought. Like a good hysteric who loves obsessional men, his constant and rather distant labor of love grabbed my attention. But if it is true that where one knows one does not enjoy, then his labor would be too much without enjoyment to be at all satisfying there where he would really have to risk his own continuity, his own presence. The obsessional above all else removes himself from this dilemma, *aphanisis* as Lacan called it, or the fading effects on the subject of the signifier. The hysteric demands a master but she ultimately desires an analyst.

So I wouldn't say that it was his systematizing or mathematizing that got to me such that I could think of his brilliance or his power, but his attraction to saintliness, his hatred of simulacrum and all that he will attach to that. A fantasy of purity. There we both then get away from being objects of *jouissance*, an enjoyment that always harbors death in its shadow.

Lacan says it is the master who deserves to be loved. Why? Because from the master's discourse we will glean the true place of the *object petit a*. From there we can introduce a little air into it. What he says is revealed by his discourse is the *object a* as the crystal of language, the place where language, for a time, can really takes hold of another person. That the master believes he is identical with himself means he is synonymous with what would be the imaginary mythic moment before the creation of the signifier. This mythic moment, as a kind of phallic totality or completion, breaks with the law of the signifier- that it be radically independent of the signified, repression and the split subject, the division word representation/thing representation, the absence of the object at the foundation of psychic reality, and all that follows psychoanalytically. Given this, in

no short time, the master will expose his castration, not least of all in his inability to love a woman. As an analyst I will have read his discourse here, through to its necessary castration which will only but turn on this semblance of saintliness.

And in a strange turn, Badiou declares much like Adorno, an end to the age of poets culminating in Celan. Somewhere he must know that he is breaking this Law and preemptively he banishes the word, not because of Auschwitz as was the case with Adorno, but because the circle has been completed- from poetry to philosophy, from the pre-socratics to Plato, and in one more turn, from philosophy back to poetry, from Plato to Heidegger. Now philosophy must take up the reins once again. He will say in praise of the poets that while their project dis-objectifies, shows that one cannot remain on the threshold of presence, uses a language that leaves you on trace of the matheme capturing the obscurity of time in a poetic disorientation, it does so only in order to orient you once more to the task of philosophy. If philosophy after Heidegger sutures itself to poetry, if philosophers from Derrida, to Gadamer, and onwards, relegate the project of philosophy to poetry, then to remain in this suture is a betrayal of Celan because it means that his poetry was the end of thought.

Philosophy, for Badiou, must discern its future- it culminates precisely in the work of Badiou himself. How convenient! I am in the descent of his event. How marvelous, particularly when we know that my timing, as my tact, is always a disaster. Now, with an air of justification, I can say with Badiou, that he is, for his part, always oriented, never dislocated, impassable.

His dream of the axiomatic principle at the heart of mathematics, what Lacan called Yahweh's invective ferocity, becomes the site from which he announces his sovereignty

over the prostitutes of philosophy, the sophists. And to the extent that this impasse is such that it requires the exclusion of psychoanalysis- perhaps one more sophistry- his discourse depends on it in which case he makes it his slave. But, since I have said that the analyst is by right a dupe, a slave even, then perhaps I will by right know what to do with my Master, Alain Badiou.

These are hard times for psychoanalysts and here I am, articulating a theory that goes for broke like the institutes themselves. In any case, our offices are empty. Our phones do not ring. There doesn't seem to be a demand for analysis. The universities have banished our scholarship. And I am incredibly lonely, with or without patients, in this community in exile. Through Adorno, Lacan, and, Badiou, I am trying to chart my particular dislocation. But this is, psychoanalysis at its epitome of success or not, my lot. And it is after all, not such a bad one. So as I take up Badiou, the last in the series.

Badiou has been there all along in this work, from the beginning and now on into its dead end. He is a very different character for me now than he was which isn't to say that I don't remember who he was to me in the beginning, but it is a very different relationship. Perhaps one may say that it is one more ethical, or if you will, more psychoanalytic in nature. Ethics as we know requires an encounter which is always a failure, in particular in the confrontation with *the Other side of psychoanalysis*, which is always the discourse of the Master.

Against Human Rights

To begin with Badiou, I will chart out how I have made use of him, his ethics, for the sake of psychoanalysis. His knowledge, his extension of the discourse of the master is

important for the psychoanalyst, as we have said, not in order to take up the running but to see perhaps what Lacan will call the “impotence of truth” with respect to the psychoanalytic act. In any case, truth is never really all that enjoyable and the trace of enjoyment is a bit beyond truth as Lacan points out, which is why if one gets bitten by this intoxicating bug of truth, one falls asleep letting ‘the real fall between his fingers.’ The analyst has to be a ‘dupe of the real’ not a ‘dupe of truth’. So while Badiou has a lot to say about truth and from this we have a great deal to learn, we cannot forget the fundamental analytic position.

What the Master’s discourse teaches us, the real classical master, is the way in which one gets caught in this trap of truth precisely as an effect of the position one holds. If psychoanalysis does not cure through insight and requires the radical maintenance of the place of the analyst, we have to get a bit deeper into this idea of the position of a speaking subject, of his agency, the place from where he is caused to act like a good agent. Here the meaning of the word ‘agent’ takes on its true definition which includes the notion of being driven.

The series, Adorno, Lacan, Badiou, while ending in the master, is in fact for Lacan set off by him because in his speech he takes himself to be “univocal” and “self-identical” and hides the fact of his castration which, however untrue, has its effects. ‘Everyone jumps,’ says Lacan. In hiding his castration what is required is that we strip language down to the bare minimum to reveal the structure, the original “violation of the law of the signifier”, the “ultra-reduced myth of being identical with one’s own signifier” (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 90). So to our mythic Badiou. Let’s see what curative effects he has on the analyst. What better use of my time than a failing strategy. Go on, it will be

marvelous.

Following Badiou's stringent logic with respect to ethics he offers a critique. He finds what I take to be the proper analytic position. He says that one that aims for is an indivisible experience of absolute difference which leads to a new kind of subjective freedom that can be "universalized." What is entirely mine is also always caught in a radical particularity that is also for all. Truths have always, back to the days of Plato, held this structure. To adhere to it, to follow out its logic, is his new philosophical ethics of which he is undisputedly the master.

In a critique of the concept of human rights he cuts to the core of our current conceptual crisis. Under the rubric of human rights we can assess a subject for whom analysis would be a relationship wherein we can determine evil *a priori*. The laws of human rights follow. Evil determines our categorization of the Good and the subject. Law in this case, Badiou will say, is first of all and only a Law against Evil. Above all else Doctor, do no harm. Metaphysics creeps back into Ethics. From this Badiou will posit a cluster of convictions:

We posit a general human subject, such that whatever evil befalls him is universally identifiable (even if this universality often goes by the altogether paradoxical name of 'public' opinion), such that this subject is both, on the one hand, a passive, pathetic, or reflective subject- he who suffers- and, on the other, the active determining subject of judgment- he who, in identifying suffering, knows that it must be stopped by all available means... 'Human rights' are rights to non-Evil: rights not to be offended or mistreated with respect to one's life (the horrors of murder and execution), one's body (the horrors of torture, cruelty, and famine), or one's cultural identity (the horrors of the humiliation of women, of minorities, etc.) (Badiou, 1998/2005, p.14).

These human rights structure our current conception of ethics and in doing so destroy exactly what it means to be a subject through forbidding the subject from thinking the void- pre-determining the Subject (who assess the situation of a violation of one right or

another) and the criteria of Evil. From this we are set to act against this particular object in our humanitarian agenda. “Finally, thanks to its negative and a priori determination of Evil, ethics prevents itself from thinking the singularity of situations as such, which is the obligatory starting point of all properly human action” (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 14). In this, one might note that thinking this singularity is the obligatory starting point of every analysis which must begin as if anew, each time, with each patient.

Under a system where evil can be predetermined, our poor suffering patients have no other right than to identify with our power to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Be strong like me. I once knew suffering but know it no longer. And yet I am humble, after all I went into this ‘helping’ profession, which makes me subject to your suffering. And I have the strength to withstand and carry on. This defines me as analyst. I see how you suffer. I will speak so that you no longer have to be a victim.

While this is an admittedly extreme characterization it makes evident the structure that Badiou points to. The naturalized and rather conservative ethics of human rights has as its counterpart, its double, for Badiou nihilistic and relativistic ethics. For example, the latter includes that of Alasdair MacIntyre who famously said that the belief in human rights is on par with a belief in unicorns and witches. Both of these however, the absolute conviction in Human Rights and a kind of post-modern relativism, fail to the extent that in the place where one solidifies truth in advance, the other equates this failure with nothingness. Rather, for Badiou there is still the possibility of a radical desubstantialization of truth and from this a subject who can seize its effects. In analysis do we not provide this possibility for our patients? The requirement is that we empty ourselves of any preconception of truth. Like Bion, we are to be without memory and

without desire. I think this is quite close to how Badiou reads Lacan's conception of truth.

If not, the patient has little room to be anything else than, like you. This is for Badiou, the logic of the same. This mirror image by which the patient is established as a victim gives to the analyst his identity as a figure of human rights, a benefactor, a man of tolerance, and a subscriber to an ethics, ironically, of difference. As Badiou will say, "become like me and I will respect your difference". It is a formula. The action is generalizable, even manualizable, and, in this hides a surplus value.

Difference within this logic of the same renders truth insignificant, particularly when it is the *a priori* foundation upon which anything may be discovered. This forbids, for Badiou, the naming of that which, as yet, has not come to be. The place of the void has not been relegated. This is not tolerance. It is not a tolerance of Otherness, it is a disqualification of the Other. It is only in what is truly Other for Badiou that a new ethical relationship can be established between a subject and a world. In fact before this situation, there is in a sense, no subject and no world, there is only difference and multiplicity.

Difference is merely the situation of what there is which is to say nothing at all. We would do better as Freud well knew to say nothing at all. Most of all then say this. "It is only through a genuine perversion, for which we will pay a terrible historical price, that we have sought to elaborate an ethics on the basis of cultural relativism. For this is to pretend that a merely contingent state of things can found a law" (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 28). In the words of Badiou, human rights are a betrayal. The predetermination of the very concept of a subject, the contents of the unconscious, or how one should be in the world, is likewise to foreclose the possibility of anything actually emerging in an analysis. It functions rather as something like a prescription for action- reified standards of one to

be followed by all. On the other side, there is the passive, pathetic (despite being valorized at times in this) victimized subject who stands in the place from which he is to be 'acted' upon.

Who wants to be a victim? Psychoanalysis has given the answer that it is everyone in the neurotic structure of fantasy. And yet somehow analysts know better? Hence the necessity of their exalted character as figures of enlightenment. The unconscious has been mastered. "At the core of the mastery internal to ethics is always the power to decide who dies and who does not" (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 35).

A child is being beaten stands as the hallmark of the repressions of the Oedipus Complex- to wish to stay a helpless infant bound within the family complex, the incestuous love of a Father, and the fantasy of the alleviation of guilt by punishment. Under the ethical system of human rights one can identify this 'victimization,' but one taken as a material rather than fantastical reality. The identifier of this victimization is positioned against it, while, also somehow being free of it. This is the necessary condition for his authorization to act in the name of these Laws, to 'free' others into his own position. These figures are then an embodiment of the Law and so not entirely subject to it. This is the perversion for Lacan of the master, his avoidance of castration. How does the figure of human rights in this scene not lapse into the beating father? Certainly the most recent call to action under a system of human rights in the figure of 'democracy' (generalizable now to the entire planet) in the Middle East has bred "disaster."

