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FROM CASE STUDY AS SYMPTOM TO CASE STUDY AS *SINTHOMÉ*:  
ENGAGING LACAN AND IRIGARAY ON  
“THINKING IN CASES” AS PSYCHOANALYTIC PEDAGOGY

A Dissertation

Submitted to McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Erica Schiller Freeman

August 2020

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2020

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ENGAGING LACAN AND IRIGARAY ON  
“THINKING IN CASES” AS PSYCHOANALYTIC PEDAGOGY

By

Erica Schiller Freeman

Approved May 6, 2020

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Derek W. Hook, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Committee Chair

---

Suzanne Barnard, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Committee Member

---

Elizabeth Fein, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Committee Member

---

Stephanie Swales, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
University of Dallas  
Committee Member (External)

---

Kristine Blair, Ph.D.  
Dean, McNulty College and Graduate  
School of Liberal Arts  
Professor of English

---

Leswin Laubscher, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Psychology  
Associate Professor of Psychology

ABSTRACT

FROM CASE STUDY AS SYMPTOM TO CASE STUDY AS *SINTHOMÉ*:  
ENGAGING LACAN AND IRIGARAY ON  
“THINKING IN CASES” AS PSYCHOANALYTIC PEDAGOGY

By

Erica Schiller Freeman

August 2020

Dissertation supervised by Derek W. Hook, Ph.D.

This dissertation accomplishes two goals. First, this dissertation articulates a Lacanian account of the epistemological and historical presuppositions of the psychoanalytic case study genre, while engaging reflexively with extant Foucauldian scholarship on this genre as well as feminist psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray’s criticisms of Lacan. Irigaray’s critique is engaged in order to tarry with its implications for a Lacanian approach to the psychoanalytic case study genre. Second, this dissertation critically examines the significance of Lacan’s (re)reading, in *Seminar V*, of Joan Riviere’s (1929) “Womanliness as Masquerade” in the midst of his oral teachings on the psychoanalytic concepts of castration and feminine sexuality, which took place when a distinctively Lacanian community of theory and practice was emerging from institutional tension in 1950s-era French psychoanalysis.

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## INTRODUCTION

How does the writing, reading, and rereading of the psychoanalytic case study genre inform the historically and culturally situated development of distinct communities of theory and practice within the transnational psychoanalytic tradition? How can psychoanalytic case studies be understood as a textual genre? What does this particular genre of writing do? This dissertation takes up these questions from a perspective informed by Lacan's psychoanalysis and Irigaray's criticism of it. In particular, I attend to the several articulations in Lacan's seminars and lectures between modern science, literature, writing, knowledge, and the network of concepts associated with the sexual. This dissertation asks: What implications do these articulations have for an account of the psychoanalytic case study genre?

A specifically Lacanian account of the case study genre does not yet exist. This omission is conspicuous, given the existence of the now-classic anthology of case studies written by Lacanian psychoanalysts (e.g., Schneiderman, 1980) and the more recent publication of case studies by students of American Lacanian psychoanalyst and translator Bruce Fink (e.g., Baldwin, 2016; Miller, 2011). Perhaps the lack of attention to the psychoanalytic case study as genre among Lacanians can be understood in reference to the well-known fact that Lacan never published case studies of his own psychoanalytic practice. Perhaps, too, those Lacanians who have written their own case studies have simply taken for granted the status and function of the case study genre within the transnational psychoanalytic tradition.

However this gap in Lacanian scholarship concerning the nature and implications of the psychoanalytic case study genre might be explained, it is well known to those with

even a cursory familiarity with Lacan's teachings that he was preoccupied throughout his career with questions concerning the relationships of psychoanalysis to science and of the sexual to knowledge, as well as with the status of truth and knowledge within psychoanalysis. His teachings on these topics provide ample conceptual resources for the development of a Lacanian account of the psychoanalytic case study genre, the relationship of this genre to that ontologically and epistemologically significant dimension of reality termed "the sexual," and the role of this genre in the formation of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a distinct community of theory and practice. The primary *theoretical* task of this dissertation has been to develop a Lacanian account of the psychoanalytic case study genre by means of conceptual resources located in relevant sections of Lacan's seminars and published writings.

Although case presentations are commonplace in the formation of Lacanian psychoanalysts, nevertheless an account of the psychoanalytic case study genre in terms of Lacan's theory has been lacking. This situation within the Lacanian field contrasts with the recent efflorescence of Foucauldian-historicist scholarship on this genre inaugurated by historian of psychoanalysis and translator John Forrester. This dissertation proceeds on the assumption that it is not a mere coincidence that both Lacan and Foucault offered conceptual resources suited to investigating this genre. As philosopher John Rajchman (2010/1991) has noted, both theorists were concerned in distinct ways with style as an *ethical* problem that had implications for knowledge production, pedagogy, and subject formation.

Style became an increasingly explicit concept in Foucault's later writings as he reflected on his own efforts in earlier writings, such as the 1975 genealogy *Discipline and*

*Punish*, to incite in his readers awareness of and critical reflection on the contingent yet violent historical conditions of the formation of individuals in modern disciplinary societies. Forrester's historicist approach to the psychoanalytic case study genre responds in part to Foucault's own discussion of this genre in the section of that 1975 text entitled "The Examination." Not only will the content of this section of *Discipline and Punish* and its legacy in historicist scholarship on the case study genre be discussed; the relevant passages from his other publications, such as *History of Madness* and *Birth of the Clinic*, are also considered in light of his later remarks on style.

For Lacan's part, he claimed in the introduction to his *Écrits* that in place of a worldview, "he would have a style" (Rajchman, 2010/1991, p. 15), a style that he primarily performed through oral teachings. The difficulty of his style was an attempt to give his audience an opportunity to witness the analysand's difficulty of speaking for oneself and the analyst's arduous task of listening for the subject of the unconscious. He sought thereby to cultivate in his students awareness of and critical reflection on the violent, alienating nature of the development of personal identity in relation to images and ideals. Lacan also performed his style as an original reader of Freud's writings in the course of his early seminars. According to Rajchman (2010/1991), the early Lacan was particularly interested in the way Freud "became an 'author' - how he came to put 'himself' into his work and his conception of his work" (p. 23). Thus the primary theoretical task of this dissertation has been undertaken not only with attention to the content of relevant portions of Lacan's teachings, but also to their stylistic form, particularly as it relates to what I will call, in Chapter 5, the question of the writer.

The recent English translation of Lacan's late 1950s-era *Seminar V* reveals to an English-speaking readership the extensive engagement on Lacan's part with female British psychoanalyst Joan Riviere. Significantly, I claim, Lacan's dialogue with Riviere's (1929) case study, "Womanliness as Masquerade," occurs in the midst of his oral teachings on the psychoanalytic concepts of castration and feminine sexuality, and at the time when a distinctively Lacanian community of theory and practice was emerging from institutional tension in French psychoanalysis. Scholars and practitioners of psychoanalysis have yet to investigate the role(s) of Lacan's (re)reading of Joan Riviere's (1929) "Womanliness as Masquerade" during the emergence of Lacanian psychoanalysis in 1950s France. I attend to this gap in my dissertation by using the Lacanian approach to the case study and a method of reading consistent with it that I develop in the early chapters of this project to explicate Lacan's engagement with Riviere in *Seminar V*. This applied portion of this dissertation will foreground and attend, from within a Lacanian perspective, to this contribution by Joan Riviere to the midcentury emergence of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and practice. This dissertation investigates Riviere's contribution as two kinds of event: (1.) as an event in the formation of the historically, socially, and culturally situated Lacanian psychoanalytic community, and (2.) as an event of relating (through attention to the roles of the signifier and style) that is inscribed by dynamics of sexual difference. This task has been undertaken in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

The very same conceptual resources that are called upon in the theoretical portion of this dissertation to develop a Lacanian account of the psychoanalytic case study genre have also been critiqued by Belgian feminist, philosopher, and psychoanalyst Luce

Irigaray, a prominent voice within the complex and varied relationship between feminism and psychoanalysis. Although Irigaray affirmed the Lacanian tenets that sexual difference is an aspect of psychological life and that individuals assume one of two sexed subject positions in relation to the Symbolic order, she rejected Lacan's claim that there is but one Symbolic order. Irigaray's critical departure from Lacan on this point focused on what she perceived as the hierarchical quality of Lacan's teachings on masculine-feminine binary in, for example, *Seminar XX*. She was concerned with the ways in which "the feminine has been construed only as the negative, inferior version or opposite of the masculine: always defined *in relation to, against, and beneath* the masculine, paradigmatically as object in contrast to the masculine subject." A consequence of Lacan's alleged systematic subordination of feminine to masculine in his teachings, according to Irigaray, is that he universalized the historically contingent fact that "being female has not been the source of an independent subjective identity but merely the inverse of being male, which *has* been taken to be a positive identity" (Stone, 2016, p. 881).

Two chapters from her 1977 *This Sex Which is Not One* feature prominently in this dissertation. In "Cosí Fan Tutti," Irigaray critiques several key themes from *Seminar XX* - the formulas of sexuation; feminine sexuality; the nonexistence or *ek-sistence* of Woman and the "sexual relationship"; and love - in terms of the sexual position from which Lacan delivered his teachings on these themes. In "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids," Irigaray foregrounds the fact that the formal languages of logic and mathematics, so crucial to the projects of modern science and Lacan's later seminars, have a history that is not only contingent and situated, but that also violently excludes in ways that support the

oppression of women. The claim here is that formal languages, which Lacan invoked on several occasions, including his attempt in *Seminar V* to formalize the terms of the Freud-Jones debate, produce what Irigaray calls “solidified forms.” Such forms promote the illusion of solidity that obscures the fluidity of embodiment and fantasy, and thus disclose, according to Irigaray, Lacan’s own disavowed allegiance to Enlightenment prejudices concerning reason. Irigaray works in both chapters to interrogate Lacan’s blindness to the sexed position of his own writing and speaking, and to articulate his status as a sexed writer and orator with the form and style of his teachings. This dissertation engages Irigaray’s critique of Lacan in order to tarry with the implications of her critiques for a Lacanian approach to the psychoanalytic case study genre.

## CHAPTER 1:

### THE ROLES OF THE CASE STUDY IN PSYCHOANALYTIC PEDAGOGY

The case study genre has played a conspicuous role in the efforts on the part of Lacanian psychoanalyst and translator Bruce Fink (1997, 2007, 2014a) and his students, such as Lacanian psychotherapists Yael Goldman Baldwin (2016) and Michael J. Miller (2011), to make Lacanian approaches visible and legible to an English-speaking<sup>1</sup> audience of psychodynamic psychotherapists and mainstream psychoanalysts. They cite the exclusion of Lacanian literature from the vast majority of clinical psychology curricula and psychoanalytic training institutes as a major factor in the absence of Lacanian approaches from conversations among practitioners. More importantly, they claim that the extant Lacanian literature,<sup>2</sup> which consists almost exclusively of theoretical explication and is often written in a seemingly impenetrable style, reinforces this institutional divide. Baldwin and Miller present the writing of accessible Lacanian case studies as an effective way of responding to two concerns: one, that Lacan's "complicated musings" have no genuine clinical implications,<sup>3</sup> and, two, that Lacan's unique contributions to psychoanalytic clinical practice will fade into obscurity like a dead language.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> More specifically, American

<sup>2</sup> Written by Lacan himself or his acolytes, such as the authors included in Schneiderman's (1980) anthology

<sup>3</sup> "Even those who have ventured to read Lacan's work and find it theoretically and philosophically interesting, often ask me how a clinical practice is founded upon such writings. ... Many people cannot imagine how Lacan's complicated musings on philosophers, anthropologists, and linguists...function in the clinic and help to allay psychic suffering" (Baldwin, 2016, p. xv).

<sup>4</sup> "...[W]e might argue that a clinical approach must evolve via more than one voice, and that if Lacanian therapy is to become a viable field of study and practice, rather than an

These remarks allude to familiar claims about the role and status of case studies in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in the broader literature. First, the case study genre is portrayed as distinctive of a clinical style of thinking, as a textual practice that establishes and confirms the boundaries of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.<sup>5</sup> Second, case studies are thought to provide legitimizing proof of the therapeutic efficacy of a particular theoretical framework. Lacanian case studies are believed to demonstrate Lacan's relevance beyond the boundaries of philosophy and the social sciences by providing evidence of the applicability of Lacanian theory in clinical contexts. Third, case studies mediate between theory and the lived experience of therapeutic process.<sup>6</sup> Fourth, case studies help negotiate membership (or nonmembership) in communities of interpretation and clinical practice. Baldwin (2016) and Miller (2011) imply that writing style in case studies indicates whether the intended audience are the "initiated" or "uninitiated."<sup>7</sup> If it

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artifact, something akin to a dead language (which needs only one authoritative text to maintain itself as such), it must go beyond the form of a monologue" (Miller, 2011, p. xvii, footnote 1).

<sup>5</sup> "In order to bring Lacan to the table of the broader clinical discourse, clinicians who utilize this theory in their practices need to articulate their actual experience" (Baldwin, 2016, p. xvi). "We must discuss our practice in concrete terms if our professional communications are to be much more than abstract philosophical exercises or empty articulations of 'manualized' approaches" (Miller, 2011, p. 32).

<sup>6</sup> Miller (2011) asserts that writing Lacanian case studies addresses questions such as, "what might an attunement to language, as Lacan advocates it, mean for psychotherapy as directed by a nonanalyst?" (p. 26), and "how does this [clinical framework] affect his [the psychotherapist's] case formulation and interventions, and the overall direction the course of the treatment will take?" (p. 27). Again, "these case studies primarily seek to illustrate in detail the impact that a Lacanian approach to the patient's language has upon the listening, and thereby upon the formulation and the interventions, of the clinician" (p. 32). Similarly, for Baldwin (2016), writing case studies responds to the question, "what does it [Lacanian psychoanalysis or Lacanian psychotherapy] look like in practice?" (p. xv).

<sup>7</sup> Nobus and Quinn (2005) make a similar point about the language of Lacanian psychoanalysis: "...the process of initiation and ordination into this tradition involves acquiring its language, a totally unique idiom with a specific grammar and



is written for the initiated, the ability to comprehend the case confirms one's membership in the community and mastery of the group's knowledge. If it is written for the uninitiated, it serves as a means of expanding the Lacanian community by educating new members in the group's knowledge. Notably, all four of these are particular ways that case studies operate socioculturally in and through language.

As noted briefly in the Introduction to this dissertation, there has been no shortage of Lacanian case presentations. However, until relatively recently, there has been a dearth of *published* Lacanian case studies. It is precisely this gap in the Lacanian pedagogical literature that Bruce Fink and his students have attempted to suture in the last two decades, in order to demonstrate to those not initiated into or skeptical of the Lacanian field its applicability to and efficacy for clinical practice. Yet, throughout much of Lacan's teachings, the spoken is privileged in relation to the written – a claim that appears at once to explain the heretofore dearth of published Lacanian cases and to complicate the endeavor on the part of some American Lacanians to demonstrate and disseminate the principles of Lacan's clinical practice through published case studies. One task of this dissertation is to attend to and reckon with this tension.

Baldwin's (2016) and Miller's (2011) case studies are meant to illustrate how language works and is worked with in the context of the clinical encounter. Ironically, however, they hardly tarry with how language works and is worked with as the clinical process is written down in the form of a case study - apart from criticizing the obscure

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vocabulary...," they claim. "Lacanian (or Lacanese, as it is sometimes called) is, after all, a language of professional exchange within the Lacanian community, and the extent to which someone is able to utilize it fluently and flexibly counts as an established criterion for assessing the degree of his or her social integration into the field" (p. 64).

style of most extant Lacanian literature and gesturing toward the need for authorial reflexivity. In this respect, they are not alone, for “what does not seem to be discussed” amongst most clinicians, “...is what view of language we hold to in assessing the written case study” (Spurling, 1997, p. 73). Spurling (1997) continues,

we take a view of language which is distinctly unmodern, or premodern. We tend to consider language to be transparent, the vehicle through which the [author's] thinking and feeling will shine through, which itself is taken as a sign, albeit at several removes, of his or her actual counselling work (p. 73).

Despite committing a fault common to many psychoanalytic practitioners in overlooking the functions of language in education and communication when preparing cases for publication, contemporary Lacanian psychotherapists nevertheless ignore topics that were of particular importance to Lacan in his roles as critic of mainstream psychoanalytic practice and as teacher of psychoanalysts. This fault is particularly striking given the keen awareness that Lacanians, such as Dany Nobus and Malcolm Quinn (2005) and Paul Verhaeghe (2001, 2004), demonstrate regarding the transmission and communication of psychoanalytic concepts in their Lacanian scholarship. Lacan's teachings on language, subject formation, and social bonds portray the communication of knowledge as an active task for both sender and receiver and emphasize the ways in which alienation and ignorance are imbricated with group membership.

As one who came to clinical training with prior education in history and philosophy of science, it struck me as curious that there was very little Lacanian literature concerned with the case study as a pedagogical instrument or on clinical writing as an array of pedagogical practices, especially given that Lacan himself engaged frequently and at length with the historical and philosophical issues linked with the status of science.

A notable exception is Sota Fuentes (2019) of the New Lacanian School, who, drawing on Miller (1996/2007) and Brousse (2010), has offered her reflections on “the question of what is a case in psychoanalysis and if the writing of a testimony as an Analyst of the School is, strictly speaking, the construction of a ‘case’ or not” (p. 2).<sup>8</sup> “Any case construction, whether it admits it or not,” she claims,

revolves around a Real impossible to say, and [one of] the question[s] to pose at the end of an analysis is...how the Analyst of the School maintains this impossible in the transmission he makes to the analytic community (p. 4).

She concludes that “the transmission of a case in psychoanalysis requires to not miss this ‘impossible to say’ and to keep alive the emptiness of signification, where the power of the equivocation, the creativity of the language, may always open new possibilities” in relation to “the audience addressed” (p. 7). I elaborate and expand upon Sota Fuentes’ (2019) reflections in Chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation, in which I discuss approaches to reading and writing case studies grounded in Lacan’s psychoanalytic teachings on language. Over the course of these chapters, I consider how the implications of Lacan’s teachings for the case study compare to the burgeoning body of Foucauldian scholarship on the case study initiated by historian of psychoanalysis John Forrester. Furthermore, with Lacan’s transgressive student Luce Irigaray as my guide, I consider the formative effects the case study has had for me, a woman who is also a clinician-in-training.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on the roles of the case study in psychoanalytic education, defined here as the transmission of knowledge

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<sup>8</sup> Loewenstein (1992), who as far as I know does not identify as a Lacanian but nevertheless engages favorably with Lacan’s teachings, is another exception. I return to his article in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

relevant to psychoanalysis with the aim of (re-)producing psychoanalysts and initiating them into specific interpretive communities (i.e., “schools” of psychoanalysis). This review is preparation for engaging the two distinct but importantly related questions motivating this dissertation:

1. How do Lacan’s philosophical (i.e., epistemic and ontological) commitments regarding *language* both enable and constrain the reading and writing of case studies?
2. How did Lacan’s (re-)reading of extant psychoanalytic case studies shape the historical emergence of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a distinct community of interpretation and analytic practice?

For Lacan, Freud’s psychoanalysis does not merely add to existing bodies of knowledge, nor does it simply constitute a wholly self-contained, distinct body of knowledge. Rather, psychoanalysis stands in diacritical relation to science, religion, art, and other disciplines, such that its historical emergence transforms the significance of all the others while also posing the task of reconsidering their conceptual foundations. In particular, psychoanalysis challenges familiar ways of thinking about the very nature and possibility of knowing and seeing. This task posed by psychoanalysis becomes especially complex in relation to the distinctive style of reasoning - “thinking in cases” - and mode of inscription - the psychoanalytic case study - that have emerged together with psychoanalysis as an institution. Is it possible to maintain the subversive originality<sup>9</sup> of psychoanalysis while participating in the practices of reading and writing case studies

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<sup>9</sup> This is Felman’s (1980-81) phrase.

that are, as I show in this chapter, of crucial importance to the production of new clinicians?

### **Knowledge, Artistry, and the Clinical Encounter**

It could be argued that, ultimately, patients' presenting concerns are problems of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> The very phenomena that motivate people to seek the help of a psychoanalyst or psychotherapist (e.g., symptoms) and that fuel sessions (e.g., dreams, parapraxes) - unconscious formations - are artifacts of our fraught search for answers to shared questions about fundamental issues such as sexual difference and the role of the father. These questions persist and often become a source of suffering because the knowledge we are seeking cannot be fully grasped. Our fundamental fantasies are constructions that offer partial solutions to this impasse (Verhaeghe, 2001). As Freud's own case studies suggest, the process of therapeutic change involves encounters with the problems of knowledge that the practice of psychoanalysis was perhaps the first to disclose. Yet the very process of thinking of a suffering subject as a "case," as this term has come to be understood in the helping professions, also requires gathering and constructing particular kinds of knowledge.

Lacan described therapeutic change in (at least) three ways over the course of his teaching career: (1.) as bringing the unconscious into full speech, (2.) as "traversing the

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<sup>10</sup> It can also be said that "[t]he only illness from which we suffer as speaking beings is that which is introduced into the living by the parasitism of the signifier. Lacan spoke of language as a cancer and evoked the virulence of *logos*. ... To equip *jouissance* is to treat the effects of language on the living. ... The subject obtains the equipment of *jouissance* through discourse and fantasy if he is neurotic. He gets there through delusion if he is psychotic - at least, if he is paranoid" (Gault, 2007, p. 76).

fantasy,” and (3.) as identifying with the *sinthome*.<sup>11</sup> In order for this to be possible, however, the structure of the patient’s fundamental fantasy must first be elucidated. The process of elucidation begins in the “preliminary sessions” that constitute the first phase in a Lacanian treatment. During these sessions, the clinician is concerned with gathering and engaging in what, in non-Lacanian parlance, can be called “local knowledge” (Rustin, 2001; Geertz, 1983) of the patient’s singular life history.<sup>12</sup> The clinician gathers this singular information in order to arrive at a provisional sense of how the patient, over the course of life thus far, has constructed their suffering and attempted to deal with it (Vanheule, 2017). Freud, as Sota Fuentes (2019) notes, inaugurated the transition from “clinical picture” thinking in the medical tradition to the kind of “thinking in cases” – singular knowledge – characteristic of psychoanalysis as a distinct discipline.<sup>13</sup> The narrative style of Freud’s five major case studies rhetorically manifests this transition. I suggest that this transition has been, and continues to be, ambivalent. This ambivalence can be discerned in the pedagogical role that case studies have been given in the century since the emergence of psychoanalysis.

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<sup>11</sup> As Harari (1995/2002) has noted, these three portrayals of the end of psychoanalysis roughly correspond to the so-called early, middle, and late Lacan. Although each signals a distinct conception of therapeutic change, they are not mutually exclusive. I engage with the first and third of these portrayals, successively, in Chapters 3 and 5.

<sup>12</sup> Here and throughout this dissertation I refer to non-Lacanian literature, both within and outside the discipline of psychoanalysis, either because (1.) I am attempting to engage with concepts that may not be articulated in Lacanian terms, or (2.) to demonstrate points at which Lacanians and non-Lacanians may be articulating comparable concepts.

<sup>13</sup> “Heir of a medical tradition, Freud was still guided by the ‘clinical picture’ methodology for diagnostics, which was based on an objective and universalizing clinical practice without a subject, where each symptom was taken as a sign of a disease, and the sick person, an example of the disease. In Freud, the transition from a clinical ‘picture’ to a clinical ‘case’ took place during the encounter with Jean-Martin Charcot” (Sota Fuentes, 2019, p. 3).

Although the narrated events, incidents, and memories are unique to this patient, attempting to know this singular being is fraught, like attempting to define a proper name. When a clinician attempts to write down the process and outcome of their clinical encounters with a patient, a tension between, on the one hand, conveying the knowledge that patient has in some sense “gained” *in* psychoanalysis (which has to do with the singular features of the patient’s speech), and, on the other hand, demonstrating and transmitting the application of psychoanalytic theory and concepts (“knowledge *of* psychoanalysis,” which, inasmuch as it consists of concepts and theory, obeys what Sota Fuentes (2019) calls “universalizing and classificatory” logic) becomes apparent. It recapitulates the tense relationship between clinical “picture”-thinking and clinical thinking in “cases” that Freud navigated in his own practice with patients.

As I will explain more fully in Chapter 2, the process of coming to know something through description, in which observations are translated into words, transforms that which is to be known into a constructed *object* of knowledge. When what is to be known is a (suffering) subject, their first-person singularity is to some extent sacrificed in that process. Paradoxically, then, the therapeutic process of facilitating subjective change begins with the objectification of becoming a case – or so it would seem, if received philosophical accounts of knowledge are left unquestioned or are not consistently questioned. It is precisely this questioning of traditional epistemology that Lacan, following some elements of Freud’s teachings, foregrounds. This questioning, I seek to show, has implications for what Forrester has termed, “thinking in cases,” the style of reasoning he claims is distinctive of psychoanalysis.

As the patient produces and gives expression to this singular knowledge of their life, the clinician is concerned with arriving at knowledge of the patient as a *particular*.<sup>14</sup> The Lacanian clinician wants to ascertain the clinical structure (e.g., neurotic, psychotic) organizing the patient's experience of their symptoms (Vanheule, 2017). More generally, the clinician is trying to *name* - diagnose<sup>15</sup> - and, ultimately, *frame*<sup>16</sup> - formulate a case conceptualization<sup>17</sup> - the patient's situation. The appearance to the clinician's eye of a problematic situation as such, as something to which technical knowledge can be applied, involves the artistic acts of naming and framing (Schön, 1987; Goodman, 1978).<sup>18</sup>

Conflicting framings of problematic situations are determined by professional identities

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<sup>14</sup> For Foucault, knowledge of the particular becomes possible with the historical emergence of the "individual" as an epistemological category. The individual is the subject of knowledge but is also subjected to knowledge. Just as Lacan views nomination, so too does Foucault regard the production of individuals as a process involving loss and violence.

<sup>15</sup> The question of sacrifice emerges once again with diagnosis. What of the singularity of the patient's situation might be sacrificed in striving to view it through a diagnostic framework? Diagnosis informs a clinician's obligations to a patient; it also shapes a patient's choices and responses. These transformations directly pertain to clinical authority and its relationship to knowledge and thinking in cases. To what extent is the exercise of this authority benevolently responsive to subjectivity or violently reductive for the sake of objectivity?

<sup>16</sup> As Chambers (1999) aptly observes, "framing encloses something and thereby sets it off from other forms of communication and interaction. Frames act as signals that what is inside should be attended to differently from everything else" (p. 17). The frame, as Chambers (1999) also acknowledges, is a fiction.

<sup>17</sup> A case conceptualization may also be called a case formulation. It is meant to provide "an encompassing view of the patient, which will facilitate concise communication between clinicians and maintaining consistency of care" as well as "to aid the therapist in anticipating future ruptures, determining the suitability of different treatment approaches, and setting reasonable goals and outcomes" (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 103). Bradshaw (2012) emphasizes that a case conceptualization ought to be "a fluid piece of writing that must change as new information arises and more experience is generated" (p. 103).

<sup>18</sup> I invoke "artistic" here, not only because the scholars cited use this language, but also because Lacan himself, perhaps most notably in *Seminar XI*, turns to art, particularly anamorphosis, and philosophies of perception in order to present psychoanalytic concepts that have implications for clinical practice.



(Loseke, 2007) and sociocultural perspectives (Shweder, 1991). Seeing the patient's presenting concerns as a case of a diagnostic category and comparing that case to a repertoire of others similar to it that have been previously encountered is helpful for the clinical process because it gives shape to the clinician's experience of the patient and also the clinical "material" produced by the patient. Thinking in cases is thus a kind of analogical thinking (Arras, 2017). It "defines what is meaningful, analytically useful, and potentially therapeutic, and offers guides, organizing constructs, 'lenses' or 'prisms' through which to see" (Glick & Stern, 2007, p. 1262). Crucially, the clinician arrives at a clinical picture by making an appeal to expert knowledge learned outside the context of the clinical sessions, through psychoanalytic education.<sup>19</sup> This expert knowledge consists of clinical theory (e.g., psychopathology, models of the mind) and systems of classification (Rustin, 2007).

Thus, as the clinician arrives at knowledge of the patient as a particular, the patient comes to be represented as a case.<sup>20</sup> A case is, first of all, an *instance* of a category. It may be a typical or exemplary illustration of that category, or an example that brings the limits of that category into view for critical consideration (Kennedy, 2000). Second, "thinking in cases" is the clinician's *process* of artistically selecting, arranging,

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<sup>19</sup> "Knowledge *of* psychoanalysis," in contrast with "knowledge *in* psychoanalysis"

<sup>20</sup> The word "case" encompasses a range of loosely connected meanings: event, instance, state of affairs, physical condition, and chance happening (Fortunati, 2011). A case is "whatever new element" - singularity - "claims to be included or not" in the canon of a specific discipline (Morisco & Calanchi, 2011, p. 15). Human case studies record events or instances that engage existing bodies of knowledge in the human sciences and communicate interpretations of these findings to communities of readers (Lang, Damousi, & Lewis, 2017, p. 1).

and constructing knowledge of the patient and the course of treatment - a matter of design (Schön, 1987). Thinking in cases is complicated, for

patients manifest many different kinds of difficulty, arising from different patterns of development. It is expected that their states of mind may relevantly fall under several different clinical descriptions at once, and that patients will rarely manifest themselves as ‘pure types’ of only one recognized psychological disorder (Rustin, 2007, p. 13).

The clinician’s task is to “bring the different classifications and explanations together in a way which captures the particularity of the individual case” (p. 15). This involves the application of expert knowledge, the body of ideas accepted by the clinician’s community. A case is, thirdly, the *product* of the clinician’s thinking process - a written case study. This written representation takes the form of “a detailed narrative of an individual patient which focuses on his or her unique history while placing him or her within the broader context of a disease type” (Kennedy, 2000, p. 6).<sup>21</sup>

Although this production of particular knowledge, or representation of the patient as a case, is generally understood to be important for planning and navigating the course of treatment, the clinician does not solely or even for the most part relate to knowledge in terms of logical deduction. Rather, the clinician tries to observe the clinical process while also remaining engaged in that process with the patient. The clinician works in modes of

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<sup>21</sup> The language of “disease” is of course controversial among psychoanalysts, regardless of their particular analytic orientation. That this term remains controversial points to the persistent, as-yet-unresolved tension regarding the historical and philosophical relationship between psychoanalysis and medicine, a tension to which I return later in this chapter.

Sota Fuentes (2019) defines the clinical “case,” understood as the product of the clinician’s thinking process, as “the construction of a singular body of knowledge extracted from the analysand’s speech, targeting the ‘uniqueness’ of the case, which objects to the universalizing and classificatory logic” (p. 3).

description “which emphasize change, process, and emergence, and which seek understanding through resemblance and analogy” (Rustin, 2007, p. 14). Writing up the clinical encounter<sup>22</sup> is believed to be instrumental in forming the clinician into a skilled observer, the “trained expert.”<sup>23</sup> “The very process of writing...helps the candidate [or novice clinician] articulate a previously tacit understanding of the patient and the analytic process” (Lister et al., 2007, p. 1238).<sup>24</sup>

Lacan teaches that becoming a subject in and through language is a process that, like the patient’s becoming a case, inevitably involves various forms or modes of objectification. As I review from a Lacanian perspective in Chapter 2, the subject-to-be takes itself as its first love object, and from this the ego and identity take shape. There is thus a cost to being named and having the potential to speak in the first person at all.<sup>25</sup> Becoming a clinician, as I discuss, is another instance of subject formation. Learning to

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<sup>22</sup> Writing up the clinical encounter begins with the clinician’s process notes, which, as Bradshaw (2012) has indicated, have been given very little attention in scholarly literature, except for an issue of *Feminism & Psychology*, 16(4), almost entirely dedicated to this very topic. Defined as a “reconstruction of an analytic hour” (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 78), process notes “provide a way to render the analytic experience in words, and as a point of departure for discovery, discussions, and associations through the process of consultation or supervision” (p. 81).

<sup>23</sup> The trained expert cultivates the epistemic virtue Daston and Galison (2007) call “trained judgment.” For more on this epistemic category, see Daston and Galison (2007). Sealey (2011) argues for the applicability of this category to psychoanalysis and the writing of case studies.

<sup>24</sup> Fink (2014b) concurs, noting that “I myself...believed that the very process of writing up the case would help me better see the forest for the trees of the day-to-day clinical material. I find that it is often only in the course of taking notes and putting things together that I notice that several people in the analysand’s life have the same names, that certain events occurred around the same time, and so on” (p. xv).

<sup>25</sup> Moncayo (2017) notes that “naming represents a gift but also will become the signifier of a loss at the level of the ideal ego. This loss and its symbolization at the level of the ideal ego will then lead to the formation of the ego ideal when the Other appears as the object of the mother’s desire” (p. 15).

think in cases by reading and writing case studies in the context of a clinical community helps instill a candidate with a psychoanalytic identity.<sup>26</sup> I arrived at this conclusion by observing the ubiquity of “thinking in cases,” particularly case presentations, in my own clinical training. Yet, initiation into group membership often comes at the cost of speaking in one’s own name. I began to wonder whether this cost was raised in my case, as a woman training to become a clinician, given that the theories and practices I was learning were largely developed by men who stumbled upon the enigma of woman.<sup>27</sup> The ethical task for the clinician is to navigate the inevitably objectifying case conceptualization process in a way that exposes the patient’s historical self-estrangement, as well as the alienating effects of the clinical encounter itself, to question. How can I engage in the style of thinking “in cases” distinctive of the clinical profession of which I am becoming a member, in an ethical manner? Is this question more fraught in light of sexual difference? Luce Irigaray – at once a woman psychoanalyst and a heretic exiled from Lacan’s school – proved to be an apt partner in dialogue while engaging in these reflections for this dissertation.

### **Knowledge, Artistry, and the Production of Clinicians**

Before explicating the ways case studies function in the production of clinicians during psychoanalytic education, I will review the history of that form of education itself. Notably, Freud explicitly describes the formation of psychological life as a kind of

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<sup>26</sup> Wille (2008) defines psychoanalytic identity as “the way in which we consciously and unconsciously feel ourselves to be analysts” (p. 1194).

<sup>27</sup> Consider, for example, Freud’s infamous question, “Was will des Weib?” (What does a woman want?) and his characterization of femininity as a “dark continent.”

education on both the individual<sup>28</sup> and collective<sup>29</sup> levels. His language in this context invites comparison with the formation of the psychoanalyst as clinician, which is an instance of education in the more mundane sense of the term. In this section, I indicate questions and concerns Lacan would raise to psychoanalytic education, based on his account of the roles of alienation and loss in human development. I claim that Freud and Lacan urge a rethinking of the learning process that complicates both the production of new clinicians and the institutionalization of psychoanalysis – both of which occur through the reading and writing of case studies. How might education be (or become) a liberating endeavor? I engage these Lacanian themes more thoroughly in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, where I explicate Lacan’s psychoanalytic epistemology and the resources it provides for reading and writing the psychoanalytic case study genre.

#### **From Freud’s informal group discussions to the founding of the Berlin**

**Institute.** Freud’s reflections on what ought to be considered appropriate psychoanalytic training coincided with his efforts to institutionalize psychoanalysis in the form of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). These moves shared common purposes: to protect patients from practitioners of what Freud termed “wild” psychoanalysis,<sup>30</sup> and to adjudicate the acceptable forms of psychoanalytic relationships.<sup>31</sup> These were Freud’s ways of giving psychoanalysis - as theory, as method, and as praxis - an identity that could be protected and passed on to younger generations. The members of the IPA

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<sup>28</sup> See Freud (1911)

<sup>29</sup> See Freud (1917b)

<sup>30</sup> Laplanche and Pontalis (1967/2006) define “wild” psychoanalysis as “the procedure of amateur or inexperienced ‘analysts’ who attempt to interpret symptoms, dreams, utterances, actions, etc., on the basis of psycho-analytic notions which they have as often as not misunderstood” (p. 480).

<sup>31</sup> Between psychoanalyst and patient as well as between psychoanalyst and initiate.

“declare their adherence by the publication of their names, in order to be able to repudiate those who do not belong to us and yet call their medical procedure ‘psycho-analysis’” (Freud, 1910b, p. 227). Engaging with the question of psychoanalytic training, Freud also broached what would remain the vexed issue of the boundary between psychoanalysis and medicine.<sup>32</sup>

Freud’s earliest remarks on preparation for psychoanalytic practice concerned the element that arguably sets psychoanalytic education apart: what would become known as “training analysis.”<sup>33</sup> Freud had started holding in his home informal discussion groups for aspiring psychoanalysts around 1905 (Lewin & Ross, 1960, p. 7); however, by 1910, Freud noticed that “no psycho-analyst goes further than his own complexes and internal resistances permit” (1910a, p. 145). Initiation into the practice of psychoanalysis required something in addition to intellectual efforts to learn concepts and techniques. The aspiring psychoanalyst must also reckon with their own psychological life. The way out of the obstacles posed by one’s own neuroses, Freud initially concluded, was to “require

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<sup>32</sup> Borossa (1997) claims that psychoanalysis as an institution has structurally and historically precarious boundaries for two reasons: it obtains its identity in relation to other disciplines (e.g., medicine, linguistics, anthropology, history), and its identity transforms over time in response to those other disciplines to which it stands in relation. The issue of psychoanalysis and its institutional boundaries can also be taken up in terms of its paradoxical status as tradition (Spurling, 1993). On the one hand, when Freud (1926) suggested in *The Question of Lay Analysis* that aspiring psychoanalysts needed to have “a knowledge drawing on a familiarity with history, mythology, and literature,” he portrayed psychoanalysis as “heir to what has gone before...widely dispersed over several disciplines” (Spurling, 1993, p. 10). However, when Freud portrayed himself as the founder (father) of psychoanalysis and sought to preserve or maintain its purity in order to safeguard its faithful transmission to future generations, he implied that psychoanalysis was a tradition that in a significant sense broke with what came before.

<sup>33</sup> According to Spurling (1993), “the institution of the ‘training analysis,’ in which each student is analyzed by an established and experienced therapist, is a form of handing on the knowledge and authority accumulated in the previous generation of teachers” (p. 5). Similarly, Rustin (2001) regards the training analysis as a kind of “craft apprenticeship.”

that he [the aspiring psychoanalyst] shall begin his activity with a self-analysis,” a practice of writing, “and continually carry it deeper while he is making his observations on his patients.”<sup>34</sup> Palmer (2008) claims that writing about one’s cases “can reveal the analyst’s work to himself, and, as such, is a valuable technique for self-analysis” (p. 477). Analyzing oneself was deemed so important that “anyone who fails to produce results in a self-analysis of this kind may at once give up any idea of being able to treat patients by analysis” (Freud, 1910a, p. 145).<sup>35</sup>

The significance of self-analysis in the historical evolution of psychoanalytic education indicates the extent to which Freud’s teachings transformed the nature and possibility of self-knowledge and knowledge of others, a point I discuss at length in Chapter 2. According to Felman (1980-81), psychoanalysis exposed familiar practices of self-reflection as inadequate, thereby necessitating “a new and totally unprecedented

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<sup>34</sup> Freud not only recommended self-analysis; he also practiced it himself from the summer of 1897 through November 1899 (Mahony, 1994/1996, 1987). Notably, Freud’s self-analysis was conducted “through, with, and in writing. ...writing was an indispensable feature with the deepest significance in Freud’s self-cure” (Mahony, 1994/1996, pp. 14-15). This process of writing was, for Freud, an effort to heal himself: “Freud’s writing cure was an act of self-discovery, self-recovery, and growth - indeed, a self-enabling and self-generative act” (p. 29). Furthermore, Freud’s self-analysis was a “publishing cure,” insofar as, for him, “a complete oedipal victory entailed that he should follow in the steps of Shakespeare and expose his achievement in the public marketplace” (p. 30). Nevertheless, it was a “partial” cure; according to Mahony (1994/1996), Freud’s writings, particularly the *Interpretation of Dreams*, contained “a substantial amount of acting out, writing out, and publishing out, whose meanings were insufficiently understood by Freud at the time” (p. 31).

<sup>35</sup> Prior to issuing these remarks, “the student mapped out his own education and his own reading. This was not an impossible task; there was mostly Freud. Even today...Freud here signifies the *arete* of psychoanalytic studies” (Lewin & Ross, 1960, p. 292). Again, “for Freud and for many of the first generation of psychoanalytic pioneers - among them Brill, Putnam, and Karl Abraham - self-analysis, reading, discussion, and correspondence constituted the major modes of psychoanalytic initiation” (Hale, 1995, p. 322).

*mode of reflexivity*” (p. 51, original emphasis).<sup>36</sup> If Lacan’s view of the divided nature of subjectivity applies to the clinician as well as to the patient,<sup>37</sup> then the clinician who aspires to self-analysis through writing up their clinical encounters as case studies must remain mindful that they are neither unified, centered, nor self-transparent.<sup>38</sup> Lacan’s challenge to those who regard the writing up and publishing of case studies as key to the formation of analysts and the dissemination of psychoanalytic concepts, then, is to reckon with the implications the fundamentally conflictual nature of psychological life has for clinical writing practices – and to do so without falling prey to the error that reflexivity can be reduced to recognizing self or other, or achieving a transcendent position.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> This is “a new mode of cognition or information-gathering whereby ignorance itself becomes structurally informative, in an asymmetrically reflexive dialogue in which the interlocutors - through language - inform each other of what they do not know” (Felman, 1980-81, p. 51).

<sup>37</sup> I explicate this theme in Chapter 3.

<sup>38</sup> At this point I would like to introduce the notion of the case study as “symptom,” as manifesting the clinician-writer’s “blind spot” or countertransference. As Sota Fuentes (2019) notes, “the case of the young homosexual woman is Freud’s case, in the sense that the analyst is always present in the portrait he paints. The exhaustive case account style, the narrative of the experience brought session by session, does not exclude the analyst from the experience he promotes, or from the account he elaborates” (p. 4).

<sup>39</sup> According to Bolton (2010), “*reflection* is learning and developing through examining what we think happened on any occasion, and how we think others perceived the event and us, opening our practice to scrutiny by others, and studying data and texts from the wider sphere. Reflection is an in-depth consideration of events or situations outside of oneself: solitarily, or with critical support. The reflector attempts to work out what happened, what they thought or felt about it, why, who was involved and when, and what these others might have experienced and thought and felt about it. It is looking at whole scenarios from as many angles as possible: people, relationships, situation, place, timing, chronology, causality, connections, and so on, to make situations and people more comprehensible. This involves reviewing or reliving the experience to bring it into focus. Seemingly innocent details might prove to be key; seemingly vital details may be irrelevant. Reflection involves reliving and re-rendering: who said and did what, how, when, where, and why” (p. 13, original emphasis).

In contrast, “*reflexivity* is finding strategies to question our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices or habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others. To be reflexive is to examine, for example, how we -



Just two years later, Freud admitted that self-analysis was something of a paradox. How can one practice on oneself the very same techniques one was not yet prepared to practice on others? “Psycho-analytic purification,” as he called it, the process whereby a clinician recognizes and addresses “blind spots” in their “analytic perception,” was more likely to succeed as an intersubjective endeavor (Freud, 1912).<sup>40</sup> He now declared that “everyone who wishes to carry out analyses on other people shall first himself undergo an analysis by someone with expert knowledge” (p. 116).<sup>41</sup> This expert knowledge, which

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seemingly unwittingly - are involved in creating social and professional structures counter to our own values... It is becoming aware of the limits of our knowledge, of how our own behavior plays into organizational practices and why such practices might marginalize groups or exclude individuals. And it is understanding how we relate with others, and between us shape organizational realities’ shared practices and ways of talking. Thus, we recognize we are active in shaping our surroundings, and begin critically to take circumstances and relationships into consideration rather than merely reacting to them, and help review and revise ethical ways of being and relating. ...This deep questioning is missed out if the practitioner merely undertakes reflection as practical problem-solving: what happened, why, what did I think and feel about it, how can I do better next time? Reflexivity is making aspects of the self strange: focusing close attention upon *one’s own* actions, thoughts, feelings, values, identity, and their effect upon others, situations, and professional and social structures. The reflexive thinker has to stand back from belief and value systems, habitual ways of thinking and relating to others, structures of understanding themselves and their relationship to the world, and their assumptions about the way that the world impinges on them. This can only be done by somehow becoming separate in order to look at it as if from the outside... Strategies are required such as internal dialogue, and the support of others. This critical focus upon beliefs, values, professional identities, and how they affect and are affected by the surrounding cultural structures, is a highly responsible social and political activity” (pp, 13-14, original emphasis).

See Pillow (2003) and Walsh (1996, 2003) for other approaches to the distinction between reflexivity and reflection.

<sup>40</sup> Rather than dispensing with the practice altogether, it might be said that Freud remained ambivalent about self-analysis over the course of his career. Subsequent generations of psychoanalysts, such as Calder (1980) and clinician-authors included in Barron (1993), have continued the practice.

<sup>41</sup> As Hale (1995) suggests, Freud was likely inspired on this point by the Zurich School of psychoanalysis, the members of which, around 1907, began analyzing each others’ dreams. “Freud praised their growing insistence that a psychoanalyst first be analyzed by another analyst before treating patients” (p. 322).

had to do with the mind and its defenses, “will be sought in vain from studying books and attending lectures” (p. 117). Transmission of this knowledge to a new generation of psychoanalysts seemed to require the specifics of the clinical encounter. The Fifth International Psychoanalytic Congress, held in 1918, officially recommended training analysis for all who hoped to practice.

Even granting the necessity of a training analysis, it was unclear what would replace Freud’s discussion groups as the number of his followers increased and the reach of psychoanalysis extended far beyond Vienna. Notably, by 1919, Freud still held that the answer was not to provide didactic instruction to aspiring psychoanalysts through existing educational institutions. “What he [the aspiring psychoanalyst] needs in the matter of theory can be obtained from the literature of the subject and, going more deeply, at the scientific meetings of the psycho-analytic societies” (Freud, 1919, p. 171). One year later, in 1920, the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, the first institute for the training of future psychoanalysts, opened. It utilized a three-part curriculum - consisting of didactic instruction in seminars, supervised control analyses,<sup>42</sup> and training analysis - officially sanctioned by Eitingon at the 1925 International Psychoanalytic Congress in Bad Homburg.<sup>43</sup> Seminars and other coursework eventually replaced what Freud (1919) had optimistically hoped personal reading and attendance at society meetings would supply in the way of learning psychoanalytic theory. Some courses were modeled on Freud’s own 1916-17 *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, the published version of

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<sup>42</sup> Eitingon first officially recommended *Analysen-kontrolle* in 1922. It became a standard element of psychoanalytic training by the 1930s (Cabaniss & Bosworth, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> This Congress also marked the founding of the International Training Committee.

a series of lectures Freud delivered in a university setting between 1915 and 1917.<sup>44</sup> Other courses took the form of the case conference, a familiar fixture of medical education. Instructors demonstrated cases and facilitated discussion in order “to give the student a greater acquaintance with clinical material so that he might have at least vicarious wide experience” (Lewin & Ross, 1960, p. 307). Finally, there was the continuous case seminar, in which “the student reporting the case is usually a novice” (p. 311).

**From the rise of ego psychology to Freud’s final writings.** As Cabaniss and Bosworth (2006) note, the training analysis was the least well-defined of the three parts of the psychoanalytic curriculum. “Early training analyses were essentially an informal apprenticeship between analyst and analysand, and no distinction was made between a personal and a didactic analysis” (Hale, 1995, p. 323). These vague circumstances left the tension between educational aims and therapeutic aims unresolved. What is the position of the analysand - are they a student or a patient? What is the purpose of the training analysis - does it aim to teach or to cure? How is it to be conducted - any differently than an “ordinary” analysis? These issues remained contentious, and came to encompass the debate on the boundary between psychoanalysis and medicine, as psychoanalysis spread to North America and endured both World Wars, and as ego psychology<sup>45</sup> was in ascendancy.

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<sup>44</sup> Quinodoz (2004/2005) notes that Freud’s *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* “is written as though Freud was conversing interactively with the reader and it includes many anecdotes and illustrative examples” (p. 155).

<sup>45</sup> Ego psychology, whose principal architects were the emigre psychoanalysts Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris, and Rudolph Loewenstein, took its primary inspiration from Sigmund Freud’s writings in the 1930s, including *The Ego and the Id* and *Symptoms, Inhibitions, and Anxiety*. “The American-born analysts and the European refugees

The founding of the New York Society for psychoanalysis predated the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute by nearly five years. Less than a year after Freud initiated conversations about creating this society, A. A. Brill<sup>46</sup> established it on February 12, 1911, and was elected to represent it at the Third International Psychoanalytic Congress (Hale, 1995). Despite his ardent allegiance to Freud - and perhaps due in part to Flexner's (1910) report on "Medical Education in the United States and Canada," which condemned the "wild" practice of medicine by amateurs posing as physicians (Lewin & Ross, 1960) - Brill insisted that only medical doctors were qualified to undergo the additional training required to practice psychoanalysis. Brill's view starkly contrasted with Freud's earliest remarks on this issue, which he reiterated in his 1926 *The Question of Lay Analysis*.<sup>47</sup> In keeping with his 1919 paper "On the Teaching of Psycho-Analysis in Universities," Freud (1926) argued that medical education was not appropriate

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together created in the immediate postwar years an American ego psychology rooted in the attempt to make psychoanalysis 'scientific.' It reflected a more conservative psychoanalytic vision, partly the result of the social experiences of the interwar years, the rise of Nazism, and a repudiation of the facile, iconoclastic liberationism of the 1920s" (Hale, 1995, p. 231). Ego psychology was characterized by the attempt to systematize Freud's teachings - a task taken up primarily by David Rapaport - as well as by placing greater emphasis on "adaptation" to the environment. Classic works in ego psychology include Anna Freud (1936/1937); Hartmann (1939/1958); Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein (1946, 1949, 1953); and Loewenstein (1957).

<sup>46</sup> Abraham Arden Brill [1874-1948], a Jewish psychoanalyst originally from Austria who emigrated to the United States, "had become the chief spokesperson for Freudian psychoanalysis [by 1914] because of his translations, speeches, and articles, as well as his loyalty to Freud" (Hale, 1995, p. 326). Brill's English translations included works of Freud such as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Totem and Taboo*. His own books included *Psychoanalysis: Its Theories and Practical Application*, published in 1912, and *Fundamental Conceptions of Psychoanalysis*, from 1921.

<sup>47</sup> *The Question of Lay Analysis*, a book prompted by the prosecution of Theodor Reik for practicing psychoanalysis without a medical degree, was written in the form of a dialogue with an "impartial" person.

preparation for psychoanalytic practice. The debate remained unresolved at the 1927 International Congress at Innsbruck; instead, a compromise was reached, according to which each psychoanalytic society was granted the freedom to decide the issue for themselves. Moreover, in 1932, the International Congress at Wiesbaden declared that each society could select its own prospective psychoanalysts for training according to their own criteria.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, Lacan was deeply concerned with the relationship between psychoanalytic treatment and education. Ego psychologists, who regarded the rehabilitation of the total personality a legitimate and feasible goal for training analysis, attended primarily to passages in Freud's writings that portray learning and thinking as means to the end of adaptively responding to obstacles to satisfaction encountered in the world. Elsewhere Freud portrayed psychoanalysis as a kind of education that both unsettles narcissism and opposes indoctrination or passive assimilation of received knowledge. It was this rethinking of education and its aims that Lacan carried forward in his own teachings.<sup>48</sup> A successful analysis, according to Lacan, requires that the patient pose a question to themselves. Arguably, undergoing psychoanalysis or becoming educated also requires posing a question to the community in relation to which one has formed as a subject. These questions to self and other become tasks contributing to the ongoing formation of the ethical subject.

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<sup>48</sup> This rethinking entails that “there is a paradox in the ‘formation’ [of the analyst] itself: the essential thing to teach cannot be taught as knowledge. Instead, it is necessary to put the subject in relation to what we do not teach and what can only be extracted by means of his own analytical experience. There he can learn that knowledge has a hole in it, and maybe consent to the impossible – the limit of all knowledge to deal with the real faced by each one in the symptom” (Sota Fuentes, 2019, p. 2).

**Case studies in the didactic instruction of psychoanalytic candidates.** The foregoing overview of the history of psychoanalytic education traced the emergence of the now-standard three-part training curriculum for candidates. In this subsection I discuss one part, didactic instruction, which takes place through three different kinds of seminar: introductory courses, clinical case conferences, and continuous case seminars. The case study, and the knowledge it circulates, is related, either directly or indirectly, to each of these kinds of coursework.

*Learning to think in cases through introductory courses.* The assigned readings and lectures for these courses testify to the importance of reading practices for psychoanalytic education. At some point nearly all Lacanian scholars or Lacanian clinicians point out that Lacan's own teachings emerged from his "return" to and (re)reading of Freud's writings. Felman (1980-81) describes this return to Freud as bearing the paradoxical "originality of repetition" (p. 45). This section raises the question of whether a psychoanalytic candidate can make a similar return to the writings of authoritative figures in the psychoanalytic tradition.<sup>49</sup> Given Lacan's teachings on the alienating effects of Imaginary-Symbolic subject formation, how can a candidate undertake such a return without entirely sacrificing the potential to speak in one's own name and make a creative contribution to what has been inherited? In Chapter 3, I suggest that this possibility has to do with engaging authority figures as divided subjects

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<sup>49</sup> Arras (2017), in his discussion of the case-based method of reasoning in bioethics, notes that "subsequent readings of a case in light of later cases," or, I would add, alternative perspectives, "may fasten onto other aspects of the case" (p. 54). These rereadings revise existing ethical principles, thus revealing, to Arras (2017), that the latter have an "open texture." I claim that the principles of psychoanalytic theory and practice have a similarly "open texture" that is revised in and through the potentially radical - even heretical - act of rereading case studies.

and their canonical writings as symptomatic productions. I show that Lacan's readings of Freud's case studies model the "originality of repetition" in a way that is consistent with his psychoanalytic epistemology.

I noted above that introductory courses for psychoanalytic candidates have often been modeled on Freud's (1916-17) *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. These lectures were prepared, delivered, and subsequently published in an expository or didactic style, attempting to communicate knowledge of psychoanalysis in as accessible a way as possible for an audience that may have had no prior instruction in these concepts and principles.<sup>50</sup> Since this style assigns little work to the reader for interpretation, they can be regarded as "closed" texts (Eco, 1979; 1962/1989).<sup>51</sup> In this respect, the *Introductory Lectures* contrast with Freud's "open" texts, such as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, as well as with Freud's five long case studies.

As Mahony (1987) notes, Freud worked within many genres to communicate psychoanalysis to his followers, "among them history, biography, autobiography, letters, lectures, dialogue, case-history narratives, scientific treatises on various subjects, and the Dream-book, which is *sui generis*" (pp. 8-9). This diversity in Freud's writings not only foregrounds the question of the status of psychoanalytic knowledge; it also raises the

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<sup>50</sup> Many of Freud's contemporaries described his oral style as "simple, concise, and outstandingly fluent" (Mahony, 1987, p. 2).

<sup>51</sup> Lang, Damousi, and Lewis (2017) convincingly argue that Eco's distinction between "closed" texts, which overtly manipulate readers, and "open" texts, which more subtly do so, applies to the case study genre. Viewed from a Foucauldian perspective, "closed" case studies are written under the enabling constraints of discursive rules within a particular discipline. The writers of these case studies usually assume that their readers hold certain values and beliefs. In contrast, "open" case studies, while never produced outside of power-knowledge, nevertheless use language in ways that exploit the inevitable holes in discourse, thereby allowing for ambiguity in what is written.

related question of how to write about psychoanalysis. In Chapter 2, I return to the significance of Freud's use of genre and writing style as it pertains to the position of psychoanalysis *vis-a-vis* Dilthey's dual concept of science.

It has been claimed that reading Freud's cases in particular provides

a sense of how Freud thought, and, more particularly, *how he thought with his patients*. Even to the non-psychoanalytic reader Freud's case studies seem to communicate how it feels to do psychoanalysis and learn from patients (Pletsch, 1982, p. 265, original emphasis).

Freud's five long case studies are often considered well-suited for pedagogical purposes to the extent that they are written in an "open" manner. They provide clinicians-in-training with access to Freud's thinking process - so that they, too, can learn to "think in cases" - rather than simply presenting Freud's thoughts as finished products. According to Schön (1987), only a very limited set of situations present to the professional eye as wholly familiar. These rarities allow for the routine application of theories and techniques derived from a systematic body of knowledge. In contrast, there are many situations that evoke surprise and wonder. These situations challenge codified practices and call for an improvisational, innovative response. The practice-world is thereby remade in such a way that the usually tacit processes of representing and intervening are revealed. Arguably, Freud's five classic cases depicted such clinical situations. They disclosed the limits of standard medical practice while also starting to define distinct psychoanalytic principles that were subsequently codified and eventually taken for granted as Freud's method was institutionalized.

For later generations of readers, these texts continue to make Freud's innovative thinking explicit. Specifically, they disclose Freud's engagement in what Schön (1987)



calls “reflection-*in-action*” as he invented new interventions on the spot.<sup>52</sup> Reflection-*in-action* imposes order and coherence on a situation by reframing it as both similar to and different from previously-encountered situations. As a result of this creative act, one obtains a “feel” for how to intervene. Similarly, Freud’s readers vicariously obtain a “feel” for psychoanalytic encounters.

The perennial appeal of Freud’s five long cases stands in striking contrast with the historical fact Sota Fuentes (2019) calls the “crisis of the case account,” which refers to “the crisis that occurred in the 1920s concerning how to present the account of a clinical case” given that “the post-Freudians no longer considered it a strength to recount sessions in the manner of a meticulous logbook” (p. 4).<sup>53</sup> Late in his career, Freud himself (e.g., in “Analysis Terminable and Interminable”) arguably broached this crisis when he acknowledged that the “path of elaboration” (Miller, 1996/2007) forged by interpretation based in the pleasure principle was potentially infinite. Sota Fuentes (2019) claims that Lacan responded to this crisis by inaugurating a transition from the “story” (narrative) of the case to the “logic” (formalization) of the case.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “Reflection-*in-action*” is thinking in the midst of action in order to make sense of what Schön (1987) calls “indeterminate zones of practice.” Thinking in this way is a kind of *poiesis*, a kind of making or producing.

<sup>53</sup> Sealy (2011) is concerned with the rise and fall of the long-form psychoanalytic case study, noting that this style of writing was carried on after Freud perhaps only by practitioners of *Daseinsanalyse*, such as Ludwig Binswanger. Other “post-Freudians” (to use Sota Fuentes’ (2019) term) wrote much briefer case studies that arguably bore more resemblance to the older tradition of medical case reports than to Freud’s five epochal cases.

<sup>54</sup> “The passage from the story, be it romantic or descriptive, to the logic of the case was given by Lacan, who replaced the exhaustive narrative method by coherence in the formalization given by the coordinates of the symptom” (Sota Fuentes, 2019, p. 4). Later in this dissertation, aided by Irigaray, I consider the implications of Lacan’s turn to formalization, particularly as it pertains to one of Lacan’s favorite topics – the relationship between sexuation and knowledge.

Nevertheless, according to Rustin (2001), the case study genre is the preeminent “inscription device” for communicating knowledge of psychoanalysis because

what happens almost invariably in the exposition of new psychoanalytic ideas is reference to clinical cases as the decisive exemplars of the phenomena in question, or of the techniques used to grapple with it (p. 36).

The case study is distinguished from other genres in psychoanalysis by the fact that it contains at least two levels of discourse from which the novice can learn: (1.) discourse of the clinician with the patient, and (2.) discourse of the clinician with an interpretive community (Pletsch, 1982).<sup>55</sup>

*Discourse of the clinician with the patient.* This discursive level registers the clinician’s engagement with their patient, and, more generally, the clinician’s participation in the practice of psychoanalytic technique in the context of the clinical encounter. Concerns about the nature and possibility of bringing the discourse of the analyst with the patient outside this context arise immediately. First of all, “reflection-*on*-action” outside the clinical context transforms the action reflected upon. Indeed, as Bradshaw (2012) notes, “the analytic experience...only exists within the consulting room, at a specific time. Once removed from the physical and psychic space, the case history becomes, like the manifest dream, a derivative production,” a constructed written representation subject to the laws of what Freud termed the “secondary process” or “secondary revision” (p. 76). This act of reflection involves thinking back on how one

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<sup>55</sup> Regarding the second level of discourse, it should be kept in mind that the clinician-writer may be discoursing in the case study with the members of their own interpretive community (such as in the cases included in Schneiderman (1980)), across interpretive communities (for example, the debates on female sexuality between psychoanalysts of the Berlin and London schools that I discuss in Chapter 4), or with members of the psychoanalytic community in its broadest sense.

has already intervened in order to discover how one's knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome. What are the implications of this transformation? Lacan's Freudian epistemology, particularly his views on language, suggest that the formal properties of the written case may be symptomatic of the clinician-writer's personal and sociocultural countertransference. I pursue this claim in detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Freud acknowledges the paradox inherent in this discursive level: initiates would learn something valuable about the practice of psychoanalysis if they could listen in on the discourse of the analyst with the patient, but such first-hand experience of the clinical encounter is prohibited.<sup>56</sup> Clinicians (including Freud himself) negotiate this paradox by “putting a professionally sanctioned breach in our rule of confidentiality” (Spurling, 1997, p. 65), and making this discourse public to the interpretive community in the form of a case study. Hence this discursive level, when written out, transmits what Pletsch (1982) terms “knowledge *for* psychoanalysts.” It is also “for” psychoanalysts in the sense that only those who have had experience with transference phenomena can “read” this level of discourse.

