

From the Position of the Analysand to the Desire of the Analyst

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The Position of the Analysand

At one point in his career, Lacan develops the idea of the four discourses from which we speak as subjects. Though he names these four separately he is clear that one individual can circulate among any number of them at different times - they are positions not personalities or stages. While the discourse of the master and the discourse of the university (or academic) have dominated our public discourse and continue to at present, Lacan also presents the discourse of the hysteric and the discourse of the analyst emergent in the modern subject of psychoanalysis. This model prepares the way for understanding the position of the analysand. For the analysand is he who speaks in order to inquire: to inquire into what causes his desire, meaning, and existence. The position of the analysand is a speech act in which truth as desire and desire as truth are at stake. To take up this position is to engage in a desire different from the cause of suffering - to exchange the jouissance of the symptom for a change in the symbolic, imaginary, and real. Freud called psychoanalysis a cure through love - not a cure by love or from love but a journey through

desire, love, and jouissance by means of language, speech and finally letters - newly invented by the subject. This is why the position of the analysand continues to exist after analysis is over even for the analyst. When Slavoj Žižek for example calls the philosopher Hegel the most sublime hysteric he echoes his own desire to remain in the position of the analysand as philosopher rather than take up the position of the analyst. For the position of the analyst is different. Yet Lacan himself clearly continues to occupy both - declaring that his seminar is where he takes the position of the analysand, putting his discourse and inventions at stake and entreating his listeners to question him as only "he who interrogates me knows how to read me."

At the same time, the position of the analysand before and after the ends of analysis is different. This is already pointed to in Freud's discussion of analysis terminable and interminable - or finite and infinite. An analysis can end where a crucial subjective shift or event has taken place and yet be taken up again at a later date or in another way. For an analyst an analysis can also come to a sufficient end as a finite relation between subjects where analysand takes up the desire and position of the analyst clinically and yet continues the position of the analysand infinitely in his own way. It is in this sense that the positions of analysand and analyst continue to support each other in one subject, just as the two subjects - or the subjectivity of the two - of the analytic relation support each other. For the desire of the analyst is not only the desire to occupy the position of the analyst for the other but its opposite - the desire to occupy the the position of the analysand as desiring subject as well. It is the desire of the analyst - as a clinical concept and in each unique case - that forms the

limit to interminable transference in the analytic relation. This is why late in Lacan's work he returns to the drive and relates it to the analyst's desire. The misrecognition of the drive in fantasy and the compromise with the other found in an unsatisfactory desire leads to a symptom. The analyst is not there to fix the symptom and restore this compromise but to accompany a journey back to the drive and its vicissitudes - and this is another explication of the desire of the analyst.

The Desire of the Analyst

Yet if it is clear how the position of the analysand continues to function as one form of the desire of the analyst to occupy his position well, it is still not clear why one would occupy the position of the analyst at all. This is what Lacan is curious about. Given that the position of the analysand is refined to the point of invention and creation, why would someone occupy the position of the analyst. If one had liquidated transference, accepted castration and the feminine position, experienced unbeing, traversed the fantasm, purified the symptom, and/or any other aspect of the ends of analysis, what would cause one to desire to take up such a position. This is the question that Lacan asks quite often and part of what leads him to formulate the idea of the pass as a procedure to learn something about this process.

The desire of the analyst was originally one person's *sinthome* - Freud's. And it is up to each one who follows him to make of the position of

analyst his own by discovering his own version of the desire of the analyst and his own way to occupy its position in his own style. Each analyst must reinvent analysis for himself and even reinvent analysis again for each analysis. This finally places it on the plane with artistic and scientific production as invention and clarifies Lacan's turn to the idea of the artist's creation as the proper model for the ends of analysis in Seminar 23 - as well as to the idea of poetics and mathematics as clinical and pedagogical methods of transmission in Seminar 24. Finally the idea of nomination as letters of validation from the other - as degree, certification, or pass - is replaced by invention of letters witnessed by the other in the artistic construction of the sinthome. With the sinthome, recognition from the other is forced - in the mathematical sense of Paul Cohen's set theory: it is axiomatically decided and enacted in the presence of the other.

The Case of the Mystic

Perhaps we can understand something of the desire of the analyst if we look at historical cases. At one point Lacan calls Socrates the first psychoanalyst. Socrates cannot really be called a philosopher. Plato is the philosopher who tries to establish ideas and uses Socrates as a character to do so. Following on from that Aristotle and his descendants will solidify the academy and university as a discourse of knowledge in the West to accompany the long standing discourse of the master found in prophets and kings of all cultures. Socrates however questions. Socrates questions

the other's assumptions and certainties. He takes the position of the analyst who holds to no truth but inquiry. While he is located in the position of the master that others might attribute to him he abdicates it, refusing to proclaim the truth. Yet he is not content to remain cynical. He questions the sophist's manipulation of the truth by establishing its core basis of unconscious choice or desire. Thus analysis was already born in the Greek epoch of the West amidst the philosophers. But Socrates does not uphold the truth of the state. Rather he is condemned to death for corrupting the youth - by causing them to question the truth and their desire.