I am slightly amused with the fact that we have come back around to the original argument concerning the seduction theory in psychoanalysis. If Freud had not changed his vision from one of reality to one of fantasy there wouldn't be 'psychoanalysis.' This

change of frame provided the measure of freedom necessary for Freud to learn to search out the derivatives of the unconscious rather than uncover a real traumatic memory. The consequences for the turn also change the meaning of ‘cure’ from one of abreaction to a subversion of the neurotic transference to overvalued figures of authority by whom we wish to be ‘beaten’, in a manner of speaking. How can the analyst hold himself above or against such a wish, a wish moreover, understood as universal?

The materialization or substantialization, rather than mere elaboration, of a fantasy is a disaster for the work of analysis. Certainly, as well, the pathos of the exemplary man, the special child, is overturned in an Oedipus complex that we share universally whose endpoint is castration. What is shared universally, what is for Badiou, ‘for all’, can be thought. At the very least, when thought as an element of fantasy, psychoanalytically we begin to chart out the unstable identifications which force us to all too fluidly lapse between the positions of the omnipotent beating father, the victimized beaten, but loved, child, and, the ‘neutral’ third party voyeur who cries out, “a child is being beaten.”

In this fantasy, the limits of analysis are clear. The acceptance of cure is even clearer. Those who choose, choose to live as analysts do. The rest can continue to die or be unhappy, each in their own way. Yet we in our happy and resolved state maintain a fascination with everyone else’s attachment to suffering and death:

Here ethics is at the junction of two only apparently contradictory drives: since it defines Man by non-Evil, and thus by ‘happiness’ and life, it is simultaneously fascinated by death yet incapable of inscribing it in thought. The upshot of this compromise is the transformation of death itself into a spectacle made as discreet as possible, a mere disappearing, regarding which the living have the right to hope that it will not disrupt their delusional habits of contented ignorance... Considered as a figure of nihilism, reinforced by the fact that our societies are without a future that can be presented as universal, ethics oscillates between two complementary desires: a conservative desire, seeking global recognition for the legitimacy of the order peculiar to our ‘Western’ position- the interweaving of an unbridled and

impassive economy with a discourse of law; and a murderous desire that promotes and shrouds, in one and the same gesture, an integral mastery of life- or again dooms what is to the Western mastery of death. Against this we can set only that which is not yet in being, but which our thought declares itself able to conceive” (Badiou, 1998/2005, p.36-38).

The ethics of ‘that which is not yet in being’ is synonymous with Badiou’s event.

Contrary to this, in both human rights and psychoanalysis the confrontation with the demands of Badiou’s formalized ethics can be taken, unfortunately, as a situation of impossibility and resistance, or, as an ambiguous and tenuous position which must be substantiated or given validity. This is the action of nihilism against what is in fact our only resource. Multiplicity must, at all costs, be preserved in thought. Without the kind of singular thought Badiou is trying to articulate, we fall prey to the complimentary system of a desire for happiness and resolution, which lapses into a desire for death.

To my mind, the elusive continuity provided by the unconscious and its logic is one that is not and will never be immediately available. It is not directly available to consciousness and yet manifests itself when we can uphold a certain position charted by Badiou with his concept of the void, the event, and the subtractive qualities of truth. Anxiety quickly moves towards the extremes of excess and lack and only in toleration and moderation, even regulation, can thinking be sustained. For Badiou, he “can manage this only by adhering to his own principle of continuity, the perseverance in being of what he is, by linking (for such, precisely, is consistency) the known by the not-known. It is not an easy matter to spell out the ethic of a truth: ‘Do all that you can to persevere in that which exceeds your perseverance. Persevere in the interruption. Seize in your being that which has seized and broken you’” (Badiou, 1993/2001, 47). This not-known is, for myself, the multiplicity of an unconscious from which we are always barred. We must

follow the derivatives. We must persevere in this which exceeds us, seizes us, and breaks us. The refusal to continue along this path is like the negation internal to every defense furthering inhibition and acting out. Like the internal negativity of the spectacle of the victim within human rights, one is then haunted by the oscillation between desires and their prohibition, a tautology that takes the form of a scene where a child is being beaten.

At the very least, to subscribe to an ethics of the unconscious means we are not bearers of the Law, freedom, justice, or truth. Truth comes to us in an ethical position maintained by the subject. This unleashes the possibility of ‘freedom and justice’ in a new configurative vision. But it is not ours. In the words of Badiou, truth “befalls” and “seizes” us and this is not a process that we can control nor master. Commitment takes the form of hope or faith, an act of self-delegation, which has no representation of a future outcome (neither in the form of reward or punishment) and is thus the meaning of fidelity.

This likewise has nothing whatsoever, for Badiou, to do with opinion or *Doxa*. It traverses opinion- avoids it ultimately through its foundation in universality, and so avoids what is most dangerous about conformity. “Thought is subjected to the ordeal of conformity and only the universal through an uninterrupted labor, an inventive traversal that relieves it... Far from fleeing the century, one must live with it, but without letting oneself be shaped, conformed. It is the subject, rather than the century, who, under the injunction of his faith, must be transformed (Badiou, 1997/2003, p. 110).” Let me give another local example here.

Psychoanalysis has become, especially in the American variety, concerned with its public reception, with opinion as it were. The calls for scientific validity, proof,

accounting, have created entire genres- neuro-psychoanalysis, manualized therapy, outcome studies, all of which include vast emendations to theory and technique. Were not these criteria and demands for scientific validity present from the very beginning of psychoanalysis? What does it mean to meet them now? Certainly in starting off his project with dreams, jokes, and slips, Freud adhered to a system whose internal continuity and logic mattered more than scientific feats of proof. And yet, there was for Freud a basis for proof in the singular work with patients in analysis.

For Badiou, in succumbing to these external demands we have allowed ourselves to conform to the century having lost our faith and commitment to the unconscious, to Being, as so to the event. At the very worst, we have abandoned the singular ethics available to us and the transformative possibilities of thought. Now we want proof and outcomes foretold in advance before setting out on any path. 'It's only for the Good', one might argue. But that is precisely the problem. In his conception of ethics there is never a nameable good and certainly not an object. "The effect of seizing... drives philosophy with a singular intensity. This intensity comes from love, but love without the quandaries of object love, without the enigma of its difference" (Badiou, 1992/1999, p. 126). The act of justification is not a radical act of commitment. In fidelity, as in love, the sheer intensity of the subject's passion in a singular situation is the only foundation. This leaves little room for justification.

Let me say a few more words here about multiculturalism and difference, as opposed to a concept of universality which functions through singularity. The former for Badiou hold within them a theory of cultural relativism that is essentially opposed to notions of universal truth (which is always patriarchal, western, obsolete, fundamentally

racist, etc) except the universal truth that truth is relative and must respect particularity. Badiou declares (quoted above) that this notion of relativism is a great historical perversion for which we will pay the price. Why? Well, let me give a slight psychoanalytic reading. It is based on a neurotic fear of perversion, which points to its very vitality within fantasy life and thus makes one prone to enactment in the necessary recourse to defensive acts of negation that must be repeated. The lingering behind every door of racism, misogyny, homophobia- perverse attitudes which must be found, combated, prevented, exiled- itself begins to resemble the authoritarianism it is designed to combat. The similarity exists most strongly on the level of repetitiveness which is the hallmark of perverse actions- to do it to oneself or the object again and again and again. It is never only one murder, one violation, one punishment. Perversion as the negative of neurosis holds in place the force of the repetition compulsion- the sound and fury of action and inhibition.

The good of freedom and equality that is 'for all' lapses into a system whereby some as opposed to others are in possession of truth. How does something aimed at a real problem lapse into exactly that against which it was aimed? This is the central problem for Freud in taking on the repetition compulsion and the death drive. The multiculturalists have, for Badiou, silenced the possibilities for elaborating what in our very Being takes part in universality- beyond race, gender, or sexual orientation. Without this universal foundation we may have set upon a path that while surely static, at worst, in this stasis repeats acts of violence itself. While one does not declare that misogyny, racism, patriarchy, homophobia, are illusions, certainly they are not, perhaps the universality in the logic of the unconscious is another less ideological avenue to travel. That must strike

one as a rather strange proposition. Let's posit a theoretical, seemingly improbable, if not merely elusive, construction like the unconscious or the void of Being, over and against, real problems of violence by people against people.

It is the only possibility for thought to be set up as one of endurance, prudence, perseverance, reserve, and responsibility. Here thought is set up as the activity of a subject in his singular situation (which may be one of bearing the weight of the violence of racism, homophobia, misogyny etc) which may open up a new vision of equality none of us yet know. It is certainly true that we do not know it. Equality known becomes one that must be made real which all too easily lapses into repetition and a haste towards violence.

Furthering this last statement, Badiou declares that we must forget history in order to transform history. The call to remember the past made by multiculturalism- to account for and remember atrocities of the past is nothing more than the after-effects of terror. In this he is also responding to so many of those philosophies that declare an impasse with the advent of World War II and a constant reckoning with the horrors of the holocaust. This memorializing activity is not exactly remembering. It is rather nihilistic thought:

It must be bold enough to present its concepts without first bringing them in front of the tribunal of their historic moment... This imperative of forgetting [history] is a method, and, of course, in no way is it an ignoring. To forget history- this at first means to [finally] make decisions of thinking without returning to a supposed historical sense prescribed by these decisions. It is a question of breaking with historicism to enter, as someone like Descartes or Spinoza did, into an autonomous legitimating of discourse. Philosophy must take on axioms of thinking and draw consequences from them. It is only then, and from its immanent determination, that it will summon its history.... [It] determines itself in such a way as to judge history itself, and not have its history judge it" (Badiou, 1992/1999, p. 116).

The reigning effect of terror upon thought creates a temptation, a haste towards substantializing a truth (in order to circumvent atrocity). This is why the categorization of evil, from the Nazis of the middle of this century and the fight against anti-semitism, to racism, homophobia and misogyny of today and the laws of Human Rights that follow, is such a crucial example for Badiou's work.

Here the act of committing oneself to the thinking of truth, in philosophy, in psychoanalysis, in science, in art and in politics, summons history and transforms it. Badiou gives us back to the transformative power of such categories as thought and truth, much like psychoanalysis gave transformative power to the categories of love and speech. What Badiou posits as thinking (linking, delimiting, persevering) is close to the Freudian notion of sublimation. It concerns the sheer power of universality for Badiou, which in its 'for all' (having cultural value- with and for all) is the only possibility for freedom, choice, and radical self-determination.

For myself, I find Badiou's thought useful to psychoanalysis in a perhaps more broad fashion than he would ever be comfortable with. His ideas seem close to how I read Freud. Freud (1905), in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, discovered the universal truth of the sexual instincts and their work in childhood development and adult character. He did so first through understanding the aberrations of sexuality as- those of the criminal, the perverse, the infantile, and the mad- *in extremis* elucidating a universal structure. For this he could be considered one of the great equalizing writers of this century. We were not so different from them as he made clear.