The practice of reading the clinician-writer's representation of their clinical discourse has the potential to teach the novice reader to think in a similar fashion when facing comparable situations in their own encounters with patients. They learn to see the

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<sup>56</sup> “The talk of which psychoanalytic treatment consists brooks no listener... Thus you cannot be present as an audience at a psychoanalytic treatment. ... It is only by hearsay that you will get to know psychoanalysis” (Freud, 1916-17, pp. 17-18; quoted in Spurling, 1997).

situation as the case writer saw their own, and thus perceive it as a situation in which the rules, theories, and techniques the clinician-writer implemented can be put to work again.

*Discourse of the clinician-writer with the interpretive community.* This discursive level emerges from the clinician's task of convincing this community and the clinician's participation as a professional in disciplinary debates. As acknowledged earlier in this chapter, conflicting framings of problem situations are determined by professional identities and sociocultural perspectives. Each of Freud's five long case studies can be read on this level (Pletsch, 1982). For example, Freud tried to establish that the theory of the sexual etiology of neurosis in adults could be confirmed in the psychoanalytic treatment of a child by publishing *Little Hans*. With the *Rat Man* case, Freud tried to show how cases of obsessional neurosis could be distinguished from cases of hysteria. And with *Schreber*, Freud supported his claim that paranoid psychosis could be explained in psychoanalytic terms. It is often left to the reader to discern the relevant debate, because the discourse of the clinician with the interpretive community may be presented in a one-sided fashion, with only the clinician-writer's position in the debate represented.

The clinician's responsibility on this level places the transmission, transformation, and extension of shared frames of reference at stake. The audience makes judgments about the quality of the evidence provided in the case study.<sup>57</sup> Acceptance or rejection of new psychoanalytic discoveries turns on these judgments. Discerning readers judge the evidence by posing questions to the text concerning the clinician's competence in and

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<sup>57</sup> Such judgments may be given by the intended audience, or some other readership. However, the case study as a site of disciplinary debate may be unreadable by a layperson unfamiliar with the specialized terminology often invoked when defending a position on a contentious issue.

application of “craft knowledge” (Rustin, 2001). It is understood that clinicians should try to anticipate such questions when writing case studies; the effort to do so may generate anxiety about conforming to the psychoanalytic canon. When judged favorably, a case study may be “absorbed into the canon of widely cited publications” (p. 39).

Lacan was likewise concerned with the relationship between the institutionalization of psychoanalysis - a process that includes establishing a canon and rites of initiation - and the formation of a church.<sup>58</sup> How does a candidate’s (or clinician’s) relationship to psychoanalysis within the context of an interpretive community compare to religious devotion and faith in authoritative figures?<sup>59</sup> Arguably, Lacan’s initial reluctance to found a school of psychoanalysis and his life-long abstinence from writing up his clinical practice in the form of psychoanalytic case studies testifies to his unwillingness to further obscure the boundary between psychoanalysis and religion. Publishing written accounts of his own practice risked facing a fate similar to

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<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Lacan’s introductory remarks, entitled “Excommunication,” to his *Seminar XI*.

The establishment of a canon, defined as “a list of writings which both carry and demarcate the authority of [a] tradition,” is a marker of transition from an oral to a written tradition. “In this process - whereby a written tradition comes to be constituted in a way that cannot be added to or detracted from, but can only be modified by subsequent commentary and interpretation - a tradition comes to be named, thereby creating itself through founding its own language. This language then gives its speakers the privilege of seeing the world from their own perspective. Such a perspective can appear to others, who do not share the same tradition and language, as a distortion” (Spurling, 1993, p. 6).

<sup>59</sup> The fact that these questions can be posed indicates, of course, a great irony at the heart of Freud’s endeavors. He believed psychoanalysis had the capacity to subvert the transcendence of religious truth, yet, with the foundation of the IPA, Freud posed the permanent risk that psychoanalytic teachings would be reduced to dogma. For Lacan, this irony discloses Freud’s relationship to the position of the Father and the Master as, ultimately, ambivalent. I return to this theme in Chapter 3 in order to explore its implications for reading case studies.

that of Freud's own writings: they might become, for some followers, canonical texts that were (allegedly) only properly understood in strictly orthodox ways.

Nevertheless, Lacan could not avoid this dilemma when he was “excommunicated” from the IPA - here I invoke his use of this religious term in the preface to *Seminar XI* - yet wished to continue teaching candidates, practitioners, and others interested in psychoanalysis. Lacan did establish a school of psychoanalysis, even if he ultimately dissolved it just before his own death. And it was from none other than this school that Lacan's own heretical student, Luce Irigaray, was herself “excommunicated.”<sup>60</sup> Later in this chapter I suggest that learning to write and present cases in continuous case seminar most acutely raises these questions of the proximity of psychoanalysis and religion. Subsequently, in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, I draw on Lacan's later teachings to suggest that a psychoanalytic case study can be written in such a way as to constitute a *sinthome*-atic production, which can be contrasted to the case study as “symptom” discussed earlier in the present chapter and again in Chapter 3. How one writes up one's clinical practice - which is linked to style understood as both an ethical and an aesthetic concept - can be decisive in whether or not one becomes an alienated disciple within an interpretive community. I argue that it is in relation to style and the *sinthome* that Lacan and Irigaray may meet for a positive, productive encounter

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<sup>60</sup> As Holland (1998) and Weed (1994) note, Irigaray was a member of Lacan's seminar audience in the 1960s, during which time she trained to become a psychoanalyst. During the first half of the 1970s, she was a member of Lacan's *EFP* but was “expelled” in response to her second doctoral thesis, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, published in 1974. A year later she published “Cosi Fan Tutti” - her response to Lacan's Seminar 20, particularly its formulas of sexuation - a text to which I appeal when considering Irigaray's objections to Lacan's turn to formalization.

concerning the case study – even if this encounter cannot be regarded as a “reconciliation” of these two polemical psychoanalytic figures.

The audience for which Freud wrote his case studies changed as psychoanalysis took shape as a distinct discipline with a community of practitioners united by their commitment to Freud’s theory and technique (Pletsch, 1982). For example, the *Dora* case was published in a medical journal, indicating that its intended readership consisted of those who could read scientific writings. Freud also explicitly indicated in the text of the case itself that competent readers must be familiar with his *Interpretation of Dreams*. With these decisions, Freud began to make psychoanalysis exclusive and its knowledge privileged. Both *Little Hans* and the *Rat Man* were published in the first journal dedicated specifically to psychoanalysis, Freud’s *Jahrbuch*, a further indication of the formation of a distinct psychoanalytic community and the closing off of the uninitiated from psychoanalytic knowledge.<sup>61</sup> The fact that this journal was published in German made assumptions about the linguistic capacity of its readership, assumptions that would come into question as psychoanalysis continued to spread beyond the bounds of the German-speaking region of Europe. The Freud-Jones debate - which Lacan (re)reads in *Seminar V* and to which I attend in Chapter 4 of this dissertation - is a particularly vivid instance of these dilemmas.

***Learning to think in cases through clinical case conferences.*** Of all the seminars included in the didactic instruction of psychoanalytic candidates, the clinical case

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<sup>61</sup> *Little Hans* was also the first of Freud’s case studies to have an explicitly *pedagogical* role within the burgeoning psychoanalytic community. Freud wrote it in such a way that it would demonstrate to initiates how psychoanalysis is practiced and how a cure proceeds.

conference most directly manifests the complex relationship psychoanalysis has with medicine. The case method of teaching was already a fixture of medical education at the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>62</sup> when psychoanalysis was taking shape as a distinct discipline. Richard Cabot at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and James Lorrain Smith of Edinburgh independently established two renown versions of the clinical case conference (Crenner, 2005; Sturdy, 2007). Aimed at cultivating in students the capacity to form a clinical picture, these seminars show how visualization and imagination were implicated in the production of new clinicians.

As I noted in my overview of the history of psychoanalytic education, the instructors of clinical case conferences, who were themselves experienced physicians (pathologists), presented cases and facilitated discussion in order to expand student-physicians' repertoires of clinical experiences. Knowledge of these experiences was transmitted not through the student's own direct clinical encounter with the patients, but indirectly, through the presenting physician's session notes, the patient's case file, and other records. Although distanced from the here-and-now of clinical sessions, these presentations were authoritative and dramatic displays. Anderson (2013) describes them as "gripping performances, where physicians contended with one another in determining correct diagnosis and treatment, learning of their success or failure only when pathologists dramatically provided the answer at the end of the proceedings" (p. 538).

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<sup>62</sup> The case method of teaching was first used by Christopher C. Langdell for educating lawyers at Harvard Medical School in the 1870s and was introduced to Harvard's medical school at the turn of the century by Walter B. Cannon (Forrester, 1996; Anderson, 2013).



In case conferences, novice clinicians test their emerging skills in designing problem situations by offering contending namings and framings based on the evidence on offer by the presenter, a master clinician. The master's evidence (content) but also their manner of presenting it (style, rhetoric) attempts to persuade the novices to see the case in a particular way. The presented case is not one that admits of straightforward application of theories and techniques derived from a systematic body of knowledge. Rather, these are cases that remain, to a certain extent, ambiguous. The appropriate means of intervening is left uncertain. These are situations that, in the moment of the clinical encounter itself, call for reflection-in-action.

*Learning to think in cases through continuous case seminar.* Candidates obtain another form of didactic instruction in the continuous case seminar, in which they are tasked with writing up their control cases and presenting them to fellow students and instructors. There are two aspects to this "rite of passage"<sup>63</sup>: verbal and written (Spurling, 1997). On this view, presenting a case verbally can be - but is not necessarily - an opportunity to experience and rediscover psychoanalytic tradition through open, critical conversation about *both* how the presenter has reflected on and narratively represented their interventions in a clinical situation *and* the adequacy of the conceptual and technical resources offered by the presenter's interpretive community. Thus, I suggest that learning to write and present cases in continuous case seminar most acutely raises these questions of the proximity of psychoanalysis and religion.

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<sup>63</sup> Mahony (1998) clarifies that "rite of passage" is a term borrowed from anthropology to refer to "a tribal initiating ritual that marks a passage into adulthood or a professionally new social status" (p. 886). Most psychoanalytic institutes require candidates to present cases in continuous case seminar, and furthermore, to write up and submit one or more cases, in order to qualify for graduation.

*Writing up a control case.* There has been some acknowledgement in the psychoanalytic literature (e.g., Reiser, 2000) that learning to practice clinically is not the same as learning to write about clinical practice. These can be thought of as two aspects of becoming “acculturated” to the psychoanalytic community<sup>64</sup> and forming a psychoanalytic identity. Nevertheless, many training institutes assume that candidates already have access to the skills required for writing up their cases (Furman, 2006). Two institutes challenge this assumption by explicitly incorporating writing pedagogy into their curricula: the Columbia Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research in New York City<sup>65</sup> and the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute.<sup>66</sup> In what follows I review the approach taken at Columbia.

Cabaniss and Graver (2007) of Columbia University are quick to point out that critiquing candidates’ clinical writing is not the same as providing supervision on the case. “What is being assessed is the nature and quality of the version of psychoanalysis constructed” (Spurling, 1997, p. 71). How effectively does the clinician as writer transform the clinical encounter and experience of it into written text? Can the clinician-

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<sup>64</sup> Buechler (1988), a non-Lacanian psychoanalyst, explicitly argues that psychoanalysis as a discipline can be regarded as a kind of culture.

<sup>65</sup> Several articles from Volume 56, Issue 4 of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* describe the four-year writing curriculum at the Columbia Center. See Glick (2008), Lister, et al (2008), Cabaniss and Graver (2008), and Glick and Stern (2008).

<sup>66</sup> Writing instruction at the Boston Institute is based on guidelines for treatment report writing and written description of analytic process established by the Committee on Certification of the American Psychoanalytic Association (Bernstein, 1992). These guidelines are elaborated in Bernstein (2008a, 2008b), as well as in other articles on psychoanalytic writing published in *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 28(4), such as Palmer (2008) and Rosenbaum (2008). See also Bernstein (2000). Michels (2000) contrasts this approach to writing up cases with other extant recommendations, such as Klumpner and Frank (1991) and Goldberg (1997).

writer narrate the therapeutic change that took place, in such a way that bestows unity on the course of treatment? These are the kinds of pedagogical questions instructors pose to candidates in this element of their training.

The four-year writing curriculum at Columbia University has developed the pedagogical technique of “layering” to cumulatively establish clinical writing skills (Cabaniss & Graver, 2007). The first layer of writing is concerned with writing up the clinician’s presence in the encounter with their patient. Often, this involves identifying and describing countertransference. Notably, candidates are being taught at this level to register their own subjectivity, as well as that of the patient, in the text under production. This contrasts strikingly with how clinical writing norms have transformed over time for medical students. It also manifests certain beliefs about psychoanalytic practice, such as that the clinical encounter is (at least) a two-person situation, and that the clinician’s experience of the patient has some kind of significance for the course of therapy.

The task involved in the second layer of writing is to put the “microprocess” into words. This involves focusing on the session-by-session interactions between clinician and patient and taking perspective on “segments” of clinical work.<sup>67</sup> Stylistically, the candidate is encouraged to adopt a way of writing that is evocative and experience-near. The clinician-writer embeds the microprocess into the “macroprocess” in the third layer of writing up a case. The task here is for the clinician to recognize dominant themes characterizing the course of treatment and to identify the theory of therapeutic action they believe most persuasively accounts for the vicissitudes of the therapeutic relationship

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<sup>67</sup> To speak of “segments” of clinical work assumes, of course, that psychoanalytic process can be broken down in this way, and, furthermore, that this segmenting can be accomplished without losing the meaning of the psychoanalytic process as a whole.

(Cabaniss & Graver, 2007). The fourth and final layer of clinical writing is concerned with fully integrating the micro- and macroprocess, that is, with taking a “big picture” perspective on the trajectory of the treatment and telling a story about the therapeutic change that took place. The clinician must be able to identify and explain in writing what changed, how it changed, and why it changed.

*Verbally presenting a control case.* As with clinical writing, the nature and possibility of presenting cases in continuous case seminars is often taken for granted. It is possible, however, to identify at least three dimensions of complexity involved in case presentations (Royal, 2015). One emerges from the fact that this seminar is overtly a group situation, and, as such, is characterized by transference dynamics and power differentials. Viewed from a social perspective, “every case presentation is also an implicit presentation by the clinician of him- or herself to a group, a declaration of an identity in relation to the ‘other’ of the group” (Royal, 2015, p. 2). Second, the reported case is based on clinical facts produced in the intersubjective clinical encounter, and organized and explicated in terms of theory. “Thus who, or what, we are hearing - patient, clinician, theory - is always a question” (p. 2). Finally, presenting cases raises the question of how it is that the audience discerns something “through the presentation, rather than because of its explicit, conscious content” (p. 3).

There has been a fair amount of recognition in the psychoanalytic literature that the relationship established with the audience is at least partly shaped by a clinician’s style of writing. Critiques have been made of a kind of writing that, in Spurling’s (1997) phrase, makes the reader or listener into a “silent witness to the substantiation and confirmation of theoretical ideas.” Written up in this way, the case study has an

ideological function. The clinician-writer is charged with confirming and giving evidence of relevant theory. Spurling (1997) associates this style of writing up cases with orthodoxy and deadness in psychoanalytic tradition. Alternatively, there is at least the notion of the possibility that a case study could be written up in such a way that it makes explicit its incompleteness as discourse and invites the audience into a collaborative, knowledge-producing dialogue. Spurling (1997) associates this style of writing up cases with the potential for originality and freshness within tradition. Can these two functions of the case study text - ideological and dialogical - ever be fully extricated from each other?

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Learning to “think in cases” through practices of reading, writing, and presenting case studies is a defining feature of psychoanalytic education, and yet it is fraught with often overlooked questions. In this chapter I distilled concerns emerging from the scholarly literature on the pedagogical roles of the psychoanalytic case study genre and its functions in the production of new clinicians. First, I suggested that there is an inevitable objectification involved in both a patient’s becoming a case and a candidate’s becoming a psychoanalytic clinician. First-person singularity - the ability to speak in one’s own name - is at least to some extent lost as the clinician attempts to know the patient and as the clinician is initiated into an interpretive community. Two aims of Chapter 2 of this dissertation are to place this concern in conceptual context and to elucidate the ways in which Lacan (and, by juxtaposition, Foucault) makes a distinctive contribution to this historical line of thought. Second, I clarified the unique literary structure of psychoanalytic case studies in order to engage more thoroughly the belief

that reading cases - particularly Freud's five long case studies - can teach candidates how to think in cases. This point will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3, where I identify and discuss the implications of Lacan's teaching for a method of reading case studies. Third, I drew attention to the claim that learning to write up a clinical encounter as a case study not only contributes to the formation of a candidate's psychoanalytic identity but can also serve as an opportunity to make a creative contribution to inherited bodies of knowledge. Chapter 5 will explore this claim in terms of the late Lacan's notion of the *sinthome*.

These concerns have not been adequately addressed by English-speaking Lacanian clinicians who have published what they describe as accessible case studies illustrating the applicability of Lacan's concepts and models to the vicissitudes of clinical encounters. Setting aside these concerns and focusing exclusively on how Lacan's teachings apply in clinical practice is problematic, I claimed, because Lacan was particularly attentive to the challenge psychoanalysis issues to familiar ways of thinking about the nature and possibility of knowing. It constitutes a failure of reflexivity inasmuch as the clinician-writer thereby refuses to acknowledge how they, as a knowing subject, are implicated in psychoanalytic epistemology.<sup>68</sup> It is symptomatic of a "desire to ignore," or disavow, not unlike what these clinicians disclose and engage with patients in clinical practice and seek to write up in the form of a case study.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, this epistemological danger also applies to the reader of case studies: the reader participates in

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<sup>68</sup> As Forrester (2017) puts it, "psychoanalytic writing is not just writing *about* psychoanalysis; it is writing subject to the same laws and processes as the psychoanalytic situation itself" (p. 65).

<sup>69</sup> The phrase "desire to ignore" is from Felman (1987). See especially p. 79.

a “desire to ignore” to the extent that they do not acknowledge the implications psychoanalytic epistemology has for their relationship, through reading practices, to the clinical dyad as well as to the psychoanalytic tradition engaged in the written case.

Lacan’s intervention into the topic of “thinking in cases,” as I see it, is as follows. While it cannot be denied that a “readable” case can be inviting to those who are new to Lacanian psychoanalysis and may even be conducive to open, transformative conversations within an interpretive community, the danger of persuasion and indoctrination persists through the illusion that learning happens only in relation to the content of a written case. Difficult style, although intimidating and possibly exclusionary, puts the reader to work like a patient in psychoanalysis. Learning happens in relation to both form and content. Nevertheless, a writing style that registers submission to a received terminology, although necessary in order to speak the language of an interpretive community, may belie ignorance more than transmit knowledge.

In the remainder of this dissertation, I explore how Lacan teaches his audience to navigate between becoming an alienated disciple or speaking in one’s own name through creative, subversive practices of reading and writing psychoanalytic case studies. I also consider the ways in which the psychoanalytic ontology and epistemology that found Lacan’s teachings took shape in and through relationships with woman and femininity: not only through his (re-)reading of Freud’s case of Dora and Riviere’s “Womanliness as Masquerade,” but also through the conflicted relationship to the feminine registered in Lacan’s appeal to formalization as an alternative to narrative in case-based thinking.

CHAPTER 2:  
EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND NARRATIVE: THE CASE STUDY AND  
PEDAGOGICAL SUBJECT FORMATION IN CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

The previous chapter introduced the possibility of a distinctly Lacanian approach to the psychoanalytic case study through a review of scholarly literature on the roles of this style of reasoning in psychoanalytic education. There, I foregrounded claims about knowledge and language as they relate both to pedagogy in general and to the case study as a pedagogical instrument. In this chapter, I appeal to my background in historical and conceptual studies of science to expand upon the first conclusion drawn in Chapter 1, namely, that there is an inevitable objectification involved in both a patient's becoming a case and a candidate's becoming a psychoanalytic clinician. Knowing and being known - even "in cases," to use John Forrester's phrase - seems to involve a particular relationship to an object.

First, I place this familiar view of knowledge in conceptual context by tracing changing concepts of knowledge through thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, and Dilthey, with whom Lacan - and, in his own way, Foucault - were in critical dialogue. With this task, I undertook a "return" to philosophers whose teachings began to contribute to my own formation as a scholar nearly a decade and a half before embarking on this, my dissertation. In Freudian fashion, the return enacted a "deferred action" on the meaning and significance of these masters' teachings for me now, as I complete the academic stage of my clinical training. I first encountered Kant and Hegel years before I realized I wanted to become a clinician, when I was learning to think critically about all knowledge claims, including those of the exact sciences. I encountered Dilthey early on in my formal



clinical training, before I discovered Lacan, or the distinctive features of French psychoanalysis more generally, during my years as a doctoral student in clinical psychology. This return also prompted me to reflect on the extent to which *men's* thinking has contributed to my education, whereas it was primarily my engagement as a volunteer with so-called "women's issues" that had contributed to my decision to train as a clinician.

My second task in this chapter is to elucidate the ways in which Lacan makes a distinctive contribution to this conceptual tradition through a detailed review of his account of subject formation in his "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious." The fact that Lacan engaged distinctively psychoanalytic questions in dialogue with thinkers across disciplines who wrote long before the emergence of psychoanalysis as a theory and a practice resonated with my own hope to forge a dialectical link between my earlier education in history and philosophy of science and my current project of becoming a clinician. While undoubtedly indebted to Kant, Hegel, and Dilthey, Lacan nevertheless subverts this inheritance by proffering unorthodox claims about knowledge, narrative, and identity grounded in his reading of Freud. He enacts this subversion through a style of reading the history of Western thought that emphasizes something often obscured in scholarship, namely, that reading and learning are fundamentally *relational* processes. A thought, an argument, a conclusion – each are produced through an encounter between speaking beings. By foregrounding ambiguity and incompleteness in the texts he engages, Lacan's subversive readings reveal the *openness* of these texts to new interpretations. This quality of openness, contrasting as it does with claims to final, authoritative knowledge and other

aspirations to mastery, suggests that any one thought is potentially inexhaustible, infinite.<sup>1</sup> Lacan's heresy, as this dissertation aims to show, makes possible alternative roles for the case study in psychoanalytic pedagogy.

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There is a notable absence of scholarship on Lacan's significance for history and philosophy of the case study, or for history and philosophy of science more generally; instead, much recent literature seeking to locate the case study in historical and conceptual context has drawn from another French intellectual, Michel Foucault [1926-1984]. This line of Foucauldian scholarship was inaugurated by historian of psychoanalysis, and erstwhile translator of Lacan's early seminars, John Forrester in his 1996 article, "If *p*, then What? Thinking in Cases." Working in critical response to Foucault's account of cases in Part Three, Chapter 2 of his 1974 *Discipline and Punish*, as well as to the resurgence of casuistic method in the context of bioethics, Forrester claimed that the case study genre was characteristic of the professions, disciplines that produced the object of study Foucault called "the individual." The "trained expert," as Daston and Galison (2007) argue, emerged as the corresponding subject of knowledge who cultivated "trained judgment." According to Forrester (1996, 2015), the "golden age" of the case study genre began in the mid-19th century in relation to other social and cultural developments, such as the formation of the novel and detective story genres in literature, the rise of secular institutions as moral authorities, and the increasing appeal to psychiatric expertise in legal courts.

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss Lacan's style of reading, particularly in its application to reading case studies, in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Following Forrester's lead, other scholars have carried these Foucauldian claims forward by emphasizing that case studies are a kind of confessional text, disclosing otherwise secret "truths" about an individual, and thereby providing a means of knowing others and knowing oneself. Hence psychoanalytic case studies in particular often become "sites of reinterpretation and translation, sometimes of resistance" (Lang, Damousi, & Lewis, 2017, p. 2). They, like other kinds of case study, are "sites of interdisciplinary negotiation, transnational exchange, and influence," affected by "larger historical and sociopolitical forces such as war, migration, and internationalization" (Damousi, Lang, & Sutton, 2015, p. 1).<sup>2</sup>

Forrester (1996), extending historian and philosopher of the human sciences Ian Hacking's taxonomy of styles of reasoning to include psychoanalysis, argued that a distinct style of reasoning, "thinking in cases," emerged simultaneous with statistical analysis and in response to the same social, historical, and conceptual transformations that produced the individual as an object of statistical study.<sup>3</sup> Whereas statistical reasoning underlay the disciplinary formation of experimental psychology, "case work" in human sciences such as psychoanalysis, guided by the style of "thinking in cases," "was how singular individuals were generated, recognized, as bearing...distinctive characteristics, increasingly through the plausibility of a narration" (Forrester, 2015, p. x). Case studies in these disciplines addressed distinctively modern questions about the

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 4 of this dissertation builds on these claims by investigating the ways in which Lacan's intervention into the Freud-Jones debate - particularly his (re)reading of Joan Riviere's case study, "Womanliness as Masquerade" - contributed to the formation of a distinctively Lacanian psychoanalysis in 1950s France.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Hacking attributes the notion of "styles of reasoning" to Crombie (1988), who identified six such styles. In *The Taming of Chance*, Hacking (1990) elaborates on Crombie's fifth style, the statistical analysis of populations.

behavior and relationships of individuals. In this way, psychoanalytic discourse provided “a new way of telling...the specific and unique facts that make a person’s life their life,” while also rendering that life public and canonical (Forrester, 1996, p. 10).

In the present chapter, I focus particularly on three thinkers - Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Wilhelm Dilthey - who will serve as reference points for juxtaposing and explicating approaches to the psychoanalytic case study discussed in the Foucauldian literature with Lacan’s own teachings relevant to these issues. A major claim of this chapter is that changing concepts of experience and knowledge have implications for the nature and possibility of a scientific study of mind. The evolution of what John Forrester has termed “thinking in cases” parallels these historical transformations. Lacan and Foucault think with and against these changing concepts in their own approaches to knowledge, truth, objectivity, and language, particularly as these pertain to narrative modes of reasoning. Arguing that concepts of experience and language have implications for the possibility of self-knowledge and knowledge of others, I draw three conclusions against which the contributions from Lacan and Foucault will be compared in the remainder of this dissertation.

First, I show how Kant’s concepts of knowledge and cognition closely align mathematization with scientificity, which he claims eliminates the possibility of a science of the mind. Throughout this dissertation I discuss the implicit challenge Lacan issues to Kant’s conclusion through his introduction of mathematical concepts and notation - the so-called “mathemes” - into a psychoanalytic study of subjectivity. Mathemes seem to offer a mode of transmitting psychoanalytic knowledge that avoids the inevitable

transformations of meaning that occur as verbal or written communication - of which the psychoanalytic case study is one example - is received in various contexts.

Second, I aim to show that Lacan's use of mathemes throughout his teachings, including in his late formulas of sexualization, appear to stand in tension with Hegel's response to the limits Kant places on scientific knowledge, despite the fact that, much as Hegel would have done, Lacan rejects Dilthey's dual concept of science. Anticipating subsequent generations of thinkers - including Lacan's own heretical student Luce Irigaray, who emphasized the limitations of "exactitude" and deductive reasoning and criticized binary oppositions as abstract and unnecessarily rigid - Hegel charges in the third chapter of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* that Kant's concept of knowledge, which remains at the level of what he calls *Verstand*, fails to acknowledge that, fundamentally, being *is* becoming. On Hegel's view, *Verstand* cannot think change; therefore, it cannot yield a science of the mind.

The third chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology* of 1807 is crucial to my aims in this chapter as it showcases Hegel's refusal to reduce the process of thinking to the activity of *Verstand*. This review will also set the stage for my subsequent discussion of Irigaray's criticism of Lacan's reliance on what she calls a "logic of solids" in the formation of subjectivity. Moreover, Hegel's portrayal of Force in his third chapter as a dynamic relationship parallels what I have found in Lacan's teachings, namely, the portrayal of reading as a relational process in which both text and reader are alternately active and passive. Similarly, the distinction between reading and writing, at first seemingly stable and obvious, is rendered ambiguous in the dynamic encounter between text and speaking being. Consciousness, according to Hegel, attempts to eliminate this dialectical ambiguity

through Law, in a conceptual move comparable to Lacan's own turn to mathemes to eliminate transformations of meaning in the transmission of knowledge.

Third, I review Dilthey's concept of *Erlebnis*, which grounds his dual concept of science. Both Lacan and Foucault incisively complicate Dilthey's promotion of a narrative approach for psychology as a human science - one that would take its place among the other *Geisteswissenschaften* [human sciences] - distinct from the physiological psychology of his day. The conceptual resources for a critical Foucauldian rejoinder to Dilthey can be found in Foucault's 1963 *Birth of the Clinic*, a text that Forrester does not engage when proposing a Foucauldian history and philosophy of the case. Lacan's response to the notion of a narrative science of the mind, in turn, can be gleaned from his teachings on subject formation and the vicissitudes of language in psychological life, such as "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire," which I discuss at length later in this chapter.

### **Kant: *Erfahrung*, Self-Knowledge, and Knowledge of Others**

Psychology was still *Seelenlehre*, the doctrine of the soul, in the 18th century, defined by Christian Wolff's rigorous distinction between "*psychologia empirica*" (empirical psychology) and "*psychologia rationalis*" (rational psychology) from the 1730s (Leary, 1982; Thiel, 2009). The former was defined as "the science of what experience teaches us about the soul...lead[ing] to empirical generalizations about the soul and its activities" (Leary, 1982, p. 19). Empirical psychology was understood as grounded in rational psychology, a "science of all that is possible to the human soul...provid[ing] necessarily true statements regarding the nature and essence of the soul" (Leary, 1982, p. 19). Wolff's distinction had developed into two separate areas of

inquiry within the German-speaking region of Europe by the second half of the 18th century. Johann Nicolas Tetens<sup>4</sup> was the dominant figure in empirical psychology during that era, whereas Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten<sup>5</sup> and Moses Mendelssohn<sup>6</sup> shared renown for their respective contributions to rational psychology. Off the continent, David Hume of Edinburgh published his *Treatise of Human Nature* in London in 1738. The *Treatise* was the result of Hume's endeavor to introduce the experimental method, as modeled by Isaac Newton, into the study of human nature.

Immanuel Kant [1724-1804], a Pietist philosopher from Königsberg, was a key figure in the German Enlightenment [*die Aufklärung*], a period in which intellectuals inspired by the tremendous successes of modern natural philosophy boldly put traditional authority of all kinds to the test in an effort to arrive at indubitable knowledge and correct belief, to establish a trustworthy moral framework, and to establish the basis for a just political life. Early modern philosophers differed profoundly as to the implications of giving reason license to question authority: Would we inevitably fall prey to atheism and skepticism? Or would we banish ignorance and promote more humane living conditions? That Kant inherited these questions is manifest in the topics of his three *Critiques*: what we can know, how we should act, and for what we can hope. As early as 1747, however, Kant inquired into the place of the human soul in the natural world (Ameriks, 1982;

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<sup>4</sup> Tetens published *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and Its Development* in German in 1777 and again in 1779.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgarten published his *Metaphysica* in Latin in 1757. A recent English translation was published in 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Mendelssohn is the author of *Phädon, oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (1767), a recent English translation of which was published in 2007.

Hatfield, 1992).<sup>7</sup> He endeavored to secure God, immortality, and, perhaps most importantly, autonomy, from the threat of determinism - a supposed outcome of the laws of nature formulated in the new physics - but without undermining the achievements of Newton and other natural philosophers. He claimed that reason could achieve these ambitious goals by critiquing *itself*. Defining the nature and limits of human cognition was a crucial component of reason's self-critique.<sup>8</sup> Yet a consequence of this self-critique of reason was that it seemed to all but sound the death knell for psychology, one of the more controversial implications of Kant's critical philosophy that has not fared well among the generations of commentators who followed him. This fate for psychology that Kant's philosophy ostensibly predicts was a point that Hermann Helmholtz [1821-1894] would decisively challenge.

Kant's attempt to account for the necessity and universality of the truths Newton mathematically deduced motivates his famous distinction of a type of judgment he called "synthetic *a priori*," which are like the truths of logic in that they bear necessity but are also like matters of fact in that we come to know them through experience. Kant also claims to save causality from Hume's challenge by proposing a new concept of experience. Whereas on Hume's view experiences reveals constant conjunctions that one then infers to be necessary as a result of habit and custom, Kant argues that genuine

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<sup>7</sup> See Kant's (1747/1902a) *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces* and (1755/1969) *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, wherein he engaged with the possibility that the soul is part of the natural world while also endorsing the belief that the soul is immortal. In the *Physical Monadology* of 1756, he expressed interest in defending his own rational psychology (Ameriks, 1982, pp. 13-16; Hatfield, 1992, p. 200).

<sup>8</sup> Cognition [*Erkenntnis*], according to Kant, is a process in which the human mind synthesizes empirical elements (sensible intuition) and rational elements (*a priori* conceptual) in the intellectual faculty of understanding [*Verstand*].



experience [*Erfahrung*] requires that one represent one's perceptions to oneself as *necessarily* connected. (Thus, not every perception is an experience.) This representation is an act of the understanding, not an induction. This definition nevertheless indicates that Kant agreed with Hume that the idea of necessary connection is foundational to causal relations. The synthetic *a priori*,<sup>9</sup> along with this new concept of experience, constitute Kant's intervention into the centuries-old debate between nativism and empiricism.

Kant's definition of experience, *Erfahrung*, overlaps considerably with his definition of cognition. In the first section of the Deduction of Pure Concepts in the Transcendental Analytic, Kant (1781/1787/1998) states that *Erfahrung* is composed of two fundamentally dissimilar elements: sensible "matter" and ordering "form" (A86/B118).<sup>10</sup> Prior to synthesis, these are the elements of *possible* experience as well as of a *possible* object. Initially, one obtains the sensible matter of experience as a "manifold" through the "synopsis" of sense. This manifold is then synthesized and apprehended as a "representation" in intuition, where it is "conditioned" as spatiotemporal (A111), and subsequently reproduced "as appearance" in the imagination (A92-94, 97/B125-127). In the third section of the Deduction, Kant clarifies that this appearance has "formal unity" through the categories (A125). Synthesis of *Erfahrung* "bring[s] forth concepts" in the understanding [*Verstand*] that allow one to "recognize" the cognized object as what it is generically (A86, 97/B118-119).<sup>11</sup> The process of

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<sup>9</sup> According to Kant, synthetic *a priori* cognition is the product of the union of *a posteriori* experience and *a priori* concepts.

<sup>10</sup> All references to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in this dissertation are to A/B manuscript page numbers.

<sup>11</sup> Later, in Part II of the Doctrine of Elements, Kant clarifies that the appearance is "related immediately to the schema of the imagination" which enables one to think of the appearance determinately in terms of "a certain general concept" (A140-141/B180).

cognition thus involves thinking conceptually and determinately about *Erfahrung* - the content of which is a spatiotemporal object or the interaction of such objects in space and time. Two important implications follow from Kant's concept of *Erfahrung*. First, this concept closely aligns scientificity with mathematization.<sup>12</sup> Second, it institutes a sharp distinction between science and metaphysics.<sup>13</sup> Later in this chapter I discuss Hegel's and Dilthey's respective renewals of the concept of experience, which depart from Kant in ways that have significant implications for self-knowledge and knowledge of others.

Kant argues in the Paralogisms of Pure Reason<sup>14</sup> that the limits of cognition place restrictions on the possibility of particular kinds of self-knowledge and knowledge of others, restrictions which, as Cutrofello (2002) observes, "save" the modern subject from scientific inquiry.<sup>15</sup> In the aforementioned section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant is primarily concerned with rational psychology, which claims to be able to deduce propositions about the nature of the human soul - i.e., that it is substantial, simple, identical, and immaterial - entirely on the basis of the *a priori* proposition "I think" (B402, 416; Thiel, 2008). The very title of this section of the first *Critique* expresses Kant's conviction that rational psychologists such as Baumgarten (2013/1757) argue

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<sup>12</sup> Cutrofello (2002) clarifies that Kant aligned scientificity with a specifically modern notion of quantification, according to which mathematics is no longer bound to the perceptible. This is, as he notes, a mathematics of the signifier, not of the sign. I return to this point when I discuss the implications Lacan finds in the modern transgression of the ancient link between being and thinking.

<sup>13</sup> "To say that intuitions and concepts are radically different in kind, that the being of beings revealed in sensibility and the truth of beings revealed in thought are utterly heterogeneous, is to say that nothing whatsoever can be known about the being of beings" (Cutrofello, 2002, p. 159).

<sup>14</sup> This is the first chapter of the second book of the *Transcendental Dialectic*.

<sup>15</sup> These limits correspond exactly to the limits of possible experience - thus also to the limits of possible objects.

“paralogistically”: they commit logical fallacies by conflating the “logical self” with the “empirical self” of inner sense. Kant acknowledges that one is self-conscious in all of one’s cognitions by asserting that the “I think” spontaneously accompanies all of one’s representations. This self-consciousness is the logical self, the subjective condition for cognition. This logical self not only does but *must* accompany one’s representations, because it is necessary to secure all of one’s representations as *one’s own*.<sup>16</sup> Kant calls logical self-consciousness “pure apperception.” Nothing can be asserted of the logical self, which is to say that no category (e.g., substance) can be legitimately applied to it. Rational psychology (insofar as it pertains to the logical self) is for this reason “empty.” Furthermore, the very attempt to apply categories presupposes an *object*. One can only become an object for oneself through “empirical apperception,” or “actual awareness of particular mental states” (Thiel, 2008, p. 210). One can only make judgments about one’s empirical self, and at most such judgments could attain the status of empirical generalizations. Thus rational psychology, according to Kant, is illegitimate because it involves reasoning without reference to experience. Rational psychology can only yield the illusion of objectivity.

Although he deems it fallacious, Kant grants that rational psychology is motivated by the “natural illusion” to treat the logical ground of cognition as a possible object of cognition (A396). The allure of rational psychology and the general self-knowledge it promises is profound (Ameriks, 1982). The qualities rational psychologists ascribe to the human soul are precisely those qualities that could distinguish human beings in a

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<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the logical self is crucial to Kant’s transcendental philosophy. The logical self is the transcendental ground of all cognition.

definitive way from the transient, corruptible, mechanically-determined objects of the Newtonian natural world. We as humans, from Kant's perspective, would like to confirm our distinction as thinking subjects by constructing a doctrine of knowledge [*Wissen*] - cognition that is "certain" - about the soul. That which can be known best - namely, nature - is also that which humans deeply want to be unlike. Yet, as Kant avers, one can only have knowledge of appearances, which are given as spatial and temporal due to the transcendental conditions of human cognition. The closest one can come to self-knowledge is a description of one's own and others' mental states, but such knowledge will not, according to Kant, be objectively valid. Kant's rejection of empirical psychology thus constitutes a second way in which he "saves" the modern subject from scientific inquiry.<sup>17</sup>

Kant also subjects rational psychology's empirical counterpart to critical evaluation in terms of his concepts of cognition and *Erfahrung*. Empirical psychology, he claims, addresses questions concerning inner experience [*innere Erfahrung*] (A382).<sup>18</sup> This empirical discipline constitutes a "physiology of inner sense" based on "observations about the play of our thoughts and the natural laws of the thinking self created from them," but it will not result in knowledge of the nature of the soul in itself (A347/B405-406). In the Preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (2004/1786), Kant rejected the possibility that this discipline could be a natural science because mathematics could not be "applied *a priori*" to inner sense (Hatfield, 1992, p.

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<sup>17</sup> "If the subject of science emerges as that which is capable of thinking the truth of beings in mathematical terms, it simultaneously appears as that which resists the reduction of its own truth to those same terms" (Cutrofello, 2002, p. 155).

<sup>18</sup> The possibility of this empirical psychology presupposes the psychological "idea of reason" as its systematic ground (A682-684/B710-712).

221). Moreover, the continuum of thoughts resists the kind of rigorous analysis and manipulation definitive of the experimental sciences. Empirical psychology can only be a “natural description of the soul” (Kant, 2004/1786, p. 7). Later, I will briefly recount Kant’s own natural description of the soul in his 1798 *Anthropology*. In that section, I will show how Dilthey’s response to Kant as well as his innovation of an alternative concept of experience, *Erlebnis*, is motivated by his dissatisfaction with Kant’s portrayal of the inner life of human beings, despite Kant’s advocacy of a generally descriptive approach to anthropology and psychology.

The appearance/thing-in-itself and phenomenon/noumenon distinctions<sup>19</sup> at the heart of transcendental idealism are crucial not only for Kant’s account of the possibility of Newton’s natural philosophy, but also for safeguarding human freedom from the determinism that allegedly follows from Newton’s discoveries. All actions, including human actions, are events in the natural world, and, for Kant, this means that they are spatial, temporal, and produced by causes. This entails that an individual’s actions are determined, for example, by the character they have developed in a particular intersubjective context. By distinguishing the “noumenal self,” which is outside of space and time, Kant argues that intentional actions, the ones an individual is morally responsible for, are causally undetermined.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Clarifying just why many Kant scholars believe that these are two different, although related, distinctions is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>20</sup> The distinctions Kant makes to frame his doctrine of transcendental idealism stand in contrast to a key feature of the position put forward by Descartes, the foundationalist mathematician who motivated rejoinders from Locke and Newton. (I discuss Descartes’ foundationalism in more detail later in this chapter.) In his Second Meditation, Descartes not only attempts to establish that our minds possess innate ideas but also that there is a fundamental distinction between mind and body. Guided by his method of doubt, Descartes first of all discovered that whereas the existence of himself as a thinking thing

The publication of Kant's first *Critique* did not end the nativism-empiricism debate. Indeed, in his *Handbook of Physiological Optics* composed between 1856 and 1867, Hermann Helmholtz [1821-1894] - whose many experimental achievements contributed to the founding of psychophysics as well as nineteenth century physics more generally - contrasted these two positions *vis-a-vis* the physiology of perception. His view was that our judgments are based *both* in our experience and in the physiological structure of our sense organs. This could be interpreted as Helmholtz's attempt to empirically verify Kant's metaphysics by operationalizing key aspects of the mind's functions as described in the first *Critique*.<sup>21</sup> Helmholtz's view is positioned decidedly within the empiricist camp, however, as compared with that of his foundationalist rival, Hering. Kant, for his part, was convinced that his own critical project succeeded in synthesizing both sides of this debate.

Lacan's insistence from early on in his career on using a kind of algebra as a pedagogical tool for transmitting psychoanalytic knowledge in a formalized way can be understood as another retort to Kant's pessimistic conclusion about the possibility of a

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was indubitable, he was able to doubt the existence of matter. In his final Meditation, he argues that mind is essentially thought and that matter is essentially extension. On his view, which is almost always interpreted as a version of "substance dualism," these are mutually exclusive essences. Mind and body/matter are two utterly distinct substances. Importantly, Descartes' dualism does not necessarily place the mind outside nature, although it does portray it an immaterial substance. Descartes believes the mind can be the subject of scientific inquiry. Both interpretations of Kant, however, necessarily position things-in-themselves outside nature. Moreover, for Kant, the mind establishes the distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves and is not, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, the proper subject of either rational or empirical investigation.

<sup>21</sup> The issue of Helmholtz's relationship to Kant's philosophy has remained a contentious issue. In particular, neo-Kantians such as Ernst Cassirer, Moritz Schlick, and Hans Reichenbach were divided as to whether or not Helmholtz made a break with Kant through his pioneering research studies.

scientific study of psychological life. Mathematical formalization, or the “matheme,” according to Lacan, confers scientific legitimacy on psychoanalysis while also providing a way of forming psychoanalytic subjects without appeal to intuition. Lacanian algebra thus seems to provide an alternative to the inevitable transformations of signification as written and spoken words are received by interlocutors in various contexts. Yet, as I establish in the chapters that follow, these transformations - problematic as they may be for Lacan, who sought to preserve the radical potential of Freud’s teachings from the deadening effects of institutionalization - are also what make possible his own and other original contributions to an ever-evolving psychoanalytic tradition.

### **Hegel: Dialectical *Erfahrung*, Self-Knowledge, and Knowledge of Others**

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [1770-1831] came of age during the final decades of Kant’s life but did not gain academic notoriety until after the latter’s death. During his seminary years at Tübingen, Hegel formed a friendship with the German Romantic poet, novelist, and philosopher Friedrich Hölderlin, who informed his concept of truth as the unity of oppositions. Hegel also befriended the *Naturphilosoph* Friedrich Schelling, who imparted to him a concept of living nature and inspired him to consider the possibility of an “absolute” perspective.

As was true of Kant, some of Hegel’s early writings<sup>22</sup> show that he was deeply engaged with the philosophical significance of the study of nature. Yet unlike some “Kantians and semi-Kantians” of his generation,<sup>23</sup> Hegel did not respond to Kant’s restrictions on self-knowledge and his privileging of the *a priori* mathematical disciplines

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<sup>22</sup> i.e., *Philosophical Dissertation on the Orbits of the Planets* (1787/1801)

<sup>23</sup> e.g., Jakob Friedrich Fries, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and Friedrich Eduard Beneke

as “proper” sciences by offering up a renewed attempt at psychology as a natural science (Leary, 1978). As early 1793 Hegel was searching for a concept of human nature that would reveal the underlying unity of the process of moral self-development and the human need for engagement in a communal world (Goldstein, 2003). Hegel found a path to self-knowledge and knowledge of others through a different concept of science [*Wissenschaft*] than Kant had employed, according to which “philosophy itself is science, not merely a reflection upon [natural] science. It is not merely critical; it actually produces true knowledge” (Leary, 1980, p. 300).

In midlife, Hegel combined his interests in nature, social life, and the possibility of knowledge and self-knowledge in an account of historically “self-actualizing” spirit [*Geist*<sup>24</sup>] (Leary, 1982). Hegel’s approach is premised on his acknowledgment that attempts at knowing ourselves, others, and the world have a *history*. Moreover, he took seriously that these attempts have transformed over time in an orderly way that he characterized as “dialectical.”<sup>25</sup> Hegel found Kant’s critique of reason limited because it proceeded, in an important sense, ahistorically: Kant raised the most successful research project of his day (Newtonian natural philosophy) to the status of timeless paradigm of knowledge. The *Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in Jena in 1807 in the wake of Napoleon’s conquest of the very same town, presents the development of spirit from abstract sense-certainty to absolute knowing through Hegel’s innovative concept of *dialectical* experience [*Erfahrung*]. The *Phenomenology* narrates consciousness’ journey

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<sup>24</sup> The German word *Geist* can be translated as “spirit” or “mind.”

<sup>25</sup> Although Michel Foucault’s approach to the history of the human sciences is often contrasted with Hegel’s dialectical approach, it is important to keep in mind that Foucault’s work nevertheless developed in critical *relation* to Hegel’s philosophy (and, indeed, to phenomenology and hermeneutics).



to the knowledge of itself as spirit. It also traces the logical overcoming of the alienating oppositions Hegel found unacceptable in Kant's transcendental philosophy.<sup>26</sup> The logical overcoming of these oppositions is Spirit's "liberation struggle" as well as the preface to the particular sciences, of which psychology is one.

Hegel claims that the problem of "philosophizing from the subjective consciousness" (Greene, 1984, p. 161) necessitated the articulation of a new, dialectical conception of *Erfahrung*. This problem appears in transcendental philosophy with Kant's assumption that the content of thought<sup>27</sup> impresses itself upon an initially passive, receptive subject. This assumption requires Kant to appeal to pure apperception to ground the unity of matter and form as an object of experience. From Hegel's perspective, "this two tiered approach to knowledge separates consciousness from the world, because it assumes they are antithetical" (Lumsden, 2003, p. 43).<sup>28</sup> Hegel's concept of *Erfahrung* overcomes this opposition in Kant's philosophy by rejecting the latter's concept-intuition distinction.

In the *Phenomenology* of 1807, Hegel portrays the experiencing subject as actively confronting the content of *Erfahrung*, as opposed to passively receiving this content as a sensuous manifold from the external world. "The experiencing subject...tacitly presupposes a distinction between appearance and reality [*Wesen*], between knowledge and its standard" (Dove, 1971, p. 625). The subject acts on this

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<sup>26</sup> Concept vs. intuition, subject vs. object, logical self vs. empirical self, and, perhaps most importantly, certainty vs. truth.

<sup>27</sup> Sensuous "matter" from things in the external world

<sup>28</sup> According to Hegel, a fully adequate account of knowledge must recognize the original unity of what Kant calls the "manifold" of sense. It must also recognize that concepts do not belong solely to the thinking subject. The object, for Hegel, is equally conceptual.

distinction. It makes a claim to know in an attempt to bridge the distance between appearance and reality. At first the subject feels its confrontation with the content of experience as certainty; then, as the subject evaluates the adequacy of its knowledge claim, it discovers the inadequacy of what it used to hold with certainty as truth. It feels doubtful and despairing about what it knows.

This movement from certainty to doubt indicates that the act of making a knowledge claim is risky: it makes an entire form of life - not just an abstract proposition<sup>29</sup> - vulnerable to negation. From the standpoint of observing the experiencing subject, the object that the subject relates to and claims to know is the product of a spontaneous, resolute response to what it learned previously from suffering contradiction, namely, “that a determinate claim to know is finite and illusory” (Kalkavage, 2007, p. 21). The present object is the objectification, or externalization [*Entäußerung*], of this knowledge that consciousness attained through previous suffering.<sup>30</sup> It is a “determinate negation” of a knowledge claim over which it ultimately felt doubt at a prior stage of the path to absolute knowing.<sup>31</sup> Hegel identifies *Erfahrung* with this dialectical process, or movement, through which the negation of an inadequate knowledge claim becomes a

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<sup>29</sup> “All the previous shapes of consciousness are abstract forms of [Spirit]. They result from Spirit analyzing itself, distinguishing its moments, and dwelling for awhile with each. This isolating of those moments *presupposes* Spirit itself and subsists therein; in other words, the isolation exists only in Spirit which is a concrete existence” (Hegel, 1807/1977, §440). All references to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in this dissertation include paragraph numbers instead of page numbers.

<sup>30</sup> This is the sense in which, as I mentioned previously, conceptuality belongs just as much to the object as it does to the subject.

<sup>31</sup> “...in speculative [*begreifenden*] thinking...the negative belongs to the content itself, and is the *positive*, both as the *immanent* movement and determination of the content, and as the whole of this process. Looked at as a result, what emerges from this process is the *determinate* negative which is consequently a positive content as well” (Hegel, 1807/1977, §59).

new object for the experiencing subject.<sup>32</sup> Prior to attaining absolute knowledge, however, the subject assumes that it simply “finds” its object outside of itself. “It does not remember where it has been, and so it does not experience itself as being on a path” (p. 24). It does not recognize that experience is the dialectical process through which it moves toward absolute knowing.

*Erfahrung*, for Hegel, is also the developmental process through which the subject becomes increasingly complex as it progresses toward absolute knowing.<sup>33</sup> This development of the experiencing subject into greater complexity through the movement of experience becomes manifest as a “new pattern of consciousness comes on the scene,” and, like its object, “implicitly “contains what was true in the proceeding knowledge” (Hegel, 1807/1977, §87). Each developmental stage of the subject encompasses those that came before it. For Hegel, the increasing complexity of the subject is also an indication that the subject is becoming less abstract. Reduced abstraction implies a reduction in the distance between subject and object. Eventually, Hegel asserts, “in pressing forward to its true existence, consciousness will arrive at a point at which it gets rid of its semblance of being burdened with...some sort of ‘other,’ at a point where appearance becomes identical

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<sup>32</sup> “*Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it, this dialectical movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called experience [Erfahrung]*” (Hegel, 1807/1977, §59).

<sup>33</sup> Although experience, for Hegel, is deeply felt and a living movement, it is not *Erlebnis*. It is *Erfahrung* because “the way to Science [*Wissen*] is already Science.” Hegel’s use of the term *Erfahrung* emphasizes that the lived experience narrated in the *Phenomenology* of 1807 is also the basis for the “Science of the *experience of consciousness*” (§88).

with essence” (§89). The subject will have arrived at absolute knowing; it will also have arrived at complete self-knowledge, that is, recognition of itself as Spirit.<sup>34</sup>

Hegel’s dialectical *Erfahrung* solves the problem plaguing modern philosophy in another way as well, by requiring that the observation of knowledge’s self-critique occur from a “speculative” standpoint.<sup>35</sup> This requirement registers Hegel’s criticism of his modern predecessors for erroneously identifying reason with the faculty of intellectual understanding [*Verstand*].<sup>36</sup> When the activity of *Verstand* is equated with the thinking process, thought atrophies into abstraction. This particularly *modern* error is overcome when “pure thinking, this inner *immediacy*, recognizes itself as a moment.” Then “thoughts become fluid” (1807/1977, §33).

In the next several subsections, I review in detail the third chapter of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* of 1807, which is, I claim, crucial to my aims in this chapter as it showcases Hegel’s refusal to reduce the process of thinking to the activity of *Verstand*. This review will also set the stage for my subsequent discussion of Irigaray’s criticism of Lacan’s reliance on what she calls a “logic of solids” in the formation of subjectivity.

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<sup>34</sup> Later, in the *Phenomenology of Mind* in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel summarizes the relationship between knowledge and self-knowledge pithily: “[Spirit] is essentially only what it knows itself to be” (1830/1845/1971, Zusatz to §385).

<sup>35</sup> “Speculative” and “speculation” in Hegel’s philosophy refer to a particular meaning of these words: the observing consciousness in the *Phenomenology* of 1807 is not simply “passively aware,” but actively “disclosing” what it observes (Schrader, 1964, p. 20). The German equivalents of “speculation” and “speculative” also contain the word for “grasping” [*grieffen*], which is related to the word for “concept” [*Begriff*].

<sup>36</sup> Hegel proclaims that *Verstand* is the “most astonishing and mightiest of power, or rather the absolute power” (1807/1977, §32), because it “dissolves” the unity of an idea through analysis. He cautions, however, that this power of making distinctions - a “necessary moment of rational thinking” - should not be mistaken for the entire process of thinking (1830/1845/1971, Zusatz to §467).

**The force of physics: Hegel on the truth of modern science.** Few who have studied modern science do not feel awe at its grandeur. Leibniz, Newton, and Galileo have much to offer, not least of which is an image of the world of ordinary experience as stable and coherent. What surer sign of knowledge is there than the ability to determine the cause of physical events? Modern scientists claim to have that ability. They proclaim that what occurs physically is not only intelligible but necessary. In short, modern science asserts that it has found the system of the world, and, at first sight, it seems to deliver precisely what it promises.

According to Hegel, the modern scientist exemplifies the form of consciousness he calls *Verstand* [the Understanding]. The three moments of modern science are, for Hegel, force, law, and explanation, each of which stand in logical relationship to each other.<sup>37</sup> Like the forms of consciousness that preceded it, modern scientific thinking as *Verstand* reveals its own inherent incoherence. In order to evaluate *Verstand* from Hegel's perspective, it must be considered in terms of the metaphysical claim it makes to truth.

**Force, the "other," and solicitation.** According to Hegel, the true nature of the sensible world for *Verstand* is Force. This claim on the part of *Verstand* is a milestone in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, for it is the first time that consciousness has acknowledged truth as intelligible. Indeed, it is the first time that consciousness has acknowledged itself as a

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<sup>37</sup> Force, law, explanation - each of these is in fact an expression of what is manifest to *Verstand* as reality, whether explicitly described as such by a particular modern scientist or not. In this way, although Newton's laws have come to represent the achievements of modern science, Leibniz, for Hegel, is perhaps the central figure among the modern physicists.

primarily thinking entity.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, since Force contains both the unity and the diversity of Perception, Force has an essential antithesis that *Verstand* will be unable to reconcile. This antithesis takes the form of the two moments, “expression of Force” and “Force proper.” At this point consciousness does not see these moments as opposites that contain each other: they simply seem like two aspects implied by the notion of

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<sup>38</sup> To fully appreciate Hegel’s account of Force, its dialectical origins must be acknowledged. Hegel claims that Force emerges directly from the dialectic of Perception, the preceding form of consciousness. Perception itself was the form generated by the dialectic of Sense-Certainty, the first form of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*. The latter dialectic disclosed that the only enduring existence of the “Here” and “Now” of the sensuous “This” is as a universal. In Perception, consciousness was certain that it had found the medium of sensuous universals in the “Thing.” This object is what Hegel calls “conditioned universality” (1807, §130). The “Thing” is conditioned in the sense that it is known through its perceptible properties. An example of conditioned universality is a grain of salt, which has several sensuous properties, such as cubical shape, tartness, and whiteness. Ultimately, however, the dialectic revealed that there was no link between the Thing and its many properties except in relation to other Things. For Perception, this conclusion was a serious problem: How can individual Things be independent if they are essentially related to others? The dialectic seems to generate anew the ancient problem of the One and the Many, the problem Perception was supposed to solve. Yet from the defeat of Perception arose *Verstand*, which now claims triumph in the wake of the previous dialectic. This new form of consciousness is certain that it can reconcile the distinctness of individual Things and their relation to other Things. This reconciliation is supposed to be afforded by Force. Force is “unconditioned universality,” and, “in it, the unity of ‘being-for-self’ and ‘being-for-another’ is posited; in other words, the absolute antithesis is posited as self-identical essence” (§134). Force, unlike the Thing, is *unconditioned* because it does not make itself known perceptibly. It is for this reason that Hegel links what he calls the Notion or Concept [*Begriff*] with unconditioned universality. This means that Force is the first concept to emerge in the *Phenomenology*.

From the perspective of *Verstand*, it comes as no surprise that Perception could not maintain the Thing as the source of its own properties. The Thing is not simple. It is complex. Indeed, it is an event. Perception failed to see that sensuous properties are in fact *expressions* of the inner potency of the Thing. The true nature of Things and their properties is Force. For example, what Perception knew as “hardness” is, according to *Verstand*, the “force of resistance.” The sensuous universals Perception saw as simply attached to the Thing actually emerge from within it. Thus, Things are not canvases that properties are painted upon; rather, the truth, for *Verstand*, is that the perceptible world is a drama in which Forces are the actors expressing themselves perceptibly.

expressivity.<sup>39</sup> Yet *Verstand* still distinguishes Force as potency from its expression - and it is precisely on this point that Hegel makes his intervention. For Hegel, all distinction, however sensible and common it may be, implies opposition and antithesis.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Hegel observes that “Force proper” is nothing but the contained expression, and “expression of Force” is nothing more than what was contained. The opposites have no stable being of their own. They vanish in the act of expressing.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, consciousness fails to see the necessity of the opposition whose being is only a vanishing. Only from Hegel’s perspective is it evident that

first...the Force which is driven back into itself *must* express itself; and secondly, it is still Force remaining *within itself* in the expression, just as much as it is expression in its self-containedness (1807, §136, original emphasis).

This is what thinking does: it generates vanishing distinctions.

Consciousness, as Hegel presents it, is unsettled by the possibility that it generates distinctions that are no more than abstractions. It is convinced that Force is the truth of the perceptible world. Yet, even though this truth may be thinkable for *Verstand*, it

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<sup>39</sup> The distinction that *Verstand* posits is not at all uncommon. It is often believed that what makes a speech, an essay, or a work of art “one’s own” - even though these same words or materials could be used by someone else - is that it is an “expression” of oneself. The claim is that exterior expression does not remain “other” and “exterior”; it is an inward reality that has gone outward but still points inward, back to oneself. Later I discuss how, for Hegel, the emergence of Language on the scene in a subsequent chapter of the *Phenomenology* revives this same dynamic.

<sup>40</sup> On this view, then, oneself and “one’s own” speech, essay, or work of art are opposites.

<sup>41</sup> To continue with the foregoing example, this means that in the act of speaking, writing, or creating art, the distinction between oneself and what is being produced disappears.

cannot be confined to thought. The distinction between “expression of Force” and “Force proper” must be a real distinction that exists independent of the mind.<sup>42</sup> Thus, Force

must be completely set free from thought, it must be posited as the substance of these differences...Force as such, or driven back into itself, thus exists on its own account as an *exclusive One*, for which the unfolding of the [different] “matters” is *another* subsisting essence; and thus two distinct independent aspects are set up (Hegel, 1807, §136, original emphasis).

The point in the *Phenomenology* when consciousness posits substantial Force as the truth of the perceptible world signals the emergence of the modern theoretical scientist - particularly the modern physicist - among the forms of consciousness unfolding toward Absolute Knowing. G. W. F. Leibniz, more so than even Newton, embodies the effort of *Verstand* here, for Leibniz explicitly speaks of Force as substance. In light of this dialectical development in Hegel’s text, a particular kind of physical event has also become especially interesting for consciousness: the collision of hard bodies. In collision, Forces remain inner, as potency, until the outward expression of that potency is solicited by an “other.”<sup>43</sup> Important for Hegel is the fact that Force is unable to self-

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<sup>42</sup> As Descartes claims in Part Four of the *Discourse on Method*, “the things we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true” (1985a/1637, p. 127).

