

## **Mario Binasco.**

### **Prelude.**

In 1967, J. Lacan wrote this rather enigmatic phrase, which always struck me: “when psychoanalysis will have laid down its arms before the increasing impasses of our civilization (the discontent Freud foretold), then the indications of my *Écrits*.<sup>1</sup> will be taken up again by whom?”.

This phrase is enigmatic and surprising because it is expressed in the indicative mode (albeit the future perfect) indicating actuality, and not in the subjunctive mode indicating possibility; also because it affirms the existence of growing impasses in culture, capable of forcing psychoanalysis to surrender (let us recall that Lacan had described his School as “a base of operations against the discontent of civilization”<sup>2</sup>); and further because, paradoxically, Lacan seems to say that only after the surrender of psychoanalysis, some “who?” --that is a subject to come, not yet determined, but not qualified as a psychoanalyst--will “take up again” the indications of his writings.

Given that analysis operates by means of a special bond, the impasses that can lead to its surrender should prevent this bond from working. Has anyone ever seen psychoanalysis in a concentration camp or a similar situation? If there were one, what an interesting testimony that would be!

The experience of analysis, the analytic treatment, is established on the basis of a special, double bond, a bond to a bond: a first bond -- the transference -- and a second, the act of the analyst, operating a cut or a torsion on the first bond. Double operation of bonding involving several moments.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Lacan. *Autres écrits*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> J.. Lacan. “Acte de fondation.” *Autres écrits*, p. 238. Or see “Founding Act” (In *Television*, edited by Joan Copjec, W.W. Norton, 1990, p. 104

An offer, a demand: this bond arises from within a market of “relationships,” that is to say, from within the human bonds of speech and language. One can also say that this bonding creates a market, makes it arise, establishes a market and at the same time a bond.

Are there special conditions for the establishment of such a market? How is this market related to the broader market which has become the global institution where human beings circulate or are being tied?

And how is it related to the political dimension, which today is reduced to an adverb, the “politically” correct?

Another of Lacan’s phrases that, for me, is enigmatic seems to wish for “an essay worthy of Lamennais on indifference in political matters...”<sup>3</sup>

I cannot tell from this text whether or not Lacan wanted this type of indifference. But in any case, I believe this indifference will be possible only to the extent that politics, in its turn, remains indifferent to psychoanalysis: how can the conditions for indifference still exist when politics begins to be interested in psychoanalysis?

Freud felt compelled to write *The Question of Lay Analysis* in 1926 because of a normative action on the part of the Republic of Austria regarding the authorization for the practice of psychoanalysis. In this essay, he reaffirms the *sui generis* and *sui iuris* character of psychoanalytic practice and its required formation, in comparison to other discourses (medical, religious....). He hoped that it could exist in the social space of that which is permitted, i.e. of that which is neither prohibited nor obligatory.

We know that in America, analysts have not followed his advice; Germany, in the course of its rapid nazification, saw the first attempt on the part of a State to take over psychoanalysis, “translating” it and dissolving it into a generic set of psychotherapies: one just needs to look at

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<sup>3</sup> J. Lacan. “*Science and Truth.*” in *Ecrits* (trans. Bruce Fink), p. 729. (*Ecrits*, p. 858).

the instructive and interesting history of the Göring Institute for German psychotherapists, not to mention the surprise of the analysts (Jews, but not only) facing the ideological-administrative initiative of the totalitarian State.

Moreover, I myself have had the opportunity to witness the effects of the drying up of psychoanalysis—of its exercise, formation, transmission--caused by the ideological-bureaucratic-economic context in Eastern European countries. In all three cases (America, Germany, East Europe), the impediments to psychoanalysis have derived from various types of denials and limitations of the social freedoms on which its practice necessarily depends: the prohibition of private practice, or its excessive regulation based on criteria of non-autonomy; the denial of economic freedom and of the freedom of association. These conditions have greatly handicapped it.