It was also this position that to my mind made his writing inherently ethical and informed psychoanalysis as a clinical practice. Clinically Freud wanted to provide

patients with the power to choose, without telling them what should be chosen. To be chosen always implicated one in a transference hierarchy.

The work of the analyst thus depends upon the subversion of a structure that seeks to maintain a power hierarchy, the analysand in the transference relation to the analyst. This question relates to the larger context of academia which has always needed to do more than merely produce masters and disciples. The subversion of this structure is the very work of a psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is predicated on the possibility of truth and thus a measure of universality, say of the existence of the unconscious and of transference love. But, it is also predicated on the possibility of absolute singularity, the analytic process given specificity by each patient alone by the mapping of their unconscious desire.

These two have always existed side by side in Freud. The difficulty of maintaining a position which adheres to both universal truth and singular truth is at the heart of the current ethical crisis. How do we think about human rights when the language of human rights seems defunct particularly as a result of its implication in justifying imperialist wars- for example the American war in Iraq. How can we speak about what is universal to humans in a time when one must respect cultural differences which implicitly supports a relativistic conception of truth- only the singular truths of a culture as universal truth is considered from this perspective *a priori* biased.

This crisis seems to echo the Freudian universal crisis of loving and desiring the same person in neurotic suffering. Neurotic splitting, or the effects of terror and nihilism, force love or desire to eclipse one another. Here we have the divide found so often in art and literature between love as everything, the most important aspect of life, and love as a

charade whose truth is narcissism and deception. I think for Freud, love is neither this idealization nor disappointment, but tied to a continual labor. It is a labor which perseveres despite idealization and disappointment. It was always love *and* work. This is close to what is the core of Badiou's ethics.

The infantile fantasy sets up ethics and love as one structured by figures of authority and an abdication of choice when confronting an ambiguous and threatening situation. Psychoanalytic ethics of transference love is antithetical to this structure while nevertheless understanding the motivation behind it. It forces one to think at that juncture of impossibility which leads to the analytic act. It is essentially in that instance, "objectless", for it depends on the sheer force of the patient and analyst to remain faithful to the unconscious and to the unfolding process. In this there is no conception of a Good. There is no object that tells one how to come out the other side, or even what there will come to be so, so that one may continue with a little more ease. Choice is always a difficult one.

As in the prior example of human rights the desire to master the impossibility, the ambiguity, the multitude, in a sense to find a stable unity, is not to make a choice at all. It is ultimately to abandon the possibility of choice. The difficulty of choice for Badiou characterizes modernity and forces him to place this difficulty at the center of his ethical system and concept of subjectivity. As we quoted before, "modernity means not being able to choose reasonably in what concerns the relation between mastery and truth" (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 53). Modernity then, to the extent that it is merely a neurotic bind, must reckon with Freud's understanding of the subject, the unconscious, and the structure of fantasy.

Badiou will call ethics the immortal of a resistance, which, as we may remember, is on the side of the positive transference for Lacan precisely because it resists suggestion, resists mere sophistry, and any ‘in vogue’ brands of therapy that hold out an object to the patient. What a relief a patient’s resistance should be as we are relieved, as was said, of having to be the bearer of truth or of right. Truth befalls. Truth fells. We only have to listen- “off you go, say anything, it will be marvelous.” The passion contained by the resistance, contained in the symptom, has merely to be brought to light in the work of analysis with unconscious desire.

In the name of singularity, human rights and an ethics of difference, pass over singularity. Psychoanalytically, historicism materialized in the space of one’s unconscious erases the relation of a subject to “a place that deploys unnamable names” (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 42). What other place that deploys unnamable name can there be than what we have outlined as the unconscious? What we know is that overdetermination of the unconscious provides no basis for knowledge. “Overdetermination puts the possible on the agenda, whereas the economic place is that of well-ordered stability and the statist place that makes individuals function.... It must be said that overdetermination belongs to the subjective realm (choice, partisanship, militancy) even though it knows no subject-effect (such effects are statist), nor does it verify, or construct, any object” (ibid., 65). Rather in the moment of subjectivization, Or Lacan’s term for it, castration, we lose the privileged supports of the object. These supports are always normative by virtue of constructing an object *a priori*. It is for this reason that over-determination in Badiou is stripped of content- it is merely the exigent character of the drive harnessed in a process of choice and militant fidelity to a truth. “What is at stake is not the conjunction of a

norm and the statist figure, but the political process as self-termination, or the idea of a process that would carry out the withering away of the figure of the State by terminating the principle of sovereignty. The notion of ‘withering away’ is not part of the normative question about the persistence of the State [life and death]. On the other hand, if the ultimate aim of politics is the good State, or the preferred State, then the emergence of a norm is inescapable” (ibid., p. 82). This withering away is close to the fall of the analyst.

Like the three dreams there is the place of self-interest, the forcing of a name for what can only be void, dimensions of power, sentimentality, romanticism, and only the mere designation of some withering away, the fall of the analyst. Instructions on how to fell a tree with little knowledge about what passes beyond that fall. I’m fine with those mere instructions, in the exact way that I can read his politics and his philosophy as some form of an instruction to psychoanalysts. Instruction as Badiou would say on how to think. For this, I am quite grateful to Badiou, and his radical diagnosis of the power-plays inherent in theory, the subtle but brute materialization of truth, and his adherence to a fragile principle of the void of truth, has been invaluable.

And yet I must ask what effects this has on his own position? In what way is he absolved or not from these dilemmas? This struggle, this question of the one who knows but doesn’t escape the symptom, has always been the struggle between the analyst and his patient. Lacan only unraveled this dilemma by forcing the analyst to exit from knowledge. Perhaps Badiou knows too much, or better put, there is with him, too much knowing without as it were being in the know, which is for Lacan, to be where one is not. While both of these figures, Lacan, Badiou, were surely masters of the entire history of philosophy, particularly its classical dimension, Badiou leaves me feeling rather excluded.

The position of the master always invokes that excluded figure and the *object a* that he is forced to renounce in order to maintain his position as master. It is the hysteric, the split subject and her jouissance. At a historical point in time it was the slave and his enjoyment, an enjoyment most resented by the master. If this is so the psychoanalyst can no longer follow in Badiou's footsteps. Let us turn to this discourse between the hysteric and the master.

Badiou and the Borderline

What If the French are right? Let us assume that I haven't drawn conclusions already. Let us assume that I am not offended as a woman and an intellectual by the diagnostic category of Borderline pathology. Let us assume that I haven't found legitimacy to the feminist pleas to be spared this fate. Let us assume that I am not deeply worried about the ramifications of these ideas for the future of psychoanalysis. Let us assume that my outrage does not overshadow my attempts at clarity. Let us assume that I can believe for a minute, so as not to echo the sentiments I seek to deny, that we can have a reasonable discourse on such matters. Let us assume that I will now go forth from a point outside the two sides, to find out what it would mean if the French were right- without presuppositions. Let us assume, on one side or the other, that we feel the stakes are high. Let us assume that these assumptions are possible when we both know that they are not.

Here as American I speak and I know: Borderline Personality recognizable by 1) non-specific manifestations of Ego Weakness 2) Identity Diffusion 3) Shift toward Primary Process Thinking 4) Primitive Defenses such as Splitting and Denial resulting in

blurring of ego boundaries such that (i) lack of the development of primary autonomy (ii) lack of anxiety tolerance (iii) excessive frustration in reality (iv) excessive aggression (v) omnipotence and devaluation of self and other. From this I might recognize myself.

Affirmatively I am- ego strength, identity coherence, utilitarian in thought, reflective, integrated, bounded, autonomous, satisfied, capable of genuine love and empathy. And to move on to the negations, I am- not deficient, not intolerant of anxiety, not full of rage, not full of myself, not empty of myself, not needy, not desperate, not naively hopeful and not crudely pessimistic. I am, in a word, not Borderline.

Love and work: I was once told by a friend that in a meeting of some psychoanalytic association they were trying to define the difference between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. In the end it seemed as if the only thing that determined whether one was a psychotherapist or analyst, was the position of the patient, lying or sitting, in front of them. "All you have to do is look, and you can know what you are", he said to me. In love perhaps it is through the Borderline that I know who I am- undefeated, steady, satisfying, tender, empathic, whole. How uncanny it feels to know who I am by what enters my gaze, the image shaping my thoughts, defining my place, granting my authority. Yet by the very necessity of an external position giving locus internally, I am stripped of the very image and place of my authority.

Is there any way around this logic of identification- the image taken in, the other who defines- positive or negative- in an unceasing dialectic? Analyst and Borderline forever wed- and maybe the hope that comes when one knows that time marches on- she and he might remarry. For now they are something so indissoluble. The Borderline is the love and work of the analyst. Or is the analyst the love and work of the Borderline? I

remember Brecht- "art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." The question that remains for me, in the case of a psychoanalysis, is- is the misfortune the mirror or the hammer in the place of the analyst or Borderline?

If one reads Kernberg- the borderline's confusion of self and object land the analyst in a place where nothing new will arise except a situation such that one never seems to know who is doing what to whom. Violence is straight-forward, the mirror is empty, or is the other way around? The choice seems to be a false one and they might bare within them a crucial relationship.

Even the fact that contemporary psychoanalysis is constantly caught in a strange duality, mirrors this couple- our analyst and borderline. What I am referring to is the false dichotomies that are the choices one must make as an analyst these days- intrapsychic or intersubjective, repression or dissociation, the relationship or the interpretation, speech or insight. Perhaps Brecht too was a little naïve, and I for one would like to smash that mirror with a hammer or somehow be rid of them both. At least that is a dream I had.

And this couple no doubt dreams of one another. The French went so far as to say that the Borderline comes closest to the dream of the analyst. But they forget that the reverse is just as much the case and they are both no doubt a consolation to one another.

Boethius in the *Consolations* begins with his dream of woman:

'But now,' said she, 'is the time for the physician's art, rather than for complaining.' Then fixing her eyes wholly on me, she said, 'Are you the man who was nourished upon the milk of my learning, brought up with my food until you had won your way to the power of a manly soul? Surely I had given you such weapons as would keep you safe, and your strength unconquered; if you had not thrown them away. Do you know me? Why do you keep silence? Are you dumb from shame or from dull amazement? I would it were from shame, but I see that amazement has overwhelmed you.' When she saw that I was not only silent, but utterly tongue-tied and dumb, she put her hand gently upon my breast, and said, 'There is no danger: he is suffering from drowsiness, that disease which attacks so

many minds which have been deceived. He has forgotten himself for a moment and will quickly remember, as soon as he recognizes me. That he may do so, let me brush away from his eyes the darkening cloud of thoughts of matters perishable.' So saying, she gathered her robe into a fold and dried my swimming eyes (Boethius, 1902, Book I, Section II).

Matters perishable clouded his sight, and she restored him, by entering into his gaze. He had forgotten himself, and so she gave him back his immortal soul. The physician finds his way back to his love and work in the end through the recollection of heroes in discourse with this woman philosophy. He is given back his weapons. His work with her a rearmament. Psychoanalysis today- a time for the physician's art and not for complaints. There is no danger, be consoled. But silence begs the question. Why? Are you dumb from shame or from dull amazement? I wish it were from shame myself.