<sup>43</sup> For Leibniz, the study of collisions in terms of Forces makes the behavior of bodies in collisions intelligible. He writes in the 1702 essay entitled, “On Body and Force, Against the Cartesians,” that, “since the Cartesians recognized no active, substantial, and modifiable principle in body,” this principle referring to Force, “they were forced to remove all activity from it and transfer it to God alone, summoned *ex machina*” (1702/1989, p. 254). Without Force, the “activities” of bodies would not be natural consequences and hence not a possible object of physical science. Furthermore, bodies understood as Forces acquire a kind of autonomy. (Leibnizian physics is not, therefore, purely deterministic; the actions of bodies are the assertion of their inner potency, like the will in human beings.) Secondly, he claims that “since the Cartesians don’t understand the use of elastic force in the collision of bodies, they also err in thinking that changes happen through leaps” (p. 255). In addition to supporting the autonomy of bodies, substantial Force is thought to save the continuity of physical events.



solicit. Why do Forces express themselves only in violent relation to an “other”? Does the need for an other undermine the autonomy of bodies as Forces?<sup>44</sup>

For Hegel, the solicitation that occurs in collision is the structure of perceiving<sup>45</sup>; I suggest, further, that the dialectical dynamics of collision are isomorphic with Lacan’s performance of reading as a relational process in which both text and reader are alternately active and passive. Thus, according to Hegel, with the object Force, consciousness has come that much closer to discovering truth as the subject-object

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<sup>44</sup> Before turning to Hegel for answers to these questions, it is important to note the role of solicitation in physics from Leibniz’s perspective. For Leibniz, every perceived aspect of bodies can be accounted for in terms of their inner potency, and every aspect in some way contributes to the behavior of bodies in collision. The mass of a body is in fact its “passive force,” which is responsible for why a body “endeavors to persist in its previous state, not only in the sense that it will not depart from that state on its own accord, but also in the sense that it opposes that which changes it” (Leibniz, 1702/1989, p. 252). The expression of Force is exemplified by a change in the momentum and perhaps other factors of spatial motion. An aspect of Force, the mass of a body, ensures that this expression is not uninhibited.

Leibniz also distinguishes between two kinds of active Force in bodies. “Primitive active force” is the striving towards a particular form, which Aristotle called “entelechy.” “Derivative active force,” however, is “the impression a body receives in impact” (p. 253). Action occurs because of the derivative active force, which, when received in collision, modifies primitive force. Generally, the primitive force of a body is turned “inward,” presumably maintaining the shape of the body. Impact is thought to violently alter the natural shape of the solicited body, thereby turning primitive force “outward.” This outward turn of primitive force is what Hegel refers to as “expression of Force”; according to Leibniz, it is elasticity, the ability to restore natural shape. Leibniz thus concludes that “bodies, in fact, always gain their motion in collision from their very own force, to which the impulse of another body provides only the occasion for acting and a limitation, so to speak” (p. 254).

<sup>45</sup> It is “nothing else than the movement of perceiving, in which the two sides, the percipient and the perceived, are indistinguishably one in the apprehension of the True, and yet each is at the same time equally reflected into itself, or has a being of its own” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §136). This is an instance of a pattern that recurs throughout the *Phenomenology*. Each successive form of consciousness has as its object the preceding subject-object relationship. In this instance, the same truth that could be seen from Hegel’s perspective in Perception - that perceiver and perceived alternate as the One and the Many - is manifest objectively in solicitation for *Verstand*. Force and its “other” alternate as solicited and soliciting.

relationship. First, however, consciousness must see its object as an inner truth: consciousness must recognize that it, too, contains an “other” which is its own self. From Hegel’s perspective, then, what modern scientists like Leibniz view as knowledge of the physical world is in fact metaphysical knowledge. It dialectically leads to self-consciousness and knowledge of human existence.<sup>46</sup> More striking, however, is the fact that Leibniz recognizes force, particularly active force, as the animating principle of body, and physical events like collision as the “life” of bodies.<sup>47</sup>

On Hegel’s view, the Forces involved in solicitation are not independent subsisting essences. Active force in Leibniz’s account of collision provides an example of Hegel’s “Force proper.” It is Force that has expressed itself as a demonstration of its inner potency. The modern scientist would claim that since the active force has caused a change in the state of the passive force, it is the soliciting member of the interaction. From Hegel’s perspective, however, the active force is soliciting *and* solicited. He makes this claim because the active force can only express itself in relation to the passive force. Each member involved in the collision completes the other as Force.<sup>48</sup> So, while Leibniz

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<sup>46</sup> Leibniz alone among the modern scientists faintly echoes this claim in his assertion that “physics is subordinated...to metaphysics through dynamics” (1702/1989, p. 255).

<sup>47</sup> It is worth noting here how Leibniz describes the solicitation supposedly occurring in collision. On his view, solicitation occurs when one body, a passive force, is impressed upon by another body, an active force. Due to the impression, the primitive force of the passive body expresses itself “outwardly,” thereby changing the passive body into an active one. At the same time, this outward expression of the primitive force of the (formerly) passive body resists the active force of the other body, reducing the speed of the active body and thereby rendering it passive. When the two bodies rebound, what was formerly passive is now active and what was active is now passive.

<sup>48</sup> Hegel states that the essence of the potent center of force (active force) “is to express itself as an ‘other’ which approaches it externally” (1977/1807, §137). Thus what “appears as the one that solicits and moreover, in accordance with its content, as the universal medium in relation to the Force characterized as the one solicited” is itself also

himself acknowledges that the “other” offers the occasion for the action of potency through impact, might it not also be true that the potency impressed upon offers the occasion for the other to impress itself in the first place? If this is the case, then “the first [solicited] Force has its determinateness only through the other, and solicits only insofar as the other solicits it to be a soliciting Force...the external, soliciting Force appears as a universal medium, but only through its having been solicited by the other Force to do so” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §139). *Verstand*, in an effort to preserve the clarity and distinctness of its thoughts, has posited substantial Forces that the dialectic has shown to be in fact indistinct. This dialectical disclosure underscores Hegel’s claim that the truth of modern science is self-consciousness, where the “other” for consciousness is its own self.

In light of the fact that even Leibniz regards dynamics as a branch of metaphysics, what are the metaphysical ramifications of the dialectic of Force as Hegel presents it? Hegel tries to show that the potency bodies acquire when understood as Forces, although it may render them capable of action apart from the action of God upon them, enslaves bodies to one another. The action of a body understood as Force is essentially related to the action of the other upon it. Later in the *Phenomenology*, the dialectic of Master and Slave presents the human equivalent of soliciting Forces. It will then become clear that something deeper and more fundamental underlies potency and its expression: fear and desire. This is a conclusion that Lacan himself takes up for his own psychoanalytic ends.

Consciousness as *Verstand* still seeks a stable and eternal reality.

This true essence of Things now has the character of not being immediately for consciousness...consciousness has a mediated relation to the inner being and, as the

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a solicited Force (§138). The body understood as the soliciting Force can only solicit because there is another Force present, capable of being solicited.

Understanding [*Verstand*], looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of Things (Hegel, 1977/1807, §143).

*Verstand* goes further “up” to truth and further “in” to reality by looking beyond vanishing Forces.

*Appearance, law, and the supersensible world.* The point at which *Verstand* begins to consider the movement of Force marks a significant development in the dialectic of this form of consciousness. From this development emerges an aspect of modern science that offers a fuller picture of what *Verstand* regards as truth. Hegel states that the “first universal” as substance is the final attempt by consciousness to maintain the solidity of the sensuous world (1807, §142). Another fundamental aspect of modern science, the “second universal,” necessitates the transcendence of the immediate world.<sup>49</sup>

What does the negation of the sensible world look like in modern physics? Suppose the modern scientist is considering the circular movement of one body around another body. According to the first Notion of Force, this phenomenon would have been manifest to consciousness as the existence of a center of Force acting upon another body. According to the new, emerging Notion of Force, the same phenomenon is now a complex flux of velocities that change as position changes. The truth is no longer sought

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<sup>49</sup> What role could transcendence possibly play in rendering something intelligible? It is important to remember that this moment in the dialectic of *Verstand* emerges because consciousness had tried to maintain that the perceptible interrelatedness of Things is the outcome of their nature as Forces, entities that assert their independence through relation. But *Verstand* can no longer maintain this position. Leibniz’s active and passive forces are just as evanescent as the One and the Many of the Thing from Perception. Active and passive become each other because they are two poles of an encompassing unity. For *Verstand*, this dialectical disclosure has negative consequences for the solidity of the sensuous and the perceptible, leading to consciousness’s rejection of the immediate world as true.

in identifying the one center of Force at work in the relationship between two bodies, but in the one essence that governs the flux called appearance.<sup>50</sup>

Hegel claims that *Verstand* resists thinking of perceptible change as qualitative change. For this form of consciousness, the only truth in appearance is in its correspondence to a simple, quantitative law. “This true essence of Things,” referring to what Hegel will identify as law,

has now the character of not being immediately for consciousness; on the contrary, consciousness has a mediated relation to the inner being and, as the Understanding [*Verstand*], looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of Things (Hegel, 1977/1807, §143, original emphasis).

Without the law to which to refer them, appearances lack coherence for *Verstand* - hence the need for science to “save” them. Position that changes with time only makes sense if there is an unchanging law governing that change. The reality of the law is borne out in

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<sup>50</sup> Appearance has been an important idea throughout the history of the natural sciences, even as early as Ptolemy’s research into geocentric astronomy. Natural science has even been referred to as the effort to “save the appearances.” To take an example from ancient astronomy, the changing position of the sun was considered an appearance. This flux was not the perceptible expression of a law, however, but of a certain kind of motion: the sun’s changing path was thought to partake in the Form of circular motion. The modern scientist’s laws are an arithmetical version of such ancient, geometric Forms. In the flux of appearances, the modern scientist looks for a constant pattern, not unlike the constant path of the sun Ptolemy sought after. That pattern in turn obeys law, just as the sun’s path is an instance of a Form. For Hegel, appearance is “the developed *being* of Force which, for the Understanding [*Verstand*] itself, is henceforth only a vanishing” (1977/1807, §143, original emphasis). From his perspective, the idea of appearance entails that consciousness is now aware of the vanishing nature of Forces, something of which it was not aware earlier in the dialectic. Consciousness no longer insists that Force and the necessary “other” upon which it acts are distinct, nor that the two substantial Forces are independent. Consciousness now acknowledges that the perceptible world is dialectical, in the sense that Force, what had been taken as the substance of the perceptible world, is vanishing. The cause of this spatial motion (a center of Force) reveals itself in the perceptible effect (a moving body). In this way, consciousness is confronted with the significance of otherness and change.

the ability to predict the changes that will happen at a later time in that circumstance. This ability can belong not only to the modern scientist who discovers the law, but to anyone who hears of the law. I suggest that Lacan's turn to mathemes as a way of eliminating the transformation of meaning in the transmission of knowledge is comparable to *Verstand's* appeal to Law in Hegel's third chapter.

In looking beyond the appearances for a stable essence, "there now opens up above the *sensuous* world, which is the world of *appearance*, a *supersensible* world which henceforth is the true world, above the vanishing *present* world there opens up a permanent *beyond*" (Hegel, 1977/1807, §144, original emphasis).<sup>51</sup> At the very least, the opening up of the supersensible world means that *Verstand* has begun to regard the truth as an idealization of the apparent world. Although the immediate world is not the true world for *Verstand*, appearances are not utterly deceptive. They can be taken up as means toward truth. Thus, through appearance, "*universal* difference," or "the simple element in the play of Force itself," can be discovered (Hegel, 1977/1807, §148). This simple

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<sup>51</sup> Although Hegel has not yet revealed anything specific about the supersensible world, it already signals a significant moment in the *Phenomenology*. The emergence of supersensible world is the first time consciousness has conceived of a "beyond" of any kind. For Hegel, its emergence is a rational necessity. This is a striking claim: the most familiar eternal "beyond"s are generally religious, such as the Kingdom of Heaven spoken of the Christian Gospels. Perhaps Hegel intimates here the possibility of a deep connection between religious and scientific truth. *Verstand* could be the source of both the mathematical laws of modern physics as well as the principles of ethics and morality that come on the scene later in the *Phenomenology*. It may be that, in a certain sense, religion and physical science differ from each other in a way that is not a real difference, just like Force and the other it solicits. But is it the case that the supersensible world of religion and myth is as *thinkable* as the supersensible world of modern science?

difference is what the modern scientist calls a “law of Force” (§148).<sup>52</sup> At this point, Isaac Newton in particular among modern scientists exemplifies the effort of *Verstand*.<sup>53</sup>

To a modern scientist, a law expresses a correspondence between variables but is not necessarily a metaphysical claim. Hegel, like Leibniz, heartily disagrees with this evaluation. For Hegel, mathematical law, whether it is explicitly a “force law” or only implicitly so, like Galileo’s laws of motion, is an expression of the imperfect - that is, from Hegel’s perspective, the non-dialectical - way that the movement of two opposite extremes into unity is manifest to *Verstand*.<sup>54</sup> Through the determination of law, the supersensible world of *Verstand* gradually becomes populated. It is no longer an empty beyond: “consequently, the *supersensible* world is an inert *realm of laws* which, though

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<sup>52</sup> Certainly, law is not immediate in the same way that the Thing of Perception was supposed to be. Law, unlike Force, must exist beyond the perceptible world because that world has already proved to be a world of vanishing appearances. For consciousness, the consequence of determining this character of the perceptible world is that the latter cannot be the true world. If the law is true, the law must be distinct from appearance. If the law were in any way *in* the world and not just *about* it, the law as well would have a vanishing existence.

<sup>53</sup> In Newton’s (1999/1687) *Principia*, Force is treated as a variable able to take on indefinitely many particular values. Although Force conceived of in this way has what Hegel would call a “vanishing” existence, Newton’s law of Force,  $F \propto 1/r^2$ , derived in Book I, Proposition 4, Corollary 6, identifies the “simple elements” within the variation of Force, its relationship to radial distance. Hegel calls this relationship “universal difference” because it describes *any* situation in which the accelerative force of gravity is at work.

<sup>54</sup> For example, the well-known equation  $v = d/t$  is a non-dialectical statement of the unity (velocity) of two opposite extremes (distance and time). A modern scientist is unlikely to say that the expression on one side of an equation *becomes* the expression on the other side, but rather that the two expressions are merely *equal*. From a modern scientific perspective, a mathematical law presents the universal relationship through which knowledge of the particular values of one variable makes possible the calculation of the corresponding value of the other variable. From Hegel’s perspective, the deeper truth of the equation concerning changing distance and time is their unity in velocity.

beyond the perceived world - for this exhibits law only through incessant change - is equally *present* in it and is its direct tranquil image” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §149).

These considerations suggest much about the criterion of truth according to *Verstand*. Truth must have a stable and eternal existence. Change and opposition, from this perspective, are excluded from the nature of truth. Hence the importance Hegel finds in the notion that the supersensible world is not just a realm of laws, but rather an *inert* or peaceful realm of laws. Unlike appearance, there is supposed to be no movement in law; the true world is at peace with itself, whereas the perceptible world is full of the war of appearances. Truth is not supposed to be at variance with itself.

The power of law is its ability to bestow universal significance on particular phenomena.<sup>55</sup> But this universality of law is also its defect, for Hegel claims that it “does not fill out the world of appearance” (1977/1807, §150). Newton’s law of Force, for example, is, according to Hegel, “indeterminate” for several reasons. First of all, it is a law of proportionality rather than equality. Second, “with every circumstance the law has a different actuality” (§150). Furthermore, this one law contains “indefinitely many laws” (§150). On one level, Hegel is concerned with the failure of law to attend to *why* force and radial distance vary at all. Why do the variables take on more than one value? On another level, in light of Propositions 11-13 in Newton’s *Principia*, it is clear that this law of Force applies to cases of elliptical, parabolic, and hyperbolic motion. The law describes the celestial motion of planets, moons, and comets, as well as the terrestrial motion of projectiles. What this force law cannot explain, from Hegel’s perspective, is

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<sup>55</sup> As Descartes claims in Chapter 7 of *Le Monde*, “if God created many worlds, [the laws] would be as true in each of them as in this one” (1985b/1664, p. 97).



not only the cause of quantitative difference, but also the presence of qualitative difference. The same defect plagues the Platonic Forms: there are indefinitely many Forms, each corresponding to a type of entity. But if law, like a Form, is supposed to be a unifying principle, there cannot be many of them. In order to avoid this contradiction, *Verstand* “must therefore let the many laws collapse into *one* law” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §150).

This contradiction, according to Hegel’s evaluation, is the underlying dialectical reason why Newton formulated the universal law of attraction, which states that every body attracts every other body with a force directed along the line of the distance between their centers that is proportional to the product of the masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance. Stated mathematically:  $F = G (m_1 m_2) / r^2$ . This formulation has far-reaching consequences. First, it is the law of Force from Proposition 4 in the *Principia* transformed into an equality. Second, it completes Galileo’s law of inertia, revealing that mass is the other factor affecting the acceleration of bodies. Moreover, it specifies a material cause for Kepler’s Law.<sup>56</sup> Most significantly, this law states that the motion of both terrestrial and celestial bodies can be comprehended in one general equation. The universe is not partitioned into heaven and earth. All bodies are contained in one system of the world, in which universal attraction is the sinew binding the bodies, like limbs, together as a whole.

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<sup>56</sup> Kepler had argued that the motion of the earth is the consequence of a god-like influence of the sun upon it. Universal gravitation, in contrast, states that the motion of the earth around the sun is in fact the motion of both the sun and the earth around their center of gravity, as well as that the force causing the motion is mutual. The sun does exert an influence on the earth, but the earth also exerts an influence on the sun.

Hegel claims a problem lurks within the stunning achievement of the law of universal gravitation: the loss of the qualitative specificity apparent in the perceptible world. “The law becomes more and more superficial, and as a result what is found is, in fact, not the unity of *these specific* laws, but a law which leaves out their specific character” (1977/1807, §150, original emphasis). Consider the form of the equation for universal attraction. The subsidiary laws of motion express the specific variables involved which, in progressing from one side of the equation to the other, are related in such a way that a new variable emerges. The relationship between the variables in a specific law can be immediately grasped. The equation of universal gravitation, however, makes no explicit reference to either the laws of terrestrial or celestial motion that are supposedly united in it. The *relationship* between the apparently distinct laws is in no way expressed.

For this reason, Hegel concludes that “the unification of all laws in *universal attraction* expresses no other content than just the *mere Notion of law itself*, which is posited in that law in the form of *being*” (1977/1807, §150, original emphasis). What is meant here is that in order to contain all appearance in one law, all qualitative difference must be collapsed into the abstract notion of mass, for mass alone is common among all moving bodies. In this way, *Verstand* “has only found the *Notion of law itself*, although in such a way that what it is saying is that *all reality is in its own self conformable to law*” (§150). The distinction between specific laws and one general law is only a distinction in kind. The general law is the modern equivalent of a Form of Forms. What is gained through Newton’s achievement is not a unified world of appearance but rather the *necessity* implied in the relationships stated in the specific laws. It is that which causes

the variables present in the latter to “return again *into the inner world as simple unity*” (§151, original emphasis).

A related problem with formulating general law, according to Hegel, is that specific laws then take on the character of appearance. In other words, specific laws behave in the same way as vanishing Forces - they are merely moments of universal attraction. For Hegel, this means that *Verstand* has not discovered stability beyond the world of appearance. The supposedly inert laws of the supersensible world are just as much in flux as the vanishing Forces of the perceptible world. What does it matter if specific laws are not inert? Isn't what is most important in this matter, after all, *necessity*? If Newton's law of universal attraction expresses necessity of the relationships expressed mathematically in specific laws, then isn't this the triumph of *Verstand*? Hegel agrees that necessity is of great importance in the efficacy of mathematical truths. What he intends to show is that the “inner *necessity* of the law” is empty necessity (1977/1807, §151, original emphasis). Here Hegel directly contradicts Kant, who with the *Critique of Pure Reason* intended to defend the very necessity of Newtonian mechanics that Hegel calls into question.

In order to appreciate the criticisms Hegel brings forth against the necessity of the mathematical laws of modern science, the way in which law is now manifest to *Verstand* must be considered. There are now two moments of law:

once, as law in which the differences are expressed as independent moments; and also in the form of a *simple* withdrawal into itself which again can be called *Force*, but in the sense not of a Force that is driven back into itself, but Force as such, or the Notion of Force, an abstraction which absorbs the differences themselves of what attracts and what is attracted (Hegel, 1977/1807, §152).

The first moment is the mathematical law itself, in which the variables involved make a distinct appearance within the expression. An example is Coulomb's law of electrical charges. The second moment is the Force that comprehends this relationship. This would be "electricity." The quantitative law and the notion of Force are moments of law equivalent to the moments of substantial Force, "expression of Force" and "Force proper," from earlier in the dialectic.<sup>57</sup>

In one sense, the mathematical law that expresses electricity in terms of positive and negative charge is like an imperative statement dictating its properties. According to Hegel, it says nothing more than that the "Force *must*, just *because* it *must*, duplicate itself in this way" (1977/1807, §152, original emphasis). The terms "positive" and "negative" indeed imply each other, but there is nothing in the law that explains why the Force of electricity necessarily manifests itself as these opposed properties.<sup>58</sup> In another sense, the mathematical law of electricity is like its definition. As a definition, the law only states how electricity exists (i.e., as positive and negative charge). Yet even if it argued that electricity must exist in this way because this how we "*find* it" (§152, original emphasis), Hegel insists that necessity has still not been found. All that has been found is,

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<sup>57</sup> The problems Hegel raises in the relationship between mathematical law and the notion of Force echo his criticism of the abstract nature of the "Force proper"- "expression of Force" distinction. The effort to maintain Cartesian clarity and distinctness among the latter moments thus reemerges as the Kantian effort to maintain the necessity of the quantitative laws of nature. This echo sets the stage for a stunning criticism on Hegel's part, given that both "clarity and distinctness" and "necessity" have been upheld as criteria of genuine knowledge.

<sup>58</sup> Arguing in the opposite direction is easier. The modern science of electricity shows that positive and negative charges can be reduced to the concept of electricity. Hegel's concern is whether this science can also make sense of why electricity manifests itself through duality. Why shouldn't the manifestation of electricity be simple, like its concept?

contrary to Kant's first *Critique*, what Hume would discount as "constant conjunction."<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, if approached from a different angle, according to which electricity must exist as positive and negative because the latter exist and are relation through other, more primary Forces, this "necessity is an external necessity" (§152).<sup>60</sup>

***Explanation, the inverted world, and infinity.*** After proclaiming his criticisms of quantitative laws, Hegel concludes that "either the universal, Force, is indifferent to the division which is the law, or the differences, the parts, of the law are indifferent to one another" (1977/1807, §154). The only reason why the modern scientist is convinced of the necessity of mathematical laws is, remarkably, because "it is...only its *own* necessity that is asserted by the Understanding [*Verstand*]" (§154). In other words, *Verstand* thinks in such a way that dissects phenomena, positing difference that is not really difference, only to reassemble the phenomena conceptually, asserting the identity of what had been artificially differentiated in the first place. This thinking process (i.e., the "construction of concepts") that Kant makes responsible for necessity is a false necessity for Hegel. Genuine necessity, on his view, cannot be expressed mathematically, for what is necessary in the deepest sense is the eternal expression and repression of difference.

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<sup>59</sup> That is to say, just because two entities exist together simultaneously or successively does not imply that there is any necessary relationship between them.

<sup>60</sup> The problem of necessity is even more glaring if gravity, or motion in general, is considered. Unlike electricity, which *Verstand* abstracts into positive and negative charge, motion is not simple. Motion is the complex relationship of changes in space and time. Space, for the modern scientist, is the magnitude "distance," and time is considered in terms of "velocity." Since the modern scientist does not think through their logical (dialectical) connection, their true nature is not manifest to him. Consequently, space and time "are not related to one another *as positive and negative*, and thus are not related to one another through *their own essential nature*" (Hegel, 1977/1807, §153). So whereas simple electricity is "indifferent" to its properties "positive" and "negative," distance and velocity are "indifferent" to each other in motion. The relationships expressed in the laws of motion, Hegel concludes, are no more than "superficial."

Short of acknowledging this movement as the truth, consciousness is left with the skepticism of Hume.

The aspect of modern science that answers to this conclusion is explanation. For Hegel, explanation is the movement between Force and the law that was only visible from Hegel's perspective during the dialectic of law. From that perspective, laws could be seen as defective, and that the unity of notional Force and the difference expressed in law must give rise to each other. Now, in an attempt to resist the dialectic, *Verstand* posits explanation - without realizing that the "movement" of explanation is tautological. Hegel would generally agree with the modern scientist that something is gained through explanation. What has been gained, however, is not genuine knowledge, but rather the confirmation that

*Force is constituted exactly the same as law; there is said to be no difference between them. The differences are the pure, universal expression of law, and pure Force; but both have the same content, the same constitution (Hegel, 1977/1807, §154, original emphasis).*

Moreover, the explanation posited by *Verstand* "not only explains nothing, but is so plain that, while it pretends to say something different than what has already been said, really says nothing at all but only repeats the same thing" (§155).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> To grasp the tautological nature of explanation, consider the example of the moon's motion. In offering an explanation, *Verstand* is trying to answer the question, "why does the moon's motion correspond to the inverse-square law?" The answer given to this question is that the moon's motion is an instance of gravity. For Hegel, Force - in this case, gravity - is treated as the ground of the lawful behavior of the appearance (i.e., the motion of the moon). The key is that now Force (gravity) expresses itself by giving rise to the law in the phenomenon (lunar motion); the law itself, however, was said to be the "simple element" in the vanishing of Force. This reveals that the relationship between Force and law is the same as the relationship between Force and the other it solicits.

*Verstand* had posited the distinction between Force and the other as a way of grasping the intelligible nature of physical events like collision. Solicitation revealed that

When *Verstand* experienced the dialectic of substantial Force, it led to the conception of a supersensible world of nature beyond and in contrast to the sensible world of appearance. The supersensible world was thought to be an eternally unchanging realm of laws, the true world. Now, having experienced the dialectic of law, the “inert realm of laws” has revealed itself as the realm of appearance, just like the sensible world. Law and Force are vanishing moments in the movement of explanation. As a result, what had been apparent from Hegel’s perspective becomes apparent to consciousness, namely, that

differences arise which are no differences, or that what is *selfsame repels* itself from itself, and similarly, that the differences are only such as are in reality no differences and which cancel themselves; in other words, what is *not selfsame* is *self-attractive* (1807, §156, original emphasis).

This truth, however, does not reveal to consciousness that the supersensible realm is in fact its own self; instead, “through this principle, the first supersensible world, the tranquil kingdom of laws, the immediate copy of the perceived world, is changed into its opposite” (§157).

The change of the supersensible world into its opposite, which Hegel calls the “inverted world” (1977/1807, §157), is a major event in the *Phenomenology*.<sup>62</sup> It signals

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Force and the other are not in fact independent. The distinction between them only exists in thought. *Verstand* then made a distinction between Force and law. Consequently, explanation “is the same flux which presented itself as the play of Forces” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §155). Explanation, like solicitation, shows that this is not a difference that subsists outside of thought. Force solicits law as much as law solicits Force.

<sup>62</sup> It is helpful to keep in mind that the inverted world of *Verstand* emerges in many different areas of inquiry. The clearest example of the principle of inversion in Hegel’s text is crime and punishment. The “*immediate law*” - the law of nature - calls for revenge in response to an affront. Revenge is the “supreme satisfaction of the injured individuality” (1977/1807, §158). What the law of the inverted world does is translate revenge into its opposite. The opposite of self-satisfaction is self-destruction. When this

the first time consciousness becomes aware of “difference of the *thing itself* or...absolute difference” (§156), in contrast to the universal difference expressed in quantitative laws. In positing this “*law of appearance itself*,” Hegel claims that *Verstand* is positing what is, for Hegel, the law of thought, namely, that

this self-same, viz. Force, *splits* into antithesis which at first appears to be an independent difference, but which in fact proves *to be none*; for it is the *selfsame* which repels itself from itself, and therefore what is repelled is essentially self-attractive, for it is the *same*; the difference created, since it is no difference, therefore cancels itself again (§156, original emphasis).

Being is constituted just like thinking. Thus, as the object of *Verstand* becomes increasingly defined in the dialectical movement from substantial Force to the inverted world, the object ever more explicitly points to an *inner* truth, within consciousness. Only later in the *Phenomenology* is this truth revealed as self-consciousness.

What is the opposite of a supersensible beyond? If that beyond is conceived as a “tranquil kingdom of laws,” then its inversion must be a restless, *living* present. In other words, the eternal movement between unity and difference, missing in quantitative law, reveals itself to be *in* the perceptible world, not beyond it. In this way, the truth of the supersensuous beyond is its identity with the sensuous present. This identification began when the Notion of law emerged in the law in the form of *being*, or mass. It is completed when the law of appearance, or “*the principle of change and alteration*” (Hegel,

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inversion is made into the law of a state, revenge is called punishment. Punishment is supposed to be the self-destruction that the criminal wills upon himself in the very act of committing a crime, whereas revenge would be an external negation of the affront. Crime and punishment allegedly emerge together from within the criminal himself. This example suggests that the political state is, for Hegel, a type of inverted world.



1977/1807, §157, original emphasis), arises for consciousness. With that, the inert beyond comes to life. It becomes ensouled.

What is the relation of the inverted world to modern science? Consider what is, for the chemist, a neutral salt. The composition of this salt is the unity of a base, which is sweet, and an acid, which is sour. Once combined, there is no distinguishable acid or base “side”; the opposites contain each other. Conversely, these opposites emerge from the decomposition of the salt. According to the law of inversion, the sweet is “in-itself” sour, the sour is “in-itself” sweet, just as crime is “in-itself” punishment. Acid and base reconcile each other to chemical laws, just as punishment is supposed to reconcile criminal action to the law of a state.<sup>63</sup>

Hegel seems to regard the discovery of opposites in the same physical reality as the great achievement of modern science. Acids and bases dissolve into the same neutral

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<sup>63</sup> Another example of inversion in modern science is the voltaic pile. As Faraday observes in the thirteenth section of the VIIth series in his *Experimental Researches in Electricity*, “it cannot but press upon the attention of every one engaged in considering this subject, that in those bodies (so essential to the pile) decomposition and the transmission of a current are so intimately connected, that one cannot happen without the other.” Furthermore, “no voltaic battery has yet been constructed in which the chemical action is only that of combination: *decomposition is always included*, and is, I believe, an essential chemical part” (2001/1839, p. 201). Elsewhere in the same paper, Faraday writes that the very same amount of current that must be applied to maintain the unity of hydrogen and oxygen together as water is emitted when that unity is dissolved. Current flows as it does in a voltaic pile because “what in the first law is the oxygen pole of electricity becomes in its other, supersensible essence, hydrogen pole; and conversely, what is there the hydrogen pole becomes here the oxygen pole” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §158).

The magnet is an even more astonishing example of inversion in modern science. Here Hegel finds that “the north pole which is the in-itself of the south pole is the north pole *actually present in the same magnet*” (1977/1807, §159, original emphasis), just as in the previous example “the oxygen pole which is the in-itself of the hydrogen pole is *actually present in the same voltaic pile*” (§159, original emphasis). The magnet is the most explicit naturally-occurring example of the Notion [*Begriff*] in modern science.

salt; anodes and cathodes are essential parts of the same voltaic pile; north and south poles in a magnet contain each other. Modern science even discovers that charged molecules tend to be unstable, that current does not flow without continuous chemical composition and decomposition, and that monopoles are not likely to exist. Yet, for Hegel, modern science still falls short of absolute knowledge. It fails not only because it conceives of opposites as substantial, but also because it does not acknowledge the necessity of this opposition. For Hegel, the modern scientist cannot say why polarity exists; much less does he regard it as an essential moment of truth. The opposition that is manifest to the modern scientist is not truly *inner* opposition, although it is found in the same physical reality, be it a magnet, a compound, or a circuit.

If the modern scientist could think inner difference, the presence of polarity in physical reality would be manifest as *logical* necessity. The two poles of a magnet, for example, would be the moment of opposition within the Notion [*Begriff*], its self-sundering. The unity of the magnet itself would be the moment of unity in the Notion. The modern scientist would be aware of the *dialectical* significance of opposition. Yet so long as the modern scientist continues in search of objective truth, he will never fully comprehend the relationships that he finds in the physical world. At the same time, the inverted reality of the modern scientist is a necessary step, according to Hegel, in the progression toward absolute knowledge.

Hegel seems to regard this truth as beyond the scope of *Verstand*, for

from the idea, then, of inversion, which constitutes the essential nature of one aspect of the supersensible world, we must eliminate the sensuous idea of fixing the differences in a different sustaining element...this absolute Notion of the difference must be represented and understood purely as inner difference, a repulsion of the selfsame, as selfsame,

from itself, and likeness of the unlike as unlike (1977/1807, §160).

*Verstand* had posited a supersensible realm of truth beyond appearance, but the dialectic revealed that in order for supersensible laws to govern appearance, the supersensible realm could not be inert. It had to possess “*the principle of change and alteration.*” In other words, the inert realm of laws needed to come alive. In doing so, it became the inverted world. Yet the very inversions of that world are present in the sensible world: “the north pole which is the in-itself of the south pole is the north pole *actually present in the same magnet*” (Hegel, 1977/1807, §158). According to Hegel, the lesson here is that “the supersensible world, which is the inverted world, has at the same time overarched the other world and has it within it...it is itself and its opposite in one unity” (§160). The magnet is the physical manifestation of this metaphysical truth called “infinity,” a unity that contains difference within itself. Infinity, for Hegel, is the Notion, which reemerges later in the *Phenomenology* as self-consciousness. The problem is that

even when the specific determinateness - say one like Magnetism for example, - is in itself concrete or real, the Understanding [*Verstand*] degrades it into something lifeless, merely predicating it of another existent thing, rather than cognizing it as the immanent life of the thing, or cognizing its native and unique way of generating and expressing itself in that thing. The formal Understanding leaves it to *others* to add this principle feature (Hegel, 1977/1807, §153, emphasis added).

In gaining the principle of change and alteration, the world came to life. This is not intended in merely a metaphorical sense. The inert realm of laws as conceived of by the modern scientist gives birth to the world of living things, the world of biology. The *others* referenced above are biologists. In the biological world, all difference is truly inner difference. Young animals grow into adult animals that bring forth from themselves

young animals. Living things are manifestly the “infinity” that was only apparent from Hegel’s perspective in the world of modern science. Living beings contain the principle of change and alteration Aristotle called entelechy.<sup>64</sup>

Truth, for Hegel, is not an inert Form or law in a supersensible beyond, but a dynamic entelechy at work in things. Truth as conceived by the modern scientist, Hegel claims, makes change impossible, even as it tries to comprehend particular kinds of motion, such as planetary orbits. This is the contradiction at the heart of *Verstand*. Yet it would be naive simply to associate this problem with modern science. This same problem has appeared in many ways. If truth is Being, and Being simply *is* while Non-Being *is not*, as Parmenides argued, change can be nothing but illusion. If truth is an inert Form, as Plato said, then changing appearances cannot be real. Has not the modern scientist inherited this same worldview, with all its profundity and failings? Perhaps the modern scientist eradicates change by translating all qualitative difference into quantitative difference. If so, then that scientist has also eradicated the possibility that he, as a modern scientist, will be able to recognize truth for what it is.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> For Hegel, entelechy is “this simple infinity, or the absolute Notion...the simple essence of life, the soul of the world, the universal blood, whose omnipresence is neither disturbed nor interrupted by any difference, but rather is itself every difference, as also their supersession; it pulsates within itself but does not move, inwardly vibrates, yet is at rest” (1977/1807, §162).

<sup>65</sup> But what is truth, if not something selfsame and eternal? Isn’t Hegel’s Notion something eternal? For Hegel, yes, truth is eternal - eternal unrest and change. This truth is supposed to be borne out by the dialectic. For Aristotle, this truth is manifest in organic growth and development. Thus, modern science as *Verstand* largely begins by rejecting Aristotle and embracing Plato, but rediscovers Aristotle in the end. It should not be surprising, then, that Leibniz, perhaps the most profound thinker in modern science, is the one who most explicitly spoke of Force as a kind of entelechy at work in inanimate bodies. Only he saw that the motion which modern science so ardently sought to explain could only be the result of soul and life.

Later in this dissertation, in Chapter 4, I will show how Lacan's transgressive student Luce Irigaray takes up these Hegelian themes in her criticism of the aspect of her teacher's pedagogical style that centers on formalization.

### **Dilthey: *Erlebnis*, Self-Knowledge, and Knowledge of Others**

Wilhelm Dilthey [1833-1911] was born just three years after the publication of Hegel's three-volume *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. After the latter's death, Dilthey assumed his position as the head of the philosophy department at the University of Berlin. Like Hegel, Dilthey's early interests and education centered on theology. Dilthey was also a great admirer of poets, whose vivid and nuanced portrayals of human life prompted him to reflect on the psychological and experiential origins of aesthetic creations.<sup>66</sup> He was perhaps most deeply and consistently committed to defending the distinction and validity of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.<sup>67</sup>

Concern with the theoretical foundations of the *Geisteswissenschaften* was not original to Dilthey. The proposed distinction between two fundamentally different kinds of science [*Wissenschaft*], unique to the German-speaking region of continental Europe, emerged at the zenith of Hegel's philosophical fame and in the context of debates within the educational system about the appropriate form of *Bildung* for students (Phillips, 2010). Later in this section I will compare Dilthey's response to the received *Naturwissenschaften-Geisteswissenschaften* distinction to the ways that Wilhelm Wundt and, in his *Birth of the Clinic*, Michel Foucault negotiated it. I will then engage the ways

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<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., Dilthey's *Erlebnis und die Dichtung*

<sup>67</sup> Although there is no fully adequate equivalent term in English, *Geisteswissenschaft* is often translated as "human science."

that Lacan's account of the formation of subjectivity likewise challenge a Dilthean dual concept of science.

Like his contemporaries among the Baden and Marburg neo-Kantians, Dilthey appealed to aspects of Kant's philosophy to ground historical and cultural inquiry. In contrast to most neo-Kantians, however, Dilthey wanted to establish psychology among the *Geisteswissenschaften*, as their foundation (Makkreel, 2008). Makkreel (1975, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2013) emphasizes a general methodological parallel between Dilthey's approach to psychology and Kant's late publications stressing reformulation of psychology as a descriptive, anthropological discipline.<sup>68</sup> In the 1798 *Anthropology*, Kant offered descriptions of inner sense in order to arrive at empirical concepts concerning "what [a human being] *undergoes*, in so far as he is affected by the play of his own thoughts" (1798/2006, p. 53). He complemented this descriptive empirical psychology with an investigation, in the second half of the *Anthropology*, of the range of possible forms of human character. This investigation grounds normative claims about the kinds of empirical conditions that obstruct or encourage moral action. Makkreel (2008) suggests that it also enables an individual to attain knowledge of others through reflective judgment (p. 548). The *Anthropology* as a whole has a practical aim: to clarify "the full human being's proper orientation to the world through common sense" (Makkreel, 2003, p. 158). Dilthey differs from Kant on this crucial point: Dilthey views psychology as a kind of science [*Wissenschaft*] aimed at "describing the basic structures of consciousness

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<sup>68</sup> Kant advocates a descriptive approach to psychology in the First Introduction to the third *Critique*. He elaborates his own natural description of the soul in his 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.

that are reflexively given” (Makkreel, 2007, pp. 77-78), not at individual or collective moral improvement.

Dilthey’s (1894/1977) defense of a descriptive and analytical psychology and 1910 *Aufbau* contribute in different ways to his distinctive endeavor to produce a “critique of historical reason.” In keeping with the spirit of Kant, Dilthey’s primary question was, “How is objective historical understanding possible?” (Makkreel, 1975, p. 8). This question indicates that Dilthey wanted to “ground the human sciences as Kant had grounded the natural sciences” (Makkreel, 2013, p. 3). Like Kant, Dilthey wanted his grounding of these sciences to ensure their objective validity. The *Geisteswissenschaften*, however, had not and would not attempt to produce synthetic *a priori* judgments. Earlier in this chapter I emphasized that Kant’s concept of cognition (i.e., production of synthetic *a priori* judgments) overlaps considerably with his concept of *Erfahrung*.<sup>69</sup> Since Dilthey upholds that the *Geisteswissenschaften* aim a different kind of knowledge than the natural sciences, the grounding of the former requires a new concept of experience.

Dilthey did not appropriate Hegel’s concept of dialectical *Erfahrung* when he rejected Kant’s concept of experience as the proper ground for the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Instead, he refashioned the German Romantic concept of *Erlebnis*. Dilthey’s implicit rejection of Hegel’s concept of dialectical *Erfahrung* is not without significance: it reveals fundamental differences in the ways that Hegel and Dilthey work with and depart from Kant’s philosophy. Earlier I claimed that Hegel innovated a dialectical concept of

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<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that even in his innovative *Anthropology*, Kant remains consistent with his first *Critique* by stating that *Erfahrung* is primarily of “objects of sense” (1798/2006, p. 16). Also in keeping with his earlier theoretical philosophy, Kant maintains that the descriptions of inner experience are necessarily deficient as compared with those of outer experience.

*Erfahrung* in order to solve the uniquely modern problem of “philosophizing from the standpoint of subjective consciousness” (Greene, 1984, p. 161). Hegel asserts that the solution of this problem ultimately requires acknowledging the “self-determination of reason.” He adapts Kant’s concept of purposiveness such that it manifests, in Hegel’s philosophy, a “determinate dialectic where teleology becomes a self-determining causality in which an Idea of reason absorbs a Concept of understanding [*Verstand*]” (Makkreel, 1992, p. 225; Zanetti, 1995). The standpoint of subjective consciousness is overcome in the movement of this dialectic. Like Hegel, Dilthey adapts Kant’s concept of purposiveness. He does not, however, adapt it in the same way, because science, for Dilthey, is not ultimately *one* system. For Dilthey, there are *two* fundamentally distinct systems of science: the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*.<sup>70</sup> “The human sciences,” according to Dilthey, “may [constitutively] attribute purposiveness to socio-cultural phenomena.” Rather than appropriating Hegel’s dialectical concept of *Erfahrung*, Dilthey reduces the latter’s absolute spirit to a non-dialectical objective spirit (p. 226).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> We might suspect that Hegel would regard this opposition of two systems of science as dialectically unstable. In his unfinished *Plan for the Continuation of the Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, Dilthey seems to concede something comparable to this. Unfortunately, the text breaks off, leaving the reader without Dilthey’s conclusion: “It is impossible for the human spirit to persist in its duality [i.e., in a world of natural sciences and also in a world of human science]. Philosophical systems attempt to overcome it in vain! ... What we need is to grasp the inner relation of these two worlds in ourselves, how we adopt changing views on the world. Sometimes we feel ourselves to be part of nature - mysterious, instinctive, earthbound; sometimes [*text breaks off, continues on with an apparently different theme*]” (1927/2010b, p. 296).

<sup>71</sup> Dilthey seems to suggest here something that he urged earlier in his career, namely that “philosophy should reach back to Kant while also taking into account the contributions of Hegel among others” (Makkreel, 2013, p. 12).



Deliberately remaining within the standpoint of subjective consciousness as he attempts to ground the *Geisteswissenschaften*, Dilthey's critical project nevertheless entails challenging the "traditional model of representational consciousness" (Makkreel, 2003, p. 156). He undertakes this challenge through his concept of *Erlebnis*. Kant's account of cognition presupposes experience as *Erfahrung*: "presented to consciousness from the outside," phenomenal, and discrete. Dilthey believes that this portrayal of thinking and experience is adequate to the natural sciences. In contrast, the kinds of experiences described in the extant human sciences are "given originaliter from within," as "real," and as a "living continuum" (Dilthey, 1894/1977, pp. 27-28). Many of the same objects of *Erlebnis* could also be treated in terms of Kant's account of cognition; yet to do so would render these abstract, eliminate their distinctive qualities as *lived* experiences. Preserving the immediate character of these experiences, *Erlebnis* "gives us access to a different world that we do not merely cognize but know. It is the world of our social and historical life that we possess as a *reality* in which we participate" (Makkreel, 2003, p. 156, emphasis added).

Moreover, in emphasizing that *Erlebnis* is "given originaliter from within," Dilthey does not deny a relationship between the inner world of the subject and the external world in lived experience. *Erlebnis* is not entirely subjective. The object of an *Erlebnis*, however, is a "valued object that belongs to my life history" (Makkreel, 2013, p. 6). As such, experiencing this object arouses from *within* oneself the nexus of its personal significance and associations. Furthermore, "with man, development tends to establish a stable psychic nexus in accord with the general and particular conditions of life" (Dilthey, 1894/1977, p. 100).

Later in the same text, Dilthey elaborates on the aforementioned qualities of *Erlebnis*, stating that “we continuously experience [*erleben*] a sense of connectedness and totality in ourselves, whereas we must impute connection and totalities to sensory stimuli” (1894/1977, p. 53). Makkreel (2003) notes that “whenever some kind of connectedness or nexus is apprehended in experience, the understanding of meaning becomes possible” (p. 155). Yet Dilthey insists that “it is impossible at every point to transform lived experience into concepts” (1894/1977, p. 58). Thus knowledge about *Erlebnisse* is knowledge of particulars, not universals. Moreover, it is not knowledge about the qualities of that particular thing. It is, rather, knowledge *that* some particular thing *is* for a particular subject, and knowledge of the relationship between the subject and that thing. “Understanding [*Verstehen*],” however,

first overcomes this limitation of the individual lived experiences and, at the same time, bestows the character of life-experience to personal lived experiences. Extending to various people, creations of the human spirit, and communities, it widens the horizon of the individual life and, in the human sciences, opens up a path that leads from the common to the universal (Dilthey, 1910/2010a, p. 162).

*Verstehen* thus presupposes and identifies the objective context of an *Erlebnis*. Some kind of expression of an *Erlebnis* enables both self-knowledge and knowledge of others through recognition of my own and others’ meanings within a shared community.<sup>72</sup>

**Wundt, psychology, and the dual concept of science.** The implications of a version of Dilthey’s dual concept of science can be found in the work of Wilhelm Wundt

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<sup>72</sup> The role of language in Dilthey’s account of self-knowledge and knowledge of others is comparable to Hegel’s claim that the soul’s mood *must* be expressed in words or other gestures so as to attain recognition of myself (and to recognize others) in relation to another self. The primary difference between their views is that Hegel identifies a dialectical necessity to this externalization of inner life.

[1832-1920], who began his secondary education in medicine but became a physiologist, and who trained for a semester under the tutelage of Johannes Müller and worked as Hermann Helmholtz's assistant in Heidelberg from 1858 to 1865. After military service, Wundt was eventually hired as a philosophy professor at the University of Leipzig in 1875. It was in this department that Wundt established and oversaw what has come to be known as the first psychology laboratory with prodigious experimental output. This institutional event has been understood as pivotal in the subsequent recognition of psychology as a science [*Wissenschaft*] distinct from philosophy, despite the fact that Wundt himself intended a rather different outcome: to reform philosophy by revealing psychology as its foundation. Students who worked in Wundt's laboratory included such renowned figures as G. Stanley Hall and E. B. Titchener, men who profoundly influenced the fate of experimental psychology in the United States, as well as Emil Kraepelin, who established a new system of classification for severe mental disturbances.

Along with Helmholtz, Wundt helped to rescue psychology, traditionally understood as a branch of philosophy, from a demise all but guaranteed by Kant's attack on the tenability of both the rational and empirical aspects of psychology in his first *Critique* and in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Wundt's mentor, Helmholtz, and another leading figure in the development of experimental psychophysics, Fechner, had already begun the rescue effort. Drawing from aspects of the metaphysics and methodologies of both of these thinkers, Wundt combined an experimental approach with a focus on psychological life (Kant's inner sense or inner experience), ultimately founding what he called "physiological psychology."

In explicit defiance of Kant, Wundt's physiological psychology was premised on the claim that consciousness can be studied in an empirical fashion. It was also based on the similarly tendentious claim that the consciousness under study was the proper object of experimental psychology, an assumption that later behaviorists would reject. It likewise signaled the revival of introspection as a viable aspect of empirical research methods. Wundt's concern was with describing and measuring the phenomena of consciousness that could be produced in controlled laboratory conditions. The focus of his research thus stands in contrast to that of the experimental psychophysicists, who were primarily interested in clarifying and explaining the workings of the nervous system.

Like Helmholtz and Fechner, however, Wundt was especially interested in sensation and perception, but in his case the interest was motivated by his conviction that these phenomena occur at the intersection of the mental and the physical perspectives we can take on phenomena. Wundt and his colleagues rigorously manipulated the physiological conditions of sensation and perception in their laboratory while investigating the resulting representations. Their goal was to articulate relationships about the dynamics of psychological life and the contents of consciousness they produced in such controlled circumstances. Wundt believed that these relationships could only be established through introspective methods because psychological life was governed by a form of causality distinct from that which characterized the physical world - evidence that Wundt did not classify psychology straightforwardly as a natural science [*Naturwissenschaft*], despite the significant role of experimentation in his methodology.

Wundt famously summarized his position on the nature of psychological causality through the principle of psychophysical parallelism: “no connection of physical processes can ever teach us anything about the manner of connection between psychological elements” (Wundt, 1894, p. 43). This principle can be understood as Wundt’s attempt to demarcate two distinct perspectives from which empirical research can be conducted into one and the same world (Wundt, 1896). Depending on the perspective adopted, different kinds of explanation can be produced for the phenomena under investigation.

Whereas he held that experimental research could address the aspect of consciousness related to representation, Wundt denied that experimentation was adequate to another domain of psychological life that had become particularly germane to the reflections of many late 19th and early 20th century figures: volition. Representational phenomena are amenable to experiment because they concern the effects of external events (i.e., Kant’s outer sense or outer experience) impinging upon psychological events (i.e., inner sense or inner experience). In the case of the will, however, the reverse relationship holds: the psychological impinges on the physical. The ubiquitous phenomena of focal attention (apperception) is but one example of an act of the will. In order to account for the ways in which each person expresses their unique psychology (e.g., character, personality) through volition, Wundt believed he had to account for the influence of cultural environment - which included language, systems of belief, and customs - on individual psychological development. Wundt acknowledged, as was typical in his day, that the study of culture was a science in its own right, but classified as one of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, guided by the methods of the understanding [*Verstand*], rather than through the methods of experimentation and mathematization which produced

explanation [*Erklären*] and that were believed to be distinctive of the *Naturwissenschaften*. Wundt called this subfield of psychology that could address culturally-informed volitional phenomena *Völkerpsychologie*. Thus Wundt held that an individual's psychology cannot be fully addressed without appeal to both the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*.

Scholars have tended to distinguish two phases of Wundt's work - the Heidelberg phase (1852-1871) and the Leipzig phase (1875-1920) - in order to bestow some coherence on his rather protean body of work. Wundt initially believed that psychology was the foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* and pursued it as part of his broader project to reform the other disciplines in this category. His view of the relationship of psychology to other sciences, however, was importantly different from that of Wilhelm Dilthey. The latter distinguished understanding [*Verstand*] as the proper goal of psychology, thereby situating the latter wholly within the domain of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Wundt eventually abandoned the aspect of his position that posited psychology as the foundation of all *Geisteswissenschaften*. During the early phase of his career, Wundt regarded experiments as useful for establishing the existence and roles of what he termed the "unconscious" aspect of the mind. Later, however, he appealed to experimental methods to create the conditions for producing psychological phenomena that could then be investigated through introspection to elucidate the workings of psychic causality.

Despite significant changes in Wundt's views over the course of his career, equally important continuities can be identified. Wundt remained committed throughout his life to the ubiquity of mind across the full range of animal species. His rejection of

ontological dualism also spans both phases of his intellectual career. Finally, despite capitulating on the primacy of psychology among the *Geisteswissenschaften*, Wundt maintained his belief that psychology is a hybrid science that requires research methods from both the *Naturwissenschaften* (experimental, quantitative) and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (idiographic). On his view, psychology straddles the boundary between these two categories of disciplined inquiry.

**Foucault and the dual concept of science.** The rejection of the Classical system of confinement as economically unsound is a historical turning point, from Foucault's perspective, with significant implications for the mad, the sick, and the criminal. These groups, in turn, become the topics of Foucault's *History of Madness*, *Birth of the Clinic*, and *Discipline and Punish*, respectively (Gutting, 1989). In my concern for the case study, a genre of writing involved in the vicissitudes of each of these subjected populations, Foucault's critique of the "cognitive" dimensions of the modern consciousness of madness - the analytical dimension, and, most importantly, the enunciatory - are the most relevant. Enunciatory consciousness operates on the level of recognition, or perceptual apprehension, but denies the madperson their own voice. For Foucault, Antonin Artaud, whose relationship to language I engage at length in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, signifies the return of the excluded madperson in the form of essays and other writings whose language, above all, registers the pain and suffering of madness stylistically, effecting the reader a recognition not possible in modern propositional language and testifying to the power of madness speaking (or writing) in the first person.

***Foucault's archaeology of consciousness in History of Madness.*** Before turning to Foucault's direct engagement with case-based thinking in *Birth of the Clinic*, it will be

helpful to review his archaeological approach to consciousness articulated in his earlier work, *History of Madness* first published in 1961 and revised in 1972. Foucault (1972/2006) is concerned in the *History of Madness* to account for the contingent historical emergence of the modern conception of madness, “mental illness,” in order to critique it. Elaborating and transforming the phenomenological tradition in which he was educated, Foucault (1972/2006) understands the mental illness concept as grounded in an experience of madness distinctive of the modern era,<sup>73</sup> an experience that is neither natural, necessary, nor timeless. Foucault (1972/2006) defines the experience of madness during a particular historical period as the dominant way in which a culture constituted madness as an object of perception and knowledge. Drawing as well from French historian of science Gaston Bachelard, Foucault (1972/2006) explicates the modern concept of madness (mental illness) as emerging from a sharp break with the experience of madness characteristic of the classical era,<sup>74</sup> which itself had previously emerged in a break with the Renaissance experience of madness.

Grounding what he takes to be superficial differences and disagreements and madness in a historical period, Foucault (1972/2006) claims that each era is distinguished by a shared consciousness of madness. This consciousness has four aspects: two evaluative and two cognitive. The first aspect, the *critical consciousness of madness*, morally judges madness in terms of the dominant values of the time. This aspect is characterized by a language of opposites, which Foucault understands as fundamentally dialectical. The second aspect, the *practical consciousness of madness*, divides,

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<sup>73</sup> Foucault dates the emergence of the modern era to the late 19th century.

<sup>74</sup> The classical era, according to Foucault, began in the mid-17th century and ended in the late 18th century.



partitions, and excludes madness on the basis of deviation from group norms. Together, these aspects compose the *evaluative consciousness of madness* during a historical period. The *enunciatory consciousness of madness* corresponds to what, in the phenomenological tradition, is the prereflective perceptual apprehension of a particular object as itself. According to Foucault, this immediate process consigns madness to “categorization at a glance” and deprives the madperson of their own voice. The *analytical consciousness of knowledge* enables the construction of objective knowledge about madness from its foundation in perception. Together, enunciatory and analytical consciousness comprise the *cognitive consciousness of madness* in an era.<sup>75</sup> Enunciatory consciousness of madness, however, is crucial for the possibility of madness taking up a subject position. According to Foucault (1972/2006), madness counters the gaze of immediate objectifying perception by attempting to voice its own truth. It does so lyrically. Foucault (1972/2006) presents Artaud’s writings, as well as Diderot’s *Rameau’s Nephew*, as exemplary of this effort.

***Foucault’s archaeology of “thinking in cases” in Birth of the Clinic.*** In his 1963 *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault (1963/1973) is concerned with the implications of these historical and conceptual transformations for the sick. He argues that Bichat, the medical vitalist championed by Canguilhem, participates in the same conceptual foundations as Broussais, who promoted the normal-pathological dichotomy (Osborne,

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<sup>75</sup> According to Foucault, all four aspects of consciousness are operative during each historical period; nevertheless, different aspects appear more prominent during different eras. For example, Foucault finds the critical consciousness of madness to be most prominent during the Renaissance, whereas he finds the analytic consciousness of madness (characterized by the concept of mental illness) most prominent in the modern era. To account for this discrepancy, Foucault suggests that historical experiences of madness are fundamentally “fragmentary.”

1992). Foucault's (1963/1973) claims in Chapter 6 and 7 are most pertinent to my purposes in this dissertation.<sup>76</sup> In these chapters Foucault (1963/1973) argues that the transformation away from the botanical model of disease was structured by two "codes of knowledge" (p. 90) in a relation of "fundamental confusion" (p. 103) to each other. One of these codes, the "pathology of phenomenon," is characterized by "a set of signs, symptoms, and manifestations whose coherence was to be sought in a natural structure" (p. 103). The "pathology of cases," on the other hand, is distinguished by "a series of facts, whose laws of appearance and convergence were to be determined simply by the study of repetitions" (p. 103). Pathological *phenomena* are linked with the "grammatical model," related to Condillac's philosophy of language; they are communicated, interpreted, and taught by means of the ideal of exhaustive description. Pathological *cases*, however, are linked with the "mathematical model," related to Laplace's reformulation of probability and uncertainty as a positive concept; they are communicated by means of statistical calculations. One of Foucault's (1963/1973) major claims is that the conflation of these two epistemic codes is evident in, to take one example, Cabanis, whose application of Condillac's analytical method in medicine had statistical implications, despite his wariness of mathematizing this field (Staum, 1980).

Notably, John Forrester, the Foucauldian historian and philosopher of the case study, does not engage with the discussion of case-based thinking in *Birth of the Clinic*.

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<sup>76</sup> As in Part III of *History of Madness*, Chapters 6 and 7 from *Birth of the Clinic* explicate the "cognitive" dimensions of the 19th century consciousness of disease. Enunciatory consciousness, which has to do with diagnosis, and therefore with the recognition, identification, and naming of pathological patterns as "units" of disease, is related to fundamental transformations in the relationship between words and things, a "new orientation towards language and its object" (Osborne, 1992).

This is a curious omission, as Foucault seems to suggest here that the case study genre, including the psychoanalytic case study, emerges historically as a mode of knowledge production and pedagogy precisely from the conceptual ambiguity regarding case and phenomenon. In other words, the case study partakes of aspects of *both* the pathology of phenomena (e.g., description) and the pathology of cases (e.g., repetition, uncertainty). Consequently, the conceptual transformations that made statistical reasoning, typically associated (especially by Hacking and Forrester) with experimental psychology, possible, *also* enabled the kind of narrative reasoning (i.e., “thinking in cases”) typically contrasted with experimental psychology. Following Osborne (1992), it is reasonable to conclude that, for Foucault, the contributions of Bichat and Broussais, despite appearances, are conceptually isomorphic.

These chapters from *Birth of the Clinic* would entail, at the very least, that Hacking’s statistical analysis of populations and Forrester’s proposed “thinking in cases” are not, in fact, two distinct styles of reasoning. More broadly, Foucault’s archaeology of medical perception undermines the coherence of the *Geisteswissenschaft*-*Naturwissenschaft* distinction associated with Dilthey and others, particularly in the German-speaking philosophy of science tradition. It now remains for me to explicate how Lacan’s account of subject formation likewise calls into question a Dilthean dual concept of science, but from a psychoanalytic perspective.

### **Lacan: Knowledge, Narrative, and Alienation in the Formation of Identity**

Lacan goes beyond rethinking the subject as a knowable object to rethink positions of knowing, their effects on the kinds of objects known, and our ways of knowing them. The psychoanalytic subject, for Lacan, is divided, embodied, and

motivated by libidinal fantasies. Lacan questions epistemological assumptions about the transparency of the subject, the immunity of the self to social influences, and reliability of reason as a corrective to distorted moral judgment.

Whereas Foucault returns to the archive of writings penned by lesser-known figures in the history of ideas in order to challenge the coherence of a Dilthean dual concept of science, Lacan draws primarily from Freud's writings on the ego as love-object and the "splitting of the ego" when formulating his concept of the divided subject, a concept that likewise calls into question the tenability of a human science-natural science distinction. Although Lacan's elaborations on these themes are ubiquitous in his writings, including "Instance of the Letter...", his "Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," published in 1960, as well as his first lesson from *Seminar XIII*, "Science and Truth," published in 1965, offer particularly valuable, sustained discussion of the implications for psychoanalytic theory, practice, and method. In this section I review these texts and their consequences for conceptualizing tradition and authority in science and, more broadly, knowledge, a task I also undertake in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

**Desire and the structure of the subject: Hegel, Freud, and Lacan.** According to Lacan, Freud's psychoanalysis subverts traditional approaches to the "question of the subject," that is to say, inquiry into the structure and formation of subjectivity (Lacan, 1960/2006c, p. 672). Specifically, Freud's discovery of the unconscious - which, for Lacan following particularly Freud's early writings, is structured like a language (pp. 676-677) - and the notion that consciousness can "split" transforms received views of knowledge, the subject's relation to knowledge and truth, and the possibility of

objectivity. These transformations have implications for the nature of science, as well as the possibility of a science of the subject.

Freud offers his most general definition of the phenomenon of splitting in his 1940 *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*. A split occurs when “two psychical attitudes have been formed instead of one single one...the two exist alongside of each other. The issue depends on their relative strength” (1938a, p. 202). Elsewhere that same year, Freud portrayed such a “rift in the ego which never heals but which increases as time goes on” as the psychological cost of holding two contrary attitudes at once (Freud, 1938b, p. 276). Although splitting interferes with the ego’s synthetic functions, Freud comes close to describing this phenomenon as an “artful” response to reality (p. 277).

Freud first encountered splitting in psychosis, but eventually he discovered that fetishism presents another vivid instance of this phenomenon. The fetishist uses disavowal as a defense against castration in order to protect narcissism. The result is the fetishist’s “divided attitude” regarding “the question of the castration of the woman” (Freud, 1927, p. 156). These attitudes “persist side by side...without influencing each other” (Freud, 1938b, p. 203). “The fetish,” Freud (1927) concludes, “is a substitute for the woman’s (the mother’s) penis that the little boy once believed in and...does not want to give up” (pp. 152-153). Eventually Freud inferred from his clinical experience that holding two contrary attitudes at once was the general state of affairs in psychological life. For the neurotic, who employs repression rather than disavowal, “one of these attitudes belongs to the ego and the contrary one, which is repressed, belongs to the id” (Freud, 1938b, p. 204).