It seems incontestable to me that psychoanalysis requires in any case a condition of freedom: the freedom to establish its special bond, the bond or knot between offer/demand and demand/offer: since it takes place in social space it must take into account conditions that are both external (collective) and internal (subjective): we know very well they are the same (or at least they are connected). I only wish to emphasize that the space of autonomy, *sui juris*, that allows for the establishment of the analytic discourse, must be established and conquered “inside,” and much in advance of the “outside.” In fact, state regulation is never only economic, but also ideological and, I would say, even mental. To open the space of analytic discourse with his act thus implies an operation on spirit.

Today we can better observe how this regulation belongs to all states and to the totalitarian character of bureaucratic administration, even in states that claim to want to export freedom. It is precisely this regulation that insinuates itself in the economy of the subject and its bonds inasmuch as they are that field of offer and demand that the State no longer wants to leave to the initiative and responsibility of the subject, to his freedom of initiative—which is essential to the psychoanalytic offer/demand--without which it is not clear how we could even just speak of

analytic act and analytic experience. I mean initiative of relationship or bonding--that is to say, of discourse--independently of the economic form it can take, which, however, cannot be just anything, without any structure.

How does entry of the state into this field occur? By way of economic and above all deontological forms that penalize initiative from the beginning. In recent decades this has occurred by attacking the problematic connection between psychoanalysis and therapy, regulating psychotherapy and training through professional organizations. Today in Italy what has happened is the following: in terms of formation, to the extent that it relies on schools of psychotherapy, and given that recently decisions of the courts have assimilated psychoanalysis to psychotherapy, the result is that the institutional and administrative conditions of formation for numerous analysts are in the hands of non-analysts who lead the orders of psychologists. And as for individual control of those who practice analysis, again in Italy, we have permitted a code of ethics that is generic and ideological, which does not allow for discernment of actual or possible violations and very well lends itself to the most arbitrary interpretations by judicial-administrative bureaucracy. A bureaucracy of non-analysts responsive to the biddings of power to judge and occasionally to suspend someone from practice, once it had decided to examine and prosecute an analyst. I underscore that this bureaucracy would likely find “ethically” unacceptable a major part of Lacan’s “technical” inventions we currently use. The fact is that the psychoanalytic act cannot help but implicate the subject as affected by the cause of desire, while any administrative discourse (university discourse) contaminated by the discourse of capitalism (as suggested by Marc Strauss) collaborates in its suppression.

In this context, the psychoanalyst is guilty from the start. This may help him take up, from a clinical point of view, a central question of our time: the question of the unconscious feeling of guilt, the unconscious guilt, the Freudian “need for punishment.” It is a crucial question, especially in a society or civilization that has abolished the subjective “traceability” of guilt and responsibility, and has constructed its administration and laws around a conception of rights based on the axiom that the real as such is unjust (whether it is a matter of the body, sex, the

Other, etc.). Yet, since the real is unjust, our society confers “new” rights as a kind of indemnification that is delirious and consoling, a true and proper “reparative therapy” for the condition of fundamental injustice which is the division of the subject and moreover his real status, his relationship to the Real. It’s a social/symbolic refusal of any subjective destitution to the point of denying what the subject is reduced to in the contamination of other discourses by the discourse of capitalism: as a new kind of negationism for the subject.

I also remember, fifteen years ago, hearing the head of an international psychoanalytic association complain that too few are following his suggestions to take sides in favor of social recognition of homosexual unions, suggestions he said are grounded in analytic doctrine. In effect, he said practice shows that there are authentic links between these subjects. Should psychoanalysts therefore authorize themselves to provide the state with certificates of authenticity of romantic and affective links? After having laid claim to the critical and subversive scope of analysis, and after decades of criticizing American analysts for their insistence on idealizing authentic love?