In love, the Borderline is defined in essence by lack and excess (lack of development of primary autonomy, lack of anxiety tolerance, excess aggression, excess frustration, excess of impulse), reproducing the very phenomenology of the drive, ripping through soma and psyche, in what can only be described as, not enough and too much, pain and pleasure inseparable since the *Three Essays*. But let me ask a question, if we suppose the symptom to be a question and these are the Borderline's symptoms, "What is it that has trouble getting up, trouble staying up, trouble not being anxious about being up, a problem about falling down, a problem having fun, and a problem coming down? I trust I do not need to provide the answer" (Schneiderman, 2005).

And if she embodies the pleasure-unpleasure principle, then perhaps it is up to her lover to be the penetration into that of reality- defined as it in accordance by its fullness, completeness, strength and vitiation. Here, in Boethius' dream, and in our pair, the woman gives the doctor back to his work, and the doctor restores the woman to her body-

both under the sign of the phallus. And I'm sure they would not have it otherwise. But at the very least I cannot take sides, they are dependant upon one another. To denounce one is to obliterate them both, you cannot choose which one to destroy.

Is there another way out then of this fortunate or unfortunate coupling?

Moustapha Safouan formulates the question this way:

the social bond is in two dimensions. On the one hand, social identity is transmitted from generation to generation along with the name, and forms a bond between the members of a society, which they will readily admit when faced with a stranger. On the other hand, within each generation, where it is not the question of a victory for anyone, there is set up a world of festival and entertainment, the world in its narcissistic structure. From this angle, the social bond which consists in hatred toward the outside, is woven on the inside out of a refusal to mourn. But to whom or to what might the mourning refer?

It would be flying in the face of the evidence to answer that mourning here concerns those we have loved and lost. For the fact is that we feel such losses only too deeply. But those whom we have loved and lost are also those whom our titles to love would seem to have uncontested validity, and it is only natural that we should think to hold these titles by virtue of what we are. And yet we need to know what we are, or rather, to know the absence of what we are beyond the reference to our image.

This question can be formulated another way: what becomes of the subject if ever he is obsessed by the question of his origins, like the Wolf-Man on the approach of his fourth birthday? The answer is that he is paralyzed, petrified by the gaze, at the outermost edge of the visible, which masks the impending dislocation of his organic integrity, the gaze of the wolves perched on the tree and wishfully supplied with magnificent tails (Safouan, 1993/2003, p. 67).

Can we see our physician, upstanding member of society, consolidated identity under one name, one flag, one land, perhaps one institute, but wary of the stranger, the outsider, matters perishable, and the clouding of his gaze which must search anxiously the horizon. With an eye for the one who is vanishing. And she the carnival, festival, entertainment, image incarnate, and likewise deaf and dumb, as the flesh is in all its sensuality giving narcissistic fullness. It is a matter of time and space that is the thin line between these two, the first the frozen image, a-historicity- no time, the second the unceasing turnover of the

image, history's march- no space, no stopping. Both wind their way to immediacy- image or word.

And if the physician dreams of his own land as borderless, she dreams of a land made simply of borderlines- both in any case a no-man's land. And if the Borderline has almost all symptoms- neurotic and psychotic alike, it insures that "she is everypatient, and he will be her everything-analyst," especially "if he takes her as Borderline and accepts her demand that she be taken thus" (Schneiderman, 2005). How strange that the every patient and everything-analyst dream of a nothing land. Surely there is the wish for relief from always having to be everything. The trouble is that, just as Safouan states, the problem is elsewhere. Or it is the elsewhere that is the very problem, the fact that I can only locate and recognize myself elsewhere, or only everywhere else but where I look. More and more our doctor and his patient are caught in a reciprocal gaze, and that elsewhere is relegated to the dream of border-lands. And so it is really a matter of optics that separates these two, she constituted by the gaze downward from above, and he by that from her from below.

I am reminded of a recent talk by Glen Gabbard. He was mapping the deficient brain of the Borderline. He glossed over it, but I caught it out of the corner of my eye on one of his slides- they had discovered the area of the brain associated with psychic emptiness (a terrible problem for these everypatients and everything analysts). But what a conundrum- If you remove this part of the brain, make a hole there, what then do you get? How do you make a hole out of a hole? Do you get an intensification of emptiness or its relief- which would be paradoxical to say the least, if not totally absurd, such that making a hole in the brain would bring psychic fullness? The Borderline and her analyst throw

back at us this dilemma of presence and absence. It would be nice, in any case, to be able to escape the whole problem.

The Borderline cannot be the unsung hero I want her to be and the analyst neither the monomaniac ego, or in any case they can be both at once not in order to break out, but to support one another in their place- to give back to one another the recognition through the image or the word. Fragmentation or coherence- both seem to travel under the sign of the whole, the all, the one, which is as much as to say the hole, the nothing and the negative. The feminists will be angry with me, but then again I am angry with myself for having been caught in this dilemma and still having no way out.

To be on one side is find your way back onto the other, Borderline or analyst, patient or doctor, French or American. I suppose these dualities are as unstable as the borderline herself and the analyst in the face of her. They both increase exponentially and these patients are turning up in huge numbers as do the texts which tell us how to manage her. Let us look there then, in lieu of remaining embroiled in this abstraction of their romance.

I had run across this once a long time ago- it comes from Kernberg (1989). Taken from reality, no one could have written it any better. It carries within it the majesty of Beckett- actions that run through themselves with vacuity but seem necessary none-the-less, affect- absent or utterly exaggerated, indifference to human difference and human difference so extreme it begs indifference, and in the last analysis- theatrical combat which is drained and depleted but persists so painfully one cannot but envision the tragedy and the hope for something else, somewhere else. Could we not have specified

more clearly the play of the Borderline patient and her doctor? It needed its proof from the transcript:

Therapist: Well, so we are starting our psychotherapy today.

Patient: Uh-huh

Therapist: Is there anything on your mind?

Patient: (long delay) No

Therapist: I have been talking on the phone with your brother, who called me to tell me that you wouldn't come to the Tuesday session because you made a suicide attempt and were in the hospital. He said that he expected you to be here today. Of course this raises immediately the question about whether you're really being able to go through this. You didn't call me, you didn't explain anything.

Patient: I did call

Therapist: You called after your brother talked with me. You told my secretary that you thought that I might be annoyed because you hadn't called. Your brother had told you something like that. So you gave indication that you called after thinking that I might be annoyed. But, uhm, you didn't call before that.

Patient: I was very out of it (silent laugh)

Therapist: But, but you didn't really take the initiative to start our with, to let me know that you wouldn't show up at your session, at a point when you knew that—

Patient: (interrupting) can I tell you that I didn't even know what day I called. I was very out of it.

Therapist: Well, let me share with you what your brother said. He said that you had been taking some kind of medication or over-the-counter drug, and that's why you conveyed the impression of being out of it. Is that a fair statement?

Patient: No, it was really an overdose

Therapist: An overdose of what?

Patient: Elavil and Valium

Therapist: Well that's what I was referring to. So if you were out of it, it was because you had taken all kinds of drugs.

Patient: Right

Therapist: So I am talking about the decision you made to take those drugs.

Patient: Hmmm

Therapist: From experience you know that once you take drugs you are out of it and you should have called me saying 'I am about to take those drugs and I am not showing up on Tuesday.' And you didn't do that [look at the wonderful mix of tenses- past, present, future perfect, future anterior!]

Patient: It doesn't seem to me to be a normal course of procedure to call someone up and say I'm going to be taking an overdose.

Therapist: Well then we have to talk about this, because unfortunately that will have to be normal procedure if you want to through with this treatment. In other words, we have to talk about how we can maintain the regularity of our sessions and at the same time, what our understandings are about your responsibilities regarding your life. For you to undergo this treatment, to come regularly, twice a week, as we are going to structure it, as we have decided for you to do, it is important that you take responsibility for your daily life.

Otherwise you cannot commit yourself to such a treatment. So what I would like to do is to spell out what I see as a minimum requirement for our really carrying out this psychotherapy and then see what you have to say about that. OK?

Patient: If you like

Therapist: What I would expect for you to do is whenever you feel that you are about to make such a gesture, regardless of the reason for it, at that point you go into a hospital immediately.

Patient: I won't go into a psychiatric hospital

Therapist: Ok, then I won't be able to treat you. (pause) then we have reached the end at the beginning.

Patient: You were the one that said to me that you do not feel that I would benefit from hospitalization

Therapist: Absolutely sure, but this is not in contradiction... certainly once you are out of control somebody has to evaluate whether you need further hospitalization and I am not going to do that.

Patient: You can't do that on an outpatient basis?

Therapist: I will not do that. Once you are in psychotherapy with me my responsibility will be to help you understand what this is all about, and the only way I can do that is by staying totally away from all the management issues regarding your suicide attempts.

Every time I read it, it has the same impact on me- the wondrous reversal of positions: patient turned analyst with her, "hmmms" and finally, the kill, her "if you like", sending back the analyst's demand through his questioning "OK?" And then the Analyst turned patient- who does all the talking and in the end must hear his own contradiction- I must not manage you, I can only manage you.

In form what I find is only the futility of each of their actions, an inability to empathize with either of their actual plights but with their words which circle around and never meet one another, until as is said, they have both reached the end in the beginning

On might generalize from this. Why so many Borderlines, or rather, if she constitutes the outside edge, what is this "Borderline state of humanity":

This female Christ is a mutant who, through his/her "suffering" causes the inhuman to arise in humanity. This physically psychic suffering is her/his flesh. The incarnation is the work of disintegration of time that produces the reverse side of the face. That is what the incarnation of the inhuman is...The borderline state of humanity was, as it were, fixed backwards and yet without a past. Surely,

then, being deprived of the anxiety of a catastrophe is a sort of proof of the inhuman, just like the inability to feel fear or dread, which are human feelings. And so the suffering that tormented her was like flayed skin that has to be rubbed all the time so that one can feel alive... The Borderline state of humanity is the fulcrum at which the grimaces, simulating affects, of anonymous normality, tip over into the slow destruction of their appearances. It is also the exhaustion of the dream by the insomnia of cruelty... If the suffering of the psyche was supposed to be, for the woman, the true flesh of her sex, then this borderline state of humanity can avail itself of the most intimate acquaintance with the suffering of Christ, who is, in some way, the mirror of all symptoms of the human- the ultimate mishap (Fedida, 1999, p. 64-65).

But what is to become of this inhuman brought to the surface in work with these Borderlines, who show not that they are Borderline, but that humanity's other face is a Borderline state- tormented flesh, the disintegration of time, catastrophe no where to be found in the real? Is it in fact to say anything very new? Or is it pointing to the fact that nothing new can be said and that to call someone Borderline is in fact to say nothing?