As he made explicit from early in his teaching career, Lacan read Freud's subversive recasting of subjectivity through the French reception of Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, particularly Hegel's account of the struggle for recognition in the emergence of self-consciousness. Nevertheless, the Freudian subject differs in important ways from Hegel's concept of the "absolute subject," a thesis Lacan announces in his 1960 "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire" by comparing Hegelian phenomenology and Freudian psychoanalysis in terms of dialectic, *Aufhebung*, death, education, knowledge, truth, and desire.

***Graph 1: The psychoanalytic subject of the unconscious is an effect of speech and language.*** Hyppolite (1946/1974) observes that "language accompanies every important moment of the life of [Hegelian] spirit, it incarnates the originality of every moment" (p. 511). Although Hegel comments on the relationship between language and the formation of subjectivity in the *Phenomenology* of 1807 as early as in his account of the very first form, Sense-Certainty, language does not explicitly emerge until the Reason stage of the dialectic.<sup>77</sup> Reason uses language to name things, thereby rendering them universal and conceptual.

In the Spirit section of the *Phenomenology* of 1807, Hegel introduces the relationship between speech and the possibility of self-knowledge: language is the "exteriority of the I such that the exteriority still remains I" (Hyppolite, 1946/1974, p. 402), "the *real existence* of the pure self as self" (Hegel, 1807/1977, §508), whereby I, as a particular self, can become an object of knowledge for myself and for others. According

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<sup>77</sup> Similarly, desire does not explicitly emerge dialectically until the start of the Self-Consciousness stage, yet Hegel claims that it nevertheless underlies the whole of the dialectical development of the subject.

to an early passage in the Culture stage of the *Phenomenology* (§§508-510), for example, Hegel (1807/1977) portrays speaking as a communicative act whereby I share my meaning with a listener who understands me because we share a common language. On this view, language contributes to the completely adequate satisfaction of desire in Absolute Knowing, wherein the subject attains self-knowledge by realizing the identity-in-difference of being and knowing. Knowledge is no longer simply longed for; it is possessed.

Consistent with his statements on the nature of language and speech contained in earlier lectures and publications but contrasting with Hegel's account of language as the means of subjective self-realization, Lacan's (1960/2006c) first graph of desire illustrates that "the subject constitutes himself on the basis of the message, such that he receives from the Other even the message he himself sends" (p. 683). The message does in an important sense originate from the body of the very young child, which Romanowicz and Moncayo (2015) call the "pre-subject" and Vighi (2019) calls the "being of needs." Especially early in life, the human being is not self-sufficient; it requires others, such as caregivers, to satisfy its physiological and safety needs. Thus, the child's task is to communicate its needs to an other. This demand for satisfaction, which for the pre-verbal child takes the form of cries or gestures, is a petition both for the means of satisfaction *and* the other's love.

Importantly, however, Lacan's (1960c) first graph depicts the transformation of need and demand into desire through the intervention of language and its laws at two points. This transformation complicates the Dilthean presupposition that the human subject is the origin of its narratives. First, the fact that a caregiver can receive the child's

cries and gestures as a meaningful narrative at all indicates that there is a pre-existing network of signification, Lacan's (1960c) "Other of the code," on which the caregiver relies in order to make sense of the child's demand. By means of this third party to the dyad, the caregiver can *anticipate* what the child wants. Language is thus "grafted" onto the body in an alienating manner (Vighi, 2019), as it never fully coincides with demand. Second, from the range of anticipated meanings, one meaning is *retroactively* imposed upon the narrative at the point of punctuation. The Other of the code determines the meaning of the child's demand; this meaning is given back to the child in the form of the caregiver's response, which may be soothing or frustrating. In the aftermath of this double intervention of language, it seems as though this final meaning was present from the beginning, supporting the illusion that speech is merely the outward expression of the speaker's pre-existing thoughts and intentions.

The Freudian subject of the unconscious consists in the desire that emerges from the difference between need and demand - that is, from what is left unsatisfied (and is fundamentally unsatisfiable) in the intersubjective encounter mediated by language. This is all the more apparent in the case of a speaking being. The misalignment between language and body manifests in formations of the unconscious, such as slips of the tongue. The subject makes its fleeting appearance in momentary lapses of communication or nonsense.

**Graph 2: *The desiring subject is distinct from the ego.*** Responses to the "question of the subject" in philosophical tradition were profoundly shaped by Descartes' notion of the *cogito*, according to which subjectivity can be identified with conscious thought. According to Lacan (1960c), this "promotion of consciousness as essential to the



subject” (p. 685) is but an illusion, and one, moreover, that psychoanalysis can explain in terms of ego formation.

Freud’s clinical encounters with hysteria early in his career, recorded in the case studies collected in the volume *Studies on Hysteria* he co-published with Breuer, led him to conclude that hysterical phenomena could be understood as manifestations of psychological conflict. On this view, the mind defends against certain ideas because they are deemed incompatible with the ego - that is, with the identity and self-understanding the patient wants to protect. Decades later, Freud (1917) offered the following description of the conflicted psyche:

For this mind is not a simple thing; on the contrary, it is a hierarchy of superordinated and subordinated agencies, a labyrinth of impulses striving independently of one another towards action, corresponding with the multiplicity of instincts and of relations with the external world, many of which are antagonistic to one another and incompatible (p. 141).

Freud’s approach to treating his hysterical patients evolved accordingly: he listened for inadvertent expressions of repressed content emerging in unconscious formations like slips of the tongue, aiming to draw attention to and elaborate this content. This approach was guided by the assumption that recollecting the repressed would alleviate the suffering associated with hysterical symptoms.

Lacan maintained this view of psychological life as fundamentally conflictual against ego psychologists in particular, who elaborated on the alternate depiction of the ego as agency of adaptation with concepts like Hartmann’s “conflict-free zone of the ego.” Lacan’s opponents could appeal to Freud’s (1923) *The Ego and the Id* for textual support of their view of the ego as the representative of reality working to master instincts. Freud

himself was apparently aware of the ontological and epistemological implications: “The ego represents what may be called *reason* and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the *passions*” (1923, p. 19, emphasis added). These conclusions stand in tension with Freud’s (1920) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a significant text for Lacan’s approach to psychoanalysis. Here Freud introduced the death drive, a fundamental principle in eternal conflict with *Eros*, the life drive. The drive to destruction is managed, to an extent,<sup>78</sup> by attempts at mastery, or what Freud calls the “will to power,” in the external world.

Freud’s clinical work with his obsessional patients also contributed to the conception of the ego that informed Lacan’s own teachings. For example, in Freud’s Rat Man case study, he describes his patient’s condition in terms of

an erotic instinct and a revolt against it; a wish which has not yet become compulsive and, struggling against it, a fear which is already compulsive; a painful affect and an impulsion towards the performance of defensive acts (1909, p. 161).

Here the ego conflicts with, in Lacan’s terminology, desire. Experiences of unpleasant affect could be indications that such a conflict was at play.

The period in Freud’s career marked by papers such as the 1914 “On Narcissism: An Introduction” resulted in a concept of the ego as a love-object. It was during these years that Freud began to think of the ego in terms of identifications. Reflecting on his engagement with the psychotic Schreber’s memoirs<sup>79</sup> as well as other evidence, Freud

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<sup>78</sup> The death drive also manifests in clinical repetition phenomena that can be observed in obsessional or melancholic patients. Freud considered these phenomena inexplicable in terms of the Pleasure Principle.

<sup>79</sup> See Freud’s (1911a) “Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides).”

“form[ed] the idea of there being an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists and is related to the object-cathexes much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia which puts it out” (Boothby, 1991, p. 75). On this view, the ego emerges some time after birth as an object that seems unified compared to the experience of the body as fragmented in auto-eroticism. Subsequently, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud (1921) suggested that the ego is the product of incorporated relationships with significant others, particularly in early life.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, through his clinical encounter with melancholia,<sup>81</sup> Freud came to understand the phenomenon he termed “identification with the lost object,” which he saw as a preliminary stage towards object-choice. Freud’s work with melancholic patients led him to conclude that the ego splits as it forms, resulting in elements such as the ideal ego, the ego-ideal, and the superego that often conflict. In Lacan’s (1960) terms, the ego is a product of both Symbolic identification with the ego ideal and Imaginary identification with the ideal ego.<sup>82</sup>

Initially the desiring subject fantasizes that the Other - in this case, the primary caregiver or Mother - is omnipotent, capable of fully satisfying need and lack. In Lacan’s

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<sup>80</sup> For example, Freud (1921) offers the following explanation of a male homosexual’s object choice: “the young man does not abandon his mother, but identifies himself with her; he transforms himself into her... A striking thing about this identification is its ample scale; it remoulds the ego in one of its important features - in its sexual character - upon the model of what has hitherto been the object” (p. 108).

<sup>81</sup> See Freud’s (1917a) “Mourning and Melancholia”

<sup>82</sup> The ego begins to take shape through identification with the specular image in the Imaginary: “the ego is thus a function of mastery, a game of bearing, and constituted rivalry” (Lacan, 1960c, p. 685). However, “the ego is only completed by being articulated not as the *I* of discourse, but as a metonymy of its signification” (p. 685), through Symbolic identification with the ego ideal. In other words, “consciousness is [also] based on the ego-ideal as unary trait” (p. 685).

terms, this fantasized Other *has* the Imaginary phallus, and is therefore seen from the child's perspective as entirely self-sufficient, lacking in nothing. The Mother's occasional absence, however, deprives the child of its fantasy object for periods of time and also undermines the belief in the Mother's wholeness. The child begins to cope with this loss through language, as Freud showed through the example of his grandson's *Fort-Da* game in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Language allows the child to symbolize the loss of the Mother; through words, the Mother attains a kind of abstract presence in absence.

Lacan teaches that an aspect of the child's attempt to compensate for the Mother's absence occurs in and through the formation of what Verhaeghe (2001) calls the "body of the signifier," which is a combined effect of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. This body has to do with body image as well as the incorporation of social norms, morality, and values. Following Nietzsche and paralleling Foucault, Lacan describes the body of the signifier as a surface that is written upon, inscribed, or marked. Approached in this way,

the body can be regarded as a kind of *hinge* or threshold: it is placed between a psychic or lived interiority and a more sociopolitical exteriority that produces interiority through the *inscription* of the body's outer surface (Grosz, 1993, p. 196, original emphasis).

The contribution of the Imaginary consists of the child's identification - the *male* child's identification, as Irigaray incisively clarifies - with the specular image during the Mirror Stage.<sup>83</sup> In this process, the child incorporates what Freud termed the "ideal ego,"

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<sup>83</sup> The formation of the ego in the Mirror Stage is Lacan's way of explicating what in Freud is the transition from autoeroticism to narcissism, in which the child takes itself as its first love-object. Freud's most elaborate discussion of autoeroticism can be found in his 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In this phenomenon, "the instinct is not directed toward other people, but obtains satisfaction from the subject's own body" (p. 181).

a unified and idealized body image. “The mirror stage is a drama,” Lacan (2006a/1949) states,

whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation - and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an “orthopedic” form of its totality - and to the finally *donned armor* of an *alienating identity* that will mark his entire mental development with its *rigid* structure (p. 78, emphasis added).

Before the “armor” of identity is “donned,” the nascent subject experiences itself as a fragmented assortment of organic needs and bodily energies.<sup>84</sup> Its utter dependence on others for the satisfaction of basic needs is felt most profoundly in early life, whereas taking on an identity protects this vulnerable being from such threatening feelings of “insufficiency,” as Lacan puts it. As Vighi (2019) notes, “the body on its own does not produce any meanings whatsoever; in order to do so, it has to be intercepted by a signifying chain” (p. 179). This inscription, through which the child learns how to enjoy and how to identify what is good for it and gains the capacity to consider the future (“anticipation”) rather than remain captive to an overwhelming present, occurs interpersonally in relation to the primary caregiver, or Mother.

The fragmented, needy, dependent child attains an ultimately illusory sense of unity, capability, and power by identifying with the specular image of the body, or ideal ego. The Mother confirms this identification by pointing to the mirror image and pronouncing the child’s name or proclaiming “that’s you.” Her action first of all “serves

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<sup>84</sup> This sense of fragmentation results from the libidinal cathexes Freud described as circulating throughout the child’s body, but particularly in what are eventually distinguished as the erogenous zones, as well as the regions linked with the sense of touch and proprioception (e.g., surface of skin, hands, feet, face).

to distinguish the child as a distinct being separate from others, bounded by its skin” (Grosz, 1993, p. 201). Second, the Mother’s description of the specular image represents the point at which the child begins to learn how it is distinguished in the eyes of others: “you are strong,” “you are big,” and, even, “you are good.” This is also the moment at which the child begins to internalize others’, particularly the Mother’s, demands. Through caregivers’ responses to the child’s demands, parts of the child’s body are named and the functions of these body parts are regulated. In other words, the Mother responds to the child’s needs by demanding that the latter eat, defecate, or listen (to take just three examples) as instructed. She thereby determines the opening and closing of the child’s bodily orifices. The child also takes up the demands of the caregiver as potential ways to satisfy the Mother’s lack and thereby solve the problem of her absence. In striving to live up to the Mother’s expectations, the child conforms its emerging identity as a body-subject to the ideal ego and endeavors to *be* the Mother’s Imaginary phallus, that which completes and satisfies her.

The contribution of the Symbolic to the formation of the “body of the signifier” can be understood in terms of the intervention of the Other as Law (or Father) into the Mother-child dyad. In this process, what Lacan calls the paternal metaphor substitutes the Name-of-the-Father for the Mother’s desire. The child’s affirmation of the Name-of-the-Father initiates Symbolic castration and installs the ego ideal.<sup>85</sup> Symbolic castration reveals that the Mother does not have the Imaginary phallus; simultaneously, it strips the child of its fantasized status as being the Mother’s Imaginary phallus. Consequently, the

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<sup>85</sup> According to Lacan, it is far from guaranteed that the child will affirm the Name-of-the-Father. In fact, the rejection or foreclosure [*Verwerfung*] of this signifier contributes to the psychic structuring of the child as psychotic, rather than neurotic or perverse.

Mother is revealed as a fundamentally desiring - that is, a lacking - being who is not fully satisfied by the child. The substitution of the Name-of-the-Father for the Mother's desire through the paternal metaphor reveals the Father as the true object of the Mother's desire. It is now the Imaginary Father who appears whole and omnipotent, the one who has the Imaginary phallus, from the child's perspective.

Just as the naming of the specular image in the Mirror Stage contributes a sense of Imaginary identity to the emerging ego, identification with the ego ideal "completes" ego formation through Symbolic nomination. The ego ideal corresponds to some ultimate trait belonging to the Father associated with the Mother's satisfaction. Metonymically assuming this "unary trait," attempting to conform to it, allows the child to relate to the Mother through the Father's mediation.<sup>86</sup> This process can also be understood as the Father bestowing the Symbolic name, which can be thought of as a last name or family name, on the child, thereby acknowledging the child's place in a genealogical line and granting access to a family's or community's values, ideals, and traditions. Entering this pre-existing system of signification "humanizes" the body-subject, "form[ing] libidinal flows, sensations, experiences, and intensities into...commodified desires that can gain a calculable gratification" (Grosz, 1993, p. 198). This process is revisited as a candidate undergoes formation into a psychoanalytic clinician: the candidate takes on the name of the intellectual ancestor and is thereby initiated into the interpretive community and acquires a psychoanalytic identity. Irigaray rightly points out, however, that it remains an

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<sup>86</sup> As Vighi (2019) explains, "subjectivation through the Other is necessarily tied to a process of *metonymical identification* which functions as a sort of anchoring point for the formation of subjectivity and the formulation of the subject's desires" (p. 188).

open question as to how a woman can take her place in the psychoanalytic lineage. This dissertation will continue to tarry with this question in subsequent chapters.

**Graph 3: *Desire conforms to fantasy.*** Lacan (1960/2006c) appeals to the processes of Symbolic and Imaginary identification to recast the Cartesian *cogito* - the supposed identity of subjectivity and conscious thought presupposed by most philosophical approaches to the question of the subject - as an illusion produced as the ego takes shape. What appears to be a subject transparent to itself and thus capable of self-knowledge turns out, from a psychoanalytic perspective, to be the product of the tenuous covering over of subjective division by the ideal ego and ego ideal. Fundamentally, then, the Cartesian ideal of self-certainty through methodical meditation is actually “the ambiguity of a misrecognizing that is essential to knowing myself” (p. 684).

Lacan (1960/2006c) expands upon this conclusion by introducing the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy. “[D]esire adjusts to fantasy...,” he claims, “like the ego does in relation to the body image” (p. 691). Accordingly, Lacan adds further detail to his depiction of the desiring subject in search of satisfaction. When this subject makes its demand, it now encounters an Other who responds with a question: “What do you want?”, or, as Lacan puts it, “*Ché vuoi?*” (p. 690). The way in which subjective desire “adjusts” is revealed by the way this question is taken up, “even without knowing it, in the following form: ‘What does he want from me?’” (p. 690). The subject tries to discern what the Other desires, that is, the Other’s values, ideals, and norms; this constitutes a (neurotic) fantasy about the subject’s relation to the Other. The fantasy can be understood as the ultimately inadequate product of Symbolic and Imaginary identification,



inadequate because no object or statement can completely satisfy desire.<sup>87</sup> By inverting the posed question such that it now refers to the Other, the subject's desire becomes the Other's desire as the subject tries to live up to the ideal ego and ego ideal. The particular nature of this desire is dictated by the subject's "fundamental fantasy." This moment in subject formation helps elucidate the central role of alienation in the production of psychoanalytic clinicians, particularly in their relation to authoritative figures, such as supervisors, mentors, or theorists.

*Complete graph: The subject of drive beyond the castrated desiring subject.* The ideal ego and ego ideal now installed, the child emerges from Symbolic castration with a fantasized image of the Father as omnipotent, as the object of both fear and love. The child loses through sacrifice the Imaginary phallus (autoeroticism, dyadic union with the mother), but this lack is rendered positive by gaining the Symbolic phallus. The child now glimpses the possibility of being loved for embodying characteristics that are desired by the Other as Father (or Society).<sup>88</sup> The Symbolic phallus is thus an alternative, non-transgressive source of phallic *jouissance* linked with adherence to norms and expectations. Inevitably, however, the child becomes disillusioned with the Father, who falls short of this idealizing image in everyday life within the family. According to Lacan

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<sup>87</sup> As Vighi (2019) puts it, "no ultimate answer to *Chè vuoi?* can ever be given. In fantasy, the child attempts to find this answer, but what resonates in every such fantasy (until the end of one's life) is nothing other than its own inadequacy, its impossibility to fill the gap opened up by desire. Fantasy then seeks to establish a degree of determinacy for the utterly enigmatic character of desire as the other's desire" (p. 197).

<sup>88</sup> "The shift of (-φ) (lowercase phi) as phallic image from one side to the other of the equation between the imaginary and the symbolic renders it positive in any case, even if it fills a lack. Although it props up (-1), it becomes φ (capital phi) there, the symbolic phallus that cannot be negativized, the signifier of *jouissance*" (Lacan, 1960/2006c, p. 697).

(1960/2006c), this moment of disillusionment has the potential, but is not guaranteed, to take the subject beyond castration. This moment in subject formation indicates that it could be possible for a clinician-in-training to engage critically with, if not entirely overcome, the alienating effects of professional identity development.

Paternal failures translate, in Lacan's terminology, to the discovery that the Other as Father is lacking - indeed, castrated. The castrated Father cannot provide for the child an identity that encompasses all aspects of its libidinal being. Attempting to live up to the values and norms included in the ego ideal, in other words, does not solve the problem of the child's lack-in-being. Desire continues to shift metonymically in search of ever-elusive complete satisfaction. This situation is paralleled in the subject's relationship to language: there is "a lack inherent in the Other [as code]'s very function as the treasure trove of signifiers" (1960/2006c, p. 693). Thus, although the child's affirmation of the Name-of-the-Father has the function of making phallic signification possible by providing access to phallic meaning, there is, nevertheless, as Fink (2004b) explains, a signifier missing from every message.

This missing signifier corresponds both to the fading subject of the enunciated and to the Name-of-the-Father itself, now revealed as lacking content. When a message is uttered, the subject of the enunciated (the locus of conscious discourse) fades as the subject of the enunciation (the subject of the unconscious) displaces it through metonymic slippage of meaning and defense mechanisms that take the form of figures of speech. This would not be the case if consciousness and subjectivity coincided, as the Cartesian *cogito* insists. Thus self-knowledge, stated in the first-person, is rendered

paradoxical and uncertain.<sup>89</sup> The Symbolic order seems to lack the signifiers that would enable one to speak definitively of oneself; nevertheless, one's proper name - which, as - 1, is extimate to the Symbolic - is a rigid designator (Fink, 2004b). Furthermore,  $\sqrt{-1}$ , the "meaning" of the proper name, "is what the subject is missing in thinking he is exhaustively accounted for by his cogito - he is missing what is unthinkable about him" (Lacan, 1960/2006c, p. 694).<sup>90</sup> As Fink (2004b) explains, proper names are an

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<sup>89</sup> "Is the place that I occupy as subject of the signifier [i.e., subject of enunciation, I who speak of myself] concentric or eccentric in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified [i.e., subject of the enunciated, the person of whom I speak]? That is the question. The point is not to know whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am, but rather to know whether, when I speak of myself, I am the same as the self of whom I speak" (Lacan, 1957/2006b, p. 430).

<sup>90</sup> The force of Lacan's (1960/2006c) linking of the proper name with -1 and the meaning of the proper name with  $\sqrt{-1}$  can be appreciated in light of the history of mathematics. Descartes, whom Lacan targets for his equation of subjectivity and conscious thought in the *cogito*, was also a groundbreaking mathematician who struggled with his own encounter with the square roots of negative numbers ( $\sqrt{-1}$  and its multiples). In his 1637 *La Geometrie*, the third appendix to his *Discourse on the Method of Reasoning and Seeking Truth in Science*, Descartes presents geometric constructions of the square root of any given line segment, using a semi-circle. He termed the square roots of negative magnitudes "false" or "imaginary" because it was impossible to construct them geometrically. Furthermore, the set of all so-called "real numbers" is complete in itself, much like Lacan's Other of the code or Symbolic order; the "complex numbers" somehow stand in extimate relation to them. Descartes' "discovery" of such numbers was revolutionary yet heretical for mathematics, on par with the subversive scientific discoveries made by Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud, which also called long-held presuppositions into question. Specifically, imaginary/irrational numbers led to intense interpretive disagreements among mathematicians because these numbers could not be given meaning within the Greek Euclidean tradition of geometry. These numbers were scandalous, as they made explicit that, to this point, mathematics had been defined, in accordance with Aristotle, as the science of quantity and required representability in terms of geometric magnitudes. Mathematicians subsequently dealt with the "unthinkability" of these roots by transforming the received concept of mathematics itself. This new definition granted arithmetic and algebra greater autonomy from geometry and its intuitive strictures. For his part, Lacan inverts Descartes by regarding the square roots of negative numbers as irruptions of the Real, not as "false" or "imaginary." (In so doing, he also rejects Hegel's equation of the rational and the real.) As Moncayo (2017) explains, "non-standard numbers...imaginary numbers, for

exceptional kind of signifier, such that nomination does not operate according to the law of metaphor. “Its [the proper name’s] statement is equal to its signification” (Lacan, 1960c, p. 694). If a proper name is -1 in relation to the Symbolic, then the Name-of-the-Father, no longer idealized, is  $0^{91}$  - the signifier of lack, absence, the nothing, emptiness - in relation to this network of signifiers. It is the *ur*-proper name that makes nomination possible.<sup>92</sup>

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The view of knowledge - of knowing and being known - as a relationship of mind to an object is familiar yet fraught with troubling implications when the knowledge in

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example...can reach truth and the Real beyond the capability or the reach of language, metaphors, knowledge, and the Symbolic” (p. xx).

<sup>91</sup> If the lacking Other is linked with 0, then the idealized omnipotent Other (Father or Mother) is linked with 1, which suggests wholeness and completion.

<sup>92</sup> Once again, the history of mathematics sheds light on Lacan’s linking of the Name-of-the-Father or Symbolic Father with 0. It is well-known that additive systems of numerical notation long preceded discovery (perhaps better, the invention) of zero. The introduction of positional or place value, according to which the same symbol can have different meanings depending on its location or context, into numerical notation eventually led to a need for a zero concept. The first, or Babylonian, zero was simply a way of signifying an empty space in a register. The Indian zero, developed later, was, in contrast, regarded as another numeral. Also well-known is the fact that ancient Greece lacked a concept or notation for zero (with the exception of some Greek astronomers). Zeno’s Paradoxes and other problems suggested the need for such a conceptual innovation, but Greek philosophical commitments, which included the principle of that there is no void, arguably outweighed these considerations. They did not resolve the strange question of how nothing could be something. Thus, zero, like the irrational, the infinite, and the void, were inadmissible to much of ancient Greece. It is believed that Indian mathematicians were able to introduce zero because, in contrast with most Greek mathematicians, they already regarded philosophical speculation on the nothing and the void as meaningful. The concept of zero, then, requires a way of thinking about “nothing” as having a function (e.g., in mathematics, the possibility of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and, even, dividing by zero). A similar way of thinking is required in order to acknowledge Lacan’s Name-of-the-Father as missing signifiers (i.e., as empty or nothing) and yet still having a function. Indeed, a zero concept is required before negative numbers (or, the square roots of negative numbers, for that matter) are thinkable.

question is self-knowledge or knowledge of others. How do these implications manifest in the style of reasoning, apparently distinctive of the professions, that John Forrester has called “thinking in cases”? In Chapter 1 I argued that if a Lacanian approach is taken to the roles of knowledge in the clinical encounter, there seems to be an inevitable objectification entailed in both a patient’s becoming a case and a candidate’s becoming a psychoanalytic clinician through initiation into an interpretive community. In this chapter I have traced the historical vicissitudes of the familiar view of knowledge through Kant, Hegel, and Dilthey, each of whose contributions have had significant consequences for the possibility of a scientific study of mind. I then considered the ways that Lacan, Foucault, and Irigaray responded to these consequences in the wake of Freud’s psychoanalysis.

First, I reviewed the pessimistic conclusion Kant draws about the possibility of a scientific study of mind, a conclusion he sees as a direct implication of his alignment, in the first *Critique*, of mathematization with scientificity. Lacan stands among those who challenged Kant’s pessimism. Distinguishing quantification from formalization within the process of mathematization, Lacan, following the lead of the structuralists, introduced “mathemes” into his psychoanalytic study of mind. In so doing, he purported to circumvent both the Scylla of reducing psychological life to what is numerically measurable and the Charybdis of the transformations of meaning that occur over time and across contexts in narrative modes of reasoning. The Lacan of the *matheme* seems to eliminate the possibility of a legitimate and positive role for the case study as a pedagogical tool in the formation of psychoanalytic clinicians.

Does the introduction of the matheme overcorrect for the dangers of interpretive variance when attempts are made to transmit psychoanalytic knowledge in language? Hegel's provocative exposé of what he sees as the limitations of Kant's concept of scientific knowledge provides a position from which to critically engage Lacanian algebra. For Hegel, being *is*, fundamentally, becoming. *Verstand*, Kant's faculty of scientific thinking, cannot think change; therefore, it cannot yield a true science of the mind. Lacan's use of mathemes seems to overlook this crucial moment in Hegel's philosophy, despite the fact that he relies so heavily - albeit subversively - on Hegel's own emphasis on the roles of desire and language in the formation of subjectivity, roles that, moreover, can only emerge as possibilities for consciousness in the *Phenomenology* after the dialectical failure of *Verstand*. In Chapter 4 I will show how Irigaray criticizes the link between Lacan's mathemes and his reliance on traditional, masculine styles of thinking that ultimately foreclose the possibility of his own writing or speaking from a feminine position. Then, in Chapter 5, I draw from the late Lacan's teachings on the *sinthome* to show how, through an alternative relationship to the Symbolic, a more fluid style of thinking in cases might be possible.

Finally, I reviewed Dilthey's defense of a dual concept of science, which he grounded in his notion of experience as *Erlebnis*. Dilthey's response to the question of the possibility of a science of the mind entails that there are *two* such sciences, allegedly distinct from each other - a narrative human science and a physiological, quantitative natural science. Foucault's archaeology of medical perception in *Birth of the Clinic* undercuts this claim. Hacking's statistical analysis of populations - linked with psychology as a natural science - and Forrester's proposed "thinking in cases" - linked

with psychology and psychoanalysis as human sciences - are not, in fact, two distinct styles of reasoning. Lacan, for his part, challenges the tenability of a narrative science of the mind through his notion of the divided subject, which is based on his reading of Freud on the phenomenon of “splitting.” Does Lacan’s pessimistic view of narrative, which is especially evident in his account of subject formation, eliminate the possibility of a distinctively Lacanian approach to the case study that isn’t simply a wholesale rejection of this genre? Chapter 3 is concerned with this very question.

## CHAPTER 3:

### DISAVOWAL IN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND HISTORY: READING CASES FOR PERVERSION

*“Psychoanalysis is an impossible profession. Freud had begun to think so as early as 1900 and amplified his hunch in ‘Analysis Terminable and Interminable,’ where he notably wrote that psychoanalysis shared with education and government the quality that ‘one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results’... The Lacanian gloss on this would add that it is impossible successfully to transmit psychoanalytic knowledge. The case history as genre, so anathematized by Lacan, is both the pedagogic and institutional attempt to overcome this impossibility.”*

John Forrester, “The Psychoanalytic Case: Voyeurism, Ethics and Epistemology in Robert Stoller’s *Sexual Excitement*,” p. 189

I concluded the first chapter of this dissertation with the claim that writing or reading case studies can constitute a failure of reflexivity to the extent that the writer or reader does not acknowledge that they are, as a knowing subject, implicated in psychoanalytic epistemology, which foregrounds the subject-object relationship. Forrester asserts more strongly that, from a Lacanian perspective, “the case history as genre...is both the pedagogic and the institutional attempt to overcome” the impossibility of successfully transmitting psychoanalytic knowledge (Forrester, 2017, p. 65). Writing and reading cases, it would seem, is inevitably symptomatic of a “desire to ignore.” Might it be better to dispense with this genre altogether rather than collude with the paradoxes to which it gives rise?



In this chapter, I respond what I find to be Forrester's oversimplification of Lacan's warnings about the transmissibility of psychoanalytic knowledge while nevertheless maintaining that reading and writing cases is both a cognitive and an emotional, erotic experience.<sup>1</sup> I show how Lacan's pessimism about narrative, discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, is mobilized into a critical style of reading psychoanalytic case studies, which in turn functions as a key aspect of Lacan's pedagogy, as I will discuss in Chapter 4. Lacan's style of reading performatively shows that there can, indeed, be a way of relating to tradition that is not wholly alienating or antithetical to making a creative contribution of one's own. Continuing to draw from Lacan's teachings on alienating aspects of becoming a subject in and through language, I show that, just as the psychoanalytic patient must pose a question to themselves, so the student of psychoanalysis must also pose a question to the writer as well as the interpretive community in relation to which they are taking shape as a subject. The reader must engage with the writers of case studies as divided subjects and their written cases as symptomatic productions on both the interpersonal and the institutional levels. This is a matter of acknowledging and working through the transference to authority, a task which itself requires reflexivity regarding the ways in which psychoanalysis encounters history.<sup>2</sup> Thus, contrary to the implications of Forrester's statement, Lacan does not entirely repudiate the case study genre in psychoanalysis. Instead, he demonstrates how

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<sup>1</sup> See Felman (1987) on this point.

<sup>2</sup> In Chapter 5 I will show that, similarly, the style a clinician employs when writing a case can be decisive in either becoming an alienated disciple or creating a name for oneself from which one can speak. My engagement with the question of style in writing practices will also return to questions about the potentially formative effects of reading on the knowing subject.

case studies can be approached as “open” texts, by attending to what the clinician-writer has ignored in order to put forward their intended meaning.

Accordingly, in this chapter I am concerned with explicating and evaluating a process of reading psychoanalytic case studies constructed from the interventions Lacan makes into traditional ontology and epistemology. Although they certainly cannot be easily distinguished, the majority of the discussion of ethical consequences is postponed to Chapter 5. Accordingly, my first theoretical task for the present chapter is to explicate “reading for disavowal” in terms of narrative features that reveal context and process.

As I work toward this approach to reading case studies, I address an instance of this kind of reading that can be found in his teachings: his performance of reading a particularly psychoanalytic case study, Freud’s Case of Dora, in the midst of his critique of the psychoanalytic mainstream in *Seminar XVII*. Lacan’s approach to the case can be described as a process of “reading for disavowal” occurring on two levels: on the level of the individual writer and on the level of the institutional context. I show how Lacan’s reading reveals that Freud’s failure in Dora’s analysis is symptomatic of Freud’s own conflicted relationship to the positions of the Father and the Master. This same conflict is writ large in a “tension within psychoanalysis itself, that tension between a discourse that aspires to science and one that restlessly reads the workings of a naturalized rationality” (Weed, 1994, p. 87).

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## **Lacan's Divided Subject and History: Implications of Splitting for Relations to Tradition and Authority**

In Chapter 2, I reviewed Lacan's concept of the divided subject, which, as I showed, draws on Freud's concept of the ego as love-object as well as the psychological phenomenon of splitting. There, I discussed how, from the start of his research into these matters, Freud regarded a form of perversion – fetishism - as the exemplary instance of splitting; eventually, he came to believe that even the neurotic individual is “fetishistic” in the broad sense that their psychological life is founded on holding contrary attitudes at once regarding what Lacan calls Symbolic castration. Submitting to Symbolic castration entails taking up the Father's Symbolic name, which thereby grants the subject-to-be access to a community's values, ideals, and traditions. A perversely structured subject disavows the Name-of-the-Father and therefore, unlike the neurotically structured subject, does not seek to obtain love by living up to a fantasized image of the omnipotent Father. If it is indeed the case that all psychological life, including that of neurotic subjects, is fundamentally perverse in the broad sense, this would suggest that to some extent all human beings take up contradictory attitudes toward tradition and authority as personal or professional identity develops.

In this section I expand upon these points to address the way in which, for both Freud and Lacan, human beings take up a fetishistic or perverse stance toward scientific achievements attained by humanity over the course of historical time. Freud argues that, on the one hand, psychoanalysis can diagnose and explain this perverse response to truth. However, even the psychoanalyst, who remains a divided subject, can be found to take up a perverse stance toward this very body of knowledge he claims to stand for. In other

words, even the psychoanalyst may hold contrary attitudes toward the de-centering truths of psychoanalysis. Here, I aim to show that perversion as a defense against psychoanalysis can manifest, paradoxically, as narrative enactments in writings about psychological life and psychoanalytic practice. These enactments reveal moments in which the writer remains blind to their implication in psychoanalytic epistemology. It remains for the reader of such writings either to remain complicit with this blindness, or, alternatively, analyze it, and thereby potentially take up a different kind of perverse stance toward the psychoanalytic tradition.

**Lacan's divided subject and the emotional impact of scientific knowledge.**

Freud returned to his concept of the ego as love-object when offering an explanation of the emotional impact of the development of scientific knowledge. "A certain quantity of libido is always retained in the ego; even when object-love is highly developed, a certain amount of narcissism persists" (Freud, 1917, p. 139). According to Freud, this is the case for human beings collectively as well as individually. He finds evidence for the narcissism of the human species in what is *felt* as difficult about key moments in the historical production of scientific knowledge. Humans typically perceive reality in ways that support the maintenance of self-love: one sees oneself and one's place in the world as central, utterly distinct, and masterful.

The ego is "educated" through scientific achievements but also finds these lessons narcissistically wounding - indeed, traumatic - because this knowledge "de-centers" the ego. Copernicus subverted the narcissistic illusion that the earth (thus human beings) are located at the center of the universe. Darwin subverted the illusion that humans as rational beings are fundamentally distinct from animals. Psychoanalysis, in the role of

teacher, says to the ego, “a part of your own mind has been withdrawn from your knowledge [i.e., awareness, consciousness] and from the command of your will...all you have learned is the outcome of their work - the symptom which you experience as suffering” (Freud, 1917, p. 142).

French historian of science Alexandre Koyré [1892-1964], who offered a seminar in the same location contemporaneous with Lacan’s Seminar 2, was especially interested in the narcissistic wound to humanity Freud associates with Copernicus. Koyré discusses this historical moment as the transition from ancient to modern “Galilean” science.<sup>3</sup> On his view, this was a spiritual revolution in the 16th century, an event both achieved and *suffered*,<sup>4</sup> best understood as a shift in “mental or intellectual attitude” involving the mathematization<sup>5</sup> of nature<sup>6</sup> and science. Such a revolution was not a matter of becoming more rational but of becoming differently rational. Something more than a new theory

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to his 1943 article, “Galileo and Plato,” Koyré discusses this transition at length in his 1939 *Galileo Studies* and 1957 *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*.

<sup>4</sup> “...this seems to me to be the most profound revolution achieved or suffered by the human mind since the invention of the Cosmos by the Greeks” (Koyré, 1943, p. 404).

<sup>5</sup> This attitudinal shift, metaphysical in character, enabled experimentation, another hallmark of modern science. “Experimentation is the methodical interrogation of nature, an interrogation which presupposes and implies a language in which to formulate the questions, and a dictionary which enables us to read and to interpret the answers. For Galileo, as we know well, it was in curves and circles and triangles, in mathematical, or even more precisely, in *geometrical language* - not in the language of common sense or in that of pure symbols - that we must speak to Nature and receive her answers” (Koyré, 1943, p. 403, original emphasis).

<sup>6</sup> For Koyré (1943), the mathematization of nature was “the destruction of the idea of a hierarchically-ordered finite world-structure, of the idea of a qualitatively and ontologically differentiated world, and its replacement by that of an open, indefinite and even infinite universe, united and governed by the same universal laws; a universe in which, in contradiction to the traditional conception with its distinction and opposition of the two worlds of Heaven and Earth, all things are on the same level of Being. ... And this implies the disappearance from the scientific outlook of all considerations based on value, on perfection, on harmony, on meaning and on purpose” (p. 404).

was required for motion as a relation to be thinkable, or the ontological parity of motion and rest for that matter: “they had to destroy one world and replace it by another” (p. 405), which can only be done to the extent that the emotional investment in that worldview is destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

Although science continued to develop in ways that further challenge the ego’s narcissism, Freud does not suggest that human beings simply advance to decreasing self-love. On the contrary, psychoanalysis, like other sciences, is *difficult* for human beings, who defend against the affliction of narcissistic wounds. During his Seminar 2, Lacan put it this way for his students:

when you are shown a new perspective, in a manner which is decentered in relation to your experience, there’s always a shift, whereby you try to recover your balance, the habitual center of your point of view - a sign of what I am explaining to you, which is resistance (1978/1991, p. 41).

Human beings try to reconcile self-love with new scientific knowledge, and, in the process, attempt to reject what is ultimately unassimilable in these de-centering lessons.

Freud’s originality is indeed not unlike the originality of a trauma, which takes on meaning only through the deferred action of a return. Freud’s discovery of the unconscious can thus itself be looked at as a kind of primal scene, a cultural trauma, whose meaning - or originality in cultural history - comes to light only through Lacan’s significantly transferenceal, symptomatic repetition (Felman, 1980-81, p. 46).

This defensive response constitutes resistance to knowledge: “the incapacity - or the refusal - to acknowledge one’s implication in the information” (Felman, 1987, p. 79).

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<sup>7</sup> This understanding of scientific change in terms of worldviews arises from Koyré’s commitment to the fundamental unity of thought. The principle can be defined as the view that “none of our beliefs stands alone, free from the influence of other beliefs” (Stump, 2001, p. 250).

Examples of resistance to de-centering knowledge abound. Most broadly, it can be found in the ambivalence of modern science to its own encounter with incompleteness, inasmuch as, Barnard (2002) notes, theoreticians in these disciplines still attempt to achieve “grand synthesis” (p. 14). It also accounts for ego psychologists’ rejection of the more radical aspects of Freud’s psychoanalysis in favor of adaptation and maturation as therapeutic goals. Moreover, it can explain the failure of reflexivity that can be found in the writing and reading of psychoanalytic case studies. Both reader and writer often remain blind to their implication in psychoanalytic epistemology.

**The decentered ego in relation to authority: Descartes and Lacan.** Although Freud (1917b) considered astronomer Nicholas Copernicus a key contributor to the downfall of anthropocentrism and even described his own efforts at establishing the theory of psychoanalysis as a “Copernican step,” both Lacan (1960/2006c) and historian of science Hans Blumenberg (1975/1987) insist that Copernicus’ scientific innovations remain consistent with a more subtle form of human narcissism. Exploring this claim helps elucidate Lacan’s concept of the divided subject and its relationship to science.

“For such a step to be constituted,” Lacan (1960/2006c) asks,

is it enough that a privilege should be revoked - in this case, the one that put the earth in the central place? ... Does anything make it seem that the other truth, if we may so term revealed truth, has seriously suffered as a result? Don’t we realize that, by exalting the center, heliocentrism is no less of a lure than seeing the earth as center...? ...the doctrine of double truth continues to offer shelter to a knowledge that, up until then, it must be said, appeared to be quite content with that shelter (p. 674).

The “doctrine of double truth” refers to the view that religion and philosophy (in Copernicus’ case, natural philosophy) may arrive at contradictory conclusions without

detriment to either.<sup>8</sup> This gap between faith and reason corresponds to the gap Lacan finds between knowledge and truth in the modern subject. Reason discovers decentering truth but simultaneously disavows that truth by maintaining a defensive attitude of faith, certified by divine guarantee, in its own centrality and omnipotence.

Foregrounding the “explicit appeal to an anthropocentric teleology” (Blumenberg, 1975/1987, p. 172)<sup>9</sup> in the Preface to Pope Paul III in Copernicus’ 1543 *De Revolutionibus*, Blumenberg insists that this appeal is no “rhetorical accident” (p. 177). On his view, Copernicus’ heliocentrism aligns with the “subordination of the teleological relation to the theological one” that the astronomer inherited from the Church fathers in Christianity (p. 179). “Copernicus himself places his work in the Humanist tradition - and with reason,” Blumenberg (1975/1987) concludes, “as one can judge if one sees the essence of his intention the saving of the cosmos, the reestablishment of the metaphysical faith in an orderly shaping of reality that is accessible to man” (p. 200). Lacan, for his part, locates the evidence for Copernicus’ collusion with humanity’s narcissism in the fact that he, like Ptolemy and other geocentrists, constructed his model of celestial motion in terms of circles.

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<sup>8</sup> This doctrine protects against deeming, e.g., heliocentric teachings, heretical because they contradict excerpts from the Bible that describe the Earth as stationary. During the Middle Ages, “in matters of faith, God was the highest authority, whose judgments are given to us in the Bible, and the Fathers of the Church, especially Augustine, were the highest human authorities. The realms of human knowledge were divided among several authorities, subordinate to faith, both otherwise presumed true: Aristotle in philosophy, Galen in medicine, Thomas [Aquinas] in theology. An authority, once established, could be displaced only with effort” (Des Chene, 2008, p. 18). As Friedman (2008) notes, Copernicus’ heliocentric teachings were in fact deemed heretical in 1616. “It was the perception that Galileo’s publication of his *Dialogue [of the Two Chief World Systems]* in 1632 had violated the terms of this order which then led to his condemnation and house arrest” (p. 70).

<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere Blumenberg (1975/1987) calls this the “teleological world-formula.”



Above all, and on this point he agrees with historian of science Alexandre Koyré,<sup>10</sup> Lacan credits Descartes with both identifying and disavowing the gap that splits the subject and that, according to Lacan, enables psychoanalysis.<sup>11</sup> Descartes identifies the gap between knowledge and truth by addressing the possibility - which he believed was actual in his case as a result of his scholastic education - that one's intellectual tradition (in his case, medieval Aristotelianism), based on writings and commentaries from authoritative figures,<sup>12</sup> stands in conflict with truth.<sup>13</sup> Descartes aimed to eliminate

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<sup>10</sup> Koyré (1957) states that "it is...Descartes who clearly and distinctly formulated the principles of the new science" (p. 99). He goes on to specify that "the world of Descartes is...a strictly uniform mathematical world, a world of geometry made real about which our clear and distinct ideas give us a certain and evident knowledge" (pp. 100-101). The Cartesian world requires that extension and matter are equivalent. Koyré explains that this equivalence implies both the indefiniteness of the world and the negation of the void (pp. 101, 104).

<sup>11</sup> "...its [psychoanalysis'] praxis implies no other subject than that of science" (Lacan, 2006d/1965, p. 738).

<sup>12</sup> "From the 1250s on, Aristotle's works were the basis of the baccalaureate curriculum. In three years, students would hear lectures on logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and ethics, lectures which took the form of commentary on Aristotle's text, divided into small portions called *lectiones* or *textus*. Paraphrases and philological elucidations were accompanied by *quaestiones* or 'questions' suggested by the text" (Des Chene, 2008, p. 17).

<sup>13</sup> In the most general sense, this conflict refers to the possibility that received teachings are at odds with eternal, necessary truths, such as the axioms of geometry or logic. It could also be the case that a body of knowledge was deemed true, but no explanation of its truth was provided. To take a specific example, Descartes was taught, in accordance with Ptolemaic geocentrism, that the sun revolves around the earth. Thus, he "knew" that the earth was at the center and stationary, and empirical evidence based on unaided sensations (e.g., ordinary vision) seemed to vouch for this. However, this traditional and sense-based knowledge conflicted with the new astronomy of heliocentrism. "The new mathematical science of the seventeenth century...involved a conception of scientific method that was self-consciously distinguished from the traditional astronomical ideal of *saving the phenomena*... Mathematics, on this conception...could also be used progressively to analyze the actions of the causes of phenomena" (Friedman, 2008, p. 71, emphasis added).

this gap - to suture the epistemological subject, as it were<sup>14</sup> - through a series of spiritual exercises (doubting and meditation<sup>15</sup>) and careful application of method, which included a kind of analysis.<sup>16</sup> Famously, Descartes claims to resolve the epistemological problem of the relationship of the external world to one's sense-based representations of it through his two-part appeal to the trustworthiness of God and the *cogito*, Descartes' indubitable self-knowledge based on clear and distinct perception of his thought and existence.<sup>17</sup> This approach allegedly demolishes the ossified inherited tradition, leaving only the eternal, necessary truths as a secure foundation upon which *scientia* (clear and distinct knowledge) can be built.<sup>18</sup> In this way, truth and knowledge could be reconciled.

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<sup>14</sup> According to Lacan (2006d/1965), modern logic is “the strictly determined consequence of an attempt to suture the subject of science” (p. 731). Moreover, “science turns out to be defined by the deadlocked endeavor to suture the subject” (p. 731).

<sup>15</sup> Meditation, for Descartes, involves taking a subjective, first-person approach to discovering the first principles on which certain knowledge can be established.

<sup>16</sup> Analysis, Gaukroger (1992) explains, is the art of discovery Descartes believed he (re)discovered. It is a process of creative thinking and problem-solving that aims to grasp the unknown. For Descartes, “to have knowledge of mathematics, it is not enough to rehearse the contents of the mathematics that others have found. Rather, knowledge requires a special disposition of the mind which allows one to *solve* mathematical problems and thus *discover* mathematical truths” (Mancosu, 2008, p. 107, original emphasis). The method of analysis contrasts with synthesis, in which conclusions are deduced from axioms. The synthetic approach is exemplified in ancient Greek geometrical demonstrations as well as in syllogisms.

<sup>17</sup> As Clark (1992) explains, Descartes' rehabilitation of knowledge requires admitting the negative criticism that sense-based empirical evidence (e.g., celestial appearances) are an unreliable basis for science. Descartes' positive contribution is to claim that by means of the primary-secondary quality distinction and the construction of mechanistic models, human beings can arrive at more adequate explanations of natural phenomena than could be achieved by making a traditional Aristotelian appeal to formal causes.

<sup>18</sup> Some refer to this as Descartes' foundationalism, “the view that all our knowledge begins with some self-evident beliefs which are not evidenced by any others but yet provide our justification for all the rest we know” (Markie, 1992, p. 141).

Questions concerning the status and origin of our ideas, traceable at least as far back as Plato's dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedo*, profoundly shaped the eventual demarcation of the discipline of psychology from that of philosophy through the work of Fechner, Helmholtz, and Wundt. They continue to inform the conceptual foundations of the

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philosophical frameworks that encompass contemporary psychological inquiry. These questions have remained perennial topics of debate since ancient times because of their supposed implications not only for epistemology and metaphysics, but also for ethics and theology. Early modern concern with the alleged innateness of our ideas is apparent in the contending positions of foundationalism in Rene Descartes and empiricism in John Locke.

The particular ways the early moderns variously understood and addressed the issue of innateness was interwoven with the work of Robert Boyle [1627-1691] and Isaac Newton [1642-1727], natural philosophers whose achievements shook the foundations of Scholasticism and defined the Age of Enlightenment. Their contributions were framed by the corpuscular hypothesis and its corollary, the primary-secondary quality distinction. The corpuscular hypothesis consists of three claims. First, objects of perception are bodies composed of corpuscles (particles of matter). Second, motion can be explained in terms of the impact of bodies and the impulses generated thereby. Third, the multitude of perceptible qualities of objects, such as smell, can be explained in terms of a limited number of irreducible, mathematical properties of those objects. This final claim supports the primary-secondary quality distinction, according to which the properties of size, shape, and motion alone are “primary,” and all other properties attributable to objects are “secondary,” i.e., ultimately reducible to the primary qualities.

Renaissance natural philosopher Galileo Galilei has often been credited with articulating the modern version of corpuscularianism in his 1623 *The Assayer*, the same text that contains his famous claim that the book of nature is written in the language of mathematics. Boyle, an Irish creationist and corpuscularian who published widely in many disciplines and gained lasting fame by experimentally establishing what has become known as “Boyle’s Law,” was one of Locke’s teachers. Locke engaged an atomist version of corpuscularianism in his 1690 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in contrast with Descartes, who, by defining matter as extension, denied the possibility of a void and defended a plenist version of this hypothesis. During his education at Cambridge, the young Newton studied Descartes’ philosophy and mathematics. Later, he became close friends with Locke, whose *Essay* was published just three years after Newton’s landmark *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, a text Newton intended as a response to Descartes’ 1644 *Principia Philosophiae*.

Descartes, who regarded himself foremost as a mathematician, articulated his view on the question of innateness in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641-2 in Latin; 1647 in French). His primary opponents in this text are Aristotelian Scholastics, such as his teachers at the Jesuit school La Fleche. Scholastics fused Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy, including the principle that perceptible things are materially embodied forms. On this view, we gain knowledge of such things through sense-based perception, a process through which forms are communicated to the rational soul. Descartes’ skeptical arguments in the First and Second Meditations undermine the supposed trustworthiness of the senses that undergirds the Scholastic philosophy by attempting to reveal a difference between what we sense and what we know. Descartes’ famous wax example illustrates this difference: I receive many images of a piece of wax through the senses as I manipulate it in various ways, and these images encourage me to have certain beliefs about the wax, yet I know that the wax is a self-

Lacan is also concerned with this gap,<sup>19</sup> and likewise links it with problematic relations with tradition and authority. His response as a practitioner of psychoanalysis is not to attempt to reconcile truth and knowledge by suturing the subject, however; rather, he seeks to “operate” on the gap,<sup>20</sup> like a surgeon who must open up and more fully expose the problematic area of the ill or injured body in order to intervene. As a theoretician, Lacan’s response is to emphasize the epistemological consequences of the “decisive change” or “radical” modification of the human subject’s position resulting from Descartes’ *cogito* argument, which gave birth to modern science (Lacan, 2006d/1965, pp. 726-27). Descartes’ own alternative of reconciling knowledge and truth by appeal to self-knowledge, according to Lacan, amounts to no more than a *disavowal* of the split nature of the human subject. For similar reasons, Lacan identifies Johannes Kepler, as opposed to Copernicus, as Freud’s genuine predecessor in the history of

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identical object, with no inherent color or odor (secondary qualities), and is capable of being analyzed mathematically in terms of primary qualities. Descartes accounts for the difference between what I believe through the senses and what I know about the wax in terms of an intellectual (non-sensory) idea I have of physical objects, the content of which is subject to the affirmation or denial of the will. Descartes’ rejection of the notion that these ideas arise from the senses entails, for him, a kind of foundationalism: the intellect is implanted with these ideas by God, who created them. Moreover, his positive theory is founded on the claim that attainment of knowledge, the truth of which is registered in clear and distinct *intellectual* perception, requires that thinkers withdraw from the senses, engage in introspection, and reason in terms of innate ideas of the essences of mind, matter, and God. Importantly, all of the mind’s contents, innate or not, are conscious. Finally, although Descartes’ theory of innate ideas aligns truth with the intellect rather than the senses, he did not denigrate the latter to the same extent as Plato. Descartes affirmed an important role for the senses in the elaboration of innate ideas and arrival at further necessary truths through investigations in natural philosophy.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, his claim that the division of the subject is “a division between knowledge and truth” (Lacan, 2006d/1965, p. 727). Lacan reiterates this claim on p. 733.

<sup>20</sup> “The subject upon which we operate in psychoanalysis,” Lacan (2006d/1965) asserts, “can only be the subject of science” (p. 729). Psychoanalytic praxis involves “the opening up” of this subject (p. 733).

science.<sup>21</sup> On this view, Kepler's first law of planetary motion, which states that planets orbit the sun along elliptical paths that have the sun at one focus,<sup>22</sup> parallels Freud's discovery of the unconscious, which explains the neurotic's "necessarily elliptical" speech and testifies to the inadequacy or impossibility of alleged self-knowledge and self-mastery.<sup>23</sup>

### **Thinking in Cases: Encounters with History in Psychoanalysis**

In the following sections I explore how perverse disavowal, as a defense against de-centering truths discovered over time, manifests specifically in writings about psychological life or psychoanalytic process. Psychoanalytic subjects may defend against history when engaging the following narrative threads Pletsch (1982) identifies in psychoanalytic case studies:

1. the patient's actual life history, 2. the patient's narration of his life, 3. the verbatim history of the analysis, 4. the history of the psychoanalyst's interpretations, 5. the life history reconstructed by the psychoanalyst, and 6. the history of the patient's acquisition of self-knowledge (p. 291).

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<sup>21</sup> See Lacan (2006c/1960), p. 674. As I showed earlier in this chapter, Copernicus argued that his astronomical findings, though in contradiction with literalist interpretations of Biblical passages, nevertheless accorded with the so-called "teleological world-formula." This could be viewed as Copernicus' own disavowal of the radical potential of his heliocentric model of celestial motions.

<sup>22</sup> An ellipse is a curve formed around two focal points such that the sum of the distances to the two foci is constant for every point on the curve. A circle is a limit case of an ellipse, in which both foci have the same location, the center of the circle. When Kepler published his first law of planetary motion in his 1906 *Astronomia Nova*, he only provided a proof for Mars' orbit, based on calculations he made using observational data collected by his mentor, Tycho Brahe. Kepler presented a proof for the more general version of his first law in his 1622 *Epitome Astronomiae Copernicanae*. Kepler's appeal to the ellipse to model planetary motion replaced earlier astronomers' attempts to use epicycles to account for the varying speeds of planets without sacrificing the assumption of circular motion.

<sup>23</sup> Felman (1980-81) elaborates on this Freud-Kepler parallel suggested by Lacan (2006c/1960).

These defensive encounters with history, in turn, emerge as narrative enactments in three different kinds of writing in psychoanalysis: (1.) case histories, (2.) case studies, and (3.) histories of psychoanalysis as movement and institution. I discuss each of these levels, along with their corresponding genres of psychoanalytic writing, in preparation for discussing a method for reading cases, enacted in Lacan's teachings, that makes possible a different kind of perverse relation to psychoanalytic authority.

**First level: Case histories: Constructions of individual lives in psychoanalysis.** In the first chapter of this dissertation, I noted that, according to Forrester (1996, 2015), the "golden age" of the case study genre began in the mid-nineteenth century in relation to other social and cultural developments, such as the emergence of the novel as a literary form. Forrester's claim is that the historical appearance of psychoanalysis as a new way of telling a life is genealogically linked with that of the novel as a new form of fiction. This dissertation proceeds on the assumption that the novel both shaped and was shaped by Freud's psychoanalysis. The Victorian novel often took as its subject-matter contemporary social issues - some of the very same that inflected the presenting concerns of Freud's first patients, the hysterics - and contributed to the blurring of the distinction between fiction and history, inasmuch as the nineteenth century novel frequently recounted the pasts of its characters or their contexts. In his case studies, Freud wove together rhetorical characteristics of genres like realism, *roman à clef*, and romance that also appeared in the Victorian novel (Kennedy, 2000). In turn, "those novels which read most clearly as influenced by Freud's model of narrative use a gendered framing narrative; a psychological center of consciousness as their most distinctive voice or site of identity; and a mystery associated with the feminine as the end

which drives their teleology” (p. 247). These hysterical narratives in novel form are marked by “gaps, disjunctions, and uncertainties” (p. 254).

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term “case history” will be taken to refer to the part of the case study as a whole that is particularly concerned with navigating between the first, second, and fifth narrative threads identified above: the patient’s actual life history, the patient’s narration of his life, and the life history reconstructed by the psychoanalyst.<sup>24</sup> Freud’s five long case studies became increasingly formally complex over time, presenting ever-more intricate life narratives of patients. This rhetorical development across the case studies was due in large part to the fact that the distinctively psychoanalytic concept of “infantile sexuality” was at stake in each of these writings. This fact also helps explain why the patient’s life history became central to the writing up of cases.

*Life histories in Freud’s long case studies.* When Freud published his first long case study, “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” (the Dora case), in 1905, infantile sexuality had not been accepted among the members of the medical community to which Freud wished to remain in good standing at that time. Yet he boldly asserted in the Dora case, “sexuality is the key to the problem of...neuroses in general. No one who disdains the key will ever be able to unlock the door” (Freud, 1905b, p. 105). This concept constituted Freud’s heresy as a physician and would ultimately contribute to the

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<sup>24</sup> As Gueguen (2007) notes, Lacan, unlike Freud, sharply distinguished psychoanalytic constructions from psychoanalytic interpretations. A construction “draws scattered and heterogeneous elements together in a linear causality, and [it] is a discretionary practice of sense (but not of signification). It aims for the internal coherence of the analytic experience” (p. 16). According to Gueguen (2007), constructions produce a “truth of *fixion* [sic]” (p. 17).

demarcation of psychoanalysis as a theory and a practice distinct from, albeit in complex relation to, medicine.

As analyst-writer of Dora's case, Freud (1905b) was especially troubled by the second aforementioned narrative thread, the patient's own life narrative. As he listened to Dora, he discovered the marks of incompleteness - the "gaps, disjunctions, and uncertainties" (Kennedy, 2000, p. 254) - that he would ultimately deem characteristic of the personal narratives of hysterics and that would subsequently shape the writing of psychoanalytically-informed novels. "It is only towards the end of the treatment," Freud (1905b) remarked, "that we have before us an intelligible, consistent, and unbroken case history" (p. 11). Initially, however, "the patients are incapable of giving such reports about themselves" (p. 18).<sup>25</sup> This posed a daunting rhetorical obstacle to Freud as a writer, who, at this time, still aspired to the Cartesian standard of clarity and distinctness that was the hallmark of modern science, including scientific writing. Ultimately, Freud concluded that this ability (or lack thereof) to coherently tell one's life was symptomatic of hysteria: "the repression of memories and the expression in the form of symptoms of the conflicts associated with the memories that constitutes hysteria precludes the possibility of an orderly recounting of one's life" (Pletsch, 1982, pp. 277-278). Thus,

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<sup>25</sup> Kennedy (2000) observes the gendered aspect of the incompleteness Freud diagnosed in hysterics' personal narratives: "The hysterical narrative thus requires a revision, by a listener whom Freud codes as a detached, rational, and persistent explorer of the clogged and wandering river of the unconscious. Her story needs both to be cajoled out of her through association and questioning...and 'disciplined' by being edited and annotated. ... Compared to the physicalized medicine of the nineteenth century, in which the patient is more passive, Freud must rely on the patient's production and dissemination of memory in order to obtain the materials with which he builds his tale. The power of the text now relies on a dual production of narrative, located perhaps most importantly in the female patient as 'originator' of the text, garbled though it may be" (pp. 243-244).



Freud (1905b) portrayed the distinctive rhetorical features of hysterical life narratives as evidence supporting his concept of infantile sexuality.

Whereas Freud's Dora case was primarily concerned with establishing a psychoanalytic approach to understanding and treating hysteria and appealed to the concept of infantile sexuality to this end, Freud's (1909a) "Little Hans" case was arguably more explicitly concerned with defending this controversial concept. A factor that both complicated the writing of the case study and, from Freud's perspective, offered unique evidence of infantile sexuality, the patient's actual life history (first narrative thread), obtained from interviews with the patient's parents due to his age, became Freud's primary analytic material. The case was further complicated by the fact that the patient's own narration of his life (second narrative thread) could not be obtained and compared with the report given by his parents.

In 1918, the year Freud published "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (the Wolf Man case), infantile sexuality remained contentious and became a point in relation to which heterodox students of psychoanalysis, such as Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, distinguished their theoretical positions from that of Freud. They were, of course, eventually excommunicated from Freud's community of interpretation and practice. Freud's decision to focus on this aspect of his patient's case may be understood as his way of explicitly stating the orthodox - that is, his own - position on this matter; this decision, in turn, had implications for the narrative form of the case history Freud produced. As Pletsch (1982) observes, "his [Freud's] concentration upon the Wolf Man's infantile neurosis thus involved him once again in reporting a severe case 'only in a fragmentary manner'" (p. 290, citing Freud, 1918, p. 7). Freud (1918) thus admitted, "I

am unable to give either a purely historical or a purely thematic account of my patient's story" (p. 13). The resulting life history reconstructed by Freud (fifth narrative thread) was formed by weaving together, in a rhetorically complicated manner, the patient's actual life history (first), the patient's narration of his life (second), and the verbatim history of the analysis (third narrative thread).