The problem here is not these unions, which as such do not concern analysts and are merely fashion, the trend chosen by the powers guiding the dance of global capitalist anthropology. The problem lies in the ferociously aggressive totalitarian policy of suppression of the subject that accompanies this trend (negationism I said), in the need to silence any perplexity, and even any complexity or division, in the social, cultural, and scientific prohibition to consider any real phenomenon that deviates or even just distracts from propaganda (note the total inability to deal with the question posed by the Islamic State, although it would seem to be in patent contradiction to the discourse of rights).

How can we think that this kind of policy, which infiltrates and contaminates the administration of every area of our lives, could be compatible with the practice of a social link that establishes and protects the rule to say anything?

The American analysts, too, thought it best and most sensible for the development of psychoanalysis, and most in line with American society, to disregard Freud's recommendation, in the *The Question of Lay Analysis*, to not leave analysis in the hands of physicians. And so, in 1967, Lacan found himself declaring failure in "unlocking the arrested development of analytic thought." <sup>4</sup>

Thus a discourse that aims to rehabilitate the subject *via* castration--like the analytic discourse--goes in a direction totally opposite to that of suppression and refusal of the subject found in various forms in discourses contaminated by the capitalist discourse. How can one thwart the antibodies of a civilization opposed to the offer of a link that permits one to well say and take into account castration?

Should such a refusal not result in a return that is a male-diction, in the field of the real? I mean the real of the clinic. For to the extent that subjects lend themselves to this rejection of the unconscious, socially proposed or imposed upon them, should we not end up seeing either manic returns <sup>5</sup>--yet already predicted and inscribed in what characterizes the mentality of consumerism, manic indeed-- or "returns" (to be assessed clinically) rather melancholic or depressive.

These returns should correspond to that to which the subject feels reduced by society, i.e. a remainder that is non-recyclable, a piece of carrion, as Marc Strauss suggests: a piece of carrion that deserves the abuse to which he is submitted, or deserves to be "reclaimed" or eliminated from the environment of which he is the source of pollution, in an ecology taken to the extreme. This is a delicate matter, given that the structural singularity of the subject, around which analysis operates, is something fundamentally non-recyclable.

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<sup>4</sup> J. Lacan. "*La Psychanalyse: Raison d'un Échec.*" **Autres Ecrits**, p. 349.

<sup>5</sup> J. Lacan. "Television" **Autres Ecrits**, pp. 520-521.

The media and legal bureaucracies do nothing but accuse the subject on all levels: of existing, of thinking, of desiring, of having an unconscious, of not having the instrumental value to which he is reduced in the current discourse.

If for Freud--as Lacan said--the attribution of an unconscious to everyone was “an incredible fact of charity,”<sup>6</sup> can an analyst do differently? How else can he detect the possibility that a subscription to the unconscious has been cancelled, when he encounters this case?

And insofar as the dominant discourse proposes to “mentality” a generalized cowardice as the politically correct model, again should we not expect repercussions for the guilt entailed in identification to a contemporary reality that leads to giving up on one’s desire? (Therefore, a neurosis that could be both actual and a defense, to take up again an old distinction of Freud’s, as revived by Sidi Askofaré in Milan?) Here it is useful to recall that the notion of political correctness goes back to the period between the two wars, and that the first decree issued by Hitler as Chancellor of the Reich established “humanitarian” methods for cooking lobsters, while we, the humans, are nailed down in our being of carrion, vile and wicked.

Psychoanalysis responds to this with a very different way of “recycling.” But from the start it must pay attention to the register of unconscious guilt correlative to the capitalist production of the failure to enjoy; and also to the impossible of the denied subject that returns in an *a priori* sense of guilt that is far from being recognized as such. One is guilty if one does not agree with the discourse of others; and if one does agree, then the discourse makes us guilty: the convergence of Freud’s superego with Lacan’s. It seems to me that the traits of both can be recognized in the politically correct, insofar as it participates in civilization’s current version of the superego.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Lacan. **Encore** (p.90). In English, see **Encore** p.98 (trans. Bruce Fink).