For myself I cannot but think of Freud's notion that neurosis is a failed rebellion. And if the analyst is wed to the Borderline, then his rebellion from the father Freud, his charting of new territories and categories through her, is likewise a failure. And if her insomnia of cruelty forces the reproduction of his dreams, his dreaming gives her the impetus to roam only in the desert. In this they resurrect one another and that is not in fact the drama of Christ's crucifixion who until the very end had no hope for resurrection and felt forsaken by his own father. "The destitute condition of humanity, if it was to be fully restored, had to be lived all the way through, pressed to the extreme limit of a descent into the hell of meaninglessness and desolation, rather than disavowed, patched up and short circuited. Only by being 'made sin' in the Pauline phrase, turned into some monstrous outcast symbol of humanity, can the scapegoat go all the way through that condition to emerge somewhere on the other side" (Eagleton, 2003, p. 37). It is not clear,

but it seems that the Borderline hardly risks such a fate. She makes herself the object of “dull amazement” as much as she brings scorn and condemnation upon her. His failure is perhaps not to be dully amazed. And in condemnation or praise, one hardly finds any risk at all, which is why this dialogue is characterized by- being stuck. There has to be yet another way out of this dilemma than what can only be seen manifestly as- “disavowed, patched up and short circuited.”

In this suturing of the void, the short circuit, something must be learned if not the temptations themselves for these kinds of solutions. If on a bad day I place myself in utmost contradistinction to my American bedfellows, disavow everything that Kernberg stands for, his commandment is a strength in me. I am not alone, and I am hardly a martyr. It is an attraction to an ethical imperative to which I might comply or revolt which makes me one with that which I seek to disobey. As Safouan puts it, “The existence of the commandment is not asserted to a lesser degree in revolt than it is in obedience. Indeed it could even be said to be more strongly asserted in revolt. For one can obey out of mere force of habit, whereas he who commits himself to an ordeal, necessarily does so under the gaze of the All-powerful” (Safouan, 1993/2003, p. 59). This is why I, at my worst and perhaps at my best, like the analyst of borderlines and the borderline herself, amounts to little more than a failed rebellion.

But in that being One, the answer may in fact lie. Because somewhere else, the elsewhere where I need to find myself, would have to be found away from any kind of being One if by that we mean any kind of specularized or dual relation, any kind of optical trick of perspectival change- the fullness given when the drive is caught in that kind of a circuit or exchange. The chasm here is precisely what is short-circuited and

reality is given over to infinite regression as a mirror of the drive that brought it into awareness. Safouan asks, “What happens when the subject is obsessed with the question of his origins?” and answers, “he is paralyzed by the gaze of the wolves and their magnificent tails.” This is the gaze that deposits you on the one side or the other, to uphold precisely that- the face and its reverse, Borderline and Analyst, whole and not-whole, phallic completeness with incompleteness as its referent or incompleteness under the sign of the phallus. Nothing else, nothing more, no more of an elsewhere from one position to the next.

I suppose a matter of value can be claimed to be the stakes of this game. You or I prefer one or the other. In this we might never meet. You prefer say adaptation, and I prefer mal-adaptation. I can do no more than to assert that I do not like where you are coming from. I can level all kinds of criticism in the direction of authoritarianism or whatnot. Multiculturalism has been one of the ways in which such a position instantiates itself- differences that are rendered impossible for the next to comprehend along with the *command* for respect despite the incomprehensibility which is also a commandment. This has been part of the relational vs classical psychoanalytic debates which have done nothing more than rent our field in two to the point that it is being driven into oblivion. The all-powerful looms large on either side when the only stakes that can be claimed are those of a particular opinion and value. *Doxa*. Such is the way that the Law comes into play and, as Badiou would say, under the sign of death:

The fundamental question is that of knowing precisely what it means for there to be a single God. What does the “mono” in “monotheism” mean? Here Paul confronts- but also renews the terms of- the formidable question of the One. His genuinely revolutionary conviction is that the sign of the One is the “for all” or the “without exception”... The One is that which inscribes no difference in the subjects to which it addresses itself... For Paul, the law always designates a

particularity, hence a difference. It is not possible for it be an operation of the One, because it addresses its fallacious One only to those who acknowledge and practice the injunctions it specifies... The particular which pertains to opinion, custom, law, cannot be inscribed in the One (Badiou, 1997/2003, p.76).

The Law here of the fallacious One of course speaks exactly to multiculturalism and the ethics of difference which could do no more than grow more and more moral. However it equally applies to the analyst of Borderlines who, as we saw, can find himself nowhere else but in the place of a case manager- acknowledge and practice the injunctions that I specify. Through clarification, confrontation, and interpretation, he declares his will and his Law. But the Borderline herself is also implicated in this schema in so far as she is the revolt from the Law, wherein the Law is given substance moretheless- “by calling the autonomy of desire “sin” [and thus transgression] when its object is fixed by the Law’s commandment, designates the effect of the latter as the subject’s coming to occupy the place of the dead” (ibid., p. 80). So it is no wonder that she incarnates the inhumanity of humanity- as the French say- but not under the aegis of radical transgression. Each fallacious One is based on the exclusion of the other, is in fact held in place in this way- this is what it is to be caught in a reciprocal gaze.

Rather than continue in praise of ill-defined sacrifice we have to, as analysts, take a more extreme risk. There has to be an effect on my subjective position which cannot be a masochistic submission to the all-powerful. It might well remain a masochistic submission but certainly not to an idea of the all powerful. Here at least, even in submission, the circuit opens rather than being short-circuited.

This opening is at the heart of Badiou’s logic. Any transfer in the direction of an Other has to do with a radical redistribution of life and death back to their rightful places. This giving of life and death back to their place- for Badiou- is maddeningly anti-

dialectical. But first, he says, we must understand how they found their way onto either side of the chiasmus.

My indebtedness to dialectical thinking, which brought me to psychoanalysis in the first place, is at risk with an acceptance of Badiou's thought. What he is concerned with is the production of something new which for him can only take place through a radical break, a radical and wholly subjective declaration, commitment, and risk. The movement of dialectics, historical truth, the becoming of being, cannot ground this ethical subject. It is just one more permutation of inner and outer, domination and submission, finding itself on either side of the chasm that separates them, and grudgingly makes its way along. This is not what he has in mind.

The problem that Badiou has, is that regardless is what position is taken what seems to be most at stake is charisma, proofs, conceptual leaping about, and not necessarily truth in the way he is trying to conceptualize it. Badiou will state:

The declaration will have no other force than the one it declares and will not presume to convince through the apparel of prophetic reckoning, of the miraculous exception, or the ineffable personal revelation. It is not the singularity of the subject that validates what the subject says; it is what he says that founds the singularity of the subject... it must be borne humbly, with a precariousness appropriate to it...[it] must be accomplished in weakness for therein lies its strength. It shall be neither logos, nor sign, nor ravishment by the unutterable (ibid., p. 54).

The problem is that the Borderline and her analyst make one another the exception to their rule- they expose one another's lie. The Law as absolute excludes, and makes present this unutterable as the reverse side of the face. Now one might say, is this not a truth process, is this not enough? I have always said yes, and furthermore that this is truth itself making itself present in the becoming. I am a good Hegelian and critical theorist. I love Adorno, and, for that matter, the Borderline herself, for manifesting this lie,

exception, and breakdown. I am charitable to her in this regard. “You, analyst of Borderline’s are not, and will grow obsolete. I am proof”. Badiou’s answer is no- no proofs, pure beginning.

This historical particularity cannot sustain a universal truth. It is mere quibbling, which, in truth, is the state of psychoanalysis today of which I am a part in his eyes. And psychoanalysis historically has only been able to move along from one charismatic figure to the next for whom you sit and wait. In the end this figure moves from scandal, to gratitude, and on to reification, with various groups making claims to his thought for their own purposes, a thinking that is increasingly moralized as the figure him or herself is increasingly valorized. Their gaze in this process is increasingly fixed. This is what Badiou calls the problem of saints becoming priests. Nothing new arises and Truth gives way to simulacrum.

In this perspective the Borderline does not create anything new, she merely makes present what is lost in the perspective of a fixed gaze. I assume, assumed, that that was all that could be made present. Truth found in the return of the repressed or the appearance of disappearance itself. She is to be congratulated for such a feat. For Badiou, it is not radical enough, it does not break with the older logic. It does not relegate life and death to their places but merely shows that where one thought they had rid themselves of the other, they were in fact wrong. It substantiates failure in the relation, but it does not show the way out, it does not provide a way out, it does not involve the risk which is inherent in the getting out. The only way out is to find oneself outside is through a radical break with this Law, this logic, this system.

For Badiou the problem is the division of the subject, the subject that has “exited from unity” and finds that the Law, whose order is that of Death, the No, and repression, gives life to the subject, but as sin and automaton (of desire). And, since the Law is right, it is life, and life is brought to the side of death. It is not I who live and act but the sin in me in accordance with the Law. “With the law, the path of death, which was itself dead, becomes alive once more. The law gives life to death and the subject as life according to the spirit falls onto the side of death... the death of life is the Self and the life of death is sin.” This leaves for Badiou the utter separation between knowledge and will, and, agency and action:

Let us generalize a little. For Paul, the man of the law is one in whom doing is separated from thinking. Such is the consequence of seduction by commandment. The figure of this subject, wherein the division lies between a dead Self and the involuntary automation of living desire, is, for thought, a figure of powerlessness. Basically, sin is not so much a fault as living thought’s inability to prescribe action. Under the effect of the law, thought disintegrates into powerlessness and endless cogitation because the subject (the dead Self) is disconnected from a limitless power: that of desire’s living automation (ibid., p. 83).

Salvation is defined by this un-separation of thinking and doing which comes with the resurrection which accords life and death back to their places through founding universal truth that is a for all, against the particularities of the Law that divide the subject and divide subjects- powerlessness on the side of the subject, and generalized war between subjects.

Power is not to be found through negation, or negative dialectics. With St. Paul such an operation falls away. With Saint Paul, the Jews and the Greeks are not negated, they are not rendered inconsequential or obsolete. Paul states, “circumcision doesn’t matter, and non-circumcision doesn’t matter.” In the affirmation the negation falls away. They no longer commingle infinitely like life and death which creates powerlessness and

blind action. In the affirmation one finds that the power produced by the declaration takes the form of hope which has no representation of a future outcome (neither in the form of reward or punishment- here we escape masochism as a submission which sustains the all-powerful) and is thus pure fidelity. This has nothing whatsoever, for Badiou, to do with opinion. It traverses opinion- avoids it ultimately through its foundation in universality. “Thought is subjected to the ordeal of conformity and only the universal through an uninterrupted labor an inventive traversal relieves it... Far from fleeing the century, one must live with it, but without letting oneself be shaped, conformed. It is the subject, rather than the century, who, under the injunction of his faith, must be transformed (ibid., p. 110).”

With this last statement, we see the untruth of the Borderline. And we might have sensed the untruth of psychoanalysis, which always traveled under the cover of dialectics. But transformation has always been its business and its problem has always been conformity, of the patient, of the analyst, of the patient to the analyst, and perhaps of the analyst to the patient as well. If psychoanalysis is to get out from under a dialogue that is not just stuck in the endless interplay of analyst and borderline, but is also caving in on itself, it must reckon with Badiou. By Badiou’s logic it matters not that he is French nor that I am American, neither that he is a philosopher nor that I am trying to become a psychoanalyst. This argument is rendered inconsequential as I cannot speak to or at you from one position or another if I am to speak the truth by maintaining the universal and not conformity or flight.