*The psychoanalytic concept of character.* Whereas Freud (1905b) attributed the incompleteness of hysterical patients' life narratives to the symptomatic condition of their own psychological lives, he explained the different kind of incompleteness - the lack of sufficiently convincing argument - marking his (1909b) "Rat Man" case to his own incomplete understanding of obsessional neurosis as a psychic phenomenon (Pletsch, 1982, p. 282).<sup>26</sup> Freud elaborated his psychoanalytic concept of character as part of his endeavor to clarify the nature of obsessionality over the course of his career (Baudry, 1983).<sup>27</sup> Freud came to understand character as, fundamentally, referring to "recurrent, identifiable, stable patterns of the person's functioning" (Baudry, 1984, p. 460).

Character traits, on Freud's view, "describe generally either ways of relating to people or reacting to situations, or ways of being (attitudes), and shaped by various factors

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<sup>26</sup> It is tempting to speculate as to whether this explanatory shift across case studies has something to do with Freud's own relationship to (perhaps even identification with) obsessionality, a psychic structure typically gendered masculine.

<sup>27</sup> The evolution of the psychoanalytic concept of character can be organized into three historical periods (Baudry, 1983): (1.) 1895-1907, the period of early development and usage, which culminated with Freud's (1908), "Character and Anal Eroticism," his first paper devoted specifically to the concept of character; (2.) 1908-1916, the second period of development, which culminated with Freud's (1916) "Some Character Types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work," his second paper on character, and (3.) 1916-1939, the third period of development, which included Freud's (1931) paper, "Libidinal Types," the final of his articles specifically concerned with character.

including a person's morality (p. 462).<sup>28</sup> Whereas an individual without a symptom is conceivable (but may not in fact exist), "there is no person without a character" (p. 465).

The concept of character gained ascendancy in psychoanalysis as Freud and other practitioners became increasingly concerned with the following issues: (1.) shared psychological features that can be understood as the context in which symptoms (i.e., eccentricities, anomalies - that which is unique or singular about a patient's psychological life) stand out, (2.) resistance and the analysis of resistance,<sup>29</sup> (3.) "reality" and psychological adaptation to it, and (4.) the conscious (vs. the unconscious) dimension of psychological life (Baudry, 1983). During what Baudry (1983) demarcates as the third phase of the development of Freud's concept of character, Freud (1923) portrayed character as an ego structure, formed out of identifications, that "contains the history of those object choices" (Baudry, 1983, p. 17).<sup>30</sup> The "major determinants of character" Freud discovered over time included:

- (1) a derivative of libidinal drives;
- (2) reflecting the influence on behavior of certain unconscious fantasies, often masturbatory in nature;
- (3) an outgrowth of identifications with significant parents;
- (4) the outgrowth of certain solutions to critical complexes (castration and Oedipus);
- (5) influenced by constitution;
- (6) an expression of certain mechanisms of mental functioning - denial, projection, reaction formation, introjection, displacement;
- (7) a reaction to trauma (positive and negative);
- (8) a derivative of a

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<sup>28</sup> Moreover, "character traits represent the way an outside observer (the analyst) *classifies* and *organizes* repetitive aspects of the behavior of the person under observation" (Baudry, 1984, p. 469, emphasis added).

<sup>29</sup> "Behavior (or character trait) is a communication - in another language - about the individual's past which needs to be analyzed and becomes, via the transference, the most useful tool and the source of the strongest resistance; the struggle at this point is dynamically active and, therefore, subject to interpretation" (Baudry, 1983, p. 11).

<sup>30</sup> "Freud stresses the motives for the formation of psychic structure as an attempt to deal with object loss (negative) and also loving, admiring feelings (positive). Both may lead to identification" (Baudry, 1983, p. 17).

conflict involving the superego; (9) a result of an attempt to deal with a neurosis or an ego distortion, or representing the equivalent of well-recognized neurotic symptom formation (p. 29).

Freud's concept of character ascended as psychoanalysis became established as an institution and ego psychology became dominant among the psychoanalytic schools.

*The modern literary concept of character.* This conceptual link between psychoanalytic character and life narrative is especially notable, given that the literary notion of character began to take moral precedence over action or behavior (as well as deliberation and decision) in literature as the novel genre emerged (Walcutt, 1966). Literary character became one of the formal elements of novelistic writing that shaped and was shaped by Freud's psychoanalysis. Indeed, psychoanalytic character, which must be inferred because it is not directly observable, is captured in writing through description, which, as Baudry (1984) notes, is "often more successfully carried out by a good novelist than by a clinician" (p. 457). This description, however, must reveal an organization or structure among the character traits. Moreover, the literary notion of character is based on particular ontological assumptions that are often left unexamined yet have informed subsequent approaches to "thinking in cases," such as the so-called "narrative" approach to psychoanalysis that I will introduce shortly.

As Wilson (1975) notes, characters in fiction are frequently equated with "actual" characters, or living people that may seek out psychoanalytic treatment, without much reflection. Literary character is meant to explain action in a work of fiction, such as a novel. Indeed, character is regarded as the cause of action, in the sense that a "tragic flaw" that exists prior to any actions undertaken is supposed to set the relevant series of

events in motion (Walcutt, 1966).<sup>31</sup> A description of character can provide this kind of explanation, insofar as character is structured by a “principle of organization” (Wilson, 1975). Specifically, it is a literary character’s values, and the relationship these values have to each other, that is thought to explain actions. If the network of values is conflictual, then a character’s actions will be reliably inconsistent.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in psychoanalysis, “if the various identifications [that, over time, form character] are incompatible with each other, a pathological outcome may occur” (Baudry, 1983, p. 17).

Character in both psychoanalysis and in literature is plagued by what might be called the “problem of classification.” Whereas the modern individual, as Foucault (1976/1978) noted, is supposed to be distinguished by depth, inwardness, and interiority that is knowable perhaps only in the context of a long-term, intimate relationship of some kind, and even then only partially, literary characters are necessarily “schematic” (Wilson, 1975), and, similarly, “no individual will ever be adequately described by a classificatory label” used in clinical practice (Baudry, 1984, p. 464). The problem, then, seems to be that thinking of people in terms of character types is to know them superficially, less intimately, than what, in theory, could be possible.

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<sup>31</sup> As Walcutt (1966) observes, these modern assumptions contrast with those that underlie Aristotle’s ancient poetics and ethics. For Aristotle, process, activity, and becoming - that is to say, motion - have ontological priority over static being. This means that, on his view, action is prior to character. The latter, for Aristotle, only appears in the ethical movement that is action, and is comprised of habit (i.e., a recurring pattern of reactions to situations) and reason (i.e., the ability to deliberate when making decisions in a lived situation). Whereas a modern character’s actions are caused by a “tragic flaw,” the situation an ancient character finds themselves in calls forth actions that are chosen on the basis of virtues; tragedy results from an error in judgment, not a flaw.

<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the modern era and the genre of the novel that is distinctive of it, are distinguished by “entrenched value conflicts, made permanently irresolvable, and shrouded in the universal ambiguity that Cervantes attributes to all human experience” (Wilson, 1975, p. 197).

Sometimes nosological classification, ultimately based on statistics, is contrasted with novelistic characterization, inasmuch as diagnostic categories seem more overtly aimed at prediction and control. Foucault (1976/1978) deemed such a contrast fallacious, as he associated personal narrative with the sexual repression hypothesis, a historical thesis he calls into question. Foucault (1976/1978) summarized the repression hypothesis as the claim that sexual practices have been subject to a restrictive economy of speech and language since the 17th century. When interpreted as a taboo practice, the act of giving a verbal or written account of one's sexual practices evokes a kind of transgressive pleasure that supports the illusion that such narratives are in the service of liberation from the constraints of repression. Foucault (1976/1978) strongly disagreed with the repressive interpretation of the history of sexuality through the Victorian era. He argued instead that “‘sexuality’ is far more one of the positive products of power than power was ever repressive of sex” (p. 121). Sexuality is a “positive” product in the sense that bio-power incites more discourse about this object (e.g., an increase in clinical discourse about sex), which results in the production of new kinds of individual (e.g., diagnostic categories as new “varieties” of human being, whose essence in a particular kind of sexuality).

The Council of Trent, understood as a bio-political event, corresponded with the emergence of what Foucault would later identify, in Part I, Chapter 3, of *History of Sexuality, Volume II*, as a new kind of subject, associated with medieval and early modern Christianity as well as with Romanticism. The confessing subject is characterized by deep interiority. It can manifest as any of a range of variations, or diagnostic categories of pervert and sexual deviant, as were recognized in the psychiatric discourse of that era. Moreover, the “truth” of this subject in all its varieties was believed to reside

as a secret within its interior depths. Through confession, through which this secret was divulged, an individual was absolved of the burden of guilt for his sexual misdeeds. Foucault (1976/1978) argued that the post-Trent Catholic church developed the technique of penance in order to discipline individuals into confessing subjects who would expose and monitor themselves for compliance with sexual norms that ultimately served the ends of bio-power (e.g., population control).

***The reconstruction of the patient's life history in psychoanalysis: Narrativists and their critics.*** Central to the narrativist approach to psychoanalysis that emerged in the mid-20th century, following the fall of ego psychology, is Spence's and Schafer's concept of narrative truth, which is supposedly founded on Freud's view of memory as constructed through the psychic process of *Nachträglichkeit*. On this view, memory supplements the partiality of the patient's past perspective with new knowledge available from the patient's present perspective. The resulting narrative is evaluated for its *coherence*: Is it continuous? Does it rhetorically persuade or convince the audience? Does it provide narrative closure? Proponents of a narrative approach to psychoanalysis portray the concept of narrative truth as a distinct hermeneutic alternative to another view of memory attributable to Freud, according to which memory is like an object found in an archaeological excavation.<sup>33</sup> Here the past is supposed to exist independent of knowing subjects, as hidden historical truth, capable of retrieval. This latter, positivistic conception of truth as *correspondence* to a real state of affairs, had been a key element of ego

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<sup>33</sup> Kennedy (2000) notes that Freud "constantly offers the reader an image of the physician as a hero of a romantic adventure into the unknown, in particular an intrepid explorer or archaeologist. Freud figures his investigation of the hysteric's mind as an expedition into either the past or 'the interior' of some wild land" (p. 232).

psychology's endeavor to make of psychoanalysis an empirical science of the deterministic influence of the veridical past in individuals' lives.

Bellin (1984) and Loewenstein (1991), arguing from a perspective generally compatible with Lacan's, contend that what appear to be "intelligible, consistent, unbroken" life narratives are precisely those that are symptomatic: riddled with gaps, disjunctions, uncertainties, and disavowals. Spence's and Schafer's concept of narrative truth, taken as the aim of psychoanalytic treatment, retains positivistic assumptions about the nature of the past and the kind of access a human being can have to it. Specifically, narrative truth, like positivist truth, assumes that life events stand in linear relation to each other, as a sequence of causal links. Past events are still viewed as determining present and future actions, including thoughts, feelings, and fantasies. Although new life narratives will be produced over the course of a successful analysis, it is the rupturing of the narrative - the exposure of its disavowals - that constitutes the therapeutic action of Freud's cure.

In light of Freud's discovery of the unconscious, the appearance of truth as coherent narrative can only be sustained by the censoring function of the ego, which, through a secondary process of selection, omits the unassimilable as inadmissible, and thereby endeavors to master the unknown. Narrative truth, then, and the attendant hermeneutic approach to psychoanalysis, turns out to be reducible to the supposedly distinct positivistic project of ego psychology. Both accounts of truth presuppose that the ego can become whole and integrated, and that this is a desirable state of affairs. This suggests that regarding a coherent life narrative as the aim of psychoanalytic treatment constitutes a perverse attitude toward psychoanalytic theory, insofar as two conflicting



attitudes toward the implications of this theory are held at once. Such a vision of the strong ego, moreover, foregrounds activities like thinking, contemplating, self-observing, self-mastery, inner stability or harmony, and consolidation of personal identity (Loewenstein, 1991). That is to say, the strong ego privileges the Platonic ideal of being or permanence; separation of knower/teller from known/told, the foundation of objectivity in the Cartesian-Kantian tradition, is valorized (Loewenstein, 1991).

Taking as his point of departure that lived experience (*Erlebnis*) does not naturally or inevitably take the form of a story, Loewenstein (1991), like Lacan, argues that a reading of Freud faithful to his more radical teachings supports a conception of *poetic* truth, or truth as *enactment*. On this view, the ego is revealed as decentered, and personal narrative, although apparently coherent, is characterized by fundamental, irresolvable contradiction and paradox. Instead of continuity, the new way of telling a life afforded by psychoanalysis reveals the human subject as divided, its discourse riddled with ambiguous gaps. Narrative closure is never completely attainable, on this view, because life events are understood to be overdetermined. This vision of the divided subject, disclosed in the psychoanalytic encounter, emphasizes the ultimate failure of the ego's pretensions to mastery, as the ego surrenders to the primary process irruptions of the unconscious in speech and the patient's familiar self-concept is disturbed (Loewenstein, 1991). The Lacanian divided subject privileges the Parmenidean ideal of becoming or change; fusion of knower/teller and known/told, the ground of Hegelian dialectical flux, is upheld (Loewenstein, 1991).

Lacan emphasizes Freud's portrayal of the ego as the product of a process of identification, which contrasts strikingly with Freud's other depiction of this aspect of

psychical life, emphasized by ego psychologists and other mainstream psychoanalysts, according to which the ego is primarily an agency of adaptation. As discussed in Chapter 2, this Lacanian conception of the ego has implications for the nature of the formation of personal identity, the particular instance of identity formation that a psychoanalytic candidate undertakes during training, and the writing up of individual life histories in case studies. On this view, successful psychoanalytic treatment could be understood to facilitate a kind of renunciation of personal agency and narrative authority. Rather than consolidating and repairing pathological character, the psychoanalytic cure - which produces both the treated patient and the analyst-in-training - could be said to disclose a more fluid, multiple sense of identity, akin to what, in Chapter 2, I claimed that Irigaray champions in her retort in “The ‘Mechanics’ of Fluids” to Lacan’s algebraic approach to psychological life. The psychoanalytic subject, following treatment, is able to take up a different kind of perverse stance: this subject may no longer seek to obtain love or approval by living up to a fantasized image of the omnipotent Father, whether this Father is Freud or some other patriarch of the psychoanalytic tradition.

**Second level: Case studies: The dialectic of the singular and the general in the transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge.** On another level, psychoanalysis stands in relation to history *vis-a-vis* the case study, the history of the clinical encounter over the course of treatment as it is written up as a document for an audience, a public. The case study, understood in this way, corresponds most directly to Pletsch’s (1982) third and fourth narrative threads: the verbatim history of the analysis and the history of the psychoanalyst’s interpretations. It attempts to preserve and transmit the psychoanalytic knowledge produced through therapeutic action in that temporal encounter.

For Julia Borossa (1997), like John Forrester, the case study is the epistemic device definitive of the psychoanalytic profession, and it is characterized by a dialectic of the singular and the general. This is a tension between, on the one hand, the *practical* task of the case study, which is to represent, in writing, the singular, private relationship between clinician and patient, and, on the other hand, the *epistemic* task of the case study, which is to provide evidence relevant to theory, and thereby become part of the archive of public, general knowledge (Borossa, 1997).<sup>34</sup> At least two concerns emerge from this tension: (1.) Can the language used when writing up a case reconcile the practical and epistemic tasks? How ought the analyst-writer describe the movement of the clinical encounter - that is to say, the vicissitudes of the therapeutic relationship?, and (2.) What

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<sup>34</sup> Over time, the alleged epistemic task of the psychoanalytic case study has come under scrutiny. Speaking from a more positivistic view of the role of language in psychoanalysis, which would seem to align with ego psychology, Stein (1988a) claims that good case writing is achieved when “conclusions are drawn convincingly from first-hand observations derived from the *raw data* of the analytic situation itself” (p. 106, emphasis added). As I note below, protecting patient confidentiality seems to be an obstacle to the presentation of proof when psychoanalytic process is regarded as “data” or “facts.” Indeed, for Stein (1988a), “by the time we finish protecting him [the patient]...we risk losing the individual by creating a fictional character, less interesting than the original, and capable of misleading the reader. We are therefore limited in how much we can disguise the person without destroying the value of the report” (p. 111).

In contrast, Kantrowitz (2004a) speaks for a more constructivist view of the role of language in psychoanalysis when she states that the kind of objection Stein (1988a) and others, such as Lipton (1991), who uphold a more positivistic epistemology “seems based on a misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of psychoanalytic case examples. The data they provide are not comparable to the data of basic science, or even social science... Analysts can only illustrate the points they want to make; they cannot prove them. ...the reader may be *persuaded* to take the author’s position seriously...[b]ut what has won the reader’s serious attention is the author’s ability to convey a new understanding and the reasoning behind it. Clinical observations may be the stimulus for theoretical discoveries, but they can never be the proof of them. ... This is a uniquely psychoanalytic perspective” (p. 91, emphasis added).

Kantrowitz (2004b) also acknowledges that “when patients actually read material about themselves, the separation between the scientific and the personal would seem much harder to maintain” (p. 115).

are the implications for the privacy of the patient - insofar as they can be regarded as a modern individual - when the analyst-writer undertakes the epistemic task of case writing?

Central to these concerns is the distinctively modern concept of privacy,<sup>35</sup> where the private is linked with the singular, and the public with the general. The protection of confidentiality (i.e., of personal identity) that has emerged out of this concept in the professions mandates the alteration of identifying details in order to authorize the writing up of cases.<sup>36</sup> Here the issue of rhetorical persuasion or conviction is once again relevant. The kind of rhetoric that facilitates healing and transformation in the clinical encounter may not convince the third party, the Other - the psychoanalytic institution - that an addition or change to theory is needed (Bellin, 1984).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the institution demanding

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<sup>35</sup> For overviews of the historical development of the concept of privacy, see, e.g., Warren and Brandeis (1890), Prosser (1960), and DeCew (1997). Although the concept of privacy was not morally privileged until the modern era, the notion of a distinction between the private and the public “is pervasive, durable, persistent, and deeply rooted” (Bailey, 2002, p. 15). Key texts in the formation of the privacy concept include Aristotle’s *The Politics*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*, and J. S. Mill’s *On Liberty*.

<sup>36</sup> Kantrowitz (2004a) found that psychoanalysts who wrote about their clinical practice tried to ensure confidentiality by (1.) disguising patient material, (2.) requesting consent to include patient material in writing, (3.) using disguise but also requesting consent, or (4.) asked for consent or used disguise depending on circumstances. Using disguise often involved changing identifying information (e.g., names), removing demographics, or changing or adding other details. The possibility of informed consent is fraught from a psychoanalytic perspective, “since it [informed consent] is always granted under the sway of the transference, even when treatment is over” (p. 93). Recognition of this point “accompanies the analytic community’s increased sensitivity to the role and influence of authority in general, as well as its specific relevance in analytic work” (p. 88).

<sup>37</sup> As Bellin (1984) explains, “a narrative text’s capacity to be interpreted by a competent readership or interpretive community, whatever the specific interpretation, is determined by its recognizable referents to other texts that are clearly acceptable and already intelligible to the community. These other deciphered texts make up the content of supplementary knowledge. A narrative’s capacity to reflect these texts is its ‘verisimilitude.’ In the theory of structuralist poetics, this *vraisemblabilisation* goes by

scientific evidence requires “singular meanings that can be consensually validated” (Bellin, 1984, p. 37), whereas a Freudian approach to language, above all evident in Lacan’s psychoanalysis, challenges the authority of such meanings.

A line of literature, written by psychoanalysts, grappling with the dialectical tension between the public/general and the private/singular in the publication of psychoanalytic case studies emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century. Stein (1988a), in an instance of the kind of perverse double-stance toward psychoanalytic knowledge I described above, begins his contribution to this scholarly conversation by proclaiming in Cartesian fashion that when writing up cases, “we can demand of ourselves at least that our writing be well organized and written in clear language, in which theoretical demonstration is manifestly derived from clinical observation” (p. 106). For Stein (1988a), the primary task of the analyst as a writer of cases is epistemic, to provide evidence that will convince a third party to the clinical encounter. Issues such as maintaining patient confidentiality,<sup>38</sup> accurately conveying the character of the analytic process, and managing the analyst-writer’s emotional investment in that process, are regarded as obstacles to accomplishing this epistemic task.

The very act of making a case public - by either publishing a written case or presenting a case verbally to an audience - further complicates the epistemic task of case

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other names as well: ‘recuperation,’ ‘naturalization,’ and ‘motivation.’ These terms signify everything about or in a text that situates that text in a discursive process which immediately assimilates it to what appears to be the natural order of things. A text is distinguished within this essentially conservatorial matrix” (p. 21).

<sup>38</sup> Regarding the tension between ethical and epistemic responsibility, Kantrowitz (2004a) puts it this way: “They [analysts who write about their patients] must protect the confidentiality of their patients while simultaneously providing clinical data accurate enough to support their ideas” (p. 70).

writing. This act can elicit exhibitionism on the part of analyst or patient: analysts who write “wish to be noticed by our colleagues” (Stein, 1988b, pp. 402-403), and patients who have access to the public form of their own or other patients’ cases - either by reading psychoanalytic literature or listening to case presentations - can take pride in making a contribution, through their course of analysis, to the professional body of knowledge,<sup>39</sup> or may alter their engagement in the analytic process due to the wish to be written about.<sup>40</sup> Reasoning from one of his patient’s responses to the writing up of his case, Stoller (1988) argued for a collaborative approach to case writing. Cases written in the traditional manner - that is, by the analyst alone - perform a kind of rhetoric “in which the author’s position is the fixed point in the universe, serving as a baseline truth” (p. 385).

As Stoller (1988) explains regarding the pedophilic patient he wrote about, “the problem was not that he had a different version from mine. He disagreed with neither the facts nor the protecting of his identity” (p. 380).<sup>41</sup> What Stoller realized he had not taken

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<sup>39</sup> As Stein (1988b) notes, “the analysand’s belief that he has taught his analyst something of value is gratifying, for it is regarded as a gift and experienced as a contribution to the enlargement of the analyst’s professional skill and reputation” (p. 398). In turn, “analysts may feel guilty about appropriating something that belongs to the patient - their history, a life - and using it for their own purposes. In this respect, analysts may feel guilty that they want the patient to give something to them - to feed them, so to speak - or that they want to be united with the patient forever, and that they have enacted such wishes by the very act of writing” (Kantrowitz, 2004a, p. 97).

<sup>40</sup> Kantrowitz (2004a) also addresses this concern in terms of patients’ motives for giving consent to being written about. She also notes in subsequent articles that patients’ responses to their written case varied significantly (Kantrowitz, 2005a), particularly depending on whether or not the patient knew in advance that their analyst had written about them and had the opportunity to give consent (Kantrowitz, 2004b). The response can also be shaped by whether or not the patient written about is a psychoanalytic candidate (Kantrowitz, 2005b).

<sup>41</sup> Notably, since Stoller (1988) published his position on case writing, psychoanalytic clinicians have recognized “clinical indications in certain patients that mitigated against

into account was that the written case affected this patient as if it were an intervention made in the midst of the clinical encounter itself.

What had shocked him, rather, was that I had humiliated him. I had caught him unawares. ... Reading the manuscript made real his awareness that he might no longer be in control of his history. His fantasized audience would think as he required of it, but a real audience would see that he truly was a great fool. So he refused to let me proceed with the writing (p. 380).

He concludes that “we should not write about our patients without their permission to do so and without their view of the matters about which we write” (p. 391). Yet, as Stein (1988b) aptly observes, collaborating on writing with the patient can be interpreted as a sexual act itself, involving “the fantasy of the book [or article, for that matter] as offspring” (p. 399).<sup>42</sup>

The Lacan of the signifier can also be drawn upon to respond to the question of the appropriate way to recount in writing the history of the clinical encounter over the course of treatment. Lacan’s 1957 “Instance of the Letter, or Reason Since Freud” is particularly instructive on this issue, as I will now show.

***Therapeutic action in the clinical encounter: Between speech and writing.*** As implied by the previous section of this chapter, narrativists portray therapeutic action as a

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requesting permission or writing about them without it. These indications related primarily to character structure” (Kantrowitz, 2004a, p. 76).

<sup>42</sup> “Certain patients express explicitly the wish that I might write about their analyses. This desire reflects not only the expected exhibitionistic components, but the unconscious fantasy that my writing would be the most intimate collaboration, the equivalent of sharing in the conception of a child. I suspect that this fantasy is more common than we generally recognize in the context of analytic writing” (Stein, 1988b, p. 399). Furthermore, the analyst-writer can be complicit in this fantasy, given that “professional writers often preface their works with dedications and acknowledgements in terms that suggest...that someone - a spouse, an editor, an agent - played a role in the production, which could be regarded as a kind of impregnation” (p. 399).

function of the narrative closure produced by rhetorical characteristics of coherence, continuity, and aesthetic appeal (Spence), or the collaborative (re)telling of a life history, distinguished by the language of active responsibility (Schafer). This is to reduce the practical function of psychoanalysis in the clinical encounter to its epistemological function in the form of the case study as epistemic device. Furthermore, as established in the previous section, the narrativists' portrayal of the clinical encounter is arguably "motivated by [a moral] ideology that prefers to represent, and thereby construe, the world and human experience as 'naturally' unified and ordered" (Loewenstein, 1991, p. 15). Instead,

the curative effect of our praxis may be accounted for by its very refusal to offer the analysand yet another false sense of unity but rather increase the analysand's capacity to withstand the ambiguity, contradiction, and discontinuity that marks our present experience and our past (p. 26),

that is, by the ethics of psychoanalysis.

The clinical encounter, on this alternative view, is a poetic, dramatic situation. Its movement is not simply that of an oral exchange or conversation, understood in the conventional, communicative sense that Lacan rejects. Rather, the movement of the clinical encounter is akin to that of a written text "because it operates as if it were written free of authorial intention. ...this 'written' text opens upon a plenitude of meaning" (Bellin, 1984, p. 15). When understood through Freud's writing metaphor - which Freud himself invoked in his account of the generation of psychic structure -

events..., speech acts and performances, accumulate over time as waxed inscriptions do, continuously read and rewritten in the present free play of signifiers begging for demystification and naturalization in terms of the knowable, in terms of some conventional text, begging for an interpretation, a return to the communicative circuit (p. 28).



The role of reader, on this view, is shared between clinician and patient, and this pair likewise partakes in “joint authorship” as they rewrite the text through interpretation (Bellin, 1984).

Lacan most closely approximates such a view in his “Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud,” where he provocatively suggests that at least one text, namely this *écrit*, can be approached as though it occupies a position on a continuum “between writing and speech” (Lacan, 1957/2006b, p. 412). Lacan must be understood here as broadening the concepts of “writing” and “speech” beyond their ordinary senses. Writing, for Lacan and Bellin (1984), is not limited to the act of marking words on a surface or the composition that is produced thereby. Nor is speech, for Lacan, simply the act of using sounds to express one’s thoughts or the vocal delivery of a discourse to an audience.<sup>43</sup> I suggest that Lacan’s remark about the “position” of “Instance of the Letter...” can be applied to other texts, including case studies. According to the broader conceptions Lacan introduces in this *écrit*, some productions of language will seem more like writing, even if they are orally uttered, and others more like speech, even if they are written down. This claim can be grasped by exploring Lacan’s rethinking of speech in the clinical encounter, particularly insofar as he teaches that a patient’s free associations should be read as much as they are listened to.

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<sup>43</sup> This is a point of disagreement that emerges when Bellin’s article is read alongside Lacan’s *écrit*. Although both Bellin and Lacan are critical of the implications of speech as it is understood within the communication paradigm, only Lacan puts forward an alternative psychoanalytic conception of speech. This disagreement need not constitute an impasse, however. Lacan’s *écrit* can be taken as emphasizing how a clinician ought to listen to the patient’s speech at moments in time (synchronic), whereas Bellin’s article can be taken as emphasizing what happens to speech over time (diachronic) as it is listened to in this Lacanian way.

*Lacan's conception of speech in "Instance of the Letter..."*. Lacan, who regards the unconscious as structured like a language, links the function of speech with the practice of psychoanalysis.<sup>44</sup> Contrary to the proponents of functionalist or utilitarian language theories who take successful communication as their paradigm, the digressing and interrupted free associations uttered by the patient who says everything that comes to mind, Lacan claims, most fully disclose the nature of speech in the clinical encounter. Yet, from a psychoanalytic point of view, even people speaking in everyday situations often say more than they intend.<sup>45</sup>

The psychoanalyst whose practice of listening is informed by this conceptualization of speech - in contrast with the third party evaluating the clinical encounter as a source of evidence for or against theory - does not expect a rigorous presentation of facts or a linear argument. From Lacan's perspective, speech can thus be described as "hysterical," in the sense that it resists systematization and remains open and ambiguous. It teaches the clinician to "hystericize" the patient by listening for absence and multiplicity, much as Freud's encounters with his first patients, the hysterics, taught this young physician how to practice the "talking cure" by hystericizing him. Over time, the oral exchanges between patient and clinician, when listened to in this way, accumulate diverse meanings, or inscriptions, in layers, much as the patient has developed a psychological life by the cumulative effect of deferred action (*Nachträglichkeit*) of memory on lived experiences.

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<sup>44</sup> See Lacan's (1953/2006e) "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis."

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Freud's (1901) *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.

Moreover, Lacan proclaims that speech is like music in that it has rhythms and tones; it is structured by chords and a polyphony of meanings or voices. The clinician attuned to the musical character of speech therefore listens for *process*, for form rather more so than content. This kind of listening involves focusing on the rhetorical and stylistic features of what a patient says.

Examples of “speech-like” written works include the “automatic writing” heralded by the Surrealists, as well as much modern poetry and literature. In these works, the “vertical” axis of language is explicit. Engaging fully with such works thus calls for hearing or listening to them at least as much as reading them in the ordinary sense of that term.

*Lacan’s conception of writing in “Instance of the Letter...”*. Whereas speech in Lacan’s sense is amorphous and flowing, he characterizes writing by a “kind of tightening up” (1957/2006b, p. 412) or editing of the text, such that it exercises control over the reader’s interpretive possibilities. Writing, for Lacan, is thus linked with obsessionality, in the sense that it, like the obsessional patient, seeks to eliminate all ambiguity in favor of univocity by closing up the holes in oral discourse.

Lacan’s broad sense of writing as an obsessional act of solidifying meaning can be fruitfully considered alongside the act of interpretation in its more familiar sense, which, for Bellin (1984), is significantly informed by “supplementary knowledge.” This knowledge consists of the expectations about narrative structure that readers have inherited as members of a community who have been acculturated to that community’s norms and conventions. The significance of supplementary knowledge foregrounds an additional register of the therapeutic relationship: that between the clinician and Freud.

This relationship shapes the clinician's theoretical orientation and informs their interventions. "The choice of poetic theory is critical in determining the analyst's perspective on therapeutic action in the psychoanalytic situation" (p. 33). Moreover, this relationship is shaped by the institutional context within which the clinician's professional identity was formed (Borossa, 1997).

In contrast with interpretation in its familiar sense, Lacan radicalized Freud's psychoanalytic approach to interpretation in such a way as to eschew the dangers of providing patients with a metalanguage for their suffering or portraying the analyst as a more mature subject supposed to know. As Miller (1996/2007) suggests, two "moments" in Lacanian interpretation can be discerned: one based in the pleasure principle that comes up against what Freud called the "rock of castration," and a second - "beyond" the pleasure principle, Oedipal dynamics, and castration - that "aims for the cause of desire...the place of the drives" beyond identifications (Gueguen, 2007, p. 15). This second "moment" of interpretation is comparable to the complete stage of the graph of desire reviewed in Chapter 2, in which the subject goes beyond castration, and looks forward to my discussion of case study as *sinthome* in Chapter 5.

Lacan's approach to interpretation has several implications that, while perhaps not immediately apparent, may be foregrounded by reference to related concepts, such as desire. The concept of desire is fundamental more so in Lacanian psychoanalysis than in other communities of psychoanalytic practice because, as Moncayo (2008) highlights, Lacan teaches that desire is the core of human being. Lacan claims that desire, or *wanting* (Fink, 1997), is definitive of human existence. This emphasis on desire registers the importance of Kojève's reading of Hegel for Lacan's "return to Freud." As discussed in

Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Hegel views desire as emerging in the dialectic of recognition in the encounter of two self-consciousnesses. On this view, all desire is desire for the other's desire.

Desire, for Lacan, is a complex concept, related to yet distinct from need, *jouissance*, and demand. Pre-Oedipal children viscerally experience and react to bodily needs such as hunger. A need is a manifestation of the id or an expression of the drives. For the most part, a young child requires another person's intervention to satisfy these needs. But the child's cries ambiguously express needs. The Mother may interpret the cry in any number of ways, often as demand for a particular source of satisfaction (e.g., food) for a specific want (e.g., hunger). The child often finds pleasurable what the Mother provides to assuage need and quell demand. As the child develops toward the Oedipal stage, the Father figure sets limits on the satisfaction of demand. Certain kinds of satisfaction are prohibited. As Fink (1997) explains, prohibition eroticizes the satisfaction of needs. Thereafter, the child experiences a kind of *jouissance* whenever and however they manage to gratify instinctual urges - either phallic *jouissance* emerging from living up to the Father's values and ideals, or transgressive *jouissance* of violating these norms.

As Nobus (2000) explains, analysis is supposed to help the patient put into words and take ethical responsibility for what has hitherto been repressed. The analyst facilitates this process by interrupting the patient's egoic discourse with pleasure principle-based interpretations, involving punctuation, that instigates the movement of desire in the Freudian transference unconscious. Thus, analysis is a transformative encounter to the extent that the patient's desire is dialecticized (i.e., the patient develops the capacity to tolerate the anxiety evoked by meeting with the enigmatic desire of the Other) and

subjectified (i.e., the patient becomes the subject who enjoys and is no longer, as ego, the subject *to* the Other).

Although Lacan instructs analysts against offering the patient a meaning that explains their discourse, he does not reject the importance of meaning in the act of interpretation or in the process of analysis more generally. On his view, meaning is always in motion - just like desire - except when halted by formations of the unconscious. Desire defies complete formulation in words but nevertheless expresses itself by faulting the patient's demands and communications. The analyst listens for these gaps in the patient's speech so as to hear the unconscious desire that moves between the lines. The analyst should offer interpretations that deliver the patient's speech back to them, with the aim of encouraging the patient to acknowledge their own desire and discover new or alternative meanings. Interpretation by punctuation "equivocates and opens the meaning up to a little outside-meaning, it shifts, or un-fixes, the meaning" (Stevens, 2009, p. 57). The analyst encourages the patient to assign meaning to the analyst's interventions by wrestling with the ambiguity they introduce. As the patient integrates this signifier into her system of knowledge, the meaning of the whole transforms and the patient's subjective position changes. Thus a new binding (or closure) of meaning is produced.<sup>46</sup> And yet, as even Freud himself acknowledged late in his career, this approach to interpretation results in potentially "interminable" analyses.

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<sup>46</sup> A text is recognizable to the extent that it meets the expectations of its readership. When it is not immediately recognizable, a text puts the reader to work to resolve the ambiguity encountered in what Bellin (1984) calls "intertextual potential," which is "a space or moment of uncertainty bridged by an act of interpretation. Such spaces of uncertainty allow and in fact demand that the interpreter be creative in his encounter with a text" (p. 24).

Interpretation through punctuation works against the ego inasmuch as it “aims at a sexual sense,” and yet “the drive remains subjected to the Oedipal myth, to the function of the imaginary father” (Gueguen, 2007, p. 15). Hence the limitations of the practice of psychoanalysis understood *only* as the analysis of the symptom:

a neurotic is a subject who has found a solution to defend himself against the real. This solution relies on the Name-of-the-Father and the fundamental identification that goes with it. This response through the paternal *semblant* is never totally satisfying because it ignores the real of the drive. The ideal identification to which the neurotic subject clings always involves a repression of drive-*jouissance* (Gault, 2007, p. 76).

Emphasis on obsessional “writing” places greater importance on the finished product as compared with the process of its emergence. Works are evaluated on the basis of validity, soundness, and clarity. In this way, writing is also linked with an ideal vision of philosophy modeled on the Kantian ideals of modern science, reviewed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, according to which argumentation, linearity, and systematicity are highly valued. The analyst who interprets solely by means of punctuation, within the bounds of the pleasure principle, is ultimately aligned with the obsessional philosopher or the modern scientist, both of whom seek closure and completion, the resolution of uncertainty.

Alternatively, as Miller (1996/2007) suggests, neurosis can be treated in terms of psychosis, in order to provoke *jouissance* in relation to *lalangue* (Gueguen, 2007).

The psychotic subject rejects the solution of the Name-of-the-Father. ... The psychotic subject who, in the name of his irreducible singularity, rejects this universal solution, is led to invent a unique solution. ... The problem...amounts to finding a solution, a solution for the treatment of this excess *jouissance* precisely by means of the symptom (Gault, 2007, p. 76).

The kind of interpretation that operates “beyond” the pleasure principle involves “the cut.” Miller (1996/2007) calls it “interpretation in reverse,”<sup>47</sup> in which “the fantasy is not to be interpreted but to be constructed. ... The symptom itself is to be thought from the fantasy, that which Lacan calls the ‘*sinthome*’” (p. 6). Whereas interpretation through punctuation reckons with castration, “interpretation in reverse” encounters *objet a*, the “waste” produced by the attempt to “integrat[e] *jouissance* into the structure of language” (p. 6). As Gault (2007) explains,

What is expected of an analysis [*vis-à-vis objet a*] is that the subject, beyond his identifications, should obtain a glimpse of his real being as waste. ... The formidable creative power of Joyce stems from the fact that he is not held back by any of the connections which the letter has with the symbolic and the imaginary. He is in relation with a letter that has severed all of its identifications, which is not attached to any stable signification. His work pays the price of this extraordinary freedom by being, for the most part, unreadable (p. 75).

In Chapter 5 I return to this notion of the *sinthome*, a kind of “construction” beyond the pleasure principle, as both an aspect of the formation of ethical subjectivity and as an alternative way of writing up the encounter of the psychoanalytic process with language.

Spinoza’s *Ethics* - composed as a series of theorems established through deductive arguments, much like Euclid’s *Elements*, foundational text of geometry - exemplifies “writing” in the broader sense introduced by Lacan. Priority is given to the “horizontal” axis of language. Yet to critically approach a production of language as

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<sup>47</sup> Interpretation in reverse “consists in withholding S2, in not bringing it in – so as to encircle S1. ... The reverse of interpretation consists in encircling the signifier as the elementary phenomenon of the subject, and as it was before it was articulated in the formation of the unconscious which gives it a sense of delusion. ... It mobilizes the subtlest resources of rhetoric. ... It is a deciphering which does not produce sense” (Miller, 1996/2007, pp. 7-8). As Gueguen (2007) explains “interpretation in reverse takes its bearings only in reference to [a kind of] construction” (p. 17), namely, the *sinthome*.



“writing” is to attend to how it is nevertheless inscribed by the unconscious. Lacan teaches that the clinician must not only listen to the patient’s speech as if it were a piece of music - that is, to read it for the rhetorical markings of desire - but also “read” it for the markings of history and institution.

*Irigaray on the role of sexual difference in psychoanalytic language.* As Irigaray and other feminists emphasize, there is another dimension of the dialectical tension between the private and the public, manifesting in case studies, that pertains to the status of women. The subversive potential of Freud’s psychoanalysis as a kind of charismatic movement was manifest in its presumption that women had interiority, that is to say, that they had subjective lives<sup>48</sup> and were entitled to privacy at all.<sup>49</sup> The recognition of women as subjects was demonstrated in Freud’s willingness to dedicate the analytic hour for these women of the Victorian era to speak freely without fear of judgment. Women’s somatic complaints were taken seriously as meaningful and able to be treated through the “talking cure,” as Freud’s earliest cases in *Studies on Hysteria*, co-written with Breuer, detail. But this subversive potential was reduced as psychoanalysis

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<sup>48</sup> “By personal life [or subjective life, or psychological life] I mean the awareness of possessing an intrapsychic life distinct from one’s place in either the traditional family or in the economic division of labor. Psychoanalysis was the first important theory and practice of personal life. As such, it was part of a radical, historical turn toward internalization, de-familiarization, and de-socialization” (Zaretsky, 2008, p. 87).

<sup>49</sup> Zaretsky (2008) distinguishes two “Freuds” in psychoanalysis, one associated with psychoanalysis as a movement and the other associated with psychoanalysis as an institution. For the charismatic Freud, “the ego was not only the seat of reason, but also part of the id, from which it derived its energies” (p. 95). This Freud “spoke to the utopian possibilities of the times... [and] was linked to the new sense of limitlessness and to what would soon be termed ‘permissiveness’” (p. 96), eventually reflective of 1960s counterculture and the New Left.

as movement solidified into psychoanalysis as institution,<sup>50</sup> a historical process discussed in part in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. When Freud recorded these private tellings and retellings of women's lives in public documents - case studies - made to serve as evidence of psychoanalytic theory and proof of cure, these life narratives became the property of the emerging interpretive community. This move, in which women's stories were made the property of a (masculine) community of interpretation is complicit with the earlier history of the private-public distinction, according to which women by definition could not be property owners and were not entitled to privacy. Arguably, this tension between the private and the public in the status of women rests on another way in which human beings often take a perverse stance toward scientific achievements such as psychoanalysis: while psychoanalysis was - and remains - able to diagnose misogynistic tendencies in public institutions (e.g., representations of women in Victorian-era medicine), it often remained - and remains - blind to the ways that it, as an institution, represents women.

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<sup>50</sup> Consistent with Chapter 1 of this dissertation, Zaretsky (2008) links psychoanalysis as institution with the rise of ego psychology. “[F]or ego psychology,” he explains, “the ego was limited in its powers, having constantly to balance reality, moral demands, and internal impulses. Determinedly anti-utopian, and closely linked to anti-facism and anti-communism, ego psychology was identified with the ‘maturity ethic,’ meaning the acceptance of limits” (p. 96), and ultimately reflective of 1950s American culture. As Zaretsky (2008) notes, ego psychologists accepted and even naturalized the received private-public distinction; furthermore, they regarded interiority, or psychological life, as basically apolitical. Analysis, for ego psychologists, aimed at strengthening the ego, for, as they saw it, “the declining Oedipal authority weakened the ego while strengthening the primitive, sadistic, self-destructive superego of early childhood” (p. 97). On this view, unchecked narcissism was thought to promote “the dissolution of social bonds, the inability to make commitments, to engage in long-run projects, to sacrifice the self for larger purposes” (p. 97).

This is precisely where Irigaray intervenes to challenge the Lacan of the *matheme*, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. It is also a point at which she challenges the Lacan of the signifier, whose account of speech seems tacitly to rely upon inherited notions of sexual difference that privilege the masculine. Two of Lacan's *écrits* in particular are vulnerable to this Irigarayan critique: not only "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," which I have already discussed at length in this chapter, but also "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" which was also published in 1957.

In the "Purloined Letter" seminar, Lacan (1957/2006g) associates femininity with the second logical moment of the intersubjective structure he finds in Poe's story,<sup>51</sup> which he describes in terms of concealment and fetish.<sup>52</sup> He even describes the purloined letter itself as "like an immense female body" (1957/2006g, p. 26).<sup>53</sup> Taken together, these allusions suggest that reading a symptom in a course of psychoanalysis or interpreting a

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<sup>51</sup> "The second [logical moment] is based on a glance which sees that the first sees nothing and deceives itself into thereby believing to be covered what it hides: the Queen and then the Minister" (p. 10).

<sup>52</sup> Consider the following passages from Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'": "For in playing the game of the one who hides, he is obliged to don the role of the Queen, including even the attributes of woman and shadow, so propitious for the act of concealment" (1957/2006g, p. 22), and "For this sign is clearly that of woman, because she brings out her very being thereby by founding it outside the law, which ever contains her - due to the effect of origins - in a position as signifier, nay, as fetish" (p. 22).

<sup>53</sup> The broader context of this simile is worth quoting: "...it is significant that the letter which the Minister addresses to himself, ultimately, is a letter from a woman... And everything...seems to conspire to make a personage, whose every remark has surrounded him with the most virile of traits, exude the oddest *odor di femina* when he appears. Dupin does not fail to emphasize that this is indeed an artifice, describing behind the spurious appearance the vigilance of a beast of prey ready to spring. ... Just so does the purloined letter, like an immense female body, sprawl across the space of the Minister's office when Dupin enters it. But just so does he already expect to find it there, having only to undress that huge body, with his eyes veiled by green spectacles" (1957/2006g, pp. 25-26). The image constructed here is disturbingly reminiscent of rape.

written work can produce a kind of sexual pleasure from the power differential and the concomitant use of force involved in these acts. This theme of sexual pleasure returns when Lacan (1957/2006b) subversively appropriates Saussure's tree diagram in "Instance of the Letter" to illustrate his account of signification. Here he emphasizes that there is no mutuality between signifier and signified, no reciprocal penetration or determination of one by the other.<sup>54</sup> In 1957, he is teaching his students that the signifier (associated with the masculine) dominates the signified (associated with the feminine) in the act of signification, even though the signifier (masculine) does not represent the signified (feminine). Indeed, Lacan (1957/2006b) himself makes the point about sexual difference in his account of language explicit when he states, "the point is...to show how the signifier in fact enters the signified" and impregnates it with meaning (p. 417). Here, the act of signification is likened to the heterosexual sex act, in which the partners each supposedly have a distinct, stable role – active or passive. Lacan's later proclamation that "there is no such thing as the sexual relationship" in Seminar 20 reveals his critical position toward this portrayal of knowledge in reproductive terms. Irigaray's charge would be that in his 1957 *écrit*, Lacan speaks (or writes) against the more subversive implications of his teachings that would become more explicit in Seminar 20. Indeed, for Irigaray, Lacan's style of reading performs an alternative sexual relationship that replaces the portrayal of woman as the object of exchange between men and even goes beyond the recognition of woman as occupant of the position of speaking subject, to the enactment of reading as an always-unfinished dialogue, in which there is an dialectic of active and

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<sup>54</sup> This is a claim that he will, of course, reiterate in his later teachings when he announces that "there is no sexual relationship."

passive in the dynamic relationship between the partners. As I will discuss in the next chapter, Irigaray's own subversive reading of Lacan in "Cosi Fan Tutti" is her performative response as a woman to Lacan's proclamations about women in Lacan's own style.

**Third level: History/ies of psychoanalysis as movement and institution: The dialectic of possibility and actuality.** Pletsch (1982) and Borossa (1997), together with John Forrester, agree that a history of the vicissitudes of psychoanalytic knowledge over time and across contexts is best told through the case study archive. When read with this claim in mind, Lacan offers instances across his teachings of the ways in which the case study genre both discloses the history of psychoanalysis as movement and institution and contributes to that history. In preparation for Chapter 4 of this dissertation, in which I examine the ways the early Lacan's (re)reading of the Freud-Jones debate - and Joan Riviere's "Womanliness as Masquerade" in particular - contributed to the historical emergence of a distinctively Lacanian approach to psychoanalytic theory and practice, I will briefly discuss an instance, taken from Lacan's *Seminar XVII*, in which he returns to Freud's (1905b) Dora case and reads it in such a way that it provides insight into the fate of psychoanalysis in the (at the time of that seminar) half-century or so since its formation. But first, a few more words about the role of disavowal in the historical record.

***Enacting truth-as-fiction: Foucault and the subversive transformation of historical realities.*** At this register, the relationship between psychoanalysis and history is characterized by another version of the dialectic of fact and fiction, a dialectic of possibility and actuality. Common sense has it that history as a "telling" of the past

emerges from a desire to imagine what has been before and, perhaps, what could be in the future; history is supposed to be a comprehensive factual record clearly distinct from fiction. A version of this view is elaborated and defended by Spence, who argues that Freud, conflicted about the apparent history-narrative dichotomy, vacillated between the two poles of it throughout his career. Yet, according to historian Hayden White (1980) - and echoed by Humphrey Morris (1993) in his discussion of the psychoanalytic version of this dialectic - the neat separation of history from fiction as well as history's appearance as totality are merely facades produced by distortions and elisions that take place as history is written.

That history appears to be an integrated whole has political implications, since, for White (1980), the telling of history renders invisible the way in which the unassimilable is rejected in the establishment of the historical record.<sup>55</sup> The desire for the possible that fuels the imagination and enables literary creation is constrained by what is - the present, or the actual - resulting in the narrativization of events. White (1980) portrays the historical record as a kind of narrative representation that rhetorically persuades the reader by imposing formal, structuring characteristics, such as coherence, continuity, and meaning - i.e., moral significance - on events.<sup>56</sup> In order to effect the form of a story, the process of "telling" appeals to the existing social system as a framing of what is morally possible. Consequently, the narrative told tends to justify the status quo and thereby render "what is" desirable.

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<sup>55</sup> See also Brooks (1982).

<sup>56</sup> In contrast, annals and chronicles merely report events and do not, unlike historical narrative, require interpretation.

The late Foucault's (2001) concept of *parrhesia* ("speaking truthfully") offers a productive way both to contend with the situation White (1980) has diagnosed and to examine Lacan's subversive role in the history of psychoanalysis as movement and institution. For Foucault (2001), *parrhesia* is the process, act, or function of telling the truth, a performance that, as Simpson (2012) emphasizes, "enact[s] truth" (p. 101), and, for this reason, entails ethical responsibility and demands of the truth-teller that they have the courage to face the risks of rejection or punishment, such as excommunication from a community of interpretation. On this view, truth is constructed and perspectival; a rigid distinction between truth and fiction cannot be maintained.<sup>57</sup> Truth-as-fiction is, or can be, an intentionally-constructed experiment aimed at transformation of "individual and collective realities" (p. 104). Fiction "constructively imagines an alternative interpretation of the present that exploits unexplored potentialities" that have implications for the future (p. 105). "*Parrhesia* emerges as the means by which authority is confronted with a truth that unsettles the present reality" (p. 108).<sup>58</sup>

Foucault's claim can be translated into psychoanalytic terms. In critical response to Spence, Morris (1993) explains that, for the later Freud, "'historical truth'...comes closer to meaning what Spence designates as 'narrative truth' - a truth distorted as it is told, from generation to generation, from patient to analyst, from an observing self to

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<sup>57</sup> Simpson (2012) explains that "the production of truth, and therefore the instantiation of resistance, can be a creative and *intentional* process...[and] this more imaginative and creative dimension is often revealed in Foucault's reflections on the role of the author" (p. 103).

<sup>58</sup> Taking up this ethical responsibility can have potentially transformative effects on both the truth-teller and their audience. I will return to this claim in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

itself' (p. 44).<sup>59</sup> This entails that "enactment is a constitutive element of a dialogic structure at the basis of psychoanalytic understanding" and historical representation (Morris, 1993, p. 35). The later Freud approaches this dialectical conclusion in his research on disavowal, a non-repressive defense he and Lacan associate with perversion, manifesting through enactment. These narrative enactments disclose that, at one and the same time, two contradictory attitudes are maintained. The psychoanalytic equivalent of *parrhesia* is to diagnose this enactment and subvert it. In this way, the truth-teller and their audience have the opportunity to take up a stance toward tradition and authority that does not seek to obtain love or approval by living up to a fantasized image of the omnipotent father.

***Lacan's critique of the psychoanalytic institution in Seminar XVII.*** Lacan (1991/2007) threads a critique of the psychoanalytic institution into the series of teachings he presented to his students in 1969 and 1970, beginning with the following passage:

Freud produced a number of master signifiers, which he covered up with the name of Freud. A name can also be used to plug something up. ... And how can one believe that analysts are what they are by virtue of a devotion to Freud's name? They are unable to untangle themselves from Freud's master signifiers - the unconscious, seduction, traumatism, fantasy, the ego, the id, and whatever else you like - there's no question of them leaving that order. They have no father to kill at this level. On is not the father of signifiers, at the very most one is "because of." No problem at this level (p. 130).

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<sup>59</sup> The process of writing unsettles a whole network of apparently stable distinctions: not only fact/reference-narrative and science-hermeneutics, but also theory-practice, evidence-rhetorical persuasion, and material reality-psychical reality/fantasy.



In this passage, Lacan (1991/2007) asserts that Freud's name plugs up a fundamental lack in the being of his followers who are, through his teachings and other aspects of psychoanalytic education, attempting to become psychoanalytic subjects. This is the *objet a*, the part of the subject's being that is simultaneously left out and produced as identity is formed. *Objet a* also animates group psychology. The institutional critique that weaves through the remainder of Lacan's (1991/2007) seminar appeals to the different versions of the myth of the Father in Freud's writings,<sup>60</sup> Lacan's own four discourses, and the psychoanalytic literature, including Freud's own Dora case, published in 1905.

Lacan (1991/2007) suggests that by adhering rigidly, even obsessively, to Freud's master signifiers, his followers maintain him in a kind of "undead" state as idealized Father, or master; as they do so, they also relate to psychoanalysis as an ahistorical, closed master discourse.<sup>61</sup> But since they are focused entirely on Freud's signifiers, they have effectively disavowed that what set up this ideal in the first place was the very murder of the primal father.

If you read the veritable anniversary corpus that is this issue  
of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* [Volume 50,

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<sup>60</sup> As Grigg (2006) notes, Freud presents at least four versions of the Oedipus complex across his writings: (1.) in his 1900 *Interpretation of Dreams* [Chapter 5, §D, b. (Dreams of the death of beloved persons)], (2.) in his 1913 *Totem and Taboo* [Chapter 4, §§2-7], (3.) in his 1930 *Civilization and Its Discontents* [Chapter 7], and (4.) in his 1939 *Moses and Monotheism* [Essay 3, Part I, §D (Application) and Essay 3, Part II, §§D, G. (Historical truth)-H. (The historical development)].

<sup>61</sup> According to Lacan, Freud's master signifiers were initially produced through his revolutionary psychoanalytic practice. This led to the emergence of psychoanalysis as a movement, a process that can be formalized in Lacan's (1991/2007) analyst's discourse. Given the circular relationship between the four discourses, however, the analyst's discourse inevitably produces a new master's discourse. In the context of Lacan's (1991/2007) critique of the psychoanalytic mainstream, this means that "psychoanalysis as a movement" inevitably transforms into "psychoanalysis as an institution" over time. There is no final turn of this circle, however; Lacan's aim in this seminar - and across his teachings - is to hystericize this master.

Issue 4, the October 1969 fiftieth anniversary issue] you will see the authors congratulating themselves on the *solidity*<sup>62</sup> displayed over these past fifty years. I ask you to carry out this test - take any issue from these past fifty years, you will never be able to tell when it dates from. They all say the same thing. They are always equally insipid, and because analysis preserves, they are always the same authors. One of them expresses himself in a single page.<sup>63</sup> They congratulate themselves on the fact that, in sum, these fifty years have indeed confirmed these fundamental truths, that the mainspring of analysis is goodness,<sup>64</sup> and that what has fortunately become obvious over the course of these years, with the progressive effacing of Freud's discourse, is particularly the *solidity* and glory of a discovery that is called the autonomous ego, namely, the ego free of conflict.<sup>65</sup>

This is the result of fifty years of experience, by virtue of the insertion of three psychoanalysts [Ernst Kris, Rudolf Loewenstein, and Heinz Hartmann], who had blossomed in Berlin, into American society where this discourse of a *solidly* autonomous ego undoubtedly promised attractive results. For a return to the master's discourse, in effect, one could do no better.<sup>66</sup>

This gives us an idea of the consequences, retrogressive if you'd like, that rebound from any form of attempt at

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<sup>62</sup> Variations of the signifier "solid" occur in this passage from Lacan's (1991/2007) critique of the psychoanalytic institution. This signifier alludes to the ego and identity and is reminiscent of Lacan's emphasis in his Mirror Stage paper on the way in which identity acts like a kind of armor for the ego. It suggests ossification, death, and, indeed, institutionalization. This signifier can be contrasted with "fluid," which suggests motion, movement, and process, and which Irigaray foregrounds in her own critique of the Lacan of the *matheme*.

<sup>63</sup> This is a reference to Sacha Nacht's article in this issue of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. See Nacht (1969).

<sup>64</sup> This is Lacan's (1991/2007) summary of Nacht's view of psychoanalysis.

<sup>65</sup> This is a reference to Heinz Hartmann's concept of the "autonomous ego" and to ego psychology more generally.

<sup>66</sup> Several quotations from *Seminar XVII* support my linking of the ascendancy of ego psychology with the transformation of Freud's psychoanalysis into a master's discourse: the ego is "the little master" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 30); "the master's knowledge is produced as...what we call science" (p. 90); "...in this discourse the subject finds himself, along with all the illusions this comprises, bound to the master signifier" (p. 93); "acting as the master is to think of oneself as univocal" (p. 103).

transgression, which, all the same, psychoanalysis was at one time (Lacan, 1991/2007, pp. 72-73).

Group cohesion (“solidity”) is achieved, it would seem, at the expense of theoretical generativity. In terms of Lacan’s four discourses, this can be understood as a consequence of the subject’s relationship to master signifiers. These signifiers are given authority out of the urge for an identity in which one can recognize oneself and be recognized by others (i.e., as a psychoanalyst).

Lacan’s (1991/2007) critique can also be understood in terms of the myth(s) of the father. Freud identified with the primal father or Moses and feared being murdered by his followers. Freud (1905b) enacted his aspiration to complete knowledge or mastery, to become the castrating father - despite the fact that his own theory showed that this was not possible - in the form of his Dora case study. Moreover, his decision to form the International Psychoanalytic Association, the primary accrediting and regulatory body for psychoanalysis, was Freud’s compromise to protect his movement from disappearing. Out of the IPA, the sectarian, dogmatic, and stagnant character of institutionalized psychoanalysis emerged. In this sense, Freud’s “murder” was partly self-inflicted. Subsequently, Freud was indeed Symbolically “killed” by Kris, Loewenstein, and Hartmann. Ego psychology was established in his image.

To return to psychoanalysis as a movement - as the analyst’s, not the master’s, discourse - requires a kind of conscious murder of the father that Lacan himself enacts through his own (re)reading of the Dora case in *Seminar XVII*.<sup>67</sup> Freud’s first version of the myth of the father, in *Interpretation of Dreams*, emerged as part of his response to his

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<sup>67</sup> This (re)reading occurs in Part 2 (“Beyond the Oedipus Complex”), Chapter 6 (“The Castrated Master”), Section 2, pp. 94-101 of *Seminar XVII*.

“encounter with hysteria” and was meant to “protect the place of the father” (Grigg, 2006, p. 67). Freud’s (1905b) case study on Dora likewise manifested in writing Freud’s complicated emotional response to working with hysterics. “You must read *Dora*,” Lacan (1991/2007) says, “and...not lose sight of something that I would go so far as to say Freud covers with his prejudices” (p. 94).<sup>68</sup>

At this moment [in Freud’s case study when Herr K says to Dora, “my wife means nothing to me”] the Other’s *jouissance* is offered to her [Dora], and she doesn’t want to have anything to do with it because what she wants is knowledge as the means of *jouissance*, but in order to place this knowledge in the service of truth. ...and this truth...is that the master is castrated (p. 97).

Lacan (1991/2007) adds that the significance of Dora’s second dream is that “the symbolic father is indeed the dead father” (p. 97). Eventually, Lacan (1991/2007) concludes that Freud “fell into error” when he substituted the myth of the Oedipus complex “for the knowledge that he gathered” from his female patients, like Dora. Freud fell into this error because of his aspiration to complete knowledge. In this way, Lacan (1991/2007) takes up a perverse stance to psychoanalytic authority in the sense that he does not remain beholden to a fantasized image of Freud as omnipotent Father. Instead, he reckons with Freud as castrated Father, or Real Father as structural operator, and thus finds a way to go “beyond” castration, as I showed in Chapter 2 is possible in Lacan’s

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<sup>68</sup> Here Lacan (1991/2007) seems to refer to “these sentences that for Freud seem to be self-evident” (p. 94), that is, his assumptions. Freud’s (1905b) assumptions when working with Dora included the claims that (1.) Dora’s desire was heterosexual, and that (2.) Dora’s lack would be addressed through motherhood, that is, by receiving the phallus. Furthermore, Freud assumes that a girl like Dora “works that sort of thing out on her own,” namely her encounter with Herr K at age 14; “she does not work it out on her own” (p. 96).

(1960/2006c) graph of desire.<sup>69</sup> Going beyond castration, in Lacan's own case, involved innovating a clinical practice that subverted the psychoanalytic mainstream.

Having considered this example of subversive reading from *Seminar XVII*, I will conclude this chapter by outlining a method for reading for disavowal.

### **A Lacanian Approach to Reading for Disavowal**

To approach the written word as “between writing and speech,” as introduced earlier in this chapter, is to incorporate a psychoanalytic conceptualization of language into a method of reading. This method involves two principles: reading for context and reading for process. Together these principles constitute a way of reading for disavowal - that is, for perversion as an attempt to hold two contrary attitudes at once - that can be applied at both individual and group levels.

Lacan - like Freud's teachers, the hysterics - experientially introduces his students and other readers to this approach to textual analysis by composing the *écrit*, “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud,” deliberately such that it occupies a liminal position and demands a similarly analytic method from anyone who encounters it.<sup>70</sup> Echoing Freud, who “maintained that...a [literary] background was the prime requisite in the training of analysts” (1957/2006b, p. 413), Lacan claims that such a textual exercise contributes to the formation of clinicians. In this subsection, I discuss these two principles of a Lacanian approach to reading. I argue that this approach

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<sup>69</sup> See Verhaeghe (2006) for more on the Real Father as structural operator.