Buddha likewise is not considered a philosopher. We do not have texts by him proclaiming the truth. What we have are various texts issued in his name by followers. The Indian Vedic interpretation and presentation of Buddha's ideas fostered a religion of beliefs and practices which established Buddhism as if it were a coherent doctrine of enlightenment for personal transcendence. However the Mahayana tradition developed especially in Tibet, China, and Japan evolved in contrast to this - presenting the practice of the bodhisattva as one who is driven by the illumination and salvation of others. Could we read in this "illumination and salvation" the elimination of suffering through desire and awareness. Like the Socratic position, the bodhisattvic position bears a striking resemblance to the desire of the analyst. But only if we read its truth through the lens of Lacan's idea of the desire of the analyst. For the bodhisattva's position is often referred to as a sacrifice or delay of one's own enlightenment until others are brought there. This implies that there is a truth for all and denies the idea that taking the position of the

bodhisattva or analyst may be a desire in itself. Or that the link between analyst and analysand, between the position of the analysand and desire of the analyst are inseparable - even within one person. Buddha claims that suffering comes from desire and advocates a practice of refining it through meditation and contemplation. In Chan or Zen buddhism this process is taken to the extreme that matches Lacan's technique where humor, poetics, nonsense, and surprise are the methods by which the bodhisattva seeks to bring the other to illumination.

If Socrates and Buddha inform us about the position of the analysand and the desire of the analyst, Christ gives us a picture of the sinthome. It is no coincidence that Lacan linked Joyce and the sinthome to the Christian mystics. For in this case the suffering is withdrawn from the symptom as passive response and complaint to the other and refined into inner experience and speech delivered in the midst of the people. In fact the message is one of sovereignty removed from the position of the master and assumed by the subject who neither looks for the truth in the other, nor proclaims the truth to the other, nor seeks recognition from the other, but speaks. The experience of Christ in the desert of the interior and exterior leads to a dissolution of the symbolic through desetre or unbeing, and a return to the symbolic with new signifiers which have nothing to do with the political or religious law of his milieu but do borrow from the experience and language of human subjectivity to deliver a new message of being. Far from recognition by the group, Christ like Socrates is condemned to death and derision. But no matter, the message is all.

Transmission and Nomination

Lacan reinvented psychoanalysis by reading Freud in his own way - by stressing the radical truth of his practice and not the codified content of his ideas. For this he was excluded from the group - the official association of psychoanalysis. Yet analysis had never been part of the state or university and it had endured splits from the very beginning with Jung, Reich and others forming their own traditions. When Lacan formed his school he wanted the structure of transmission to be different than by certification. He created the procedure of the pass as an experiment to see if something could be learned about the transmission of analysis and also if there was an alternative to traditional nomination. Yet why did he insist that letters of recognition or nomination would be the outcome of the process. Does the former imply the latter? If one seeks to achieve authorization through the pass then it is a failure - the analyst only authorizes himself by and for himself. Does this not imply that the failure is built into the structure of the procedure or apparatus itself? Is this nomination by recognition from the group a necessary lure to lead one to undertake it? After all a "pass/fail" is still a grade - and though it was neither meant to guarantee nor bar the analyst, the outcome of the pass was uncertain. It is reported that the majority of pass attempts at Lacan's school failed the jury. Lacan himself declared the pass a failure after a decade of operation - perhaps because of a misunderstanding. Nevertheless the concept is sufficiently interesting to have inspired further exploration, experimentation, and controversy.

Is this also why Lacan dissolved his school? Because of the near impossibility of maintaining a community of those with no common fantasm, ideal, or ideology. Lacan certainly did not feel it was worthless or he would not have tried to maintain psychoanalytic associations and schools but he was nevertheless suspect of their ability to succeed. At least he was not going to allow a school to continue in his name if it could not remain true to his spirit. He himself had ultimately been excluded from the psychoanalytic community created in Freud's name. At one point Lacan said that it was up to his descendants to be Lacanian, that he had been Freudian. In other words he had had the difficult task of figuring out how to remain true to Freud's spirit and not the letter of the law created in his name by the other Freudians that he felt had missed the message. Lacan's descendants would have to determine how to remain true to him without the benefit or detriment of a school in his name. Thus no one owns the truth of Lacan - or his desire. Perhaps Lacan was wrong. What he was really doing was figuring out how to be Lacanian - to speak in his name - to sign his name and nominate himself within the history of psychoanalysis, as well as philosophy, science, and medicine. I believe that this unique style comes to full fruition at the end of his life, and this is elaborated in his concept of the *sinthome* and the poetics and mathematics of invention and nomination developed especially in seminars 23 and 24.

Freud had described the ends of analysis as the acceptance of loss, castration, and the feminine position. Lacan had echoed this in his description of the falling of the object cause of desire and the ensuing radical loss of unbeing or *desetre*. The *pass* was one way to enquire into

the transition and transmission from the position of the analysand to the desire of the analyst by means of a form of nomination - the construction of a story or speech act reported to listeners who would then transmit this to a jury. Clearly Lacan was looking for a new end to analysis that Freud had not envisioned and it had something to do with new signifiers within the symbolic order. But the method devised was still too ensnared in the fantasm of group psychology and recognition by the other - the nomination by letters was to be given by the other through a pass or fail. In Joyce the artist, the poet, Lacan saw the possibility of another nomination. In this case desire enables a subjective shift that leads to a freeing from the symbolic of the other enough to invent something new, and the pass is performed by the artist in the construction of new letters out of the old symbolic or "rotten culture" which had been given by the other. The pass of the sinthome is a new version of the old symptom - an event in which the dissolution of the symbolic is followed by a reconstruction out of its ashes. This pass or sinthome - an event rather than an apparatus - is lived, written, and transmitted among - but not for - others.