Psychoanalytic quibbling of opinions and allegiances, vigilance of the trespasser or the sign, endless waiting for the next cult of personality, exhausting all of our reserves

of power when we render thought powerless to act, is to lose any foundation in universality. The split between humanities and the sciences is just one more testament to the division of the subject that Badiou speaks about which while not untrue, doesn't make its way toward universal truth. If anything the Christ event in psychoanalysis was the declaration of the existence of the unconscious and the logic that proceeded. This is what to my mind has been foreclosed.

The universality of the unconscious is lost in the particularity of the historical figures that psychoanalysis valorizes, as well as their infighting and demands for proof, which we both conform to as we find our way towards the very commandment itself. It is no longer enough that we say it. And so then it follows that the speech of our patients and the interpreting of the analyst will never exceed themselves toward what Badiou will call grace. Action is rendered impossible without the allowance of grace. Analysis is interminable, subjectivity is terminable. We will, as Badiou said, never be "caught unaware" which is how the event arrives, which is as much as to say that the unconscious is lost. There is in this state, no psychoanalysis.

To declare that the unconscious exists and that we know nothing, and need not know anything more about it, is inherently a weak position that we must bear out if our discipline is to have any effect of truth:

[It confounds] those who 'when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, are without understanding', ascribes no redemptive signification to the apostle's tribulations. Here again, as always, it is a question of the earthen vessel, of the post-evental bearing of weakness, of the destitution of worldly criteria of glory: 'if I must glory, I will glory in the things that show my weakness'... Paul's preaching includes no masochistic propaganda extolling the virtues of suffering, no pathos of the crown of thorns, flagellation, oozing blood, or the gall soaked sponge (*ibid.*, p. 104).

The French are right then, to answer the question with which we began, to the extent that they do not redeem the Borderline, but redeem neither the borderline, nor the analyst of borderlines, nor do they condemn either. In fact this holds for the psychoanalyst and the analysand, universally as opposed to those whose subjective position gains strength, through an illusory gaze- glory, tribulations, pathos of suffering. Psychoanalysis and its proofs, scientific as well as that of the analyst's mastery of the patient and their dynamics (the multitude of case studies), have been the conditions upon which it saw itself gaining strength. This is also the condition under which psychoanalysis is driven into death.

The Borderline is she who holds up the mirror as the reverse side of the face- death brought to the side of life. The analyst of Borderlines submits to the reflection and embodies a dead law whose extolled virtue is supposed to give life. The unconscious as an event that the two share is eradicated from their relationship as that universal which exceeds them. In fact again and again we are told to have no faith in her unconscious and a total mastery of our own- our theories which show that we should have no faith in what she comes to say to us as analyst- blind primary process, as if personality, false self, pure evacuation, incapable of analytic symbolic work, non-specific manifestations of ego- weakness- as it is, in short, detestable weakness. We shall counter it under the guise of strength which is why analysis has to go down the path of arm-wrestling the Borderline out of helplessness.

Ah, the indelible problem of her subjective position of weakness, economic drain that she is since hospitalization only makes her worse, and you have to, in the end, beg her to leave your office. We cannot hear her, but I, hearing Badiou, say, here, "Do not work from within her gaze and her weakness will be transformed, which is as much to

say that our weakness is transformative.” Such will have been the analyst’s fidelity to the unconscious, our uninterrupted labor to remain in fidelity within a century whose ordeal is conformity.

This fidelity to the unconscious seems to me to define what it is to be an analyst. What I do not know as weakness is transformed into a state of grace when I allow myself to be caught unaware which is to accept the not-known, the unconscious, as the only power of the known. Weakness, being a dupe, declaring that the ineffable unconscious exists, is the only way to open up possibility. To enter into grace. Such will have been my burden as an analyst:

This is a detour that calls to mind- if we are not to say that it calls to mind the subject of the unconscious- another, namely, the one leading us to the fact that it is through the law of the name that the subject is constituted as subject of desire. It is thanks to its grace that the subject escapes madness where it has no choice but hurl itself desperately at all-powerfulness, assuming it does not lay claim to it; just as it is by the demand signified in it that it is invited to its position as subject. In this regard, it is at the source of what one may term the analyzing function of the latter (Safouan, 1993/2003, p. 63).

Again, I am grateful to Badiou. I am in his debt. And through this debt I know what kind of analyst I would like to be and in the end it has little to do with who Badiou is. In fact it prohibits it for the very reason that from within this I cannot be a philosopher as he has conceived it, as he has ultimately conceived of himself. I use him, I’ve used him this entire time, and in the end I let him go, with all of the shame that this brings upon me. It is a better shame than the one he induces as the master who gathers the conditions of everyone’s truth and who, like the analyst of borderlines, will only but confront the contradiction within the position that he holds. I am the one in the process of vanishing, out from under his gaze from above, not to lapse into the borderline, the attractive immanence of her truth, but to finally find the position of the analyst. This is the

consequence of my fidelity to his thinking, of having loved him in the way he couldn't have loved anyone else, even himself. Impossible without desire.

On Love and Shame

So it is as a clinical psychoanalyst that I must return to Badiou. It is from a very different place than that in which his philosophy is articulated. There is trouble here. Psychoanalysis has maintained a kind of self-imposed exile from academia—at its most extreme here in America—with fewer and fewer clinical analysts that aim to speak outside of their institutes and enclaves as clinical analysts. But in the end I must try.

The great contradiction in addressing Alain Badiou is that he told me that he wished to know nothing about psychoanalysis and that if I liked I could call this his symptom. How do I take such a rebuff from my master? I don't think he's alone in not wanting to know anything about psychoanalysis. Oddly, psychoanalysts themselves display this tendency through their own withdrawal.

But what do we make of this decision? Badiou is a philosopher who considers Lacan his event. He is, as he has said, a great "Lacanian." But then we have to take account of the fact that Lacan was first and foremost a psychoanalyst, with a practice and a discourse that was meant to speak to analysts about analysis.

I think we all too easily forget that in this age of cultural criticism. And do we not then fall into the trappings of a symptom when we promote this wholesale repression? A passion for ignorance—as is the case with symptoms.

Psychoanalysis is, in Badiou's system, like symptoms themselves, everywhere and nowhere. One can read from this a structure—it is centered around a hole, but one

which has come to be filled with a little symptom that cannot be known, cannot be spoken. For Badiou, psychoanalysis is a part of the truth procedure of love but not equivalent to it, is taken up in Lacanian structures that inform him, has some bearing on a theory of the subject, and yet, the clinical dimension is dismissed, because truth for Badiou, should always be free. Perhaps it can be subsumed under some idea of an anti-philosophy, but, in the end, the final word is that it cannot, and should not, be confused with philosophy. Mums the word, while that was, I'm sure, a mouthful.

But let us try to seriously consider the question of the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis (lest we lapse into mere cultural criticism once again). I often think of philosophers like Derrida or Deleuze, or even Žižek, for whom a concern with psychoanalysis was central. Their discourse was a perpetual game of fort-da, and, for my part, I recognize little in them that resonates with what I do as a practicing analyst. Badiou is something else entirely, ironically: he is the one philosopher who has chosen to disavow this confrontation with psychoanalysis.

Here I speak as a psychoanalyst who takes Badiou at his word. He determined a large part of my formation, as we call it, as an analyst. His discourse had a profound effect on my reading of Lacan, and it led me back to a particular strain of his thought, in particular on the question of modesty. This is perhaps not an obvious point, even if it has become all too obvious to me. I forget the clichés that subsume Lacan. The violence he still provokes. Perhaps the glare coming off of so many Lacanian objects—the jargon, mathemes, formulae, graphs—prevents one from seeing this other side of Lacan. I see in him a modest analyst, in love with madness, feminine madness in particular, but through a real sense of limitation, not in the sense of a discourse on finitude, but that which comes

from understanding what it means to be an analyst, to act from that impossible place.

Badiou, for me, reads Lacan here.

All that blather of Lacan's about the analyst playing dead, playing dumb, allowing himself to be a dupe, and love the unconscious, becoming, as he says, as stupid as a cabbage. Certainly, if a symptom is a passion for ignorance, the analyst professing to be a lively and knowledgeable fellow would get nowhere. Impossibility has to delimit, as Badiou says, the conditions of possibility. Or further, this is the very "power of the impossibles." For Lacan, to be an analyst means learning to live through the vertigo of the analytic position, being put in the position of supposed knowledge and having to find the way both to accept that position and yet internally to refuse it. One also must find the way to allow oneself to be discarded, in the end, by another. At that juncture, I am forced to confront a divide at the place of this symptom of Badiou's, as he calls it, where I can no longer locate my place in his discourse for the reason that there is a difference between a discourse on modesty and a modest discourse. It is to the latter that this work was always aimed no matter how often it failed, no matter how often my voice failed. I could have taken up a position of mastery, even as I eschewed knowledge. It would have made writing much easier. I have tried something else. I have wrapped this work in a conceit of dreams.

So then let me tell you about one last dream. I walk into a library to look for my husband, but I do so by looking for another man, a philosophy professor of mine who is, in fact, dying. It is a disorienting and strange tactic, no doubt, but who am I to argue with the logic of dreams. A third man, who I will find out later is a visiting professor, asks me if I am just going to stand there with my mouth agape. I am enraged and humiliated, and

a sense of shame, like finding yourself naked in public, overwhelms and paralyzes me. I almost apologize and give way to inhibition. Instead I find myself saying, “I find my way by looking for the man who I know will never be there.” The word left in my mouth when I awoke, was not in fact “agape” but Agape—Christian Love of thy neighbor.

Certainly, one can glean a certain hysteria in this, an old and not so trustworthy friend. She usually leads me astray, except, of course, when it comes to a certain question of truth. Lacan, famously said that if there is anything the hysteric loves, it is truth, and she brings one into question precisely there. She raises the value of the symptom to the level of truth, which, as he says, is always the truth that the master is castrated.

The difficulty with hysterics is that they never lay a hand on truth, and, as it goes, she usually winds up with precisely what she claimed not to be looking for (as it is said a master). So, perhaps, knowing a certain inclination I have that is particularly hard to escape, I reverse strategies, and find exactly what I want, precisely by looking for something else.

This something else—in the case of the dream a someone else—that will never be in his place, means one can find the right place, at the right time. It is about a stance that one occupies as a matter of tact. There are four figures in this dream: myself, and three men—the interlocutor, my husband (whom I presumably find), and the absent one.

Lacan states that for the hysteric, it is only if things are well with the God who is dead, who is not there, that she can do anything with a real man. Otherwise, we run into the perennial problem of the love of a hysteric that flows in the beauty of a virile identification, the “implacable erotic transference” (Badiou, 1998/2005, p. 53), as Badiou calls it.

And in the case of my interlocutor, he is that figure Lacan called the non-dupe-err, the one who refuses to make a mistake and so goes astray. For this figure, the God who is dead is clearly not dead enough and the indictment of what should be done properly in libraries, rather than standing around with our jaws dropped, mouths wide open, shows that he is up to his ears in a shame before this God, with which he can do little else than dump it onto his neighbor. I could have crawled off in the face of him. We are sometimes at our best in dreams.

And, of course, there is this question of the living husband and the absent man. One of the thoughts I had upon awakening was that it is impossible to look for someone. The more you look for the signifiers you expect to see, the more you are led astray. At least for me, the moment that I drop the intensity of my gaze, I suddenly allow some new sign into consciousness that allows me to find what I am seeking. In a crowd, for example, I look for some obvious sign—my husband’s bald head, his interminably black shirts—and not until I stop looking do I find what will actually let me locate him—the slouch in his shoulders, his particular gait, a thickness of neck.