<sup>70</sup> It is evident that this piece is liminal because Lacan moves freely between, on the one hand, highly evocative turns of phrase and at times direct reference to or quotations from poetry, and, on the other, instances of mathematical formalism and apparently straightforward definitions of key terms.

answers to the question of the possibility of making a contribution in one's own name to psychoanalytic tradition.

**Reading for Symbolic context.** Lacan indicates the importance of reading for context by making explicit how “The Instance of the Letter...” is itself situated. His audience, gathered before him in the Descartes Amphitheater at the Sorbonne, consists of the “philosophy group of the Fédération des étudiants ès lettres” (1957/2006b, p. 412). These students, Lacan emphasizes, have a “literary background” (p. 413). The implication is that this context helps explain why Lacan acknowledged the rhetorical character of his work and why he employed this rhetoric in the first place, as well as why the nature and function of the “letter” is his focus. He endeavors to show how psychoanalysts, too, are “étudiants ès lettre” [students of the letter].

The fact that Lacan turns his students' attention to context entails a significantly different approach to reading than one grounded in the norms of mainstream philosophy. Attending to validity, soundness, and clarity - what Fink (2004a) terms the “internal coherence” of a work - encourages the reader to treat a text as though it existed in a vacuum, composed during no specific era and addressed to no one in particular. It also assumes that these epistemological norms are themselves timeless and universal, rather than the products of culture. Inevitably, in taking this approach without reflexivity, a reader will tacitly privilege some context and its norms without realizing they are doing so, and thereby become blind and deaf to other possible meanings.

Reading for context, then, not only pays attention to the structural conditions of the signifier (differential couplings, grammatical and lexical laws) but also to “the notion of ‘usage’ of a taxeme or semanteme, which refers to contexts just one degree above that

of the units in question” (1957/2006b, p. 418). Taken together, these “symbolic contexts” (p. 420) constitute a word’s “associative richness” (Muller & Richardson, 1982), which transcends the conscious intentions of any individual speaking being. Thus, the reader not only considers what they take to be the primary context of the work but also all the other possible contexts in which the work could be interpreted. Reading for context acknowledges that productions of language say more than what their creators intend.<sup>71</sup>

***“Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’”: Prioritizing destination over origin.***

Lacan’s teachings in his 1957 “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’” shift priority from the origin of a piece of writing to its destination, while also emphasizing that a piece of writing can be displaced, that is, purloined or diverted from its path. Lacan inaugurates his most explicit statement on this theme by posing a question. “For there to be purloined letters, we wonder, to whom does a letter belong?” He continues,

...Might a letter to which the sender retains certain rights then not belong altogether to the person to whom it is addressed? Or might it be that the latter was never the true addressee? ...the responsibility of the letter’s author takes a back seat to that of its holder... I say the “holder” and not the “owner.” For it becomes clear thus that the addressee’s ownership of the letter is no less questionable than that of anyone else into whose hands it may fall... we are quite simply dealing with a *letter* which has been *detoured*, one whose trajectory has been *prolonged* (Lacan, 1957/2006b, pp. 19-21, original emphasis).

The familiar emphasis on ownership not only connotes that something belongs to or relates to a specified individual. It not only indicates that the thing in question was done or produced by that individual, or even that the thing is particular or proper to that person.

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<sup>71</sup> “What this structure of the signifying chain discloses is the possibility I have...to use it to signify *something altogether different* from what it says” (Lacan, 1957/2006b, pp. 420-421, original emphasis).

Most significantly, ownership foregrounds the concept of *origin*. To assign ownership is to take full ethical responsibility for something. It is to acknowledge paternity and authorship. Lacan challenges this familiar emphasis by prioritizing destination over origin.

The concept of destination is grounded in that of place. To acknowledge that something has a “place” is to affirm that there is a portion of space available for or designated by that thing. Above all, place foregrounds the importance of that thing’s association with a particular *context*. That a piece of writing can be purloined or *displaced* indicates the possibility of deviation from the course or direction of movement leading to the intended reader. That is, the piece of writing can arrive somewhere other than where the origin intends. For Lacan, symptomatic speech is addressed to someone in particular, someone significant in the patient’s life. In the clinical encounter, these words are displaced, so as to arrive at the analyst, the new destination. Displacement entails that the words are taken up by an unforeseen reader. They are read in a new context.

The priority of destination and the possibility of displacement have significant implications for practices of writing and reading. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the writer is no longer conceived as one who transmits in Buffonian “good” style a univocal meaning that aligns with the order of nature. Rather, the writer uses style to open up interpretive spaces in their own written compositions. Encountering these spaces, the reader is provoked into interpretive action, not simply relegated to passive acceptance or reception of ideas. The emphasis, then, is put on the activity of the reader, who is put to work by a piece of writing. Interpretive activity is the reader’s ethical responsibility as a reader. As Lacan states in the “Overture” to his *Écrits*, “it will be up to this reader to give



the letter in question...the very thing he will find as its concluding word: its destination” (1966/2006f, p. 4). The concept of communication is rendered rather more complicated as a consequence.

According to Lacan, the first dialogue between the Prefect of Police and Dupin in “The Purloined Letter” “represents the veritable complexity of what is ordinarily simplified, with the most confused of results, in the notion of communication” (1957/2006b, p. 12). Despite the fact that “communication can give the impression...of conveying in its transmission but one meaning” and, further, that “if we only retain the dialogue’s meaning as a report, its verisimilitude appears to depend on a degree of accuracy” (p. 12), Lacan asserts that psychoanalysis teaches us to “shift here from the field of accuracy to the register of truth” (p. 13). In truth, for Lacan, “the signifier is not functional” (p. 18). It does not simply function to communicate or transmit a univocal message.

Practices of reading, then, must be conceived in terms of *repetition*, not reception. Lacan finds the reader’s creative transformation of a piece of writing illuminated by Freud’s explanation in his 1895 “Project for a Scientific Psychology” of the primordial effort to find the irretrievably lost object. Symbolic repetition uses words to achieve the presence of the lost object even in the midst of its physical absence. In contrast to Kierkegaard’s perspective on this issue, Lacan, following Freud, rejects the commonsense view that repetition is a function of consciousness. Rather, acts of Symbolic repetition, such as the interpretive transformation of piece of writing by a reader, are, to an extent, unconscious processes.

Lacan's teachings in this *écrit* rearrange familiar notions of the relationship between human beings and language, a theme Lacan elaborates upon at length in many of his writings. Here, in the "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," Lacan notes that

If man comes to think about the symbolic order, it is because he is first caught in it in his being. The illusion that he has formed this order through his consciousness stems from the fact that it is through the pathway of a specific gap in his imaginary relationship with his semblable that he has been able to enter into this order as a subject (1957/2006g, p. 40).

Man is seized by the Symbolic order yet also takes up capture actively, like Freud's grandson in the *Fort-Da* game depicted in Freud's 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

***The unconscious and history.*** The principle of reading for context frames Lacan's imperative that psychoanalysts, as members of an institution or interpretive community, "return to Freud" and read his works for themselves. On Lacan's view, Freud's descendants erred by interpreting his written teachings in terms of the norms and biases of their own contemporary context. For many of Freud's followers who immigrated from Europe to the United States to flee the threat of genocide, that context was postwar America, characterized by values such as independence and individuality. Their experiences navigating the tasks of acculturation and assimilation likewise inflected their interpretation of Freud. Lacan suggests that ego psychology and neo-Freudianism are symptomatic of history and culture in these ways.

The problem is not that these readings of Freud were shaped, for such shaping is inevitable. Rather, according to Lacan, the problem is that psychoanalysts associated with these interpretations tended to adhere to them without reflexivity. Consequently, Lacan contends, many of Freud's followers transformed Freud's works in such a way that his teachings were rendered conservative. Returning to reading Freud in his contexts can

interrupt these received versions of psychoanalysis and restore the full subversive potential of his teaching.

Yet returning to Freud in context also requires reflexive discernment on the part of the reader. Indeed, Freud's ways of thinking were shaped in part by a kind of scientism, much as the way he listened to patients was impacted by misogyny and patriarchy. Freud's teachings, too, then, are symptomatic of history and culture. The task Lacan undertook and bequeathed to his students was to attempt to bracket these Symbolic contexts and consider what Freud provides in his work that can subvert problematic ways of conceptualizing knowledge, truth, and women. The implication is that the shaping force that history and culture exert on ways of thinking is not utterly deterministic. Something escapes, and this is desire.

*The historical unconscious and the symptom.* "The unconscious," Lacan asserts in his "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," "is the chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a lie: it is the censored chapter. But the truth can be refound; most often it has already been written elsewhere" (1953/2006e, p. 215). He reaffirms this view in 1957, stating that "the unconscious is neither the primordial nor the instinctual, and what it knows of the elemental is no more than the elements of the signifier" (1957/2006b, p. 434). With these assertions, Lacan distances himself from definitions of the unconscious in terms of instincts that develop through a series of chronological stages, definitions that became dominant among the adherents of ego psychology and neo-Freudianism.

Lacan's (1953/2006e) list of places where the repressed truth has been "written elsewhere" includes sites that are most immediately applicable to particular individuals,

as well as those that are more aptly considered aspects of group or community experiences (p. 215). The fact that Lacan includes “semantic evolution,” traditions, and legends among the sites where the repressed can return symptomatically further supports the application of psychoanalytic method to a reflexive critique of psychoanalysis as an institution. The conservative character of mainstream interpretations of Freud, then, can be conceptualized as a problem of anamnesis. Concepts and their history have been disavowed or read without reflexive consideration of Symbolic context.

Corresponding to this historical understanding of the unconscious is Lacan’s early conception of the aim of psychoanalysis: the historicization of the subject, the assumption of one’s history, or the articulation of full speech.<sup>72</sup> On this view, the patient’s predicament is understood as a symptom, which Lacan understands as fundamentally metaphorical in its dynamics.<sup>73</sup> Lacan subsequently elaborates this link between metaphor and symptom in 1957.

Metaphor’s two-stage mechanism is the very mechanism by which symptoms, in the analytic sense, are determined. Between the enigmatic signifier of sexual trauma and the

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<sup>72</sup> “To Freud’s mind, it is not a question of biological memory...but of remembering, that is, of history... Let’s be categorical: in psychoanalytic anamnesis, what is at stake is not reality, but truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by the conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the scant freedom through which the subject makes them present” (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 213). Furthermore, “this assumption by the subject of his history, insofar as it is constituted by speech addressed to another, is clearly the basis of the new method Freud called psychoanalysis” (p. 213). Again, “what we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history - in other words, we help him complete the current historicization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical ‘turning points’ in his existence. ...every fixation at a supposed instinctual stage is above all a historical stigma: a page of shame that one forgets or undoes, or a page of glory that obliges” (p. 217). In sum, “analysis can have as its goal only the advent of true speech and the subject’s realization of his history in its relation to a future” (p. 249).

<sup>73</sup> “...metaphor being but a synonym for the symbolic displacement brought into play in the symptom” (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 216).

term it comes to replace in a current signifying chain, a spark flies that fixes in a symptom - a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element - the signification, that is inaccessible to the conscious subject, by which the symptom may be dissolved (1957/2006b, p. 431).

If a community, such as the psychoanalytic institution as it existed in Lacan's day, can be said to have an unconscious, it can also suffer from defensive reactions to psychoanalytic truth. Reading its representative works/texts for Symbolic context is a way of subjecting that community to psychoanalytic treatment. It is in this sense that "commenting on a text is like doing an analysis" (Lacan, 1975/1988). But this kind of reading must be coupled with an evocative response, such as Lacan gives in his own teachings, in order to transform the relationship the psychoanalytic institution has to its own concepts. The psychoanalyst's evocative response, which Lacan claims it is our responsibility as practitioners to give,<sup>74</sup> "tends toward nothing less than the transformation of the subject to who it is addressed by means of the link it establishes with the speaker..." (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 245). In other words, "speech commits its author by investing its addressee with a new reality..." (p. 246).

**Reading for Symbolic process.** The second principle of a Lacanian approach to reading, in which attention is given to the workings of Symbolic process in a piece of writing, has been informed in two ways by Lacanian psychoanalytic literary theorist and critic Shoshana Felman's (1993) *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference*.

First, this principle of reading presupposes Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis *both* as an ethics to be heeded in particular acts of reading, *and* as a collection of

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<sup>74</sup> See Lacan (1953/2006e), pp. 247-248.

symptomatic theoretical texts. As symptomatic, the literary excess emerging from the primary source texts by Riviere, Lacan, and others implicitly poses questions that productively frustrate the rhetorical attempts at authority in these very same texts. Yet, simultaneously, as an ethics of interpretation, “psychoanalysis precisely teaches us [to read] every human knowledge [as having] its own unconscious and [teaches] that every human search is blinded by some systematic oversights of which it is not aware” (Felman, 1993, p. 71). This conceptualization of psychoanalysis as both an ethical attitude and an (attempted) authoritative body of knowledge thus recommends attending to the unconscious, polyvocal character of the writer, reader, and researcher.

Second, this approach to reading for process presupposes feminism as another kind of ethics to be heeded in particular acts of reading. Specifically, feminism is understood here as a particular kind of “bond of reading” that attends to the moments of rupture in texts, symptomatic as they are of what Felman (1993) calls the “absence of a story.” Here “absence” will be taken to refer not only to gaps in particular writings, but also to the gaps in the historical record that will have been identified. A feminist reading strategy as an ethical attitude toward the research project will involve, above all, “being careful never to foreclose or to determine in advance the reading process” (p. 6). To do otherwise would be to lead primarily with the dogmatic aspects of theory, and to position oneself as reader as if from the outside of the text. This can blind the reader in particular ways that result in violently reducing the otherness of the text. Furthermore, establishing a feminist bond with a text in a concrete act of reading will be understood as a process of becoming - that is to say, of assuming one’s position as a sexed reader of a text that is itself also inscribed by sexual difference.

***Reading for intended meaning.*** At this first stage, the aim will be to discern what meaning the author seems to want to say through the written text. Attention will also be given to considering the other ways of making meaning that may have been avoided.

***Reading for narrative threads.*** This second stage in this Lacanian approach to reading seeks out what Rogers (2007) calls “story threads” - but which, in the context of this dissertation will be referred to as “narrative threads” - disclose various subject positions and discourses in the piece of writing at hand.

A story [narrative] thread might run through an entire [piece of writing], disappearing, reemerging, and leaving a trace in subtle ways. Furthermore, different story threads play against one another, creating particular effects through their associative positioning. Listening in this way, [the reader] begins to discern contradictions and specific ways of shaping a narrative through unconscious censorship (p. 110).

Narrative threads thus structure different relationships to knowledge in particular ways. This method of “hearing” the text will guard against simply following the context and becoming attached to the narrative illusions it promotes.

The following narrative threads will be distinguished and explored in Chapter 4: (1.) the history of psychoanalysis in France, particularly the emergence of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a distinct interpretive community, (2.) the Freud-Jones debate, (3.) the aspect of Lacan’s pedagogical style that involves (re)reading case studies, (4.) the aspect of Lacan’s pedagogical style that involves literary reading for the signifier, and (5.) the aspect of Lacan’s pedagogical style that involves formalization.

***Reading for the divided subject.*** This third stage in this Lacanian reading method will attend to the various appearances of the subject in the teachings from *Seminar V* that

will be analyzed. As I will show in Chapter 4, these appearances include the Lacan of the signifier and the Lacan of the matheme.

***Reading for the address.*** Modes of address - as rhetoricians, literary critics, and reflexive sociologists have emphasized - do significant kinds of work in written texts and oral speech. They establish a relationship between the author and the groups or communities with which the author identifies. They also establish relationships both to the people written about, who may or may not be included in the author's intended audience. This fourth stage of reading aims to attend to moments in the writing when the address becomes apparent.

***Reading for signifiers.*** This fifth stage in this reading method focuses on repeating words and phrases whose meanings may shift in various positions within a piece of writing, such as "mask" and "mark." These will be noted as potential signifiers.

***Reading for textual form.*** This sixth stage in the Lacanian approach to reading is concerned with the formal and stylistic qualities of the primary-source writings analyzed in Chapter 4. Attention will also be given during this stage to patterns among the signifiers in the writings.

***Reading against Lacan (Irigaray's stage).*** This final stage in the Lacanian reading method will attempt to read against the conscious intentions of the reader, in this case Lacan as a reader of case studies.



## CHAPTER 4:

### JOAN RIVIERE'S "WOMANLINESS AS MASQUERADE," LACAN'S FORMULAS OF DESIRE IN *SEMINAR V*, AND IRIGARAY'S MIMETIC CRITIQUE OF LACAN

*"Such duplicity, the homo duplex denounced since antiquity, is less that of a liar than of a hypocrite, meaning actor in the Greek sense of the word. It is that of an actor who needs an audience in order to express himself and has already understood 'the importance of an audience,' but is so good at his part that he is caught in his own game. He makes an exhibition of himself for others but also for himself and, having become his own spectator, he no longer quite knows whether he is playing or being played. 'An actor perhaps,' André Walter was to say later on, as he practiced in front of a mirror, 'but I am playing myself,' a dangerous game which ends by becoming a simulation before oneself and puts the apprentice sorcerer into the power of forces over which he no longer has control."*

Jean Delay, *The Youth of André Gide*, p. 94

In the "Signification of the Phallus" section of *Seminar V*, delivered in 1957 and 1958, Lacan (1998/2017) intervened in the so-called Freud-Jones debate, an institutional conflict that initially took the form of lectures delivered at the annual International Psychoanalytic Congress, subsequently published in English in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in the 1920s and 30s. What would become the distinct institutional characters of British and Austrian psychoanalysis were formed in part through the ways the analysts in these two geographical locations differently read and responded to Freud's infamous question, "What does a woman want?". Commentators have differed as to which analysts in particular should be considered participants in this debate,<sup>1</sup> but most

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Odes Fliegel (1986) asserts that "the key papers were two by Horney (1924, 1926), three by Jones (1927, 1933, 1935) and three by Freud (1924a, 1925, 1931). There were important papers by Lampel-de Groot (1928) and Helene Deutsch (1930,

agree that Ernest Jones' (1935) lecture-article, "Early Female Sexuality," signaled the end of the conflict. His paper is generally understood as an explicit gesture on the part of British psychoanalysis ("London") to gain institutional recognition from Freud's followers in Vienna. In the century following Jones' (1935) article, the debate has been revisited and reread for various ideological ends.<sup>2</sup>

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1934); Fenichel's (1930, 1934) role was interesting, and Melanie Klein (1928) was an important background figure" (p. 4). Quindeau (2013) offers a somewhat different account, stating that "the debate can be followed in four essays by Horney (1924, 1926, 1932, 1933). It is also reflected in three essays by Jones (1927, 1933, 1935), and in three essays by Freud (1924, 1925, 1931). In addition, there is an essay by Melanie Klein (1928), in which she participates indirectly in the controversy" (p. 79).

Another set of commentators differs more strongly, arguing that "the controversy was really triggered by these two important contributions [i.e., Freud's 1924a and 1924b papers]. As a consequence of their publication the debate takes on a life of its own in the late 1920s. ... The controversy is usually referred to as the 'Freud-Jones debate.' However, at least one recent re-examination of the terms of the disagreement rejects this [Mitchell & Rose, 1982]. And indeed, when one reads the articles collected here it becomes obvious that the real dispute, though it remains unacknowledged throughout, is between Freud and Abraham, with one of Abraham's clinical papers being central to the controversy [i.e., his 1922 paper, which included a table referenced by all debate participants except Freud]" (Grigg, Hecq, & Smith, 1999/2015, p. 9). In notable contrast, Buhle (2009) portrays Abraham and Freud as basically in agreement over the terms of the debate. Buhle (2009) also emphasizes the transnational character of this institutional controversy: "For a decade Europe's leading psychoanalysts contested over the meaning of female sexuality. Karen Horney, in Berlin, led the dissenting ranks until the early 1930s. Although much more circumspect than Horney, Ernest Jones and Melanie Klein played important roles in Great Britain; Otto Fenichel and Sandor Rado carried on related discussions in Central Europe. Freud found his defenders in the faithful Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, Helene Deutsch, and Ruth Mack Brunswick. At stake was nothing less than the basic doctrine of Freudian psychoanalysis" (pp. 74-75).

<sup>2</sup> According to Odes Fliegel (1986), between the end of the Freud-Jones debate in 1935 and the resurgence of interest in the 1970s and 1980s in the issues it engaged, "the historic controversy around this subject [i.e., feminine development] was seemingly all but forgotten, with classical literature generally reflecting an unquestioning acceptance of the validity of Freud's views" (p. 3). When interest resurged in the 70s and 80s, theorists tended not to explicitly recognize the early dissenters to Freud's views on feminine sexuality in the psychoanalytic community. Odes Fliegel (1986) notes one exception: Robert Stoller (1968, 1976, 1979), whose 1976 paper in particular basically reversed Freud's view.

In *Seminar V*, Lacan (1998/2017) criticizes aspects of both Freud's and Klein's contributions to the Freud-Jones debate. His positive theory, however, emerges primarily out of his engagement with Joan Riviere's (1929) "Womanliness as Masquerade." Ordinarily Riviere's (1929) paper is considered a precursor to this debate, rather than its resolution,<sup>3</sup> not least due to the chronology of these publications. Throughout these teachings Lacan (1998/2017) invokes Riviere's language of "mask" and "masquerade," treated as signifiers, to distinguish his position on feminine sexuality. There is, I claim, a parallel between the state of French psychoanalysis at the time of these seminar teachings and the state of affairs in which the Freud-Jones debate took place between analysts in London and Vienna. This parallel elucidates Lacan's pedagogical decision to re-open that fraught series of textual exchanges on feminine sexuality more than two decades after this conflict within the transnational psychoanalytic community had ostensibly been resolved. One aim of the present chapter is to argue that Lacan's (1998/2017) intervention in late 1950s France into the Freud-Jones debate - that is, his (re)reading of

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English-language primary source anthologies on post-1935 psychoanalytic views on female sexuality include: Lemma and Lynch (2015), Quindeau (2013), Fiorini and Abelin-Sas Rose (2010), Matthis (2004), Birksted-Breen (2003), Dimen and Goldner (2002), Harding (2001), Saguaro (2000), Schwartz (1998), Abel, Christian, and Moglen (1997), Berger (1994/2013), Zanardi (1990), Alpert (1986/2013), Mendell (1982/2012), and Ruitenbeek (1966).

<sup>3</sup> Few commentators explicitly mention Riviere (1929) as a participant in the Freud-Jones debate. Mitchell (1982), a Lacanian feminist, is a notable exception: "Lou Andreas-Salomé, van Ophuijsen, then Karl Abraham and Auguste Starcke in 1921 initiate the response to the notion [of castration]. Franz Alexander, Otto Rank, Carl Müller-Braunschweig, and Josine Müller continue it until the names that are more famous in this context - Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, Lampl-de Groot, Helene Deutsch, Ernest Jones - are added in the mid-twenties and thirties. Others join in: Fenichel, Rado, Marjorie Brierley, Joan Riviere, Ruth Mack Brunswick, but by 1935 the positions have clarified and the terms of the discussion on sexual differences do not change importantly, though the content that goes to fill out the argument does so. Karl Abraham's work is crucial...though often not acknowledged" (p. 15).

Riviere's case - is his way of announcing the emergence of what would become the distinct community of Lacanian theory and practice. Through these subversive interpretive acts, Lacan demonstrated that he was not beholden to the psychoanalytic mainstream, nor its fantasized image of Freud as omnipotent Father of psychoanalysis. He thus made a contribution in his own name to psychoanalytic tradition.

Lacan's (1998/2017) pedagogical approach in this section of *Seminar V* reveals that, from his perspective, the Imaginary dimension of language infused the original series of exchanges between London and Vienna with confusion and prejudice and thereby aggravated the theoretical impasse. Pivotal to Lacan's (1998/2017) intervention into the Freud-Jones debate, then, is his formalization of the terms of this institutional conflict. With this move, Lacan supposed he evacuated the debate of Imaginary prejudices. Lacan's own heterodox student, Luce Irigaray, calls this conclusion into question when her trenchant criticism of the Lacan of the *matheme* is considered alongside this section of *Seminar V*. According to Irigaray, Lacan's formalist approach remains infused with Imaginary misogynistic prejudice. His translation of the original terms of the Freud-Jones debate into Lacanian algebra effectively disavows sexual difference and appropriates Riviere's feminine position to ultimately masculine ends.

In Chapter 5 of this dissertation I will engage with Irigaray's feminist alternative, which is to stylistically enact difference - that is to say, inhabit it, and write or speak from within it - rather than attempting to approach a feminine position from without and "represent" it, as Lacan unreflexively did in *Seminar V*. The present chapter focuses primarily on Irigaray's negative criticisms of Lacan's formalist pedagogical approach to the question of feminine sexuality.

## **Institutional Context of *Seminar V***

My task in this first section of Chapter 4 is to describe the emergence of French psychoanalysis as it has come to be known through extant historical research. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the literature on psychoanalysis in France or on the emergence of Lacanian psychoanalysis, there is, I claim, a parallel between the state of affairs in 1950s French psychoanalysis and the institutional circumstances surrounding the Freud-Jones debate earlier in the century. This parallel can help explain why Lacan intervened in that by-then-dormant debate during the years that Lacanian psychoanalysis began to make its appearance on the scene as a distinct community of interpretation. Furthermore, I discuss the way in which Lacan's pedagogical efforts to establish his own community of psychoanalysts can be understood as his attempt to speak in his own name *vis-a-vis* psychoanalytic tradition and authority.

**Formation of French psychoanalysis.** As de Mijolla (1992) notes, psychoanalysis was largely ignored in France during the first decade of the 20th century.<sup>4</sup> Although the first of Freud's psychoanalytic writings to be translated into French, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, was published in 1907 in the French-speaking region of Switzerland, no members of the audiences at the two meetings of the International Congress of Psychoanalysis held that decade were from France.<sup>5</sup> A few mentions of psychoanalysis appeared in print in France in the following decade, only to cease during

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<sup>4</sup> De Mijolla (2010) suggests that this may be explained in part by the fact that the French generally perceived the Germans as aggressive rivals during that time. Consider, for example, that the Germans defeated both Napoleons, fought the French in the War of 1870, occupied Alsace-Lorraine, and published medical and psychiatric texts that rivaled those in France.

<sup>5</sup> The first Congress to take place in France was the 15th, held in Paris in August 1938.

the years of the First World War. According to de Mijolla (1992), however, it was the challenge that this war presented to traditional worldviews that helps explain why, in the 1920s, translation of Freud into French began in earnest.

Indications of the institutionalization of psychoanalysis in France began to appear in 1926 with the establishment of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris [SPP], or Paris Psychoanalytic Society, co-founded by Marie Bonaparte [1882-1962],<sup>6</sup> whom Roudinesco (1986/1990) considers Freud's unofficial representative in France.<sup>7</sup> Here emerges, in the French context, something akin to Zaretsky's (2008) distinction between "psychoanalysis as movement" and "psychoanalysis as institution."<sup>8</sup> Eventually the SPP established its own professional journal, *Revue française de Psychanalyse*, and Freud

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<sup>6</sup> Roudinesco (1986/1990) offers a sketch of Marie Bonaparte and her significance for the emergence of French psychoanalysis. Bonaparte participated in a course of psychoanalytic treatment with Freud that terminated in 1926, after which she returned to France and remained on very good terms with her analyst. She contributed, in terms favorable to Freud's own view, to the scholarly discussions about female sexuality that emerged during that same decade. (See, e.g., Bonaparte (1935).) During the 1930s she also made attempts to present her own readings of Freud to a French audience. In response to the Nazi occupation of France during World War II, Bonaparte eventually emigrated from her native country. She also helped Freud and his family when they emigrated from Austria to England during this war.

Although she co-founded the SPP, Bonaparte faced professional discrimination due to the fact that she was not medically trained. Since she was not a physician, for example, she was not permitted to publish case studies of her psychoanalytic practice with patients.

For more on Marie Bonaparte, see Stein-Monod (1966) and Bertin (1982).

<sup>7</sup> Other members of the first generation of French followers of Freud included: Rudolf Loewenstein, Édouard Pichon, René Allendy, Angélo Hesnard, and René Laforgue (de Mijolla, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> "...we find the example of a permanent duality in the spread of psychoanalysis in France. We have, on the one hand, the closed societies, carefully filtering their members, often with the latter arrayed against one another. On the other hand, we have the vast movements which attempted to gather together opposing tendencies, opening themselves up to the public and neglecting neither the support of the media nor the infatuation of the intelligentsia" (de Mijolla, 1992, pp. 81-82).

entrusted Bonaparte to oversee this publication as conflicts between French psychoanalysts and the IPA<sup>9</sup> - as well as between the French psychoanalysts themselves - began at the end of the 1920s. Subsequently, in 1934, the Institute of Psychoanalysis - which included a library and was dedicated to the formation of new psychoanalysts - was established. It was closed, however, during the four years of the Nazi occupation of France, as psychoanalysis was regarded by the occupying force as a “Jewish science.” Training analyses officially resumed in Paris at the end of the war in 1945. At this point, according to Roudinesco (1986/1990), the history of psychoanalysis in France increasingly becomes a matter of the “negotiation of conflicts” internal to the psychoanalytic institution (p. 163).<sup>10</sup>

**Splits in French psychoanalysis and the formation of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a distinct community of theory and practice.** De Mijolla (1992) identifies “three directions” in which psychoanalysis developed in France, each of which he associates with a particular male figurehead who also happened to be analyzed by Rudolf Loewenstein. One was the “psychological direction,” which de Mijolla (1992) traces back to the earliest translators of Freud into French (the French-speaking Swiss) and associates with Daniel Lagache of the Sorbonne, “one of the artisans of the

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<sup>9</sup> “During the interwar period, the IPA, successively directed by Eitingon and Jones, came gradually under Anglo-Saxon, then American control, with a pragmatic and medical orientation quite distant from the lay perspective recommended by Freud” (Roudinesco, 1986/1990, p. 164). Kleinianism, Anna Freudianism, and ego psychology came to dominate the IPA in the 1950s (p. 171).

<sup>10</sup> As Roudinesco (1990) puts it, “starting with 1945, the history of the implantation of Freudianism is a closed book. The historian leaves the terrain of the grandiose adventure of the pioneers for the less heroic turf of the negotiation of conflicts. ...a new view of the horizon is called for. The period about to begin was marked by a dual movement” (p. 163), one international and one internal to France.

prestigious development of the ‘human sciences’ within intellectual circles” (p. 85). He was a major proponent of the *licence de psychologie* (degree in psychology), created in 1947, which offered a path of professional formation other than medical education for aspiring psychoanalysts. The “medical direction,” in contrast, was championed by Sacha Nacht, “who recommended a codified and hierarchically constructed training, complemented by obligatory hospital appointments” and (p. 85). Nacht eventually took up a leadership position in the SPP, which he occupied until Lacan replaced him for a few months in 1953. Finally, the third direction, “the philosophical and literary (cultural) current,” was led by Jacques Lacan, “after the surrealists and the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, accompanied by Merleau-Ponty and by Jean Hyppolite, armed with Kojève’s teaching and with that of Ferdinand de Saussure” (p. 86).

Lacan’s methods of teaching, his approach to training analysis, and, above all, his use of variable-length sessions aggravated the SPP’s Training Commission, which had been established in 1948. By 1951, this commission demanded that Lacan fall into closer alignment with their regulations concerning the formation of new psychoanalysts, since the IPA recognized the SPP as the only society in France with the right to initiate candidates into the orthodox community of theory and practice. Ultimately, this institutional conflict led to the secession of a group of dissidents, including Lacan,<sup>11</sup> led by Françoise Dolto [1908-1988],<sup>12</sup> who collectively formed the rival Société Française de

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Lagache was also a member of this dissident group. De Mijolla (1992) emphasizes that this secession was motivated primarily by opposition to Nacht’s leadership, rather than sympathy for Lacan’s apparent heterodoxy. Nacht was subsequently elected vice-president of the IPA in 1957, when the International Congress of Psychoanalysis was held in Paris.

<sup>12</sup> According to Hall (2009), Dolto entered psychoanalysis with Laforgue in 1932, and terminated it, apparently prematurely, in 1936. She applied for psychiatric residency in



Psychanalyse [SFP] in June 1953. Founding the SFP entailed resignation from the IPA and estrangement from Marie Bonaparte.<sup>13</sup> De Mijolla (1992) notes that it took about a decade before the IPA would agree to recognize the legitimacy of the SFP, but even then this was only on the condition that Lacan, who had made his famous call for a “return to Freud” in 1955, and Dolto would be removed. This controversy led to a second split in French psychoanalysis in 1963. The following year, in 1964, Lacan founded the École Freudienne de Paris [EFP],<sup>14</sup> which remained the school of Lacanian psychoanalysis until Lacan himself dissolved it in 1980, shortly before his own death.

**1950s French psychoanalysis and the Freud-Jones debate: Parallels.** The teachings that comprise Lacan’s (1998/2017) *Seminar V* were given in 1957 and 1958, during the years that fell between the revocation of Lacan’s membership in the IPA and the opening of his own training institute. I review this history because there is a striking parallel with the context in which the Freud-Jones debate took place that can help to elucidate (at least in part) why Lacan essentially re-opened that fraught series of conversations on feminine sexuality more than two decades after they ceased to be a

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1934, published her thesis at the end of her medical training in 1939, and became a child analyst. She discovered Lacan by reading his “Les complexes familiaux” and subsequently befriended him. “Dolto and Lacan started addressing each other as ‘tu,’ as was customary, after Dolto became a full member of the SPP in 1939, but their friendship seems to date mainly from after the war, in the run-up to the 1953 SPP split, when Dolto sided with Lacan, and is recorded in a number of letters gathered and published in 2005” (Hivernel, 2013, p. 506). Hivernel (2013) considers Lacan and Dolto the Symbolic parents of the members of the École Freudienne de Paris [EFP], which was founded in 1963.

<sup>13</sup> “The characteristic of the first split in 1953, which made it truly a novelty in the history of psychoanalysis, consisted in the fact that it did not happen because of theoretical divergencies; rather, it was due to problems related to the training and diffusion of psychoanalysis in France and its control” (de Mijolla, 2001, p. 4).

<sup>14</sup> This, of course, was what Lacan (1973/1981) would call his “excommunication” in his 1964 *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*.

central, schismatic conflict within the transnational psychoanalytic community. Jones' introductory comments in his 1935 "Early Female Sexuality," one of the articles Lacan engages in this third section of the seminar, bring this parallel to the fore.

Jones composed this text as a lecture at the invitation of Federn to establish a dialogue between psychoanalysts in London and Vienna ostensibly to forestall a possible break between the practitioners in these two locations. He gives several reasons for the "danger of local views becoming unified to such an extent as to enable people to speak of a Vienna school or London school as if they represented different tendencies of a possibly divergent order" (Jones, 1935, p. 263), one of which is the mounting tension in Europe that would, four years later, erupt into the Second World War. Beyond these political and economic factors, however, Jones also noted the institutional power of analytic publications to support or undermine the unity of an interpretive community. "Many English analysts do not read the *Zeitschrift*," Jones acknowledges, "and still fewer Vienna analysts read the Journal [i.e., the *International Journal for Psycho-Analysis*]" (1935, p. 263). It was no longer possible to ignore that language barriers and the need for translation exacerbated the division between analysts working in these two geographical locations. Jones, however, does not intervene in this state of affairs as a neutral party. He is primarily concerned with what he sees as "the fact...that new work and ideas in London have not yet, in our opinion, been adequately considered in Vienna." Jones' lecture-article, in other words, is a gesture on the part of British psychoanalysis to gain institutional recognition. He selects the conflicting views on femininity and the pre-Oedipal as the material through which to intervene in the London-Vienna conflict. The characters of British and Austrian psychoanalysis, as national versions of the Freudian

tradition, were formed in large part through the ways they differently read and responded to Freud's infamous question, "What does a woman want?"

Lacan's intervention into the Freud-Jones debate in late 1950s France is not simply a coincidence or merely the result of some kind of conceptual progression across his teachings. Rather, I claim that Lacan's teachings on the themes of sexuation femininity are his way of disclosing what would increasingly become the unique character of Lacanian psychoanalysis, as compared with its counterparts in London, Vienna, the United States, and even other communities of psychoanalytic practice in France itself. Indeed, this much is suggested by the fact that Lacan frequently invokes the implications of these seminar sessions for the much larger issues of the status of Kleinian psychoanalysis, the end(s) of psychoanalytic treatment, and the possibility of "normativization" through psychoanalysis. Yet Lacan does not invoke the likes of Riviere, Jones, Horney, and Deutsch merely to dismiss them and offer an altogether distinct response to the questions of femininity and subject formation. Rather, his frequent and involved engagements with the published texts by these authors, coupled with his repeated encouragement to his audience that they read these texts for themselves, shows that Lacan's views on the issues discussed in this section of the seminar emerged conceptually in and through textual dialogue with key psychoanalysts from other parts of Europe. This aspect of his teachings thus stands in dialectical relationship with London and Vienna and is mediated by his (re)reading of case studies relevant to the Freud-Jones debate.

**Formation of community through communion, communication, and...comedy.** If my suggestion can be sustained, then this third section of *Seminar V* indicates rather explicitly Lacan's increasing concern with the establishment of a community of French psychoanalysts. Notably, one such indication is given in the midst of his remarks on comedy in Chapter XIV, "Desire and Jouissance." He compares theater with the Mass, claiming that, in particular, comedy is produced for the community "insofar as the latter represents a group of men, that is, insofar as, above itself it constitutes the existence of Man as such" (p. 245). He also likens comedy to the ritual practice of Christian communion, which, within the Christian tradition, reconfirms the unity of the faithful as one community, the Church. These themes of community, communion, and comedy recall a striking series of remarks delivered in an earlier part of the seminar:

The wine of speech is always present in everything I say. A joke is usually present, ambient in everything I recount as soon as I speak, for I necessarily speak in the double register of metonymy and metaphor. ... But also, this wine of speech usually seeps into the sand. What is produced between the Other and me in a joke is, as it were, a very special communion between the bit-of-sense and the step-of-sense. This communion is no doubt more specifically humanizing than any other, but it is humanizing precisely because we begin at a level which, on both sides, is very inhuman.

If I invite the Other to this communion, it is because I have even greater need of his assistance because he is the vase or Grail. This Grail is empty. I mean that I address nothing in the Other that is specified, nothing that unites us in any kind of communion that might lead to any kind of agreement in desire or judgment. It is solely a form.

By what is this form constituted? It is constituted by what is always at issue in jokes, what in Freud are called inhibitions. It is not for nothing that when I prepare a joke I

evoke something in the Other that tends to set him in a certain direction. This is still nothing more than a shell in comparison with something more profoundly linked to the stock of metonyms without which, in this order, I am absolutely unable to communicate anything to the Other.

In other words, in order for a joke to make the Other laugh, as Bergson says somewhere, and it is the only good thing that there is in *Laughter*, you have to have a lot in common, you have to belong to the same church (pp. 106-107).

Lacan revisits these themes in subsequent pages. He says, for example,

You are the Grail, which I'm solidifying by placing your contradictions on alert in all sorts of ways, with the aim of getting you to authenticate 'in spirit,' so to speak, the fact that I am conveying this message to you. The essence of this Grail consists in its very defects (p. 109).

Again, he states,

there has to be a relationship, and this is what I was expressing last time when I said that the Other has to be from the same church, of like mind. It is not enough that he more or less understands French, even though this is the first way to be of like mind. If I made a joke in French, for it to work and succeed there are many other things assumed known and that the Other must share (p. 112).

Perhaps most striking is the following: "I would simply like to give you something with which you, who wander about the world as, I hope, so many apostles of my word, could introduce the question of the unconscious to people who have never heard it mentioned" (p. 160). Here Lacan speaks to his audience as though they are his (potential) converts in this denomination or "church" of psychoanalysis, called to be missionaries and to proselytize these teachings as if they were the "Good News."

This is certainly not the first seminar in which Lacan invokes imagery associated with the Christian church as a religious institution. Indeed, *Seminar I* commences with a comparison between Lacan's pedagogical style and that of the Pope:

The master does not teach *ex cathedra* a ready made science; he supplies an answer when the students are on the verge of finding it.

This kind of teaching is a refusal of any system. It uncovers a thought in motion - nonetheless vulnerable to systematization, since it necessarily possesses a dogmatic aspect. Freud's thought is most perennially open to revision. It is a mistake to reduce it to a collection of hackneyed phrases. Each of his ideas possesses a vitality of its own. This is precisely what one calls the dialectic (p. 1).

Again in *Seminar I* he states that "we are in a seminar here, we are not professing *ex cathedra* teaching. We are trying to find our bearings, and to draw the greatest profit from a text and above all from someone's thinking as it develops" (p. 127). The next year, in *Seminar II*, Lacan reminds his audience that

I am not engaging you in *ex cathedra* teaching. I don't think it would befit our object, language and speech, for me to bring something apodictic for you here, something you would just have to record and put in your pocket. ... If there is a true speech behind this discourse, it is yours, my listeners, as much, if not more, than mine (p. 314).

In light of these remarks from previous years, Lacan's statements about the "wine of speech" and the similarities between comedy and Christian communion nuance his broader, implicit claims about the ways in which psychoanalysis compares, as an institution, to that of the Christian church. The earlier seminars emphasize that, unlike the Pope, Lacan is not speaking from a position of infallibility. Although his role as teacher is one of authority, and his rhetoric can suggest that he is quite sure of himself, he characterizes these early seminars as dialogues with his students, as a collaborative enterprise in which they, collectively, are trying, tentatively, to work out their questions in Freud's texts. These remarks in *Seminar V* do not necessarily contradict those from

*Seminars I and II*, but they do stand in tension with each other. *Seminar V* places emphasis on the seminar as a *process*, a kind of experience that can be both intoxicating (wine as a form of alcohol) and transcendent (wine as part of the communion rite, which unites the individual with the greater whole, the community of the Church), and one that, given the language of the Mass, has a much more pronounced sense of hierarchy in its dynamics than the language of dialogue, from the earlier seminars, suggests.<sup>15</sup>

If the process of the seminar encourages something of a conversion on the part of Lacan's students, what exactly are they being converted to or into? In the most straightforward sense, they are undergoing formation as analysts.<sup>16</sup> If the remarks from *Seminars I and II* still hold, however, then the audience is not becoming a community of analysts by pledging faith in the content of Lacan's teachings, as if this content amounted to a religious creed. Yet, as will become clear as this chapter continues, there are some defining features of the form of French psychoanalysis Lacan is establishing through his teachings. These features both distinguish this version of psychoanalysis from its counterparts in Britain and in Vienna, and also emerge as conditions for membership in the fledgling Lacanian psychoanalytic community.

**Lacan on the cost of identity formation.** Rather than a strictly chronological period of maturation, Lacan portrays the formation of the Freudian subject through Imaginary and Symbolic identification as a dimension of human existence that is

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<sup>15</sup> Although perhaps there is greater complexity at play here, given the hierarchy discernible between Socrates and the slave boy in Plato's *Meno*, a dialogue Lacan explicitly refers to in *Seminar II*, and the role of wine in Plato's *Symposium*, a dialogue that will serve as the occasion for Lacan's teachings on transference in *Seminar VIII*.

<sup>16</sup> It is telling that the same word, formation, is, via the French, a translation of the German *Bildung*, used to describe both the formations of the unconscious and the formation of the psychoanalyst.

rehearsed countless times throughout life - for example, as a candidate develops a means of orienting themselves in their first clinical encounters through supervision and training. “While the original source of identity is based on body image [for psychoanalytic theorists], identifications with parents and others,” such as groups or communities, “subsequently leads to more complex and elaborate experiences of identity in a variety of contexts,” such as a candidate’s psychoanalytic identity in the context of an interpretive community within which they have trained (Frosh, 2010, p. 29). Furthermore, Lacan’s emphasis on the roles of loss and self-estrangement in the process of subject formation provides *critical* perspective on this process of forming a psychoanalytic identity.

Attention is rightly given in the early days of clinical practice to teaching the new clinician to recognize and appropriately manage the anxiety they feel in these first encounters with patients. The dilemma, from a Lacanian perspective, is that the trainee, like the very young child, cannot make sense of their own desire except in and through the desire of the Other. This has at least two familiar interpretations. First, there is the way in which the new clinician tries to manage their own experience in the clinical encounter by trying to determine what the patient (the other) wants in this situation. Second, there is the deeper sense in which the clinician is also trying to allay their anxiety by attempting to become what the other wants (i.e., the object of their desire). But there is yet another way to understand how the clinician’s desire is the desire of the Other. The trainee is learning to navigate clinical encounters in relation to teachers and supervisors who embody the authority of psychoanalytic tradition. In reading canonical case studies, for example, the trainee is not simply learning to manage anxiety in clinical situations by “thinking in cases,” but is concerned with developing this style of thinking in



conformity with their fantasy about how their mentors think in cases. The clinician desires to be loved not only by the patient but also by the teacher.

For all that is gained by developing an orientation to the world - or more specifically, the clinical context - Lacan focuses on the price paid in the process of identity formation. This process, as Boothby (1991) explains, proceeds through self-rejection and self-exclusion. The infant's situation perhaps most vividly manifests the bodily nature of what is lost. Imaginary identification involves learning to ignore somatic stirrings or to respond to them in ways deemed appropriate by significant others. This is a kind of intersubjective adaptation - conforming the body to expectations encountered from without - to which the subject-to-be submits in order to be (or become) the object the other wants. The rigidity and solidity Lacan attributes to egoic identity promotes stable being over the movement of change and becoming; over, for example, openness to ongoing transformation of one's psychoanalytic identity through clinical encounters that may challenge received theoretical assumptions.

What is lost are those bodily urges, and responses to them, that are illegible to others - for example, in the case of the clinician-in-training, the community in relation to which they are developing their clinical skills. The candidate is taught to direct their feelings about patients in particular ways stipulated by theory. They may be encouraged to bring the feelings to their own therapy, or to verbally express the feelings to the patient, or even to reformulate the case conceptualization in light of the affective experience. As the clinician learns to anticipate this guidance in new clinical situations, the ideal ego is taking shape. This is the image of the ideal clinician as communicated by a theory and those who teach it. It encompasses not only clinical technique but also

practices of writing up the clinical encounter. “It is this moment [the Mirror Stage] that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge [*savoir*]” - here, knowledge of psychoanalysis - “into being mediated by the other’s desire” (Lacan, 1949/2006a, p. 79). Yet something is inevitably left out of this representation of affective experience. In other words, the candidate is estranged from certain responses as they form a psychoanalytic identity. This is the Real of the body, that which is rejected as the ego is formed.

These responses may violate the ethical code to which all clinicians, regardless of theoretical orientation, are bound; however, they may instead violate the teachings of a particular interpretive community. For the community, these violations are mistakes. To the extent that the clinician identifies as a member of the community, momentary inclinations toward these violations seem uncanny. But might it be possible, in some situations, that what appear to be mistakes are creative alternatives, instances of the clinician responding in their own name? Identity - even a psychoanalytic identity - can be a bondage from which one needs to escape.

Lacan draws attention to this tension between the Real of the body and Imaginary identity. For him, this is the site at which the death drive emerges. “The pressing toward expression of somatic energies alienated by Imaginary identification constitutes a force of death, insofar as it threatens that identity” (Boothby, 1991, p. 67). This phenomenon can be found in the letters Freud wrote to Fliess during his self-analysis, which, as Mahony has noted, contained many instances of “writing out.”

### **Lacan’s Pedagogical Style and Aims in *Seminar V*, Section 3**

Lacan (1998/2017) introduces his series of teachings on sexuation and femininity with a remark about ethics in psychoanalysis. “[U]ntil Freud,” he states, “every study of

human economy more or less started from a certain concern with morals, with ethics in the sense in which it's less about studying desire than already reducing it and training it" (p. 235). Most broadly, this remark anticipates the way in which Lacan would rethink ethics two years later in *Seminar VII*. Here, however, within *Seminar V*, this opening remark signals to the reader that Lacan intends to emphasize and engage the ethical radicality of Freud's views on the topics to be discussed during the forthcoming seminar meetings. Moreover, he intends to criticize the normative accounts of sexuation and subject formation that were circulating within psychoanalytic institutions at this time, and to distance his own emerging Lacanian approach from this normativity. This consideration provides something of a conceptual context for his many references to perversion in the pages to follow.

Lacan (1998/2017) opens Chapter XV by reminding his audience that their participation in this seminar is part of their formation as analysts. "The first presupposition of our task is that you appreciate what we are trying to do here," he insists.

It is, namely, always to bring you to the point where the difficulties, contradictions and impasses that form the fabric of your practice appear to you in their true significance, whereas you avoid them by referring to partial theories and even by dodging the issue and fudging the meaning by the very terms you use, which are also the locus of all one's excuses (p. 253).

Lacan's interdisciplinary teachings are meant to affect the practice of psychoanalysis.

**First aspect of Lacan's pedagogical style: (Re)reading case studies.** Lacan's (1998/2017) intervention into the Freud-Jones debate consists of "three theoretical steps"

(p. 253),<sup>17</sup> two of which involve his own critical reading of several cases comprising it. The *first step* consists of returning to Freud's (1931) paper, "Female Sexuality." Although Lacan (1998/2017) will ultimately appeal to other moments in Freud's teachings when articulating his own position on this contentious topic, he criticizes the Freud of this 1931 paper for his naturalism and biologism. According to Lacan (1998/2017), Freud's (1931) approach encourages a normative and essentializing approach to psychoanalysis and human desire. Moreover, Lacan (1998/2017) finds that Freud (1931) argues unreflectively, taking an equivocal paradoxical stance infused with cultural prejudices. The *second step* consists of engaging with the responses to Freud's (1931) paper: first, Jones' (1935) "Early Female Sexuality," as well as two written by female psychoanalysts, Karen Horney (1924) and Helene Deutsch (1930). As noted earlier in this chapter, Jones' (1935) paper is frequently regarded as the end of the Freud-Jones debate. In contrast, Lacan (1998/2017) argues that Jones (1935) basically leaves Freud's (1931) paradox intact. Although more generous toward Horney (1924) - yet another transgressive figure who was eventually exiled from the psychoanalytic community - Lacan (1998/2017) finds that neither she nor Deutsch (1930) - towards whom he is decidedly less favorable - solve Freud's (1931) paradox. Lacan's (1998/2017) *third step*, which is to formalize the terms of the debate, is supposed to provide a genuine resolution to the theoretical impasse.

Lacan (1998/2017) grounds his three-part intervention into the Freud-Jones debate by returning to Joan Riviere's (1929) case, "Womanliness as Masquerade," and

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<sup>17</sup> These steps can be viewed as an early version of his formulas of sexuation, which are discussed at length in *Seminar XX: Encore*.

foregrounding the theme of “mask” in it. This move serves multiple aims in this third section of *Seminar V*. First, Lacan (1998/2017) claims to dissolve what he regards as the unresolved paradox of the Freud-Jones debate by using the signifier of “mask” to disclose the nature of desire. This effectively relocates the site of paradox to the human being, which is, in Freud’s terms, polymorphously perverse. Second, Lacan (1998/2017) rhetorically performs his criticism of the assumptions about normativity, progress, development, and linear time by appealing to a chronologically prior publication (i.e., Riviere (1929)) as the resolution of the Freud-Jones debate. In keeping with Freud’s notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, Lacan (1998/2017) understands this institutional debate as retroactively conferring significance of Riviere’s (1929) case. Lacan (1998/2017) suggests that it is precisely the fact that his psychoanalytic commitments inform his approach to reading that enables him to discern this deferred action. Third, Lacan (1998/2017) appropriates Riviere’s (1929) case to identify and bracket cultural prejudices that he sees as shaping the content of the Freud-Jones debate. This strategy does not, however, provoke reflection on his own style of thinking - formalization, which he will enact in his third theoretical step. I claim that it is on this point that Lacan’s own transgressive student, Luce Irigaray, can be shown to make an incisive critique.

After initially situating her case study as a response to Jones’ (1927) “The Early Development of Female Sexuality,” Riviere (1929) sets the following as the aim of her own contribution: “I shall attempt to show that women who wish for masculinity may put on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men” (p. 303). In the next three pages, she reviews her analytic work with a “particular type of intellectual woman” (p. 303), which she understands as having theoretical implications

for Jones' (1927) typology. The case supposedly showed that, for this particular patient, "womanliness...could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it" (p. 306). Over the course of treatment, "the mask of womanliness was being peeled away, and she [the patient] was revealed either as castrated...or as wishing to castrate" (p. 307). Riviere (1927) infers from this case that, in general, there is no fundamental difference between womanliness and masquerade: "they are the same thing" (p. 306).

Lacan's (1998/2017) engagement with Riviere's (1929) case occurs in Chapter XIV of *Seminar V*. His reading consists of two negative criticisms and one positive evaluation of Riviere's (1929) contribution. His first criticism regards the dialectical tension between the singular and the general, distinctive of case studies, that I discussed in Chapter 3. There I noted, following Borossa (1997), that this tension emerges between the practical task of the case study - to represent, in writing, the singular, private relationship between clinician and patient and the representation of the patient that emerges from this relationship - and the epistemic task - which is to provide evidence relevant to theory, and thereby become part of the archive of general psychoanalytic knowledge. Lacan (1998/2017) claims that Riviere's (1929) paper "is about the analysis of a *specific* case, and not about the function of femininity in *general*" (p. 238). Riviere (1929) does in fact draw explicitly general conclusions about "womanliness" in her publication, but Lacan's (1998/2017) criticism may be that this logical inference is not acknowledged and discussed, only asserted.

His second criticism concerns the way in which Riviere's (1929) historical context unreflectively infuses the way she reasons about her case. "She [the patient],"

Lacan (1998/2017) states, “was someone who had a perfectly independent, developed and free professional life, which, I repeat, stood out much more in those days than in our own” (p. 238). Most immediately, Lacan implies here that the sharp cultural distinctions between men’s and women’s roles have dulled or blurred in the nearly three decades since Riviere published this case. The problem, for Lacan (1998/2017) is not so much that Riviere (1929) is criticizing misogynistic tendencies of her own culture, but that her criticisms are not clearly distinguished from her claims about psychological structure. Ultimately, Lacan (1998/2017) will try to show that Riviere’s (1929) characterization of “womanliness” - as “masquerade” - pertains to the nature of desire in general, regardless of sexuation or context.

Both criticisms of Riviere’s (1929) paper pertain to potentially problematic ways the Imaginary infuses “thinking in cases.” If one engages in this style of reasoning unreflectively, one can easily make assumptions or reiterate norms. Despite this limitation of the case study genre as a mode of knowledge production, Lacan (1998/2017) maintains that this case study is pedagogically useful insofar as it illustrates a Symbolic theme of psychological life. Lacan (1998/2017) praises Riviere (1929) for foregrounding the way in which the Hegelian desire for recognition, discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, is at the heart of subject formation. “[W]hat is at stake in an analysis and in the understanding of subjective structure is always something that shows us the subject engaged in the process of recognition as such” (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 239). Again, “the ultimate mainspring of the unconscious” is “the subject’s desire to be recognized” (p. 240).

Lacan's (1998/2017) return to Riviere (1929) prepares him to take his first "theoretical step," which is to critically revisit Freud's (1931) "Feminine Sexuality" in Chapter XV.

He undertakes this step by

showing you, in the text itself, Freud's contribution to a precise theoretical point by observing the difficulties that he provokes amongst his followers. In his attempt to be more precise about things, starting from certain preconceived requirements, moreover, something emerges that makes the difficulty even greater (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 253).

Given that Freud initially took the boy child's sexual development as the norm when formulating the Oedipus complex, the girl child's development appears problematic to him when he turns to it in 1931. Two developmental tasks seem to complicate the development of female sexuality: (1.) the shift of genital priority from clitoris to vagina, and (2.) the exchange of the mother (the "original object") for the father.<sup>18</sup> Based on his own "observations" from working with women as analysands, Freud (1931) aims to establish that the girl's attachment to the father (Oedipal phase) is preceded by an equally intense phase of attachment to the mother (pre-Oedipal phase): "the pre-Oedipal phase in women gains an importance which we have not attributed to it hitherto" (p. 226). Moreover, he asserts that "the main content of her development to womanhood lay in the carrying over of her affective attachments from her mother to her father" (p. 232).

Freud (1931) not only uses the publication of the "Female Sexuality" paper to state, in positive terms, his view of the developmental process in the case of women. He also uses this paper as an opportunity to review the broader conversation on this

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<sup>18</sup> Regarding this second complication, Freud (1931) states, "a female's first object, too, must be her mother: the primary conditions for a choice of object are, of course, the same for all children. But at the end of her development, her father - a man - should have become her new love-object" (p. 228).



contentious topic within the psychoanalytic community and evaluate the claims made by the participants. Freud (1931) explicitly rejects Jung's term "Electra Complex," evidence of Jung's fall from Freud's favor. Whereas he professes general agreement with Lampl-de Groot (1927) and Deutsch (1930), Freud (1931) takes issue with Horney (1926) regarding penis envy and Jones (1927) for failing to acknowledge that the girl child passes through a phallic phase during development.

Lacan (1998/2017) criticizes the content of Freud's (1931) argument insofar as it takes up the (supposed) "problem" of female sexual development only to conclude with a paradox. Like the perversely-structured subject, Freud (1931) maintains simultaneously two contradictory attitudes toward the "problem." At one and the same time, Freud (1931) portrays woman as *made* - that is, fabricated, artificial, not born as woman - through changes in object-choice, but also asserts that this change is the result of a *natural* course of development.<sup>19</sup> This paradoxical conclusion is bound to be wholly unacceptable according to the binary thinking that - as Chapter 2 of this dissertation showed that Hegel critically discussed in his treatment of *Verstand* in his 1807 *Phenomenology* - distinguishes the natural sciences. Each of the participants in the Freud-Jones debate will attempt to resolve the paradox but will be unsuccessful because they only oscillate between the two dialectical poles of the nature-nurture opposition without calling into question this dichotomous approach in the first place. Hence Lacan's (1998/2017) second criticism of Freud's (1931) paper - that he rhetorically positions himself as natural scientist:

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<sup>19</sup> "What this means is that the *natural evolution* of the drives brings it about that...one arrives at this phallic fantasy by which it is ultimately in a masculine position that the girl presents herself in relation to the mother" (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 258).

Initially, the paradox presents itself at the level of a sort of scientific observation. It's as a natural scientist that Freud says to us, "What my experience shows me is that the phallus is also central for a woman, and not only for a man" (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 258).

And again,

Freud introduces it initially as a pure and simple fact of observation, one that therefore presents itself - like everything observed - as a part of nature, natural (p. 258).

According to Lacan (1998/2017), the paradox Freud (1931) generates can be appropriately addressed outside the horizon of natural scientific thinking, by distinguishing between three different orders of lack (Lacan, 1998/2017, pp. 260-261).

When Lacan (1998/2017) moves on to his second "theoretical step" in the same chapter of *Seminar V*, he refers to the women analysts, such as Karen Horney, as well as Ernest Jones, who critically responded to Freud's (1931) account of female sexual development as "rebels" and their critique as a "revolt." This language echoes Jones' (1935) own introductory remark in "Early Female Sexuality," in which he states that "there is some danger of local views [on female sexuality] becoming unified to such an extent as to enable people to speak of a Vienna school or London school as if they represented different tendencies of a possibly divergent order" (p. 263).

For him, Freud represents the Vienna school and Klein the London school. Jones (1935) summarizes the dispute in terms of two questions: (1.) Is the mother the sole object of the pre-Oedipal phase?, and (2.) Does the girl child pass through a "masculine" phase? Is the oral stage a masculine or phallic phase for her? (p. 266). On his view, the two "schools" differ in terms of the logical order of events: Vienna/Freud holds that "the girl hates her mother because she has disappointed her wish that her clitoris were a penis"

(pp. 267-268), but London/Klein asserts that “the reason that the girl wishes that her clitoris were a penis is that she feels hatred for her mother which she cannot express” (p. 268). Ultimately, Jones (1935) comes down in favor of Klein’s view: “I should agree with Melanie Klein’s conclusion that the girl’s repression of femininity springs more from her hatred and fear of her mother than from her own masculine attitude” (p. 269).

Lacan (1998/2017) concurs with Jones’ (1935) distillation of Freud’s paradox into the question he poses at the end of his own paper, namely, “the ultimate question is whether a woman is born or made” (p. 273). However, he takes issue with Jones’ (1935) conclusion to this question, which is to deny that there is a genuinely phallic phase in female sexual development. Jones’ (1935) response to Freud’s (1931) paradox is to try to give a more thoroughly naturalistic account, which results in a more staunch form of essentialism about sexual difference (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 267). Rather than ending the Freud-Jones debate, Lacan (1998/2017) finds that this negotiation of the theoretical differences between Vienna and London simply leaves the paradox intact.

Actually resolving the paradox, according to Lacan (1998/2017) requires leaving the realm of natural scientific thinking altogether, which is beholden to “observation,” and taking an alternate approach in terms of the signifier. This requires, at a minimum, that the phallus (signifier) be distinguished from the penis (organ), a distinction that is allegedly “absolutely inconceivable in Kleinian dynamics or mechanics” (p. 267). Making this distinction is supposed to defeat essentialism: “If the woman has to go via this signifier [i.e., the phallus], however paradoxical that is, it’s insofar as it’s not a question for her of fulfilling a primitively given female position, but of entering into a defined dialectic of exchange” (p. 267). Here Lacan (1998/2017) appeals to Lévi-Strauss’

(1949) *Elementary Structures of Kinship* to support his point. Although Lacan (1998/2017) arguably has in mind here the exchange of libidinous objects over the course of the girl child's development, his detour into an anthropological framework that portrays women as property - that is, as objects to be exchanged - leaves Lacan himself vulnerable to criticism from feminists like Irigaray. If a fully-formed (male) subject is one who can own property and make exchanges, then even on Lacan's account the female subject is still portrayed as "other" and subordinate.