This is a description of the tact of the analyst. The stupidity and possibility of surprise allows one to find her way to speech; it opens up a space, a gap. Without this gap? Without the man who will never be in his place? There are a thousand ways one goes astray between the beginning and the end of analysis, in the space between “agape” and Agape (with the embarrassing allusion I cannot help but hear—from the oral dimension to sublimation proper).

For Lacan, one of the signs that one is approaching this hole, this gap, is not in fact Love, but shame. It is only through shame that we pass towards a doing well with a

“God who is Dead.” The dilemma here is close to what we already mentioned as the impossible choice of modernity for Badiou- the inability to chose between mastery and truth. Badiou would prefer that “truth be articulated onto the void,” to “discover a thinking of choice and of the decision that would go from void to truth without passing through the figure of the master” who is either, invoked again and again, by said visiting professors, or sacrificed, in the immanence and immobility of a hysterical terror (*ibid.*, p. 53-54).

Lacan took from Hegel the link between the Death of God and love of one’s neighbor. The destruction of the Law into the pure formality of Agape—the maxim to “love thy neighbor as thyself”—contains the risk of going to the heart of a necessary emptiness. For Hegel, what dies on the cross is not a finite representative of God, but the God beyond himself. Man stands alone in the face of the Other who becomes an abyss. It is only this structure that allows us to truly love in that uniquely Christian sense, from that edge.

This is how Lacan understands the problem of sublimation. The good is sacrificed in the name of desire, because what one comes to know is that desire is always sacrificed in the name of a good. The good, even when it is the love of a spouse, makes that other a counterpart to the detriment of a sublimation that must attempt to recoup otherwise. In his book on St. Paul, Badiou shows how the Christian discourse is an articulation based, itself, on a man who is not there or never will be in his place (dare I say the empty tomb) and Agape. The impossible (as a belief in the resurrection) is what gives strength to the place of the Pauline discourse. Love in Paul, says Badiou, is the affirmation of the labor of truth, the power of thought in a universal declaration that cuts unilaterally. But

we cannot forget that this declaration, this mighty affirmation, comes from a point of near impossibility and radical emptiness.

What I would like to say about Badiou touches upon this scene in the library. It is about the stance that one occupies in relation to shame, modest discourse, and this symptomatic ignoring of psychoanalysis. Where in Badiou does this symptom of psychoanalysis rear its head? I would like to say in the absence of shame, a certain fatigue with the attempt to master everything, and the only place where a Law is articulated in the name of a Good—the idea he has of the Good of philosophy, its separation in function from the truth procedures. Badiou, I think, loves philosophy very much. But it is possible to love too much. Psychoanalysts have learned that hysterical ideals with respect to love are always at the heart of symptoms. One runs into trouble again. Love as labor means love comes later, like an aftertaste left in one's mouth.

Lacan reminds us of this phenomenon, referring to a peculiar fact we see endlessly in our offices: what if, for the sake of your wife's happiness, you sacrifice your own—only to find that hers will vanish before your eyes? “Enjoy with the wife you love” is indeed the height of this paradox, because it is precisely loving her that creates the obstacle (Lacan, 1991/2007, p.190). Rather than take this direct path of love, Lacan suggested we approach it from another angle—that we go in the direction of shame.

Do a bit of analysis, Lacan says, and you will see that you already have enough shame “to open a shop” (ibid., p.182). This was brought up in the context of the events of May 1968, when Lacan said that what the revolutionaries did not understand was precisely this shame, the system that produced the immense shame of living. In the name of the shame of others, they took to the streets as if they were out from under it

themselves. “You cannot get out without entering,” he cautioned them, and further, “What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one” (ibid., 207).

As analysts, the use we can make of shame is the only bit of tact left to us with the symptoms of our time. For Lacan there is only one virtue: modesty. He writes that “it is impossible for the honest to die of shame. . . . You know . . . that this means the real. . . . If it happens now, well then, it was the only way to deserve it. . . . You were lucky.” Otherwise you do not die and you are left with a life of it “by the bucketful by virtue of the fact that it’s not worth dying for.” This, he says, is what “psychoanalysis discovers” (ibid., p. 181-182).

The closer one gets to shame, the closer one is to the hole in the real from which a new truth might arise. We must get as close as we can to this hole if we want anything to do with the subversion, or even just the rotation, of the master’s discourse where everyone is sold short on love. What is the problem with the master? It is a real master that Lacan says everyone forgets, especially in a hysteria that casts him as a sort-of tyrant.

Lacan, like Freud, was, at times, seemingly no friend of the philosophers. In the 1968 seminar, he says, “Philosophy in its historical function is this extraction, I would almost say this betrayal, of the slave’s knowledge, in order to obtain its transmutation into the master’s knowledge” (ibid., p. 22) Moreover, he asks, “Does the master who brings about this operation of displacing, the conveyancing, of the slave’s knowledge want to know?” His answer, “A real master . . . doesn’t desire to know anything at all—he desires only that things work” (ibid., p. 24). One might add: that work militantly at that.

This master, Lacan says, is, like the benevolence and love of most Fathers, thoroughly castrated. It is this position which makes his discourse so unassailable. It is for this reason, this structure, that the tools of the analyst are the power of the impossibles. We learned this from Dora, who gave the key to Freud in the very discovery of her transference (our greatest resistance and our greatest ally).

So what is it about these fathers that their daughters find so hard to know? It is that they want to make too many women happy, all the women (and then the whole world to boot), to be precise. Think of all the jewelry Dora's father had to buy for his wife, his lover, his daughter, and the cases to enclose them as well. And, as captains of industry, they feel it their duty to get the whole world up and running, which is, to their great shame, impossible. Impossibility wears them down and tires them out. This father does nothing more nor less than occupy the contradictory place of not knowing what he wants and always ending up at some distance from it—the women and his work. On the other hand and on the other side, “being deprived of woman—this, expressed in terms of the failure of discourse, is what castration means” (ibid., p.154).

Shame, when working on that side of the truth of desire in analytic work, holds up the power of the impossibles rather than grinding away in the face of it. This edge of impossibility, and the shame at the sham of what one does, is the only way I can work clinically. Orienting oneself, knowing how to find one's way, is different from what one may call the register of having—possessions, accumulation—and this holds just as much for truth itself. Something must be done with the philosopher's truth, because in and of itself, it is a trap. As Lacan writes, “One doesn't marry truth; there can be no contract

with her, and even less can there be any open liaison. She won't stand for any of that" (ibid., p.184-185).

Lacan said that the analyst is the one who "leaves the thread of . . . truth to the one who already has his worries with it" (ibid., p.186). He will have to worry about it like a curse and go to work. In the end, the function of this curse of truth is a "collapse of knowledge" which holds up certain self-fashioned laws. I hear such a curse in the "why" of my interlocutor in the dream, the visiting professor in the library.

Lacan continues, if many believe that I am in possession of truth, or have begun to worry about it, they say, as a result of me, "it's through not giving the appearance of having laid a finger on it" (ibid., p.185). This act of refusal in the position one holds, which one might imagine as a form of exclusion, is actually the only path toward collaboration. This is why it is at the foundation of the analytic act. If you want subversion, you have to love the impossibility, the shame, of never being able to die from impossibility or shame. It provides you with that mysterious thing called "tact" that gets things moving—not too much, not too little.

One might ask: Isn't it modest to take away from the philosopher in the very field in which he works, being able to produce a truth himself? Does Badiou not say that philosophy limps behind its four truth procedures? The false modesty of a symptom is cunning. Here philosophy oscillates symptomatically between being an exalted and depraved figure much like the hysteric herself and the father who she simultaneously tears off the pedestal only to seat him there once again.

Let me say then that this separation between philosophy and psychoanalysis, this separation between the gathering of the conditions of truth and those four little discourses

that go to work for the great father, is also (for better or worse) impossible. For me, it is matter of understanding what to do, tactfully, with this impossibility. I do not propose to have an answer as to the similarity or difference between psychoanalysis and philosophy except to begin to address it through the division Badiou makes and the strange place to which he has relegated clinical psychoanalysis. The minimal difference manifests itself in relation to shame. It is only this that holds the limit. The master has none, the university has too much, the hysteric speaks its truth only in her symptom, and an analyst finally makes do with its impossibility.

The system, Lacan says, despite producing the immensity of the shame of living, “has no shame. . . . This translates as—it’s impudence” (ibid., p. 190). So it would do one well not to go in that direction. It is here that one finds the only law that could be taken as moral in Lacan. Thievery, tyranny of knowledge, forcing truth, are only of the order of the structures of discourse—they are impossible by virtue of the fact of being structures of discourse but, as such, are unavoidable and so cannot be taken morally. They are always at work. If one allows this shame its place, she will allow herself to slip between these structures of discourse—to find her way towards tact; able to, in Badiouian fashion “labor under truth, labor as love” (Badiou, 1993/2003, p. 96) But here, then, there cannot be a neat division. We have to slip in the vertigo of this impossibility. Our discourse must bear the trace of this shame.

No one comes to know shame better than the analysand in the encounter with an analyst. Perhaps one experiences shame only in the face of an analyst these days for one particular reason—he represents the consolidation of the law in the supposed subject of knowledge. One goes for no other reason. Even, miraculously, if one is aware of that fact.

And one might say about Badiou that he wants to know nothing of psychoanalysis to the extent that his desire is that philosophy gets back to work on the level of truth. And yet we find in this desire an underlying love of truth and, like the hysteric, a centering of discourse around a kernel of symptomatic refusal.

Symptoms attest to that divide between thinking and doing, between mastery and truth, which leaves psychoanalysis in a domain where insight is valued over speech, which, in effect, changes nothing for a subject in relation to mastery. Philosophy, in this same vein, can speak about modesty but never from within a position of modesty—which, ultimately, I think, is the lesson of Badiou's work, even the heart of his revolutionary politics. As a philosopher, Badiou does not create, he merely gathers, and if this is not the thievery of the master, then perhaps it is too much like the discourse of the university and the gathering of knowledge, the systematizing of truth—another trap of desire in any case. None of this discussion would stand as a condemnation to the extent that we no longer take any of this to be anything other than the permutations of discourse (impossibility).

But not to condemn brings into question one's relation to shame. If there is glory to be had it is more certainly to be had as a philosopher than as a psychoanalyst. We have long since left the best-sellers list. That doesn't mean that I do not procure as analyst a certain force of intrigue. It may be my only cache. But it is precisely there where I can think of little else than shame. That is my experience.

The proletariat can be redeemed, as can the professor. Also woman, at times, in her particular elevation. Even our elusive master, who tires when he tries to make the whole world happy. But what does the analyst do? Whatever it is, it is clearly absurd,

making himself the cause of desire, of what Lacan will call the insane operation of a psychoanalysis. The shame I experience after sessions pivots between “what have I done” and “why, in God’s name, did that work?” Perhaps analysis takes this shame to its limit. Badiou was one of those who taught me—strength in “weakness,” not a weakness made strong.