Following his criticism of Jones (1935), Lacan (1998/2017) turns to a discussion in Chapter XVI of *Seminar V* of Horney's "On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women," which she originally delivered as a case presentation in 1922 and turned into an article, her first publication, two years later. She identifies Abraham (1921) as her interlocutor. Through this contribution, she helped set the terms of what would become the Freud-Jones debate. As she puts it, "the prevailing conception of the castration complex in women," which she sees as significantly informed by "masculine narcissism," can be summarized as follows:

Many females, whether children or adults, suffer either temporarily or permanently from the fact of their sex. The manifestations in the mental life of women which spring from the objection to being a woman are traceable to their coveting a penis when they were little girls [i.e., to penis envy]. The unwelcome idea of being fundamentally lacking in this respect gives rise to passive castration phantasies, while active phantasies spring from a revengeful attitude against the favored male (p. 50).

Lacan (1998/2017) focuses on Horney's (1924) second question: "Does the complex we are discussing really rest on 'penis-envy' and is the latter to be regarded as the ultimate force behind it?" (p. 55). In response to this question, she identifies two "roots" of the

castration complex in women, one of which is identification with the father, and ultimately concludes that penis envy is neither the consequence or the cause of the castration complex in women.

Lacan (1998/2017) looks favorably on Horney's (1924) emphasis on the third moment of the Oedipus complex, in which desire is transformed via the ego ideal, or what he calls the "insignias of the father" and the "stigmata of this [secondary] identification" (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 276).<sup>20</sup> Identification with the insignia of the Father introduces the signifier, names the Mother's desire, and captivates the child with an ideal. For all children, the father is ultimately exchanged from object (i.e., libidinal choice) to signifier (i.e., ego ideal).<sup>21</sup> He finds that Horney's (1924) emphasis more closely aligns with Riviere's (1929) notion of the mask, despite the fact that Horney's (1924) view would ultimately be deemed unorthodox "neo-Freudianism." For Lacan (1998/2017), these insignias become the subject's mask, or persona, which is ultimately a fiction.

The final contribution to the Freud-Jones debate that Lacan (1998/2017) engages is Helene Deutsch's (1930) "The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of

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<sup>20</sup> Lacan makes explicit to his students that the second step in clarifying his view of women's relationship to the phallus requires a detailed discussion of "the question of identifications" (1998/2017, p. 270). In other words, the third "moment," the exit from the Oedipus complex, and the emergence of the ego-ideal must be addressed in order fully to account for subject formation and sexualization. Identification, a process through which the subject assimilates an aspect of the other and is transformed to some extent in relation to the model provided by the other, denotes the crossroads in subjectivation. The child's desire must pass through the Symbolic order in order to be recognized, but in thus passing through, it is transformed and something is lost.

<sup>21</sup> Summarizing the third moment in the transformation of desire in the Oedipus complex, Lacan (1998/2017) states, "finally, an exchange occurs - what was the object of the libidinal relation becomes something else and is transformed into a signifying function for the subject, and the latter's desire passes over onto another plane, the plane of desire established with the third term" (p. 279).

Women,” toward which he is decidedly more critical. In this paper, Deutsch (1930) aims “to examine the genesis of ‘femininity,’ by which I mean the feminine, passive-masochistic disposition in the mental life of women. In particular,” she continues, “I shall try to elucidate the relation of the function of feminine instinct to the function of reproduction” (p. 48). Although the girl child is not born female, it is her “anatomical destiny” to become a woman, and, ultimately, a mother. This conclusion effectively reiterates Freud’s own paradoxical stance on the question of female sexual development, but in an even more confusing way.<sup>22</sup>

After criticizing Deutsch (1930), Lacan (1998/2017) considers his second “theoretical step” accomplished, and moves on in Chapter XVII to his third “step,” which is to articulate the formulas of desire. I will return to this step somewhat later in my chapter. First, however, I will discuss the role of literature in Lacan’s pedagogical style in Section 3 of *Seminar V*.

**Second aspect of Lacan’s pedagogical style: Literary interpretation.** In his introductory remarks to Chapter XIV, Lacan (1998/2017) poses a vast question: What does it mean “that the human subject is able to take possession of what in his world are the very conditions imposed upon him as if these conditions were made for him and succeed in satisfying him” (p. 236)? This question most explicitly serves as an opportunity to explore the concept of fantasy as it is employed in psychoanalysis,

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<sup>22</sup> Lacan (1998/2017) seems to find the following remark toward the end of Deutsch’s (1930) paper especially fraught: “But sometimes, when the patient’s instincts are so unfortunately fixed and yet there are good capacities for sublimation, the analyst must have the courage to smooth the path in the so-called ‘masculine’ direction and thus make it easier for the patient to renounce sexual gratification” (p. 56). He disagrees with the implication that a woman could be both “psychically healthy” and never experience orgasm (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 281).

particularly in relation to sexuality, but it also foregrounds the fundamental theme of *poesis* - making or creating - in human existence. This theme discloses the significance of two of the topics of Lacan's (1998/2017) extended discussions in these seminar meetings guided by the second aspect of his pedagogical style: first, Jean Delay's (1956-57/1963) psychobiography of Andre Gidé, the French novelist - winner of the 1947 Nobel Prize in Literature and infamous for pederasty - who died in 1951, just a few years prior to Lacan's delivery of *Seminar V*; and, second, a comedic play, *The Balcony*, the first version of which was written by French playwright Jean Genet in 1957 and revised in 1962.

Notably, in contrast with previous seminars, during which Lacan made little if any reference to his own publications, he opens this year's series of teachings by admitting that "my hope, a modest one, or so it seems to me, is that you who make an effort to listen to what I have to say also make the effort to read what I write, since in the end it's for you that I write it" (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 3). The two of his writings to which he makes explicit reference are in fact ones in which he enacts his own style of reading literature and which I began to discuss in these terms in Chapter 3 of this dissertation: "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'"<sup>23</sup> and "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," both roughly contemporaneous with *Seminar V*. He refers to the latter no fewer than six times in *Seminar V*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Mentioned on pp. 5 and 142.

<sup>24</sup> On pages 7, 9, 18, 23, 55, and 64.

These writings are framed by Lacan's teachings on the relations between the unconscious, the Symbolic, the letter, and truth. Recall Lacan's remarks from early in the text of "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'":

This is why I have decided to illustrate for you today a truth which may be drawn from the moment in Freud's thought we have been studying - namely, that it is the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject - by demonstrating in a story the major determination the subject receives from the itinerary of the signifier. It is this truth, let us note, that makes the very existence of fiction possible (1957/2006g, p. 7).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Lacan opens his "The Instance of the Letter" by "situating it between writing and speech...halfway between the two" (1957/2006b, p. 412). Further along in the same essay, he concludes that

it is between a man's proper name qua signifier and the signifier that metaphorically abolishes it that the poetic spark is produced, and it is all the more effective here in bringing about the significance of paternity in that it reproduces the mythical event through which Freud reconstructed the path along which the mystery of paternity advances in the unconscious of every man (p. 423).

These writings teach that the truth of the unconscious, although it manifests in speech, must be regarded as, in a sense, a (written) text that must be read like literature. Reading literature for the signifier teaches Lacan's audience, who are primarily psychoanalysts in formation, how to listen to their analysands; in turn, learning to listen like an analyst can teach "students of the letter" how to read literature.<sup>25</sup> Whether applied to the patient's free associations or to a work of literature, Lacan's approach to reading for the signifier

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<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Lacan returns to this notion of "reading" the formations of the analysand's unconscious later in Section 3, when he critically engages with some of Freud's interpretations in the course of his early courses of treatment with Dora and Elisabeth von R.



as gleaned from his teachings in the late 1950s provide a means of appreciating the “uncanny knowledge” that reveals the subject as divided - that is, as cut or castrated - by language (Weller, 2015). In contrast, a “literal” reading - which is arguably, from Lacan’s perspective, the kind of interpretation most of the participants in the Freud-Jones debate apply in their work with their patients - is liable to remain snared in the Imaginary and tend toward essentialist conclusions in keeping with the ego psychological project of making psychoanalysis a (natural) science. On Lacan’s view from the late 1950s, this is a wrong way of understanding the relationship of psychoanalysis to science, encouraging fallacies related to nature and biology.

Lacan’s (1998/2017) first foray into literature occurs just after he distills a schema, triangle EPM, from Riviere’s (1929) case study, a move I will discuss more fully later in this chapter. At this moment in his teaching, Lacan turns to Delay’s (1956-57/1963) lengthy study of Gide’s early life. Although Lacan differs from Freud in that he rejects the latter’s attempt to explain literature and other works of art in terms of the creator’s psychopathology, he is not altogether opposed to efforts to understand writers and their works in terms of the psyche.<sup>26</sup> Delay’s (1956-57/1963) psychobiography is, on his view, a success because it “explores in depth one particular subject so as to reach the central core of humanity” (Rabaté, 2019, p. 101). Lacan (1998/2017) finds that *both* Riviere’s (1929) case and an episode from Delay’s (1956-57/1963) psychobiography illustrate schema EPM. That is to say, the two examples are structurally isomorphic. A well-executed psychobiography, then, like a case study that manages to evade Imaginary snares, discloses aspects of psychological life shared in general by all speaking beings.

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<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Lacan’s (1958/2006h) “The Youth of Gide, or the Letter and Desire.”

The relevant episode from Gide's life that illustrates schema EPM is the scene in which his aunt attempts to seduce him. According to Lacan (1998/2017), this is the moment when Gide "became the desired child" and was decisive in the formation of his perverse (rather than neurotic) psychic structure (pp. 243-244).<sup>27</sup> At this moment he becomes divided between desire and *jouissance*, where it is possible to detect the appearance of the signifier of the mask that Lacan (1998/2017) first located in Riviere's (1929) case study.<sup>28</sup>

André Gide's perversion consists in the fact that, there, at E [in schema EPM], he is able to constitute himself only by perpetually relating himself, only by submitting himself to this correspondence [i.e., the letters he and his cousin, and eventual wife, Madeleine wrote to each other] that for him is the heart of his work...[he] constitutes himself as a personality in her, through her, and in relation to her (p. 245).

In other words, Lacan (1998/2017) and Delay (1956-57/1963) agree that Gide is perverse due to his object relations (i.e., that he endeavored to remain the "desired child" by marrying his mother-substitute,<sup>29</sup> Madeleine), not his object choice (i.e., his pederasty).

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<sup>27</sup> "He falls in love forever, for the rest of his existence - this little boy that for an instant has been in the arms of his aunt, this aunt who stroked his neck, his shoulders and his chest. His entire life is there" (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 243).

<sup>28</sup> Delay (1956-57/1963) notes that Gide was also divided between actor and spectator. He created many masks for himself through writing thinly-veiled, autobiographically-inspired narratives. He was alternately André Walker, Urien, Prometheus, and so on. "A transference, either positive or negative, takes place between a novelist and his double, and helps him become aware of his own depths. ... André Walker was André Gide's first experience with a double" (p. 249). Earlier in his psychobiography, Delay claimed that "the impression of being split into actor and spectator, and of living in a world that is not quite real, creates a feeling of theater or, at any rate, of illusion" (p. 111).

<sup>29</sup> Delay (1956-57/1963) sees Gide's mother as many-layered. Most overtly, she appeared to be a phallic woman. "Yet the mask hid another face and the *persona* another person. Behind the strong authoritarian mother, Gide gives us a glimpse of a shy woman, worried to the point of anxiety and deeply lacking in self-confidence. As a young boy he noticed how very much her attitude changed when she was outside the house or the family circle. ... She forced herself to see the people one has to see, but always seemed to come away

“Reading” Gide in this way, for the structural relationship, helps both Lacan and Delay evade the Imaginary snare of interpreting Gide’s perversion in terms of cultural norms. Years later, Madeleine burns these letters in response to Gide’s affair with a young man. For both Lacan (1998/2017) and Delay (1956-57/1963), Madeleine’s destructive act simultaneously exposes Gide’s disavowal and reveals her as a “true woman.”<sup>30</sup>

Lacan (1998/2017) follows his commentary on these decisive scenes in Andre Gidé’s life with his remarks on the genre of comedy that I began to discuss earlier in this chapter. As Gormley (2018) observes,

Lacan [1998/2017, p. 247] maintains that comedy always appears during times of crisis; in this instance a crisis of faith, characteristic of the post-war era, in traditional authority figures and institutions such as those that appear in *Le Balcon*: the Bishop, the Judge, and the General (p. 119).

Building on this observation, I suggest that Lacan (1998/2017) would have his audience “read” the Freud-Jones debate as, in this sense, structured like a comedy. Note, for example, that the first three scenes of Genet’s (1962/1966) play involve perverse characters who fail to obtain the recognition they desire when role playing the aforementioned authoritative figures. Here the signifier of the mask makes another appearance.<sup>31</sup> If Freud, as the Father of the institution of psychoanalysis, can be viewed

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with the depressing and specious impression that she was ‘not as good as the others’” (p. 43). Again, “hidden, as so often happens, under an authoritarian mask was a lack of self-confidence and a great need for reassurance” (p. 44).

<sup>30</sup> That is, as wanting to castrate.

<sup>31</sup> The reality-illusion binary is a major theme in Genet’s works, including *The Balcony*, and it shares this theme with Delay’s (1956-57/1963) psychobiography of Gide. “All of [Genet’s] dramatic works deal in some fashion with characters who are caught in the reality-oriented world and who act out their fantasies in masquerade, impersonation, and play-acting” (Cetta, 1974, p. 2), and “his plays decide in favor of illusion over reality (also death over life)” (p. 3).

as identifying with these same figures across his writings, then perhaps the participants in the Freud-Jones debate are like Genet's (1962/1966) pervers who unsuccessfully attempt to enact these roles in their contributions to the debate. Rather than sublimating these Symbolic functions of authority, or ego ideals, the perverse characters *eroticize* them (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 247). When Lacan (1998/2017) notes the context of political revolution within the play, he further supports this reading. Perhaps, then, Joan Riviere, as writer of "Womanliness as Masquerade," could be likened to Genet's (1962/1966) Irma, keeper of the brothel and madame of the masks,<sup>32</sup> and Karen Horney or Melanie Klein likened to Genet's (1962/1966) Chantal, whom Lacan (1998/2017) describes as "the voice and words of the revolution" (p. 250).

Lacan's (1998/2017) brief remark about the relationship between comedy and tragedy is particularly instructive, insofar as the link between these genres can be understood to have important parallels to the relationship between desire and *jouissance* with which Lacan is concerned in Section 3 of *Seminar V* as a whole. Speech, according to Lacan, in a certain sense creates desire, inasmuch as a spoken demand articulates a biological need, but the response that tries to satisfy the demand always either falls short or is excessive. Desire, as a relation to a lack, emerges in the space of this mismatch.

Zupančič (2008) explains that comedy and tragedy alternately result from taking one of

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Lacan (1998/2017) was probably also fond of *The Balcony* because it foregrounds the mirror as yet another signifier of psychological life. "[T]hroughout [Genet's] dramatic *oeuvre* stands the symbol of the mirror, image of that world of illusion that preoccupies him" (Cetta, 1974, p. 2).

<sup>32</sup> "[T]here can be no question of it: it is Irma who triumphs in this play; she alone wears the stamp of heroism and knows, in wearing it, that it brings sadness and fatigue. ... The only illusion she has allowed herself is the realization of the important place illusion plays in life and, since this is not illusion but primal reality, only she is in sufficiently knowledgeable communication with the world to control it" (McMahon, 1963, p. 175).

two possible positions from within this structural dynamic. Tragedy, which stands at the point of demand, “is the pain of the difference between demand and its satisfaction” (p. 129), and is ultimately concerned with desire. Comedy, in contrast, stands at the point of satisfaction. From that location, the discrepancy between demand and satisfaction is experienced as *jouissance*. Comedies “thrive on these discrepancies as a source of pleasure rather than pain” (p. 130). In this way, comedy corresponds to the move from the castrated subject of desire to the subject of drive “beyond” castration that I introduced in Chapter 2. On Lacan’s (1998/2017) reading, Genet’s (1962/1966) *The Balcony* likewise illustrates this move in its final scene, in which the character Roger self-castrates.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, Lacan (1998/2017) states that the enjoyment (*jouissance*) produced by comedy arises “from the relationship with an effect that has a fundamental relationship to the signifying order, namely the appearance of this signified, the phallus” (p. 246). The Symbolic phallus is the signifier of lack, of castration, whereas it is the Imaginary phallus that appears as omnipotence, fullness, and completion - in other words, as a veil over the fact of castration. Zupančič (2008) emphasizes that the Symbolic phallus appears in comedies as an object (p. 216) and that it serves to instantiate the “fundamental nonrelationship” between the biological and the Symbolic (p. 214). That other nonrelationship, the sexual relation, and its more enduring form, love, can also be

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<sup>33</sup> The castration scene “manifests an attempt to become the father, symbol of the generation that must expire (that is, become *continuous*, attain the state of nonbeing) in order to insure the survival of the succeeding generation... When the Chief of Police’s alter ego, Roger, mutilates himself...castrator and castrated are the same person. Thus, in *The Balcony*, the symbolic castrated being becomes not only the father, but also the son, actor and receptor, at the same time; he is life and death at once, and...he is man and woman at the same time” (Cetta, 1974, p. 53).

understood to be structured like a comedy.<sup>34</sup> Humans enter the “order of love” (Lacan, 1998/2017, p. 273) in the earliest experiences of the dialectic of desire and *jouissance*, in the midst of the “pain of existence” felt in incompleteness and the separation from the Mother. However, Lacan (1998/2017) ends Section 3 with a description of the love relationship as fundamentally comedic:

The problem of love is the problem of the profound division it introduces into the subject’s activities. What is at issue for a man, following the very definition of love, ‘to give what one does not have,’ is to give what he does not have, the phallus, to a being who is not it (p. 330).

This implies that sexuation and subject formation are ultimately comic in character, despite the fact that Freud named the defining complex of human sexual development after a tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*.<sup>35</sup>

**Third aspect of Lacan’s pedagogical style: Formalization.** Note the several pedagogical modes Lacan (1998/2017) swiftly moves between in the course of Chapter XIV: psychoanalytic case study → mathematics → psychobiography of a literary figure → comedic play. What can be made of this? After all, he warns his audience at the end of the teaching in that chapter not to disregard these comments, for they “will serve as reference points for the essential question of desire and *jouissance*” in the next several seminar meetings (p. 252).

One way to take up the questions just posed is to recall that Lacan began to use mathematical schemas, such as Schema L, in previous seminars. They have functioned

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<sup>34</sup> See Zupančič, 2008, pp. 133-136.

<sup>35</sup> This is one way of understanding Lacan’s passing remark that “a comedy always completes the tragic trilogy” (p. 245), particularly given that he divides the Oedipus complex into three logical “moments” - a trilogy, in other words.

from the start as a pedagogical tool for transmitting psychoanalytic concepts in a formalized way. Each of the points in a diagram like triangle EPM, extracted in Chapter XIV as a structural relation (i.e., the desire for recognition) from Riviere's (1929) case study, is associated with a symbol in Lacanian algebra (i.e., E, P, and M), and the lines connecting these corners of the triangle designate structural relationships. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation I noted that, for Lacan, mathematical formalization is supposed to confer scientific legitimacy on psychoanalysis while also providing a way of forming analysts through knowledge transmission that does not rely on intuition. In this instance, schema EPM is supposed to communicate, rigorously, the triangular structure of the relationships between Mother, Phallus/Father, and Child/Ego in the Oedipus complex. It thereby eliminates - or claims to - confusion and prejudice arising from the Imaginary elements at play in a case study. This move to formalization may have to do with Lacan's (1998/2017) concern, stated later in Section 3, about "go[ing] off into synonyms, shifts in meaning, equivalences, and, as a consequence, obscurity" (p. 290).

Lacan (1998/2017) clearly states when he introduces his three formulas of desire late in Section 3 that by translating the terms of the Freud-Jones debate into mathemes, he intends to avoid explicating the role of the phallus *vis-a-vis* contemporary ideologies (p. 297). Yet it is precisely at this point that Lacan (1998/2017) makes himself vulnerable to his student Irigaray's criticism, to which I now turn.

### **Irigaray, the "Mechanics" of Fluids, and the Possibility of a Feminine Psychoanalytic Identity**

Irigaray gestures back to Hegel's provocative criticism of binary oppositions and traditional deductive logic, reviewed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, in her criticism of

Lacan's account of the origin of identity in his "Mirror Stage" paper, an account she links with his formulas of desire from *Seminar V* as well as his much later teachings on the formulas of sexuation. I claim that Irigaray's rejoinders to Lacan on these points are significant for understanding a candidate's development of a psychoanalytic identity in relation to teachers, mentors, and an interpretive community. Irigaray emphasizes the sexed differential at the heart of the possibility of speaking in one's own name. In this subsection I discuss several points at which Irigaray intervenes in Lacan's account so as to raise the more specific question of a woman assuming a psychoanalytic identity.

***Irigaray on the privilege of identity formation.*** From an Irigarayan perspective, Lacan's preoccupation with the costs of identity formation in the Mirror Stage is evidence that he tacitly aligns the process of becoming a subject with the privileges of being male. Lacan rightly emphasizes the "rigid" character of the identity constructed through identification with the mirror image, for identity as it has been traditionally understood constrains both men's and women's responses even as it enables them. Rigidity and solidity of egoic identity emphasize stable being over the movement of change and becoming, for example, the openness to ongoing transformation of one's psychoanalytic identity through new clinical encounters that may challenge one's theoretical assumptions. Nevertheless, Lacan fails to question his presupposition that there is an image - or a mirror, for that matter - available in the first place for the subject-to-be. According to Irigaray, this is precisely the girl child's situation.<sup>36</sup> For all the

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<sup>36</sup> "And so far as the organism is concerned, what happens is the mirror provides nothing to see? No sex, for example? So it is with the girl" (Irigaray, 1977/1985b, p. 117, original emphasis). See also her earlier remarks in *Speculum*, where she claims that "the castration of woman, penis-envy, hatred of the mother, the little girl's despicability and rejection of her sex/organ, then end of her (masculine) auto-eroticism that results, the



problems with identity, women remain in the paralyzed condition of the fragmented body. Without the unity of a body image suited to the feminine, women are denied agency. For women who are training to become clinicians, this lack of a mirror not only pertains to how women are portrayed by psychoanalytic theory - as the “other of the same,” defined in negative terms in relation to the masculine - but to who has constructed the theories. The most authoritative voices are typically male, and although Freud self-consciously relied on his female acolytes as his inquiry into female sexuality in particular progressed, he infrequently credited his interlocutors in print and even at times misrepresented the views of dissenters, such as Karen Horney. This leaves women in training with the untenable “choice” of either dispensing with psychoanalysis altogether or “identifying with models and laws derived by male subjects” (Irigaray, 1977/1985b, p. 86).

Moreover, while Lacan is right to criticize negative face of narcissism, which promotes a self-centered perspective, he does not adequately consider narcissism’s positive contribution. Without it, the child cannot develop self-esteem. Tacitly privileging

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failure to explain the evolution of her anal eroticism - except in terms of a ‘stunted penis’ - are all signs that the appropriation of the specular, or speculative, process/trial is a victory for (so-called) masculine sexuality. They are signs of a specular process/trial which favors a *flat mirror* as most apt to capture the image, the representation, the auto-representation. ...she must inscribe herself in the masculine, phallic way of relating to origin, that involves repetition, representation, reproduction” (Irigaray, 1974/1985a, pp. 77-78). Here, the available mirror privileges the male, and the female body is seen from the perspective of the male gaze, according to which it appears as lacking. Similarly, she argues that there is no satisfactory source of primary identification for the female child. The only available images are those of the phallic mother and the castrated mother. For Irigaray, this is symptomatic of the failure adequately to distinguish between “being a mother” and “being a woman.”

a male subject, Lacan assumes that the subject possesses or has access to healthy self-love. This, Irigaray justly insists, is what women have been denied.

Irigaray, like Lacan, powerfully attends to the tension within traditional concepts of identity between mobility and rigidity. She goes further, however, by pointing out Lacan's apparent inability to think identity differently, and does so in a style of reading and writing that mimes Lacan's own. For Irigaray, Lacan's inability to think identity differently is symptomatic of his repression of the feminine, which, on Irigaray's view, is linked with mobility, or, as she puts it, "fluidity." A fluid identity must become thinkable if the problem of women's identity is to be addressed without capitulating to familiar notions of identity in terms of the One or the Same.<sup>37</sup> To do so would require that Lacan admit that "there may be some other logic, one that upsets his own" (Irigaray, 1977/1985b, p. 90). That is to say, he would have to rethink the very concept of rationality he has inherited, which, like subjectivity, has been gendered male.

Irigaray's intervention on this point goes to the heart of Lacan's psychoanalytic epistemology. Following in the Cartesian tradition, Lacan understands the Imaginary (here, as intuition) as inimical to the growth of scientific knowledge. Although the Imaginary has a positive role to play outside of science - in the arts, for example - "the image offers [merely] apparent and seductive solutions to problems of knowledge which must be resisted if real knowledge is to be won" (Whitford, 1991, p. 55). This aspiration to evacuate the Imaginary is prominent in the algebra Lacan constructs over the course of

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<sup>37</sup> Identity "must be thought of in terms of the female imaginary, an imaginary that will bind or attach the scraps and debris together into something which gives women a 'home' but does not prevent their mobility, their becoming, and their growth" (Whitford, 1991, p. 138).

his career to formalize psychoanalysis. According to Irigaray (1977/1985b), this project is tantamount to attempting to “get rid of the body” (p. 90). Moreover, on her view, total freedom from the Imaginary is an unrealizable fantasy.<sup>38</sup> Knowledge, even in the form of Lacanian algebra, is always, inevitably, marked by the Imaginary.

One task she issues, then, is to confront the fundamentally sexed character of the Imaginary. Irigaray finds that the image of the male body, aligned with rationality in the philosophical tradition, is characterized not only by unity but by solidity. This state of affairs testifies, she claims, to “a *complicity of long standing between rationality and a mechanics of solids*” (1977/1985b, p. 107, original emphasis), a “relationship...against which fluids have never stopped arguing” (p. 113). Fluids, for Irigaray, figure the feminine, which has been traditionally linked with irrationality. “[W]omen diffuse themselves according to modalities scarcely compatible with the framework of the ruling symbolics” (p. 106). Thus they have been excluded in pursuit of a certain kind of rationality. She seeks instead an alternative in some relationship or intercourse between these masculine and feminine elements. With this would come the possibility of thinking of the death drive differently, in terms of “the economy of fluids - the resistances brought to bear upon solids” (Irigaray, 1977/1985b, p. 109). This rethinking is crucial, according to Irigaray, because the violence of the death drives as they are currently figured, although ostensibly in the service of self-transformative escape from Imaginary identity,

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<sup>38</sup> “What is so disturbing,” Irigaray (1977/1985b) remarks, “is that of these fantasies, he makes laws, going so far as to confuse them with science” (p. 88). Furthermore, “to seek once again to make a science of it amounts to bringing it back inside the logic of the subject” (p. 98).

is more likely in the case of women to remain self-directed in destructive but not liberatory ways.

Ultimately, Lacan and Irigaray are both concerned with the possibility of speaking in one's own name, with countering the bondage, the alienating violence, of identity formation, perhaps most especially in the instance of psychoanalytic identity. Both acknowledge that this task requires a different kind of thinking that does not simply repeat the past, but partakes of the originality of repetition. Lacan appears to do so when he returns to the Freud who discovered the linguistic unconscious and criticizes the Freud who focused too literally on anatomy in his investigations into sexual difference. Yet his formulas of sexuation - perhaps even especially these formulas - bear the marks of their formulation by a subject in a masculine position of enunciation. His reliance on formalization stylistically reaffirms the aspiration to wholeness and mastery entailed in the modern Cartesian project of clear and distinct thinking, despite the fact that Lacan was committed to the claim that the *form*, not just the content, of thought bears ontological and epistemological significance. In terms of form, then, Lacan is not entirely consistent with his own contributions to undermining the pretensions to mastery in patriarchy by underscoring the lack in the Other and the fallibility of the phallus. For Irigaray, this means that even Lacan's psychoanalysis is guilty of repeating the phallicism of the Western tradition (1977/1985b, p. 86).<sup>39</sup> This tradition portrays "woman as womb, the unconscious womb of man's language. ...absent as subject" (p. 94), meaning that she cannot "disrupt through her speech...the prevailing organization of power" (p. 95). In

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<sup>39</sup> See also: "That woman is 'taken only *quod matrem*' is inscribed in the entire philosophic tradition. It is even one of the conditions of its possibility" (Irigaray, 1977/1985b, p. 102).

other words, women have more difficulty than men in finding a place from which to speak in their own name in Lacan's theory. Indeed, women bear the greater burden of having to establish a place that does not yet exist.

It is crucial that Irigaray's criticism of Lacan is enacted *stylistically*, and in fact that her style of critical engagement mirrors Lacan's own (Weed, 1994). Irigaray "reads" Lacan for the symptom, just as he analyzes the canonical texts of the Western tradition for their symptoms.<sup>40</sup> Irigaray thereby reveals the conservative "bent" to Lacan's teachings. She charges that, to the extent that he aspired to formalize psychoanalysis and thereby eliminate the transformation of meaning in the transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge, Lacan, like Freud, stood in conflicted relation to the position of Father and Master. If, instead, Irigaray launched her critique in traditional demonstrative form, she, too, could be viewed as repeating the same symptomatic process she is trying to expose in Lacan's style of thinking and teaching. By engaging Lacan in his own terms, so to speak, she also avoids the danger of suggesting that she has arrived at a final, absolute thesis, which is the Master's fantasy.

Irigaray's critical position *vis-à-vis* Lacan, like Lacan's *vis-à-vis* the Western tradition, proceeds as a process of relating with and against her conceptual interlocutor. In doing so, she effectively reinstates Lacan's teaching as an "open" text. She defers, indefinitely, the hermeneutic closure that would be attempted by an authoritative reading. This stylistic gesture paradoxically protects Lacan's teaching from being displaced by

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<sup>40</sup> "What Irigaray is trying to do in her writing is to effect an *intervention*, so that her writing would function like the psychoanalyst and set something, some change, in motion" (Whitford, 1986, p. 6). Like Lacan, Irigaray does this through irony and catachresis.

another teaching aspiring to the status of absolute knowledge. Irigaray maintains the dialogical process, then, by refusing to let Lacan have the last word.

Irigaray's stylistic critique of Lacan's formalizations ironically foregrounds the way in which, broadly, Lacan's teachings, particularly his seminars, have the character of a thought in process, a mode of (re)reading that is also a process of relating. Tangents are frequently taken, doubts or critical questions are brought up without necessarily being resolved. Lacan often thinks against himself, revises his position, and considers alternatives. His is a self-questioning, fluid thinking, rather than the complete system that was the dream of modernity. His teaching is not a self-identical project. All of these characteristics suggest *non-closure*, a style of thinking that declares or admits its own difference. This processual character of Lacan's thinking and teaching provides openings for readings of an "other" Lacan to be enacted, and, ultimately, for a positive encounter with Irigaray to take place. The aspect of Lacan's thinking that appears to be at odds with this characterization is precisely his formalizations, particularly his formulas of sexuation in *Seminar XX*, which were supposed to be an alternative to the case study as a style of thinking distinctive of psychoanalysis.

Irigaray's stylistic mode of critique furthermore refuses the traditional model of thinking-as-sexual-reproduction that Lacan himself exposes for critical scrutiny in *Seminar XX*. Her contribution does not "complete" Lacan, which would simply invert the traditional view of the sexual relationship as a unity, complementarity, or synthesis, and treat Lacan as if he (instead of she) were the passive, feminine, "lacking" partner. Her critique-as-style performs a different kind of sexual relationship that emphasizes the dynamic sustained between the partners – one, moreover, that Lacan himself performed

in his (re)readings of Freud and other canonical thinkers. She thereby shows that mimesis, mask, and masquerade – the supposed Lacanian feminine – can be a kind of positivity, not simply a negative or lack as Freud and Lacan often suggest.

Does this imply that Lacan and Irigaray can be reconciled in relation to style? If to be “reconciled” means that Lacan and Irigaray can be shown to be saying the “same” thing, or that Irigaray’s criticisms can somehow be reduced to Lacan’s, then my answer is no, they cannot be reconciled. Instead, I suggest that the style they share renders each open to the perspective of the other, in a potentially infinite dialogue. One possible site for the emergence of an “other” Lacan that can be understood as “joining with” Irigaray can be found in the *sinthome* introduced in Lacan’s *Seminar XXIII*. The *sinthome*, as a critical concept, goes beyond the provision of a methodological framework or toolbox for analyzing hierarchical or oppressive systems, to showcase a positive rethinking of the nature of change, transformation, or development that preserves particularity and resists normativity. Chapter 5 of this dissertation continues to take up these themes.

## CHAPTER 5:

### CASE STUDY AS *SINTHOME*

*“So, the sign of my entanglement is indeed Joyce, precisely inasmuch as what he puts forth, and in a way that is quite especially that of an artist because he has the know-how to pull it off, is the sinthome, and a sinthome such that there is nothing to be done to analyze it.”*

Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 106

In this fifth chapter, I elaborate on Irigaray’s critical yet productive response to Lacan’s reliance on formalization as an aspect of his pedagogical style, which I began toward the end of Chapter 4. I do this by investigating the concept of style as Lacan - and, by juxtaposition, Foucault - employs it. Drawing from philosopher John Rajchman’s (2010/1991) *Truth and Eros*, in which he argues that style, for Lacan, as for Foucault, was a specifically *ethical* problem with implications for knowledge production, pedagogy, and subject formation, I explore links between Lacan’s remarks on style in his “Overture to This Collection,” the three-page opening to the *Écrits*, and *Seminars VII* and *XXIII*. What relations can be found between style and the possibility of making an original contribution to psychoanalytic tradition? I argue that the style a clinician employs when writing up a case can be decisive in either becoming an alienated disciple or creating a name for oneself from which one can speak/write.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the recent efflorescence of Foucauldian scholarship on the case study genre owes much to the “style of reasoning” concept first introduced by historian of science A. C. Crombie and subsequently amended and expanded by Ian



Hacking and his colleague, John Forrester. Hacking, elaborating on Foucault, defines a style of reasoning as an “enduring way of thinking,” a “package of practices, reasoning procedures, and ways of going on that are to be found in the sciences” (Forrester, 1996, p. 2). Crombie (1988) identified six such styles. In *The Taming of Chance* - Hacking’s (1990) study of Crombie’s fifth style, statistical analysis of populations - Hacking (1990) argues that any such style of reasoning “is a matter not only of thought but of action” (p. 6). Styles, produced and disseminated through particular modes of training and writing practices, shape problem formulation, investigation, and problem solving.

In his 1992 essay, “‘Style’ for Historians and Philosophers,” Hacking engages in his most detailed discussion of the concepts of “style” and “style of reasoning” as he understands them. A style of reasoning can be distinguished only if it introduces certain “novelties” in what Hacking describes as an “open-textured, ongoing, and creative way” (p. 12). These novelties include objects, evidence, sentences, laws or modalities, possibilities, and, sometimes, classifications and explanations. For example, styles of reasoning enable practitioners to see and attend to things previously unrecognized, such as “the unconscious.” Naming and thus making visible things previously unseen typically inaugurates an ontological debate. A style of reasoning also enables practitioners to enunciate sentences that, prior to the emergence of this style, were not recognized as possibly true or false. What Hacking (1992) calls “philosophical technology” (p. 18), or techniques of self-stabilization, however, constitute the truly sufficient condition for distinguishing a style of reasoning. Arguing that each style of reasoning “settles what it is to be objective” (p. 4), Hacking (1992) claims that techniques such as the case study explain how styles of reasoning become standards of objectivity.

## **Lacan and Hegel: Ethics and Transgression**

In Chapter 3 of this dissertation I appealed to the late Foucault's (2001) concept of *parrhesia* ("speaking truthfully"), a performance that enacts truth-as-fiction and entails ethical responsibility on the part of the truth-teller. There, I suggested that this Foucauldian concept could address the possibility of taking a stance toward tradition and authority that does not seek to obtain love or approval by living up to a fantasized image of the omnipotent father. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, I argued that Lacan's intervention into the Freud-Jones debate could be understood as his attempt, via the case study genre, to take such a transgressive stance toward the psychoanalytic establishment and begin to form a distinctively Lacanian community of psychoanalytic theory and practice in 1950s France. One aim of this chapter is to elucidate the link between ethical subjectivity and the concept of truth-as-fiction, first by reviewing the Hegelian foundations of Lacan's psychoanalytic ethics in *Seminar VII*, and then bringing this ethics to bear on the concept of style.

### **Hegel's ethics in the *Phenomenology* of 1807: Antigone, death, and *polis*.**

Hegel (1807/1977) claims that ethical life has the logical structure of action [*Handlung*]. This view recalls Aristotle's ontological prioritization of process, activity, and becoming (motion) over static being, which, as I noted in Chapter 3, grounds both his ethics and his poetics. In §§444-472 of the *Phenomenology* of 1807, he argues that the dialectical character of the latter ultimately unsettles the harmonious wholeness of the ancient Greek *polis*, Hegel's (1807/1977) paradigm of ethical community. Ethical action is grounded in the relationship between the individual citizen and the community. The harmony of the ethical community, on Hegel's (1807/1977) view, is rendered dialectical by the division

of ethical substance into the opposition between human law and divine law (§445). This division demarcates public life of political engagement from private family life. Crucial to the dialectical tension of ethical life is the claim that each citizen acts in accordance with one, but not both, of the laws, in keeping with their own character (§466). Criminal action temporarily interrupts the harmony of the ethical community; justice is supposed to intervene to resolve the dissonance of such transgressions. More problematic is the fact that each citizen promotes the law they obey as the absolute ethical standard, ignorant of their necessarily one-sided allegiance. Hegel (1807/1977) argues that such claims to absolute ethical life incite tragic outcomes - including the tragedy told in Sophocles' play, *Antigone* - and, ultimately, the dissolution of the Greek *polis*.

Hegel (1807/1977) understands the tragic quality of the *Antigone* in terms of contradictory commands issued to the protagonist by human and divine law. Such a contradiction is possible within the *polis* because many relationships are infused with both civic and familial responsibilities. This heterogeneity is potentially problematic because human law understands ethical responsibility in terms of the good of the *polis* (a universal), whereas one's inclination to care for loved ones is grounded in one's desire and the particularity of the beloved in relation to one's desire. Only the act of burying the dead is uniquely familial, an act legislated solely by divine law (§451). The burial act seems to evade the problematic tension of the opposing laws while also guaranteeing the ethicality of the act, given that Hegel (1807/1977) considers the dead person a universal insofar as the deceased's life is complete (§451). This is precisely what makes Antigone's situation so unsettling: one does not expect any ethical conflict in her conviction that she

must bury her brother, Polyneices, but the laws of the *polis* as issued by Creon are such that burying him is a criminal act.

According to Hegel (1807/1977), *Antigone* is a tragedy that dramatizes the contradictions inherent in Greek ethical life. Creon and Antigone clash, he argues, because each acts and responds from the conviction that he or she has an absolute right, *vis-à-vis* the law he or she obeys, to bury the dead or to forbid that burial (§468). The tragedy unfolds because each has necessarily incomplete ethical knowledge. Each knows just one “side” of the whole of the ethical substance they live within.

Hegel’s (1807/1977) account of the dialectic of ethical action in the Spirit stage of the *Phenomenology* of 1807 is reminiscent of the dialectic of master and slave from the earlier Self-Consciousness section of the same text. Action is similar to labor in two ways: first, both processes externalize, actualize, or render objective the subject; and, second, both processes transform the world in some way. Action, however, is a more logically advanced manifestation of the slave’s labor. Action is unlike labor in the sense that, once the act is committed, the agent can observe it and perceive its one-sidedness. The agent now feels guilty about the limitations they have found in the action undertaken. According to Hegel (1807/1977), this self-incrimination intensifies as the agent quite literally recognizes their own one-sided ethical act as a crime against the other side of ethical substance (§468).

Refusing to act, or allowing others to act in one’s place, would be equivalent to taking the role of the master in the dialectic of master and slave. Hegel (1807/1977) considers this role both logically and ethically inferior to that of the slave (in the case of the master-slave dialectic) or the ethical agent (in the case of the dialectic of ethical

substance). Not acting is tantamount to surrendering one's subjectivity: it is to take on the "mere being of a stone, not even that of a child" (§468). With this criticism, Hegel (1807/1977) charges that non-action is neither a morally superior nor even an equivalent ethical stance to the one-sidedness of action. Moreover, he insists that it is not possible to act in fidelity to both sides of ethical substance. Only through suffering the tragedy of action does one discover the other side of ethicality of which one had been ignorant.

Hegel (1807/1977) suggests that one must commit the "crime" of action in order to learn that the other, and the other's ethical law, completes one's ethical one-sidedness. It is in this sense that the tragedy of ethical life tends, on Hegel's (1807/1977) view, toward the sort of reconciliation and proto-mutual recognition that, as I will discuss, Lacan (1986/1992) criticizes him for reading into the *Antigone*. This Sophoclean tragedy uniquely dissolves the entire structure of the Greek *polis*, however, because Antigone committed her crime fully aware that she was transgressing Creon's edict. The conflicting convictions at play in this drama express the very limits of the Greek form of ethical life itself. Thus, when Creon and Antigone meet their fate, they no longer have a role in their *polis*. So much is indicated by the fact that Antigone ends her own life and Creon exiles himself from the community before the drama concludes.

**From Aristotle to Freud: Ethics, the sovereign good, and the Real.** According to Lacan (1986/1992), Freud articulated an "original" ethical position. It is helpful to consider the manner and extent to which moral philosophy has transformed since the full flowering of ancient Greece. "In Aristotle," Lacan (1986/1992) explains, "the problem is that of a good, a sovereign Good" (p. 11), a concept that Aristotle discusses in relation to the ethical goal of living well and achieving *eudaimonia*. Aristotle claimed that human

beings, as rational animals, have a natural desire to know the Good. Ethical perfection consists in obtaining ethical knowledge and taking actions in situations in such a way that the sovereign Good, what Lacan (1986/1992) terms *das Ding*, is achieved.

Freud's innovation several centuries later was to claim that "the question of ethics is to be articulated from the point of view of the location of man in relation to the real" (p. 11). In this reference to the Real, Lacan (1986/1992) intends to invoke both the sense of the undifferentiated (in contrast to the differentiation of the Symbolic) as well as the "character of impossibility and of resistance to symbolization which lends the real its essentially traumatic quality" (Evans, 1996, pp. 159-160). More specifically, however, as will become clear in the course of this section, Lacan (1986/1992) also specifically intends to evoke the relationship between the Real and *jouissance* in this brief summary of Freud's ethics. As *Seminar VII* unfolds, Lacan explains that Freud's innovation consists in aligning ethics with maintaining a distance from *das Ding*, rather than with obtaining it.

How did such a dramatic shift in ethical discourse occur, to think of ethics in terms of a regulation of the drive for pleasure, rather than as a striving after the supreme Good? To understand this shift "the function of the master" must be considered (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 11). Lacan (1986/1992) asserts that Aristotle articulated his ethics in terms of the master's discourse; Freud's ethics is given instead from the slave's perspective. Here Lacan (1986/1992) invokes the concept of the master's discourse - a concept that will be elaborated at length during Lacan's (1991/2007) *Seminar XVII* - in order to emphasize not only Aristotle's assumption that the Good can be known and achieved, but also the way in which Aristotle's ethics assumes the slave culture of ancient Greece.

Hegel marks a turning point in ethical discourse insofar as he exposes the dialectical quality of the master's relationship of *jouissance* to the slave's labor (Lacan, 1986/1992, pp. 11-12).

**From Kant to Freud: Ethics, the moral law, and the death drive.** Lacan (1986/1992) once again refers to Hegel's philosophy in his account of the relationship of pleasure to reality in Part I of *Seminar VII*. First, however, he invokes Immanuel Kant's contribution to ethical theory. Lacan (1986/1992) begins by observing that "the moral law, the moral command, the presence of the moral agency in our activity, insofar as it is structured by the symbolic, is that through which the real is actualized -- the real as such, the weight of the real" (p. 20). In contrast to Aristotle, Kant argued that moral goodness is possible precisely because humans are the sort of creature that seeks pleasure. What Kant calls the "moral law" places a limit on each person's pleasure-seeking activities. The moral law commands us to act in accordance with moral duty instead of making a decision wholly or partly on the basis of maximizing pleasure. Someone is amoral to the extent that she permits pleasure-seeking to dominate her decisions. In the foregoing quotation, Lacan (1986/1992) translates Kant's ethics into the language of the three orders of psychoanalysis. The moral law, on Lacan's (1986/1992) view, is the intervention of the Symbolic. This law divides, as it were, the Real by legislating what is moral. Moreover, as Rajchman (2010/1991) notes, Lacan (1986/1992) emphasizes, in a Kantian manner, the way the law functions to divide the subject from itself. The ethical act is opposed to the subject's own self-conception in terms of its own good.

The late Freud recognized something "beyond the pleasure principle," i.e., the death drive (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 21). Freud definitively moved beyond the limits of

Kant's deontology with this ethical concept, the implications of which disclose the genuinely dialectical character of what otherwise seems to be the apparently stable opposition of pleasure and pain. The drive for the ever-elusive state of complete satisfaction - which is to say, the death of the drive itself - manifests as a pursuit of *jouissance* in excess of the command to enjoy as little as possible. Freud explained this pursuit of excess *jouissance* in terms of an ultimately biological tendency of the human organism to dissolve back into its nonsentient elements. According to Lacan (1986/1992), however, we should understand this dialectical relationship between pleasure and pain as a tendency of the ego, an Imaginary structure, to disintegrate in response to the "return of the real," or the bodily drive toward *jouissance* (Boothby, 1991, p. 153). This can be understood as the move from the castrated subject of desire to the subject of desire "beyond" castration formalized, as I showed in Chapter 2, in Lacan's (1960/2006c) Graph of Desire and dramatized, as I showed in Chapter 4, in the final scene of Genet's (1962/1966) *The Balcony*.

Analysis, Lacan (1986/1992) states, is a "concrete experience" that prepares one to act morally by disclosing a liberating "truth" in full speech (p. 24; Lacan, 1953/2006e). This claim entails a radical departure from aspects of Kant's depiction of the ethical subject. As Rajchman (2010/1991) explains, the Kantian ethical subject is supposed to be able to use reason to transcend cultural norms and thereby discern absolute moral truth. Emotional and social bonds with others, by implication, threaten to skew this objective perspective and undermine one's rational commitment to duty. The early Lacan's concept of full speech, in contrast, discloses truth as particular to the patient undergoing psychoanalysis, not universal. Furthermore, this truth is opaque to reason, given the way



in which the Freudian unconscious “de-centers” the ego, as I discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. With this point in mind, I turn once again to Hegel’s relevance to psychoanalytic ethics - but not before addressing another point of contrast between Aristotle and Freud.

**Back to Aristotle and again to Hegel: Ethics, *ethos*, and transgression.** Lacan (1986/1992) reads Freud as teaching that psychoanalysis prepares those who undertake it for ethical action, but also that it only ever brings one to the “threshold” of such action (p. 21). Having made this assertion, turns his attention back to his contrast between Freud and Aristotle. According to the latter, as noted in Chapter 3, a good life and *eudaimonia* are attained by cultivating the right kind of character (*ethos*) through habit formation and prudent deliberation when making decisions in lived situations. Lacan (1986/1992) acknowledges that this philosophy of *ethos* presupposes a nested harmony of soul, city (*polis*), and world (*cosmos*). The process of cultivating an ethical character is premised not only on the existence of such a harmony, but also, moreover, on the possibility of coming to understand that harmony. To *know* this harmonious wholeness is the beginning of the good life.

Lacan (1986/1992) troubles this account by asking a question frequently raised by critics of ancient Greek ethics, namely, how is possible to act amorally if one knows what is good? After all, the unethical citizen, for Aristotle, is supposed to be the community member who acts in ignorance of the harm they are doing to themselves and others. Translated into the language of Lacanian psychoanalysis, this question takes the following form: how is it possible to transgress the “right discourse” (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 24)? He admits that Aristotle himself wrestled with a version of this problem but finds

Aristotle's engagement with this question inadequate because the latter apparently never departs from the master's discourse in attempting to give an answer. Hence, for Lacan (1986/1992) the great ethical significance of Hegel's dialectical account of the master-slave relationship. Hegel was able to perceive the master's dialectical dependence on the slave -- thus, also, a weakness in Aristotle's ethics. Hegel's *Phenomenology* shows that the possibility of living well within Aristotle's vision of ethics is not simply a matter of acting in accordance with reason; it is also grounded in the privilege of leisure given only to masters.

In his account of the death drive in Part III of *Seminar VII*, Lacan (1986/1992) states that the concept of "transgression" in psychoanalytic ethics "bears significant relation to...the meaning of desire," which must be strictly distinguished from biological need (p. 207). In this context he praises Marx for offering insightful criticisms of Hegel's philosophy of right (p. 208). Marx criticized Hegel for attempting to articulate political principles in terms of "need and reason" because he does not criticize the law itself. Such a political approach leaves each individual a "victim of the egoism of his private needs" (p. 208). Lacan (1986/1992) agrees that Marx improves upon Hegel insofar as he insists on the liberation of individuals from alienation in a political community. Here emerges the possibility of an *ethical* transgression of tradition and authority, insofar as these have ossified potentially liberating movements of thought - such as Freud's psychoanalysis - into dogma and ritual.

Lacan's Freudian account of subject formation, formalized in the Graph of Desire reviewed in Chapter 2, supplements Marx's politics by emphasizing the crucial relevance of desire to the problem of alienation. The tension between need and reason is, on

Freud's view, constitutive of the human subject to an extent that Hegel failed to appreciate. This tension eventually produces the *Spaltung* in the subject. Such a split is an interior alienation that parallels political alienation, thereby inverting the nested harmony of soul-city-cosmos assumed in Aristotle's ethics. Moreover, the divided nature of the human subject is rendered yet more fraught by the tendency to pursue excess *jouissance* vis-a-vis the death drive (pp. 208-209).

Lacan (1986/1992) returns to his discussion of the ethics of the good in terms of *jouissance* slightly later in the text, in a section of Part III entitled, "The function of the beautiful." He defines "the good" as the "point of departure of the human subject's destiny in his coming to terms with the signifier" that has prominence within the web of signification constituting that subject's unconscious (p. 234). The most important quality of the good in this context is the way in which it signifies the "power to satisfy" (p. 234). An individual's relationship to *das Ding* is, moreover, structured by an alter ego imagined to be able to possess or already possessing this ultimate object of desire. Here the ethical character of the libidinal economy emerges explicitly. It is now possible to reformulate concepts from earlier in Lacan's career (e.g. the mirror stage paper of 1949) in terms of the psychoanalytic ethics taught in *Seminar VII*. The ego ideal, for example, is the version of oneself that we imagine *could* have unlimited power to attain satisfaction. This idealized sense of self has a kind of mastery over the desirable to which each individual aspires through any number of symptomatic behaviors. The urge to attain the ego ideal is equivalent to wanting to occupy the role of the master. The ideal ego, for its part, can be thought of as the alter ego *already* capable of attaining *das Ding*. One's departure from the ideal ego produces a sense of deprivation and envy. All of these terms

structure one's lived world in terms of the good, which turns out, on Lacan's (1986/1992) view, to be an ethically nefarious distraction from the vicissitudes of desire.

Lacan (1986/1992) explains, for example, that a patient often comes to analysis "in order to feel good, to be in agreement with himself, to identify with or be in conformity with some norm" (p. 237). In a successful analysis, however, "the subject reveals himself to the never entirely resolved mystery of the nature of his desire" (p. 237). There is a tension here, not least because of the way in which a neurotic patient thinks that others have access to *das Ding*. "This other is held to enjoy a certain form of *jouissance* or superabundant vitality," which arouses envy in the patient (p. 237). This envy, in turn, incites in the patient feelings of hate and an inclination to destroy the alter ego.

Convinced that psychoanalytic ethics has political implications beyond this envious competition of individuals in the Imaginary, Lacan (1986/1992) wants to articulate a "beyond-the-good" principle (p. 237). To this end Lacan (1986/1992) engages with the ancient Sophoclean tragedy *Antigone*. On his view, *Antigone's* drama represents the possibility of ethical transgression, or what Lacan (1986/1992) calls the "criminal good." I suggest that *Antigone* figures the ethical subject who moves "beyond" castration, from desire to drive, through a transgressive ethical act.

**Lacan's interpretation of *Antigone*: Action at the limit of the law.** Lacan's (1986/1992) discussion of the *Antigone* is found in Part 4 of *Seminar VII*. He agrees with the long-standing tradition of reading this tragedy as "a turning point in...ethics," insofar as it addresses the "question of a law that causes conflict in us even though it is acknowledged by the community to be a just law" (p. 243). Concerning which ancient

drama is most exemplary of the tragedy of the psyche however, Lacan (1986/1992) departs from Freud's preference for the *Oedipus Rex* and instead aligns himself with Hegel's (1807/1977) preference for the *Antigone* as the superior play.

We are told that "*Antigone* reveals to us," more so than does the *Oedipus Rex*, "the line of sight that defines desire" (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 247). Here begins Lacan's (1986/1992) radical re-reading of this play, as compared with interpretations of it by generations of commentators, including Hegel. We do well, then, to clarify Lacan's (1986/1992) conception of tragedy itself before proceeding. De Kesel (2001/2009) notes that, "[f]or Lacan, a tragedy is first of all an arbitrary set of disparate facts and events that, precisely through these confusing impressions, generate an image that is lit up with an 'éclat,' a radiance" (p. 210). Again, tragedy is "a staging of signifiers in such a way as to allow the real, gaping beyond the symbolic field, to shine through" (p. 227). This helps us understand Lacan's (1986/1992) obscure claim that it is specifically the "image" of *Antigone* that produces the cathartic effect of the play (pp. 247-248).

Lacan (1986/1992) traces the ethical power of the *Antigone* to the fact that the protagonist knowingly crosses over from life into the "zone" of death (p. 248). Indeed, this is a plot element shared by several great Greek tragedies. The protagonists are all "characters who find themselves right away in a limit zone, find themselves between life and death" (p. 272). Traveling through that zone, "the beam of desire is both reflected and refracted till it ends up giving us that most strange and most profound of effects, which is the effect of beauty on desire" (p. 248). Here Lacan (1986/1992) has in mind not only Kant's aesthetic theory but also, perhaps more importantly, his own account of the relationship between desire and the death drive.

Lacan (1986/1992) articulates his criticism of Hegel's (1807/1977) interpretation of the *Antigone* in terms of desire and the "image." Lacan (1986/1992) charges that Hegel's (1807/1977) philosophy is weakest in its reading of the ethical import of this play in terms of a conflict between divine law and human law. Hegel (1807/1977) erroneously assumes that the characters in this play say exactly what they mean, and, more problematically, that their conflicting ethical commitments "move toward some form of reconciliation" (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 249).

In the midst of this criticism of Hegel's (1807/1977) account of the *Antigone*, Lacan (1986/1992) returns to the significance of "the image represented by" the protagonist (p. 252). He asserts that Hegel's focus on the clash of ethical laws is misleading, for Antigone is, in fact, "borne along by a passion" (p. 254). This passion fuels the tragic unfolding of the play and accounts for Antigone's action. Lacan (1986/1992) can point to textual evidence of this passion in passages of the play's text where, for example, Antigone expresses a desire to join with her dead brother, Polyneices. Thus Antigone is motivated to pursue "a good that is different from everyone else's" (p. 270). This pursuit, in turn, results in her ultimate act of transgression, which exposes the irreconcilable discord between human and divine law. Lacan (1986/1992) tells us, moreover, that we can find in this tragic unfolding an illustration of the divided nature of subjectivity - specifically, the misalignment of the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders such that transgressive acts can dissolve the structures of the Imaginary back into the Real.

Antigone is extraordinary because she knows that her unrestrained pursuit of her desire will result in her death. On Lacan's (1986/1992) reading, her assertions throughout

the play to the effect that she is already dead carry both concrete and psychological significance.

From Antigone's point of view life can only be approached, can only be lived through or thought about, from the place of that limit where her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side (p. 280).

Antigone manifests the death drive insofar as she knowingly pursues her desire beyond the limit set by the pleasure principle (p. 281). Indeed, "she pushes to the limit the realization of something that might be called the pure and simple desire of death as such. She incarnates that desire" (p. 282). In that last excerpt from *Seminar VII*, Lacan suggests that Antigone's criminal act is no mere transgression of a law; it is the transgression that reveals the profound limitation of the law itself. In this way she exposes the fatal flaw in the ethical system, thereby proving, contrary to Hegel (1807/1977), that "no mediation is possible here" (p. 283).

Having reviewed the Hegelian foundations of Lacan's psychoanalytic ethics, I will now proceed to bring this ethics to bear on the concept of style and its relation to truth-as-fiction.

### **Lacan and Foucault *contra* Phenomenology: Style in the Absence of a Worldview**

A deceptively familiar term, "style" proves ambiguous upon reflection. As Wessely (1991) has noted, it is a term bearing various significations imported from art history and sociology of knowledge. Moreover, "style" can be used to describe either an individual or a collective. In the hybrid discipline of history and philosophy of science, to which both Hacking and Forrester have contributed,

style [is understood to] play[] a role in the emergence and perpetuation of scientific ideals, institutions, and ideologies. Style is invoked in order to explain success or failure of

individual, institutional, and national scientific endeavors and to account for scientific creativity (Nye, 1993, p. 30).

According to Rajchman (2010/1991), “Lacan was proud to say he had no ‘worldview,’ no *Weltanschauung*. In its place he would have a style” (p. 15). In this section, I show that, by juxtaposing worldview to style, Lacan intensifies an existing tension between two etymological lineages that inform the term “style.” Moreover, I elucidate the implications this tension has for Lacan’s pedagogy, the institution of a Lacanian community of interpretation and practice, and the roles of psychoanalytic case studies in the formation of Lacanian clinicians.

**Style as *stylus*, signature genius.** Historical notions of style have alternately elaborated upon the connotations of the two etymological ancestors of this term: (1.) the Latin *stylus* (writing instrument) and (2.) the Greek *stylos* (architectural column). Buffon’s famous remark, “style is the man,” which I will discuss in detail later in this chapter, was taken up and transformed by the German Romantics and other students of the arts who developed the concept of style in terms of its cognitive dimension, associated with the Latin *stylus*. Wessley (1991) explains that understanding style in this way directed attention to particular features of representations and emphasized their cognitive or technical basis. The German Romantics incorporated the dimension of history into the study of style, introducing the notion of “national” styles developing over time. A collective style was taken as the standard against which the productions of individual artists within a nation could be evaluated. This notion of collective or national style thus serves as the signature of a group, individuating and distinguishing it from other collectives, and manifesting its particularity (Gayon, 1999). Inevitably, a people’s collective style can also register problematic norms, such as misogyny or racism (Nye,



1993), an observation that aligns with the spirit of Irigaray's criticism of the role of formalization in Lacan's pedagogical style, as I discussed in Chapter 4. While the German Romantics themselves understood the emergence of national styles in terms of the unfolding of spirit [*Geist*], scholars have reinterpreted the historical development of collective style as the result of "traditions passed on through formally institutionalized schools - for example, universities - and through informally constituted schools, which include 'research schools'" (Nye, 1993, p. 32).

Buffon's remark was also taken as validating contemporaneous theories of genius, according to which artists should seek to cultivate the eccentricities of their own personal style. Here style functions as the signature of individual creative singularity. It implies innovative transgression of precedent, tradition, and authority. On this view, "the perceived social marginality of the artist [was understood] as a consciously embraced position above, or in advance of, the norms of his age" (Wessely, 1991, p. 269).

**Style as *stylos*, shared worldview.** Although the study of style within the field of sociology of knowledge is recognized as emerging from Max Weber's social research (Wessely, 1991), it can also be traced to phenomenology.<sup>1</sup> As philosopher Dan Meacham (2013) has shown, the concept of style (*Stil*) features significantly not only Husserl's

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, Hacking remarks in passing in his 1992 article on style that other scholars, such as historian of science I. B. Cohen, are mistaken to trace their application of the German word *Stil* in discussions of the historical emergence of modern mathematical physics to the phenomenological philosophy. Hacking contends that "style," as an analytical tool for historians and philosophers of science, does not descend from Edmund Husserl's passages on Galileo in Part 2, Section 9 of *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Hacking is correct when he argues that in passages in the *Crisis* cited by Cohen and others, Husserl in fact explicitly refers to a "style of the world" that appears less relevant to the concept of style in Hacking's own Foucauldian project. I claim that he errs, however, in failing to consider the broader conceptual affinity between his project and that of Husserl's teachings on style and institution.

*Crisis* but also in his lectures on intersubjectivity<sup>2</sup> and in the second book of his posthumously published *Ideas II*. Meacham (2013) argues that when all of these textual sites are taken into consideration, it is evident that Husserl conceptualized an “egoic style” distinct from the “style of the world” he mentions in the *Crisis*. Egoic style, in Husserl, refers to the typical ways an ego is motivated in its constituting activity and habitual comportment. Style is always a dynamic interplay between general tendencies and singular responses. General human style, Husserl argues in *Ideas II*, arises from the structure of embodiment shared by all humans. Movement and action are instances of corporeal expression that are communicable and understandable to others precisely because all humans partake in this most general of styles. Individual or singular human style, although constrained by the limits of general style, nevertheless manifests particular persistent motivations and affections. Apperception of styles as static types is possible, but involves reductive abstraction from this dynamic relation.