If any academic with a penchant for radical leftist ideology feels shame at the abstraction of his work, psychoanalyzing takes this abstraction beyond any point of recognition, into pure semblance. It may be this that holds as the subversive power of the analytic discourse. If the hysteric ends in a deprivation worn on one’s sleeve and takes off running around the streets, the analyst does nothing but sit. Knowledge does not progress through critique or filter or force but through an audacious leap through artifice in which we give truth back to God. The analyst’s atheism is a strange one—shameful, really.

As Joyce said to Nora, in love letters that show the power of wrestling with one’s relation to shame, “I gave others my pride and joy. To you I give my sin, my folly, my weakness and my sadness” (Joyce, 1966, p.107).

But there’s the rub. Badiou encountered an analyst about whose work he says he wants to know nothing. I think, in the end, that is right. I would say that his encounter allowed him to function in the place of a master signifier. His is a new discourse, in that it is an audacious leap through artifice. If psychoanalysts do not any longer know of this master’s discourse, then it is clear that we need Badiou, that I needed Badiou, and that philosophy needs Badiou. To the extent that his philosophy, separated out from psychoanalysis through the force of a particular kind of ignoring, makes one ill at ease and yet gets one to work, there is no harm, merely shame. It cannot be transgressed, not

on one side or the other. All that one has left is to wait for the fall. If it is not Badiou who disappears at this point, then it is I.

The leap through artifice requires that we give truth back to God. I give truth back to the philosophers. I give truth back to Alain Badiou.

To end by quoting Badiou himself on Beckett: It will always be a question of making sense of the magnificent formula from *The Unnamable* (1953/2006): “I alone am man and all the rest divine . . .” To relegate the divine and its curse to the periphery of saying, and to declare man naked, without either hope or hopelessness, relentless, surviving, and consigned to the excessive language of his desire” (Badiou, 2003, p.117).

Lacan, like me, speaks alone as a psychoanalyst. To do so is the only fragile and risky guarantee that we have to give, which is essentially nothing. As Lacan said, Love is to give what one does not have. What bearing does this have for the philosopher? Like a good analyst, I will end provocatively by saying nothing at all, in the spirit of collaboration.

Call in the Reserves or Last Remarks

Leclaire's notion that there is no truth beyond or before unconscious desire, which supports truth as much as it veils it, is the premise on which this work has been written. Like Alain's three second book, likened to the three second session, it both supports his truth, that of the formalization of philosophy, along with his desire for the absolute formula to be synonymous with himself. It also veils his desire that this formula do so in order to eclipse precisely desire which extends in particular to psychoanalysis which he would like to eradicate from his knowledge. Perhaps it means he breaks free of his debt to Lacan, just as Freud's book of dreams was the beginning of the dissolution of his tie to Fliess, which ended, as we might remember, in his failing to give him credit for the theory of bi-sexuality.

In any case, this fact about unconscious desire, in the end, has nothing to do with me or with Badiou. I can only offer the semblance of an instruction which is the closest I have gotten to any formula. As for psychoanalysis I learned from Badiou what I have come to see as our only fighting chance- to remain in complete fidelity to desire- the militant maintenance of a strength to stand there when "nothing is promised to us but the power to remain true to what comes to us" (Badiou, 1998/2006, p.23), even if that is nothing. As these dreams progressed, from the first to the third, I had the strange sensation of being able to write less and less about them, as if one was closer to this supposed formula of desire- the place where interpretation stops, the moment perhaps when an object comes closest to the thing and no longer requires the supplementation of a meaning.

What does this mean for writing? It is surely different from Badiou's infinite production of texts out from under the 'truth' that he has grasped. His work, as he likes to tell us, is planetary. He is "living in thought like someone who had fallen upon an oil well: an inexhaustible intellectual energy lay at my disposal" (ibid., p. iv).

A truth, Badiou has said, is "scarcely-said", and yet, miraculously, he finds a great deal to say about it. For Lacan though, the ethics of the analyst is quite different. It is precisely predicated on this Thing which means that truth must be creation from nothing. He asks:

what sort of disaster does analytic knowledge produce? That is what was in question, what has been in question for as long as it has not made them all itching to become authors. It is a very curious thing that the non-signed [the analysts] should appear paradoxical, whereas of course over the centuries all the honest men there have been have always acted as if someone had torn their manuscript from their hands, as if someone played a dirty trick on them. No one expected to be sent a note of congratulations on publication" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 191).

The anonymity for Lacan was important, and in a way, these dreams grew increasingly anonymous. This also holds true for our three figures. Even further this somehow makes writing increasingly difficult which also meant that in order to do so, one had to start taking risks. Anonymity might be the cover that allows that work to be *ripped* from one's hands, to call in the reserves.

Badiou will say about it that "ethics... consists entirely in exercising a sort of restraint with regard to its powers... the reserve of the non-saying; in the limit of the voice vis-à-vis that which shows itself; in that which is subtracted from the absolute imperative to speak the truth" (Badiou, 2004, p. 116). This quality of reserve came to guide my idea of the ethics of psychoanalysis precisely as prudence, tact, grace, and modesty which were only possible as linked to the feminine. This was done in

accordance with the Lacanian collapse of the feminine and the unconscious- the necessity for a confrontation with castration. That it took my finding my way out from under Adorno's seductive weight, out from under the betrayal of Lacanians, then with Badiou, it was a relationship such that his inability to subtract himself from his discourse meant I must go to the very edge of my own, precisely in order to uphold it. If I hadn't grasped this possibility before I entered into his thought, and it is unlikely that he taught me given his particular inclinations, I certainly have an indication of it now. Like this work, it is only through a series that is set off, Adorno, Lacan, Badiou, that one can discover what belongs to them- that one can discover what it is to be given back their desire.

So I have tried and most likely failed to write this kind of ethics in setting off this series. It is a task slightly different from any writing *about* ethics, and tries to remain closer to desire pure and simple. It has meant, I'm sure, that my passion has got the best of me, which will no doubt turn-off a great many of you. Obscurantist non-sense! I take it as a compliment, as did Lacan, since the attempt to invoke desire might mean an inspiration towards judgment. Impetuousness has more possibility than the supposed lack of it.

Psychoanalysis, one could say, if it does anything, truly initiates a series, a chain of associations, a set of signifiers, which begins to articulate desire. This is why movement is so important. One could say that that is all that a psychoanalysis does- gets things moving. It is around these figures that it begins to highlight the subject, figures who no doubt condense with the analyst him or herself on whom its final act will turn. By virtue of this it gives rise to a singularity, not of the others, but of the subject. It produces a subject in rendering this other utterly anonymous, nameless even. Not my father, not

my mother, not my maternal grandmother, not Adorno, not Lacan, not Badiou. But not nothing either.

This other who had paralyzed the subject with his imagined watchful gaze returns to the mere fact of an encounter. Someone I came to love and came to leave. It happened, that's about all that needs to be said, and it has its effects, structural ones in fact, which was what I was after from the beginning. The slow rate of change.

This is Lacan's definition of truth- universal in structure, singular in content; the formula as formula with the particular words and images which decipher it. It constitutes a psychoanalysis oriented towards the future and by virtue of this may be the sole means for addressing its life and death. With the past relegated to the past what matters is what is said.

So truth be told, a great deal of this work is wrapped in a complete conceit- the future of psychoanalysis and my dreams? Are you joking? Why does it matter that psychoanalysis disappoints you and whether or not you get out from under that? With a grandiosity you'll no doubt fail not to detect, I suppose with Freud I must ask the reader "to make my interests his for quite a while, and to plunge with me, into the minutest details of my life" (Freud, 1900, p. 121). I will, with a lingering tinge of hysteria, take the life and death of psychoanalysis as my own.

Badiou wrote that "what [truths] produce (the unnamable in language itself, the potency of the pure letter, general will as the anonymous force of every namable will, and the Two of the sexes as what has never been counted as one) in variable situation is never but a truth of these situations... onto which no knowledge can 'pin' its name, or discern beforehand its status" (Badiou, 1989/1999, p. 107). So the situation was mine own, it was

the time I had spent with psychoanalysis as a discipline in various contexts, it was my educational experience, it was, of course, my analysis, and it was these dreams. Is it too much to say that each dream falls into these effects of the truth of a situation- the unnamable in the memorial, the letter, the general will that falls, and the one that is never counted, the always absent one? If it is only there where I am not, that I am thinking, that one can locate the periphery of the human- then dreams are one place that we can think in the place of non-knowledge. This non-knowledge as truth must find a means of articulation. I took the risk of bringing it to that through the series of transferences- Adorno, Lacan, Badiou.

Dreams, it is said, take hold when a transference is at work “raising the question of the secret of phantasy... the profound passion that drives the discoverer of enigmas and the explorer of origins... That passion is manifest at once in the intensity of the transference” (Leclaire, 1968/1998, p. 62). These two taken together point to a writing that complicates the process of exchange, destroys any supposed symmetry between the partners, and in this risks losing them completely. It does so founded on little else than a guiding ethics and an intensity of passion. It aims for a fundamental change in the nature of discourse. Whether that happens is not up to me anymore. You will read this as you chose.

With every one of these thinkers there was for me in the beginning a kind of madness, reading for hours on end, you couldn't get inside it enough, much like the beginning of any common love affair. I used to, I'm sure you can imagine, become increasingly disappointed. The reading would trail off with a mild depression. It isn't like that so much for me anymore. It's more like enthusiastically waiting to be inspired again,

perhaps with an anxiety that the last may truly be the last. A change of discourse is indicated by Lacan in that something has fallen. Love is in the air. A turning has initiated a delicate but powerful chain of events that cannot be stopped, that one would never let stop. It is there that it becomes a matter of life and death.

In the final editing of this piece of work I had a dream I think, perhaps, in order to finally close it. I was in a train with someone who is of immense importance to me and also to this piece of work. The train is strewn with objects whose quality as object comes across very clearly somehow- they seem to have no utility whatsoever. They are almost like an object purified as thing. One of them starts screeching. He picks it up, takes out a screw-driver, and makes a quarter turn in a switch on the back. He looks at me and says, "some of them are made for that, you just might not necessarily know it." It returned to its status as thing.

I think I could properly say that this is the formula for my desire- the importance of the turn, the one who isn't afraid of the object that screeches, a knowledge one doesn't know, the one who in fact has a know-how about it, and the idea of being made a thing. If being made a thing had its previous echoes in the idea of sacrifice, submission, it is now this thing in the hands of my friend that epitomizes for me the feminine as a place for desire, the possible elevation of the object. He is of course, for me, the analyst. In Lacan's theory of discourse there is the quarter turn between the hysteric and the analyst and I don't think it is possible without a deep love and respect for the unconscious. We are made for that even if we don't know it.

To conclude, Celan, someone who I constantly turn to in order to rehabilitate my relationship to language, to arouse again some obscure piece of desire, comes close to

this in his name for poetry. A breathturn, *Atemwende*, he called it. He says, “it is no longer a word. It is a terrifying silence. It takes his and our breath and words away. Poetry is perhaps this: an *Atemwende*, a turning of our breath... It is perhaps here, in this one brief moment, that Medusa’s head shrivels and the automatons run down? Perhaps, along with the I, estranged and freed here in this manner, some other thing is also set free?” (Celan, 2005, p.162). Perhaps. For the life of psychoanalysis, I offer this silence, that freedom. As for me, I’m over it. I’m happy.

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