Husserl’s explication of style in *Ideas II*, Meacham (2013) argues, is closely linked with his concept of institution (*Stiftung*). This concept captures the way in which acts of consciousness passively refer back to prior acts and “re-institute” them, thereby establishing a tradition or an institutional history, as a trajectory or pathway for future acts of consciousness. This trajectory, in philosopher Donald Landes’ (2013) words, lies between pure creation and pure repetition. Furthermore, this institutional history in turn manifests as always-evolving style. Husserl explicitly discusses institution as involved in habit formation, empathy, object constitution, and lifeworld constitution, yet he also leaves open the possibility that institution could be understood as operating on other

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<sup>2</sup> Published in *Husserliana 15*

levels, including cultural ones. Indeed, even for Husserl, stylized acts can exceed an individual's conscious awareness or deliberation, evidence of what Meacham (2013) calls an "institutional unconscious" or what Polanyi called "tacit knowledge." Meacham (2013) argues that this acknowledgment marks a shift in Husserl from a conceptualization of consciousness primarily in terms of constitution to that of consciousness as dynamic institution and style, or what Landes (2013) calls a "moving equilibrium."

It is this shift in Husserl's thought that Merleau-Ponty takes up in his more extensive, explicit, and well-known engagement with the concept of style, particularly in his later work. As philosopher John O'Neill (1970) has noted, consciousness for Merleau-Ponty is institution rather than constitution. In his 1954-55 lectures, Merleau-Ponty makes explicit the possibility in Husserl of levels of institution, recognizing not only the affective or motivational level Husserl discussed, but also the institution of works, language, and history. Perceptual norms, shaped by culture, find expression on each of these levels. Importantly, Merleau-Ponty's elaboration of Husserl's teachings on institution and style allow for speaking of natural, social, and human sciences as symbolic institutions - human communities distinguished by stable yet dynamic perspectives and practices. Following O'Neill (1970), every such institution is a "symbolic system in which the individual incorporates himself and through which his actions acquire a typical style" (pp. 58-59). Moreover, as noted by Landes (2013), stylized actions

only "survive[]" or "endure[]" as the other side of a potential taking up, even in the case of mathematical objects or scientific descriptions. ... The institution brings about, through fragile expressions, the sense of a certain idea...insofar as it remains available to be taken up again (p. 15).

It is here that the affinity with Hacking's "style of reasoning" concept becomes most apparent.

A worldview emerges within an institution as

a specific pattern of perception, action, and interpretation arising from the common experiences of a social group. It provides a hierarchical system of meanings organized according to their relevance to group existence (Wessely, 1991, p. 271).

A worldview is a conceptual schema to which various propositions or explanations may be compatible or incompatible. Incompatible ideas are usually rejected because they contradict these received ways of naming and framing situations. Rejection can occur even if the inherited schema clashes on the factual level with observations.

Within the context of a particular worldview, a style of thinking consists of "the tacit and culturally bound rules that govern scientific research" (Wessely, 1991, p. 276).

It is a specific perspective from which objects are seen and situations are framed and designed, entailing certain ontological commitments and levels of abstraction.

Phenomenologically, a style of thinking is "a set of dispositions, inhibitions, and acquired skills in connection with a performance that allows for the perception and conceptualization of meaningful forms" (p. 273). It fits observations and experiences into the existing body of knowledge accepted by a community of practice. New knowledge can arise from creative negotiations between the practitioner as subject, the practitioner's object, and the body of knowledge accepted within the practitioner's professional community. Hermeneutically, a style of thinking is "a holistic system of meanings within the closed construction of a world. It determines what can be regarded as a solid fact or an acceptable explanation" (p. 273). In this way, the adoption of a style of thinking by a

group of practitioners at a given time not only homogenizes their approach to solving problems, but also the ways in which they first select and formulate those problems. Sociologically, a style of thinking consists of the set of social constraints, arising from the organization of the community of practice and its social status, that prescribes how problems should be solved and how the resolution of the problem should be presented if it is to be accepted by the community. It is “the socially reinforced result of a hierarchically structured exchange of ideas among scholars” (p. 273).

**Style in the absence of a worldview.** Whereas Merleau-Ponty explicitly engages the concept of style across many of his writings, Foucault does not thematize style until his final publications and interviews. Style is nevertheless a crucial, albeit implicit, concept in much of Foucault’s work. The late Foucault’s rethinking of ethics provides an access point from which to see how this is so. As philosopher Johanna Oksala (2005) explains, Foucault understands ethics as concerned with producing forms of subjectivity that are capable of functioning as resistance to normalizing power; in other words, ethics involves “finding ways of thinking, living, and relating to other people that [are or] were unimaginable” (p. 169). Undertaking this ethical task involves “relating to ourselves and our lives as to a material that can be formed and transformed” (p. 169), echoing the notion of style as *stylus*, discussed above. To stylize is a process akin to marking a material by applying a stylus. It enacts the transformative potential for ethical self-construction entailed in the late Foucault’s (2001) concept of *parrhesia*. Importantly, Oksala (2005) clarifies that Foucault’s ethical subject can only constitute itself in and through “modes of behavior and forms of thinking of its cultural context,” which it appropriates into a “singular ethical style” (p. 192).

Foucault can be read as further radicalizing Merleau-Ponty's shift away from the constituting subject by treating subjectivity as historically-variable form.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in keeping with O'Leary's (2006) suggestion, the possibility of subjective transformation, for Foucault, can be linked to Foucault's rethinking of experience. Referencing his engagement in the 1960s with Bataille and Blanchot, Foucault describes his development as a thinker in terms of this concept in his 1978 "Interview with Foucault." Taking up the concept of "limit experience" from these interlocutors, Foucault claims in his 1960s essays that some experiences, particularly those instigated by certain kinds of modern literature, can transform and challenge "lived" experience as he understands it. Lived experience, Foucault contends, is shaped by a general, dominant background structuring of thought, action, and feeling at a particular time. This background structure is not only deeply implicated in power and forms of knowledge; it also enables, and in some cases necessitates, forms of perception. It thus produces rigid forms of subjectivity and even, as historian Hayden White (1973) claims, verbal styles. Drawing from Foucault's *History of Madness* and *Order of Things*, White (1973) explains that style for Foucault is constrained by "horizontal" rules of exclusion, which demarcate what can be said and what can be true, as well as by "vertical" principle delineating shared discursive modes.

The background structure, or institution, establishes limits that exclude ways of thinking, living, and relating to others - even ways of writing. Returning to Hacking and Forrester, the case study genre is an example of such a shared discursive mode of writing within the modern human science professions. This genre usually stays within instituted

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<sup>3</sup> I do not claim, however, that Foucault actually read these portions of Merleau-Ponty's writings or that he explicitly took them up in his own work.

bounds, evinces a commitment to a style of representation, and produces individuals as exemplars of one or more classificatory types. In contrast, some works of modern literature - such as Artaud's essays, as I will show later in this chapter - evoke a transgressive limit experience, an experience of excess, by manipulating what Foucault calls the "vertical dimension of language," or the degree of misfit between words and things. This vertical dimension is not wholly bound by the demands of representation or communication - it is language at its most poetic. Limit experience thereby allows for momentary contact with the excluded "outside," as, for example, in madness. Writing and reading essays like Artaud's constitutes an ethical subject by shattering the limits of the normative subjective form of life imposed within a given era. It can produce, for example, a madperson who resists normalizing treatment or a clinician who resists disciplinary norms in the human sciences.

O'Leary (2006) concludes that Foucault sets aside these claims about writing, reading, and transformative limit experience after the 1960s. I suggest, instead, that Foucault further cultivated and practiced a style of historical writing that had the potential to provoke limit experiences for his readers as well as for himself, as writer. According to White (1973), Foucault's style is characterized by oracularity, paradox, hyperbole, and irony. His "reversed style" - to apply to Foucault himself the term he uses for the verbal style characteristic of Roussel, Sade, Bataille, and Blanchot - works with the poetic possibilities available in the vertical dimension of language. It makes use of linguistic ambiguity, the ability to say different things with the same words, to render the familiar strange and to call instituted limits into question. Deploying language in this way, Foucault critiques received traditions, practices, and explanations and thereby effectively

“redraw[s] the map of cultural history.” A reader provoked by Foucault’s foregroundings of the contingencies at play in the history of sexuality (to take just one example) is thus provided with a margin of freedom within which to consider how things might be otherwise, by considering concepts and relations elided by traditional historical narratives.

Both Lacan and Irigaray, I claim, likewise enact this kind of style in their published works.

### **Style in Lacan’s “Overture” in the *Écrits***

**“The style is the man” (Lacan, 1966/2006f, p. 3): Buffon, Voltaire, and Joyce as three representations of the writer.** The fact that Lacan (1966/2006f) opens his “Overture to the Collection” with Buffon’s famous quotation on style immediately poses the following questions: What is a writer? Who takes up (or can take up) this role? Thinkers who have broached these questions have not only taken a position on the nature of style; they have also promoted a particular conception of human being, of the relationship human beings have to the world, and of the relationship of nature and culture. On this first page of the “Overture,” Lacan (1966/2006f) not only introduces Buffon but also Voltaire - two contemporaneous figures who represent quite distinct ideas of the writer.

Buffon [1707-1788] is remembered as a neoclassical humanist of the French Enlightenment. He was educated as a naturalist yet, renowned for his scientific prose, also gained fame as a literary master who railed against those who took license with language. For Buffon, style is a timeless, universal, cognitive ideal (Wessely, 1991). Good style, for Buffon, is “appropriate to addressing the cultivated reader... [It is]



concerned primarily with clearly expressed ideas” (Fellows & Milliken, 1972, p. 154). Accordingly, “a writer’s value was not in the atypicality of his emotions, but in the efficiency and completeness of his intellectual formation” (p. 153). On this view, prose should be “paraphrasable” (p. 155), orderly, as unambiguous as possible, and not particularly demanding on the reader or listener.

Buffon’s stance on the question of style makes evident his conceptual debt to Aristotle’s definition of man as the rational animal: a naturally generating, self-unfolding essence that is centered and self-transparent. Humans as rational animals, for Buffon as well as for Aristotle, dwell in “a world that makes sense, a reality centered around man’s needs, responsive to his nature” (Fellows & Milliken, 1972, p. 169). Likewise, Buffon’s stance discloses his aesthetic commitments. He subscribes to the view that culture or artifice should mirror nature, which he sees as orderly and harmonious. Thus, for Buffon, there is a correct way to perceive the world, and the writer with good style takes up that perspective.

Lacan, of course, takes exception to such Buffonian humanism. Indeed, for Lacan (1966/2006f), Buffon’s position demands a degree of self-deception, which he finds depicted in the portrait of Buffon dressed in an ornate outfit complete with lace cuffs encircling his wrists as he writes. As Lacan sees this portrait, Buffon as the supposed exemplar of human nature is not presented to the audience naked or unadorned; instead, he is clothed in elaborate artifice. That is to say, he is masked.

Whereas Buffon represents Enlightenment humanism, Voltaire [1694-1778] was that era’s version of the anti-humanist. For Voltaire, style is a matter of self-conscious artifice or mask-wearing. In contrast to what he perceived as Buffon’s solemnity, Voltaire

issued his polemical, critical perspective in the form of playfully irreverent writing. In contrast to Buffon's attempt to publish a rigorous and total account of nature, Voltaire openly rejected systematic thinking.

Despite their obvious points of difference, these contrasting figures of the French Enlightenment both invite questions about the relationship of style to the project of making a name for oneself, the transmission of ideas, and the recognition of the writer - questions that Lacan repeatedly revisited throughout his career.

As Fellows and Milliken (1972) explain, Buffon considered intellectual formation to be "the least idiosyncratic of the components of [one's] being. ...style is the essence of humanness" (p. 153), that is, of human being in the generic sense. Hence the paradox in Buffon's conception of the writer: on the one hand, since style is supposed to be something cultivated, it cannot simply be imitated, but, on the other hand, since good style supposedly manifests the full flowering of human nature, it bears no distinguishing characteristics of the particular writer. In other words, as the exemplar of the form of the species, the good writer is no one in particular.

Nevertheless, Buffon maintained that

a mastery of style...assures the personal fame of a particular author precisely because it is one of those universal intellectual qualities that make possible one man's effective communication with others; it is a guarantee that his vision of things, his insights, will not be lost (Fellows & Milliken, 1972, p. 153).

Good style ensures that the writer cannot - or, at least, should not - be misunderstood.

Consequently, the *content* of his writing, his original thoughts - his contributions as a *particular* rational animal - can be transmitted to subsequent generations univocally. One

makes a name for oneself out of the content of one's writings; good style ensures that that name persists beyond the writer's own lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

Turning now to Voltaire, whose given name was in fact François-Marie Arouet, this controversial figure quite literally made a name for himself after his imprisonment in the Bastille. Moreover, Voltaire published under several different pseudonyms over the course of his career. Arguably, he used these pseudonyms as masks to elude possible censorship of his heretical ideas. Ironically, however, the style of writing he used became increasingly recognizable as his own over time, despite his protean nomenclature. Voltaire's relationship to style thus raises several points that complicate the conclusions that might be drawn from Buffon's aphorism. First, whereas Buffon's conception of good style suggests that it is possible successfully to communicate the supposedly univocal meaning of a writer's thoughts, Voltaire's use of an array of aliases effectively fragments him as a writer. It becomes nearly impossible to discern a definitive message in his work, for either there is no longer *one* writer, or the persona of that writer is mutable. Second, whereas Buffon supposes that good writing style mirrors the nature of human beings, Voltaire's self-consciously constructed name points to the artificial quality of the image the writer presents of himself through his publications.

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<sup>4</sup> On this point, it should be noted that Buffon issued his famous statement on style during his 1753 speech to the Academie Française. He gave this speech in response to his induction as the new member of that illustrious group. Initiation into that group signified institutional recognition of Buffon as a great researcher and writer. Buffon believed that his writing style made him recognizable as such. Recognition was probably especially important to him at this moment, given that the Academie did not initially intend for him to be their newest member. He was only offered the honor when the original recipient rejected it.

Lacan's (1966/2006f) own position on these questions more closely resembles that of Voltaire. Freud's psychoanalysis, for Lacan, radicalizes Voltaire's Enlightenment anti-humanism vis-a-vis the unconscious, which makes explicit that "man is no longer so sure a reference point" (Lacan, 1966/2006f, p. 3). No longer the rational animal, the human in light of psychoanalysis is a *libidinal* being, a creature of lack, a divided subject. Psychoanalysis teaches that man is unrealizable, unsatisfiable desire. If it is still possible to speak of human nature, it consists of nothing more than the persistent desire for something beyond oneself. This shift in perspective, as Lacan's teachings make clear, has implications for the nature of style and the possibility of writing in one's own name.

The proper name has a significant role in Lacan's teachings as early as the pieces from the 1950s included in the *Écrits*. This theme persisted late into his career. In *Seminar XXIII*, for example, Lacan (2016/2005) engages yet another literary figure, this time the Irish novelist James Joyce [1882-1941], in his ongoing reflections on the proper name. As Harari (2002/1995) and Moncayo (2017) note, the nature and function of the proper name, for Lacan, is simultaneously Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. The Imaginary dimension of nomination is, on Lacan's (2016/2005) view, particularly salient in Joyce's case, as several quotations from *Seminar XXIII* make evident.<sup>5</sup> The Imaginary name has

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<sup>5</sup> "Joyce quite deliberately wanted this breed [i.e., academics] to busy themselves with him. The best of it is that he managed, and beyond all measure. It has lasted, and will last further still. He expressly wanted three hundred years of it. He said he wanted to *keep the critics busy for three hundred years*, and this he shall achieve..." (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 7, original emphasis).

"Why not conceive of the case of Joyce in the following terms - isn't his desire to be an artist who would keep the whole world busy, or in any case as many people as possible, what compensates exactly for the fact that, let's say, his father was never a father for him?" (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 72).

"...it was in wanting a name for himself that Joyce came up with a compensation for the paternal failing" (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 77).

to do with attempts made to close or suture the gap forged during subjectification through identification with the given name. Imaginary identification is thus narcissistic in character. The resulting identification is inherently unstable because it is always threatened by lack. It is also linked with the S1 or master signifiers (i.e., values, ideals) of the master's discourse, making it especially relevant to matters of authority, ideology, and tradition. The Imaginary name is concerned with recognition and posterity, taking on the role of the master who leads a group of disciples or students. One either wants to become the current master's successor or to replace that master through revolution or insubordination. I suggest that, from a Lacanian perspective, this is also the dimension of nomination with which Buffon and Voltaire were concerned in their reflections on style.

**“The style is the man...one addresses” (Lacan, 1966/2006f, p. 3).** Who, then, is Buffon? What kind of writer is he? Lacan's (1966/2006f) juxtaposition of Buffon and Voltaire, who belonged to the same generation of intellectuals in France, shows how the answers given to these questions will differ greatly depending on the one to whom these questions are addressed. Asked of Buffon, he would likely characterize himself as the cultivated intellectual representative of humankind who uses a style of writing that accurately mirrors the world he observes from the supposedly correct perspective. In contrast, Voltaire - one of Buffon's most vocal critics, particularly on the question of style - would give a strikingly different reply. For Voltaire, as Lacan emphasizes in the

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“When one reads Joyce's text, and above all his commentators, what's striking is the number of riddles it contains. Not only do they abound, but one may say that Joyce played on this, knowing full well that there would be Joyceans for two or three hundred years to come. These are fellows who are kept busy exclusively by solving these riddles. At a minimum level, this consists in wondering why Joyce put such and such a thing here or there. Naturally, they always find a reason why” (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 132).

“Overture,” “there is nothing natural” about Buffon’s writing (Lacan, 1966/2006f, p. 3). Voltaire considered Buffon’s magnum opus, the multi-volume *Histoire Naturelle*, excessively solemn and pompous in form. Moreover, Voltaire made his opinion evident by issuing his counterpart an ironic task: “in a bombastic style,” he urged Buffon, “tell us about physics.” Voltaire thus received Buffon’s writing in a way that differed profoundly from how Buffon himself understood his own message. Who, then, is the authority on a writer’s style? Perhaps, as Lacan suggests, style is “the man...one addresses” (p. 3).

Lacan’s (1966/2006f) amendment of Buffon’s famous aphorism on style both broadens the scope of his reflections on the writer-reader relationship and provides an entryway into his own teachings on speech and language. The stark contrast between Buffon’s self-image and Voltaire’s perception of his counterpart raises the question of who, if anyone, “owns” a piece of writing. Is writing the property of the writer? Furthermore, how might a reader’s relationship to a text be characterized? Are there multiple ways of relating to a text, and, if so, are some more warranted than others? At the heart of these questions is the issue of the nature and possibility of “successful” communication, a theme Lacan engaged at length, particularly in his “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter,’” which he explicitly mentions in the “Overture,” as well as in “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis” and “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud.”

***“The Function and Field of Language in Psychoanalysis”***. In 1953, Lacan (1953/2006e) reorients the familiar relationship between the speaking being and Symbolic language with the publication of “The Function and Field of Language in Psychoanalysis.” Here he teaches that Symbolic language creates the speaking being.

Indeed, “man thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man” (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 229). It is the Symbolic, not man, that is autonomous. Thus, language is not the tool of man but the creator of man.

The field of language is the law governing all human encounters. “The law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts,” Lacan (1953/2006e) states;

...these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbol means pact, and they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact they constitute as the signified (p. 225).

Furthermore, “the primordial Law...superimposes the reign of culture over the reign of nature... This law, then, reveals itself clearly enough as identical to the language order” (p. 229). Contrary to Buffon and many other Enlightenment thinkers, culture does not simply mirror nature. Rather, culture makes nature speakable in the first place by instituting the nature-culture distinction. Lacan also identifies the Symbolic law with the law of the Father. “It is in the *name of the father*,” Lacan states, “that we must recognize the basis of the symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law” (p. 230, original emphasis).

Nevertheless, according to Lacan (1953/2006e) human subjectivity is created as “creative subjectivity.” That this is the case is suggested by Lacan’s (1953/2006e) remarks in passing in this *écrit*. “[C]reative subjectivity,” he clarifies, “has not ceased in its struggle to renew here the never-exhausted power of symbols in the human exchange that brings them to light” (p. 234). Here the emphasis is not on creative individuals, for to place the emphasis there “would be to give in to a romantic perspective” (p. 234). Instead, Lacan draws attention to the historical emergence and development of various

disciplines, fields of research, and even interpretive communities that call into question and subvert received concepts and frameworks. “[T]his subjectivity, regardless of the domain in which it appears - mathematics, politics, religion, or even advertising - continues to animate the movement of humanity as a whole” (p. 234). Thus, in a Hegelian manner, human subjectivity manifests itself historically in the shape or form of these domains. Lacan (1953/2006e) is quick to specify that “psychoanalysis has played a role in the direction of modern subjectivity” (p. 235). The formation of Lacan’s own community of interpretation will be “necessary to sustain this role” psychoanalysis has played by “aligning it with the movement in modern science [i.e., Structuralism] that elucidates it” (p. 235).

Although Lacan (1953/2006e) rejects individualist accounts of intellectual history, he nonetheless affirms that encounters between individuals are also dialectical, given that the Symbolic is always implicated in these situations. Here Lacan (1953/2006e) brings the ambiguous, polyvalent character of language to the forefront. Indeed, “analysis consists in playing on the multiple staves of the score that speech constitutes in the registers of language” (p. 241). Thus, just as the function of style is not to transmit univocal meaning but to provoke interpretive activity, “the function of language in speech is not to inform but evoke” (p. 247).

In one sense, the analyst’s interpretation should evoke the implicit resonances - the various significations and associations - in the patient’s speech. “Human language would then constitute a kind of communication in which the sender receives his own message back from the receiver in an inverted form” (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 246). In this



way, the analyst's stylized response is a creative word that unsettles sedimented understandings, thereby making room for questioning and curiosity.<sup>6</sup>

In another sense, interpretation evokes the speaker as subject, rather than as ego.

The subject is called out or from egoic meaning. As Lacan puts it,

what I seek in speech is a response from the other. What constitutes me as a subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I proffer what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to answer me (Lacan, 1953/2006e, p. 247).

The analyst's ethical responsibility is to respond in the clinical encounter in such a way that the patient's subjectivity - which is desire - is recognized. The language of unconscious desire, furthermore, "is absolutely particular to the subject" (p. 243).<sup>7</sup>

***"The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud"***. As I discussed at length in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, identification with the ego ideal "completes" ego formation through Symbolic nomination.<sup>8</sup> This process can be understood as the Father bestowing the Symbolic name - which is like the family name or last name - on the child, thereby acknowledging the child's place in a genealogical line and granting access to a family's or community's values, ideals, and traditions. As Lacan (1957/2006b) states

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<sup>6</sup> Hence the importance, for Lacan (1953/2006e), that "the analyst can play on the power of symbols by evoking them in a calculated fashion in the semantic resonances of his remarks" (p. 243). See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for more on the nature of interpretation from a Lacanian perspective.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for more on the relationship between desire and interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> Recall that the ego ideal corresponds to some ultimate trait belonging to the Father and associated with the Mother's satisfaction. Metonymically assuming this "unary trait," attempting to conform to it, allows the child to relate to the Mother through the Father's mediation.

the subject, while he may appear to be the slave of language, is still more the slave of a discourse in the universal movement of which his place is already inscribed at his birth, if only in the form of his proper name (p. 414)

in the Symbolic sense as ego ideal. In this process, the child tries to discern what the Father desires (i.e., the Father's values, ideals, and norms); the child's endeavors eventually result in the construction of a (neurotic) fantasy about the child's own relation to the Father, or Symbolic Other. The child's desire thus becomes the Other's desire in attempting to live up to the ideal ego and ego ideal. Yet the fantasy is ultimately inadequate, because nothing can wholly satisfy desire.

“Metaphoric creation,” or what Lacan (1957/2006b) also calls “metaphor's creative spark,” “flashes between two signifiers, one of which has replaced the other by taking the other's place in the signifying chain” (p. 422). According to Lacan (1957/2006b), metaphor is deeply connected with the place of the subject, whereas desire, on his view, has the structure of metonymy. Lacan (1957/2006b) invokes “Hugo's verse” to emphasize this link between subjectivity and metaphor. In “Hugo's verse,” “sheaf” - which is itself a metaphor for the Symbolic phallus, the Symbolic name, or ego ideal - replaces the proper name “Booz” - this is the Imaginary phallus, the first name, or ideal ego - “at the very place that awaited him” (p. 422).

The subjection of the speaking being to the Symbolic Other is aptly depicted in Hugo's metaphoric substitution of “his sheaf” for “Booz.” The affirmation of the Name of the Father, or Symbolic phallus, must occur for phallic meaning to be possible in the first place. Thus, this substitution is akin to the superimposition of the ego ideal over the ideal ego in Symbolic identification, like a mask. The child becomes meaningful in their

community by taking on the family or group name, which substitutes the community's master signifiers for the child's Imaginary particularity. The result is a kind of alienation.

Given the Symbolic link between sheaf and phallus, Hugo's metaphor also effectively substitutes the noun "father" for the proper name "Booz," thereby crossing out his Imaginary particularity by identifying him with a generic role or function. Something is lost in this process, even though as father, Booz is granted the authority associated with origin or source.

There is, however, a more positive potential at work here. Hugo, in taking up the role of writer and poet who makes something, namely his "verse," out of words, participates as a speaking being in the fecundity of language - the fecundity of the Symbolic Other, the Father - to which speaking beings are otherwise subjected. Lacan (1957/2006b), too, as a reader, also participates in the fecundity of language through his own act of metaphoric creation. This is illustrated by Lacan's (1957/2006b) declaration that his own inverted version of the algorithm of signification found in the *Cours de linguistique générale* "should be attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure" (p. 415). Here Lacan (1957/2006b) uses the function of metaphor in order to make Saussure's teaching "signify something altogether different from what it says" (p. 421).

By engaging in this subversive practice of reading, Lacan (1957/2006b) acknowledges the ambiguity and resonance of the signifiers that comprise Saussure's teaching that are otherwise lost by the transmission of that teaching through mathematical algorithms. On this point he aligns with Irigaray's criticism of formalization as a pedagogical style. Formulas "are considered to be devoid of meaning, as they should be" (p. 416). Subversion of Saussure's algorithm lacks subtlety - it is simply inverted,

transformed into its opposite, or negated - whereas subversion of Saussure's signifiers involves the art of reading otherwise that I have explored throughout this dissertation. Lacan (1957/2006b) recognizes the complex polyphony of Saussure's teaching by declaring him the father of a signification he might not recognize as his own. This is an instance of Lacan (1957/2006b) seeing more in Saussure than the latter - or Saussure's disciples - might see in himself. It is to see that he - and his teaching - are more than his egoic image as master of the Structuralist school of linguistics. Creatively, actively taking up Saussure in this way also acknowledges the persistence of Lacan as a subject even as he submits to the descriptor "student of Saussure." This practice aligns with the formation of the subject as ethical, as Lacan (1957/2006b) understands this process: "we cannot confine ourselves to giving a new truth its rightful place, for the point is to take up our place in it. The truth requires us to go out of our way" (p. 433), that is to say, to forge a path other than that of a submissive, alienated disciple.

Here, then, is where style comes in once again. Speaking beings are always already beholden to the creative power of language, since, as Lacan teaches, the unconscious shares its structure. The defense mechanisms, through which the ego tries to protect itself from subversive unconscious messages, have the forms of figures of speech, which include what the ancient rhetorician Quintillian termed "figures of style" (Lacan, 1957/2006b, p. 433). Listening for and playing with the patient's stylized use of signifiers in the clinical encounter helps disclose the repressed messages of the unconscious. The analyzed patient becomes ethical not only by taking responsibility for this unconscious style, but also by actively employing style in reading, writing, and speaking, to subversive effect.

**“It is the object [*objet a*] that (cor)responds to the question about style that I am raising right at the outset” (Lacan, 1966/2006f, p. 4).** The student who seeks to forge a path other than that of a submissive, alienated disciple may thereby face the fate of the heretic. Heresy in the narrow sense refers to belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious doctrine; more broadly, it signifies a stance profoundly at odds with what is generally accepted. The heretic questions established authority and tradition. Lacan embraces this epithet, noting that it puts him in the company of other great individuals. “[H]e” referring to James Joyce, “like me, is a heretic,” Lacan (2016/2005) proclaims late in his career, in *Seminar XXIII*. In light of his remarks in the “Overture,” Voltaire, too, belongs in this company. And as I seek to show in this chapter, so, too, do Foucault and Artaud.

As Harari (2002/1995) notes, the intellectual is regarded as a heretic from the perspective of the mainstream. For Lacan, this mainstream was ego psychology. The individual deemed a heretic is thus exiled from mainstream group identifications, yet this estrangement is also liberatory, in the sense that the heretic is also exempted from the unending, alienating struggle for recognition, which is bound up with domination and competition. The heretic reveals the lack in the Symbolic Other, the ultimate failure of group identifications. The writer, reader, or speaker who occupies this place of Symbolic lack and failure may, from that position, instigate Symbolic transformation.

In Rajchman’s (2010/1991) terms, this is to write, read, or speak “from within” the very difficulty with which one is concerned. As he notes, Lacan and Foucault share this stylistic feature in common. I would add that Irigaray - like Artaud, as I will show - also enacts this kind of style by writing against what is conceivable and formalizable by

reason. Through these enactments, Irigaray and Artaud call attention to their places of enunciation or statuses as speaking beings - that is, as woman (Irigaray) and madperson (Artaud) - and thus their relationships to authority and tradition.

Heresy has a subversive relationship to what Lacan (1991/2007), in *Seminar XVII*, terms the “master’s discourse.” The structure of this discourse is distinguished by the fact that S1, the master signifier, occupies the agent position. This entails that, when exposed to this discourse, individuals are subjected to the ideals and values associated with consciousness, synthesis, self-equivalence, and the autonomous ego, all of which correspond to the Enlightenment conception of man espoused by Buffon. S1, in this discourse, stands in relation to an obligatory ideology. Lacan (1991/2007) describes *objet a*, which occupies the position of product in the master’s discourse, as “artifice,” something novel with respect to the mainstream worldview. The artisan, according to Lacan, is linked with S2 in this discourse.<sup>9</sup> The artisan bestows their personal signature on the thing made.

The artifice produced by the heretical individual is what Harari (1995/2002) has termed “exiled writing,” writing that lies outside of discourse in the sense that it does not seek to establish a social bond with those who receive it. “There can be no better term to express non-relation,” Lacan states, “than *exile*” (2016/2005, p. 56, original emphasis). Not calling for our empathic identification, exiled writing thus reads as enigmatic and

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<sup>9</sup> “As for the signifier subscript 2, S2, there stands the artisan, in so far as through the conjunction of two signifiers he is capable of producing what I have called the object *a*” (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 14).

unsympathetic, or, as Lacan (2016/2005) puts it, “unreadable.”<sup>10</sup> It exemplifies the foreclosure of meaning in the Real, the unbinding effected by the death drive.

I suggest that Lacan (2016/2005) and Irigaray encounter each other productively at this concept of exiled writing, or what the early Foucault regards as madness speaking in the first person. As I discussed toward the end of Chapter 4 in this dissertation, Irigaray can be read as charging that, although Lacan radicalizes Freud’s own criticisms of traditional epistemology through his engagement with thinkers across centuries and thereby lifts some of the repression of Western thought’s own history that defends the *cogito*, Lacan does not carry out a thoroughgoing *change* in modern styles of thinking to the extent that formalization remains an aspect of his style of thinking and teaching. This criticism has affinity with Freud’s own acknowledgement, late in his career, that “insight,” or the lifting of the repression of unconscious contents, was not necessarily sufficient to cure a patient’s symptomatic repetitions. Thoroughgoing change required something like a new relationship to the drive that grounds the symptom, a Freudian point that Lacan reformulates in his distinction between identification with the analyst and identification with the symptom as “ends” of psychoanalytic treatment. According to Verhaeghe and Declercq (2002), “the identification with the Real of the symptom... is a particular process that is situated entirely in the line of femininity” (p. 17).

I will now discuss the implications of exiled writing through a close reading of Foucault’s account of Artaud’s writings.

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<sup>10</sup> “Why is Joyce so unreadable? We must indeed endeavor to imagine why this is so. It might be because he doesn’t stir any sympathy in us. But mightn’t something be suggested in this affair of our by the fact, the patent fact, that he has an *Ego* of a quite different nature?” (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 131, original emphasis).

## **Foucault and Lacan on Exiled Writing: Madness Speaking in the First Person**

In preparation for elucidating the meeting point between Foucault and Lacan at the concept of exiled writing, I begin this section of the chapter with a review of Artaud's role in Foucault's (1961/1972/2006) opus, *History of Madness*.

### **Madness as object and subject: Artaud in Foucault's *History of Madness*.**

French dramatist, poet, and essayist Antonin Artaud's [1896-1948] writings play a key role in Foucault's historical critique of the modern concept of mental illness.

Artaud first appears in Foucault's (1961/1972/2006) *History of Madness* in the Introduction to Part II. In these pages, Foucault (1961/1972/2006) presents an analytic grid for organizing the conclusions he reached in Part I concerning the classical experience of madness, as well as the additional conclusions about madness in the classical era he will establish in Part II and his argument about mental illness in Part III.<sup>11</sup>

Artaud appears once again in the Introduction to Part III, where Foucault (1961/1972/2006) announces his aim to trace the emergence of the modern experience of madness, particularly insofar as it marks the separation of madness from unreason. Rameau's Nephew, who for Foucault (1961/1972/2006) is the "last character in whom madness and unreason are united," prefigures this separation that acquires a tragic dimension by Artaud's lifetime. Foucault (1961/1972/2006) identifies a fundamental continuity from Diderot's dialogue to Artaud's writings that is superficially obscured by the pathological terms in which Artaud is often discussed.

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<sup>11</sup> See my discussion of Foucault in Chapter 2 of this dissertation for an overview of Foucault's (1961/1972/2006) archaeology of consciousness in *History of Madness*.



Foucault (1961/1972/2006) elaborates on Artaud's significance for the history of madness in Part III, Section 5, "The Anthropological Circle," the final section of the text. Contrary to the received view that Pinel granted madpeople their freedom by releasing them from their chains, Foucault (1961/1972/2006) locates the "fundamental liberty" of the madperson in the act of speaking. Whereas there was allegedly "no place in the classical age for a literature of madness," Foucault (1961/1972/2006) claims that Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* signaled the reappearance of madness in language: "madness was permitted to speak in the first person, uttering in the midst of the empty verbiage and the insane grammar of its paradoxes something that bore an essential relation to the truth" (p. 517). Thus, "madness found its voice once more" (p. 518). Earlier, in the Introduction to Part II, Foucault (1961/1972/2006) used the metaphor of the mirror to suggest that what reason immediately apprehends in madness is in fact a reflection of itself. This is the kind of mirroring Irigaray enacts in her "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids." She takes selections from Lacan's own seminars, and, typically with the aforementioned "reversed" style, presents these statements back to him, as an image of himself that discloses what he himself had disavowed from his place of enunciation.

Here, in the final section of *History of Madness*, Foucault (1961/1972/2006) claims that modern literature, particularly Artaud's writings, makes this mimesis explicit, though it remains disavowed by analytical consciousness. "This gaze" of objective knowledge, he states, "could no longer see without seeing itself" (p. 519). Reading Artaud is a limit experience that "opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, opening an unhealable wound that the world is forced to address" (p. 537). It has the potential to dis-place the reader into exile. The moral judgment of madness is

reversed, and the reader is made to feel guilty for the way in which the mad are reduced and excluded.<sup>12</sup>

In his 1964 “Madness, the Absence of an Oeuvre,” included as an appendix in *History of Madness* from the 1972 edition onward, Foucault (1964/2006b) optimistically speculates that, at some time in the future, “Artaud will then belong to the foundation of our language, and not to its rupture” (p. 541). Foucault’s hope is founded on the distance that madness, increasingly finding its voice and presence in modern literature, has begun to take from the language of mental illness dominant in hospitals and psychopharmacology. Through these literary events in language - and not “medical progress,” Foucault (1964/2006b) insists - madness may disappear.

**A Foucauldian-Lacanian reading of selections from Artaud’s oeuvre.** In an attempt to disclose the convergence of Foucault’s (1961/1972/2006) claims in *History of Madness* about the significance of Artaud’s writings with Lacan’s (2005/2016) teachings on the heretical significance of Joyce’s writings, I will now present a narrative analysis of three of Artaud’s short essays from 1925.<sup>13</sup>

The three essays form one narrative that tells the story of a man that exists in a limbo-like void and who wrestles with the decision to try to move out of this void. Artaud

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<sup>12</sup> Reason will not only face moral judgment; it will also meet with intellectual judgment. Foucault’s (1961/1972/2006) text ends with the following: “The world believes madness can be measured, and justified by means of psychology, and yet it must justify itself when confronted by madness, for its efforts and discussions have to measure up to the excesses of the oeuvres of men like Nietzsche, Van Gogh and Artaud. And nothing within itself, and above all nothing that it can know of madness, serves to show that these oeuvres of madness prove it right” (p. 538).

<sup>13</sup> These three essays are “Here is Someone...” (Artaud, 1965a/1956/1925), “All Writing is Pigshit...” (Artaud, 1965b/1956/1925), and “Situation of the Flesh” (Artaud, 1965c/1956/1925).

describes this void in which he is caught as somewhere and as some condition between being alive and being dead (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36). In describing the void as a kind of separation from something of which he might form a part and as the experience of the silence of trapped thought (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36), Artaud suggests that to be fully alive to oneself and to others is to have a place within a community. Intrapsychically, the void is the inner space of thought in the “gaps, traps” of and between the words that fail to capture the full meaning of his thoughts (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). The void could also, by extension, be viewed as the nether-space in which a person who cannot communicate with others, or who at least cannot be meaningfully understood by others, exists apart from the community. Echoing Harari (1995/2002), it might be said that the void is the place of exile.

Although he is committed to trying to move out of the void, Artaud’s narrative nevertheless discloses that he is somewhat conflicted about this decision. To stay silent in the void would be to remain in a condition of death-in-life. “If one could only take pleasure in one’s own Void, if one could settle down in his own Void” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36), Artaud laments, but instead it leaves him restless and unsatisfied. Another possibility is the fraught project of “making myself over” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37), which Artaud undertakes in the act of writing these essays. Put in Lacan’s register, Artaud’s writings are an instance of the heretic artisan’s project of creating their own Real name by working from the (non)place of the failure of Symbolic identification.

For Lacan, the Real name is the pseudonym, alias, or nickname - the enigmatic name that protects the heretic.<sup>14</sup> Whereas the identification involved in the Imaginary name futilely attempts to suture the divided subject, Real nomination uses the name to reveal lack, and this aim is, arguably, at the heart of ethical practice. Here there is a possibility for genuine Symbolic transformation, rather than, in Lacan's pessimistic anti-humanist view, the circularity of revolution. This is the move from tragedy to comedy Lacan mentions in Section 3 of *Seminar V*. Real nomination involves an emptying out or evacuation of narcissistic investment, so as to occupy the position of *objet a*:

This is the way of proceeding that the unconscious has - it only gives traces, which not only efface themselves of their own accord, but which any use of discourse strives to efface, *the analytic discourse like the rest* [emphasis added]. You yourselves will reckon only on erasing the traces of mine from discourse, since I'm the one who started out by furnishing the analytic discourse with its status, on the basis of *affecting a semblance of the object a* [original emphasis], that is, my naming of *man putting himself in the place of the refuse that he is* [emphasis added] - at least in the eyes of the psychoanalyst, who has good reason to know this, for *he himself puts himself in this place* [emphasis added]. One has to go via this determined refuse so as, perhaps, to *retrouver*, to find again something that might belong to the order of the real (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 105).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "That Joyce was also called James links up in a succession only with the use of the alias - James Joyce *also known as* Dedalus. The fact that we can pile up a whole stack of them ultimately leads to one thing - it introduces the proper noun back into the common nouns" (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 73).

<sup>15</sup> This conceptualization of *objet a* is arguably introduced much earlier, in Lacan's seminar on anxiety.

"...right where, in discourse, there stands that which you articulate as being you - in a word, right where you say *I* - that is where, at the level of the unconscious, the *a* properly speaking is located. At this level, you are *a*, and everyone knows that this is what is intolerable and not only to discourse itself, which, after all, betrays this" (Lacan, 2014/2004, p. 103).

"The *a* is precisely what resists any assimilation to the function of a signifier and this indeed is why it symbolizes that which, in the sphere of the signifier, always presents itself as lost, as what gets lost in signifierization. Now, it is precisely this waste product,

Symbolic transformation requires willingness on the part of the subject to relinquish any claim to posterity.<sup>16</sup> According to Moncayo (2017), what remains after this falling away is an identification that has been divested of the Imaginary trappings that attempt to fill the gaps within the Symbolic. Filling these gaps instead blocks access to the Real as well as to the contradictions within the Symbolic. Symbolic holes or gaps are places where group identifications and ideologies fail, thus allowing for the possibility of non-identification, which would provide the distance from ideas necessary in order to transform and evolve the Symbolic. For Lacan - as for Joyce and Voltaire, and indeed for Foucault, Artaud, and Irigaray - writing was a form of ethical practice, a way of taking action with words. Their writing styles had formative effects on their student-readers insofar as these styles enacted their teachings, rather than simply explaining those teachings.

Artaud's narrative is equally the story of a man who has confronted profound loss, and whom the reader encounters as a figure who is tragic in many respects. Artaud self-identifies as a "man who knows the innermost resources of loss" (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37) and "a man who has lost his life and is seeking by every means to reintegrate it in its proper place" (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59). Thus, the reader is left with the impression of a grieving person who cannot feel his feelings "from the inside" in a manner comparable to the way he can think his thoughts "from the inside." The reader also meets in this narrative a man who is especially sensitive to the way in which his thoughts are lost to

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this scrap, which resists signifierization, that comes to find itself constituting the foundation of the desiring subject as such" (Lacan, 2014/2004, p. 174).

<sup>16</sup> "...one needs to try to disentangle oneself from the idea of eternity" (Lacan, 2016/2005, p. 128).

language. His own meaning escapes him: “the mind...slips away like snakes” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37).

Perhaps the most vivid impression the Artaud makes upon the reader is that he is a tragic figure. He describes himself as a man who tries to write-to-experience but whose efforts are criticized by those who are in power. These critics expect clarity, illumination, and, above all, a mastery of language in “good” narratives (1965b/1956/1925, pp. 38-39), without considering the possibility that these expectations might not be legitimate, especially concerning the various agendas Artaud might have as a writer. There is only a slight consolation in the recognition that he “will be understood ten years from now by the people who then will do” the work of these critics (1965b/1956/1925, p. 39). Here Artaud contends with the allure of Imaginary nomination and the glory of posterity it promises. His remarks about future readers echo those of Joyce, who admitted that he hoped to keep academic commentators busy for two centuries.

Artaud further describes himself as a man who has the inner experience of desire and longing, but who cannot find satisfaction or fulfillment of these echoes of emotional life in the interpersonal world: “I no longer touch life, yet I have inside me all the appetites and insistent titillations of being” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36). Similarly, he is a man who is dedicated to an intellectual project that is related to yet crucially distinct from the personal work in which he is simultaneously engaged: “All the systems I may erect will never match these cries of a man engaged in remaking his life” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58). He is trying to understand how he “lost his mind” by establishing a more adequate theory of mind, but he is also trying to have a richer experience of the desire and longing he recognizes within himself. He also recognizes the anguish of his personal work. And

yet, Artaud is still inclined to understand the emotional dimension of his life in systematic, explanatory terms, e.g., as the “life-force” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58). He understands this aspect of his life as an “undefined force” which is expressed outward in the “form of a cry” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58). Artaud acknowledges that the effort to know anything, especially oneself, and the failure even to know oneself fully, is an emotional experience as much as it is an intellectual one. He evocatively calls these experiences of trying to know and of failing to completely know, “intellectual cries” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58).

In what follows, I identify and discuss the narrative threads I extracted from these three essays written by Artaud.

*Narrative Threads.* Artaud presents his tragic yet ambitious, limbo-like existence along several narrative threads, such as the limitations of language and of the third-person observational perspective, the dialectic of power and limitation, and the relationship of feeling and thought.

A primary, complex theme concerns *the superiority of the first-person perspective over the third-person perspective*. This narrative thread includes the issue of visibility versus invisibility. Artaud remarks on the limited access that others as mere observers can have to his experience: they can observe his behavior, but they do not have access to his perspective. These others tacitly assume that their observations are adequate: “...we see you. We see clearly what you’re doing” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). At least some of those who observe him seem to have “good intentions.” These observers try to “normalize” his difficulty with language by reflecting how ““this is normal, everyone lacks the right word, you’re too hard on yourself...”” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). Yet he experiences even

the responses of those who seem to be well-intentioned as vexing. “Yes, but you don’t see what I’m thinking” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37), Artaud responds. This response testifies to his extreme difficulty expressing his own inner experience adequately. It also testifies to his implicit yearning that others would admit that they do not understand.

A second issue relevant to the first narrative thread concerns the interior versus the exterior. Artaud experiences “a thought FROM INSIDE,” which he says has spatial “gaps, traps” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). He gets lost in these spaces: “I lose myself in my thought the way one dreams, the way one suddenly returns to his thought” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). His thoughts are not the only inner experiences that are for the most part trapped within him. His emotional experience is also trapped: “I have inside me all the appetites and insistent titillations of being,” and yet, “I no longer touch life” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36). In this remark, “life” seems to refer to interpersonal connection and the ability to act in the world upon his desires and longings.

Artaud also suggests that even if he could find adequate words, others (i.e., the majority of people) who have a “normal” existence might resist accepting his descriptions of his own experience: “you go around barking, you rabidly persist in not understanding” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37). This failure of others to understand him reflects the broader narrative thread of his experience of being trapped within himself, locked out of social existence in the world. He experiences this separation from community life as painful, and as a kind of death, a death of the social self: “It’s so hard to no longer exist, to no longer BE, as part of something” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36).

A second narrative thread concerns *the inadequacy of ordinary language to describe experience or express thought*. Artaud has thoughts that exceed the confines of



ordinary communicative language, that he cannot adequately verbally express. These are the thoughts he loses himself within: “the real pain is to feel thought shifting inside you” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36). His experiences also exceed the capacity of ordinary language: “there’s no correlation between words and the exact state of my being” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37).

Artaud’s effort to express himself beyond the confines of ordinary language - by writing from, or out of, the difficulty - is an indictment of those who would use his “poverty of speech” as evidence that he is an irrational “imbecile” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36). Others may be able to observe his behavior and hear his unusual speech, but have never “watched” words, like “vitreous corpuscles” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36), form from thoughts. Artaud implies that his familiarity with the failure of language and his observation of the process through which thought is translated into speech has given him insight into the workings of the mind that many other people lack. He seems to have grasped that putting thoughts into words involves a kind of violence to his experience. In “making himself over,” Artaud, like Joyce, assumes the role of heretic, taking up deliberately an alternately active and passive relationship to the Symbolic that is manifest in his style of writing. Artaud thereby challenges the way in which language imposes itself on all speaking beings.

As the late Lacan remarks,

How is it that any of us can help feeling that the words on which we depend are in some sense imposed upon us? ...the question is why a normal man, a man said to be normal, doesn’t notice that speech is a parasite, that speech is a veneer, that speech is a form of cancer that afflicts the human being? ... It’s quite certain that Joyce affords us a little inkling of this (2016/2005, p. 78).

Lacan's point is that all humans, neurotic and psychotic alike, are subject to the Symbolic. Words impose themselves on speaking beings. Joyce models a way of taking up an active stance in this passive position, insofar as "he ends up imposing on language itself a sort of fracturing, a sort of decomposition, which makes it so that there is no longer any phonatory identity" (p. 79).<sup>17</sup>

Artaud demonstrates a similar activity-in-passivity when he deliberately uses "term" instead of "word" in the midst of describing the relationship between experience and language that he has discovered. On the basis of the familiar view of words, according to which a word is a unit of univocal meaning, it might seem quite sensible to "believe in terms" as the majority of people tend to do. In substituting "term" for "word" Artaud implies that such a view is ultimately untenable. Although they can be useful for attempting to communicate with others, they are in fact "terminations" that arbitrarily limit the thoughts whose meaning exceeds them.

Moncayo (2017) explains that in the foregoing passage from *Seminar XXIII* Lacan implies a distinction between malevolent *lalangue* (i.e., the voices and clanging associations to which the psychotic is characteristically, and incessantly, subjected) and benevolent *lalangue* (i.e., what literary figures like Shakespeare disclose in their prose and poetry). Although one can never be completely free from the imposition of the Symbolic, actively forging a benevolent relationship with it can be liberatory, in contrast with the invasive and persecutory quality of the malevolent imposition of language,

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<sup>17</sup> Notably, however, Lacan admits that "it is ambiguous as to whether this warping [of language] lets him [Joyce] free himself from the parasite of speech..., or whether it leaves him on the contrary open to invasion from the essentially phonemic properties of speech, from the polyphony of speech" (2016/2005, p. 78).

which the psychotic's experience so vividly reveals. As Lacan suggests, it is possible to read writers like Joyce - and, I would add, Artaud or Irigaray - as finding means by which to transform their relationship to language through the practice of transgressive writing from a (non)place of exile. Such transformation holds the promise of unsettling the master's discourse, offering a new way of thinking that goes beyond the phallic signifier.

A third narrative thread appears as the implicit claim that *the power invoked in writing-to-power has crucial limitations and is in fact weakness*. Artaud charges that most people from the majority who write from a recognized place of enunciation are guilty of a kind of naive simplicity. They think unreflectively and uncritically, producing statements through the "automatic grinding" of their mental machinery (1965b/1956/1925, p. 38). These people prereflectively and with ease take perspective on all matters, and thereafter proceed to write from such "vantage points in their spirit" (1965b/1956/1925, p. 38). The power wielded by these people is manifest in that they appear to be "masters of their language" and are "those for whom words have a meaning" (1965b/1956/1925, p. 38). Yet Artaud suggests that this power is ultimately a sham because these people tend to think in ways that conform to "currents of thought," "the spirit of the times," and even "brandish whatever ideologies belong to the hierarchy of the times" (1965b/1956/1925, p. 38). He calls these people "pigs" to emphasize that despite their judgments of him, it is they that are less than human. Here Artaud's heretical lack of concern with evoking others' sympathy is on full display.

The worst of what Artaud calls the "pig majority" writes and criticizes on the basis of untenable assumptions. They assume, for example, that "emotions are classifiable" and then proceed to argue about how these classifications are made

(1965b/1956/1925, p. 38). Other problematic assumptions include the tacit trust in the adequacy of words (1965b/1956/1925, p. 38), as well as the Cartesian principle that truth is clear and distinct. Worst of all, perhaps, is the failure of this powerful majority to acknowledge that their work is founded upon an inadequate theory of the “configuration of the mind” (1965b/1956/1925, p. 39). The majority’s problematic assumptions and dubious power forms the foundation of their belief that their perspective as observers could provide them with adequate insight into Artaud’s experience. “[Y]ou attach too much importance to words,” they say, and yet fail to realize the simplistic view of language presupposed in their observations and judgments (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37).

The second and third narrative threads develop the first thread concerning the superiority of the first-person perspective over the observer’s perspective. Despite the advantage that Artaud’s first-person perspective confers on his ability to acknowledge the failures of the Symbolic, he himself admits that even he has but a grasp of (i.e., he “possesses” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59)) his experience, but not a full, verbal understanding of it. His intellectual grasp results in “an indescribable science which explodes by slow thrusts” and the consolation that “all true knowledge is obscure” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59). Although he lacks words that can adequately express his experiences to others, Artaud nevertheless insists that he has a superior grasp of his experience due to his first-person perspective. “I’m the man who’s best felt the astounding disorder of his language in its relation to his thought,” he retorts. “I am the man who has best charted his inmost self, his most imperceptible slitherings” (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37).

A final narrative thread concerns *the nature of human existence as mind embodied in flesh*. Artaud has found through careful consideration of his first-person experience that something like “flesh” is more encompassing than reason or sentiment. “Flesh,” he asserts, is synonymous with “existence” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59). For example, his experience of having “all the appetites and insistent titillations of being” within him and yet being disconnected from a life in which he could satisfy these desires (1965a/1956/1925, p. 36) has revealed to him “to what degree those who bank solely on Intelligence or absolute Intellectuality are in error” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58). Moreover, just as his difficulties with verbal expression have suggested to him that meaning flows beyond the static confines of words, so his experience of being “deprived of life” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58) has suggested that “[t]here’s a mind in the flesh but a mind as quick as lightning” (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59) which could be interpreted as a reference to instinct.

For the late Lacan, too, “this idea of the self, the self as a body, carries weight. This is what is called *the Ego*” (2016/2005, p. 129). Lacan elaborates this claim through his commentary on the episode in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in which Stephen passively undergoes a beating. Lacan notes that “he metaphorizes his relationship with his body. He observes that the whole business was divested of, like a fruit peel” (2016/2005, p. 128). De-identification with the egoic image dislodges narcissism. The image of the body falls away, and what is left is *objet a*.<sup>18</sup> “Treatment” of

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<sup>18</sup> These remarks recall Lacan’s earlier statement in his seminar on anxiety: “The *niederkommen* [letting oneself be dropped, be delivered (as in giving birth)] is essential to any sudden moment at which the subject is brought into relation with what he is at *a*” (2014/2004, p. 110).

this condition comes through the creation of the *sinthome*, which makes engaging with concepts and values possible without lapsing into idealization or rigid identification.

The fact that Artaud's existence is fleshly (i.e., embodied) is the basis for the distinction between his effort to establish a new theory of the mind which will allow others to understand how he "lost his mind" (1965a/1956/1925, p. 37), and his effort to recover his life (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59). His feelings resist systematization; his pain cannot be captured by intellectual grasp (1965c/1956/1925, p. 58). More profound, perhaps, is his conclusion that the fact of embodiment, as the basis of sensibility, is the principle of each person's individuation. Through sensibility we each have access to "direct knowledge," but this is "an intimate, secret, profound assimilation, absolute in relation to my own suffering, and consequently a solitary and unique consciousness of this suffering" (1965c/1956/1925, p. 59). In these reflections Artaud appeals to the etymological relationship between "feeling" and "suffering" in "passion," which is received through sensibility. His conclusion is somewhat tragic, for it suggests that any one person's effort to know anyone else can only be partial, for humans ultimately differ in ways that fall through the gaps of the faulty Symbolic. Ultimately, Artaud suggests that all people exist and suffer at least to some extent in isolation.

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This final chapter of my dissertation has been concerned with several aims. First, I sought a means of responding to Irigaray's criticism of the aspect of Lacan's pedagogical style that involves formalization. I undertook this task by linking her criticism to Lacan's later teachings on language and the *sinthome* in *Seminar XXIII*.

Although the Lacan of the matheme insists that the Imaginary snares that can infuse psychoanalytic case studies with prejudice can be countered by extracting the structural relations relevant to the case, such as the formulas of desire from *Seminar V* or the formulas of sexuation from *Seminar XX*, the Lacan of the *sinthome* offers an alternative that aligns with Irigaray's own association of the feminine with fluidity. Relating to language differently (as *lalangue*) and speaking out of, or from within, the difficulty at hand - as Lacan, Foucault, Artaud, and Irigaray do - does not concede to the same prejudices that underlie formalization. I suggest that Artaud's essays, which the early Foucault praised as exemplary of exiled writing, as well as Irigaray's own mimetic style of engaging with Lacan in "Cosi Fan Tutti" and "Mechanics of Fluids," both model ways of writing from within the difficulty that can be applied when producing psychoanalytic case studies. Artaud's writing, like Joyce's - and, I would add, Irigaray's - produce the Real name, and it is in this name that each make their own contributions to tradition and forge a transgressive relationship to authority.

## CONCLUSION

The five chapters of this dissertation constitute my responses to a series of questions that emerged for me as I, a student with a prior education in history and philosophy of science, moved through several years of formal academic training as a clinician that involved extensive engagement with Lacan's psychoanalysis: How does the writing, reading, and rereading of the psychoanalytic case study genre inform the historically and culturally situated development of distinct communities of theory and practice within the transnational psychoanalytic tradition? How can psychoanalytic case studies be understood as a textual genre? What does this genre of writing *do*? Noting with curiosity that there was little Lacanian literature concerned with the case study as a pedagogical instrument or on clinical writing as an array of pedagogical practices, despite the fact that Lacan himself remarked frequently and at length on the historical and philosophical issues linked with the status of science, I posed these questions to Lacan and his approach to Freud's psychoanalysis:

1. How do Lacan's philosophical (i.e., epistemic and ontological) commitments regarding *language* both enable and constrain the reading and writing of case studies?
2. How did Lacan's (re-)reading of extant psychoanalytic case studies shape the historical emergence of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a distinct community of interpretation and analytic practice?

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I introduced the philosophical concern that there appears to be an inevitable objectification involved in both a patient's becoming a case and a candidate's becoming a psychoanalytic clinician. When a clinician attempts to



write down the process and outcome of their clinical encounters with a patient, a tension between, on the one hand, conveying the knowledge that patient has in some sense “gained” *in* psychoanalysis (which has to do with the singular features of the patient’s speech), and, on the other hand, demonstrating and transmitting the application of psychoanalytic theory and concepts (“knowledge *of* psychoanalysis”) becomes apparent. First-person singularity – the ability to speak in one’s own name – is thereby at least to some extent lost as the clinician attempts to know the patient and as the clinician is initiated into an interpretive community. This dilemma was historically manifest not only in Lacan’s own “excommunication” from the IPA but also in his student Irigaray’s expulsion from Lacan’s own school after the publication of her thesis that criticized Lacan and Freud on sexual difference. I also provided a historical review of the way in which Freud inaugurated the transition from “clinical picture” thinking in the medical tradition to the kind of “thinking in cases” historian of psychoanalysis John Forrester and others have claimed is characteristic of psychoanalysis as a distinct discipline. Finally, I foregrounded Sota Fuentes’ (2019) claim that Lacan responded to what she calls the “crisis of the case account” that arose in the 1920s by inaugurating a second transition, this time from the “story” (narrative) of the case to the “logic” (formalization) of the case.

In Chapter 2 I appealed to my background in historical and conceptual studies of science to contextualize the first conclusion I drew in Chapter 1, namely, that there is an inevitable objectification involved in both a patient’s becoming a case and a candidate’s becoming a psychoanalytic clinician, in the Western tradition. First, I reviewed the pessimistic conclusion Kant draws about the possibility of a scientific study of mind, a conclusion he sees as a direct implication of his alignment, in the first *Critique*, of

mathematization with scientificity. Lacan, I showed, stands among those who challenged Kant's pessimism. Distinguishing quantification from formalization within the process of mathematization, Lacan, following the lead of the structuralists, introduced "mathemes" into his psychoanalytic study of mind. In so doing, he purported to circumvent both the Scylla of reducing psychological life to what is numerically measurable and the Charybdis of the transformations of meaning that occur over time and across contexts in narrative modes of reasoning. The Lacan of the *matheme* seems to eliminate the possibility of a legitimate and positive role for the case study as a pedagogical tool in the formation of psychoanalytic clinicians.

Hegel's provocative exposé of what he sees as the limitations of Kant's concept of scientific knowledge provides a position from which to critically engage Lacanian algebra. For Hegel, being *is*, fundamentally, becoming. *Verstand*, Kant's faculty of scientific thinking, cannot think change; therefore, it cannot yield a true science of the mind. Lacan's use of *mathemes* seems to overlook this moment in Hegel's philosophy, despite the fact that he relies so heavily - albeit subversively - on Hegel's own emphasis on the roles of desire and language in the formation of subjectivity, roles that, moreover, can only emerge as possibilities for consciousness in the *Phenomenology* after the dialectical failure of *Verstand*. The third chapter in Hegel's *Phenomenology* thus proved to be crucial to my aims in this dissertation, as it set the stage for my discussion later in the dissertation of Irigaray's criticism of Lacan's reliance on what she calls a "logic of solids" in the formation of subjectivity. Moreover, Hegel's portrayal of Force in his third chapter as a dynamic relationship parallels what I have found in Lacan's teachings, namely, the portrayal of reading as a relational process in which both text and reader are

alternately active and passive. Similarly, the distinction between reading and writing, at first seemingly stable and obvious, is rendered ambiguous in the dynamic encounter between text and speaking being. Consciousness, according to Hegel, attempts to eliminate this dialectical ambiguity through Law, in a conceptual move comparable to Lacan's own turn to mathemes to eliminate transformations of meaning in the transmission of knowledge.

Finally, in Chapter 2 I also reviewed Dilthey's defense of a dual concept of science, which he grounded in his notion of experience as *Erlebnis*. Dilthey's response to the question of the possibility of a science of the mind entails that there are *two* such sciences, allegedly distinct from each other - a narrative human science and a physiological, quantitative natural science. Foucault's archaeology of medical perception in *Birth of the Clinic* undercuts this claim. Hacking's statistical analysis of populations - linked with psychology as a natural science - and Forrester's proposed "thinking in cases" - linked with psychology and psychoanalysis as human sciences - are not, in fact, two distinct styles of reasoning. I showed how Lacan, for his part, challenges the tenability of a narrative science of the mind through his notion of the divided subject, which is based on his reading of Freud on the phenomenon of "splitting."

In Chapter 3, I showed how Lacan's pessimism about narrative, introduced in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, is mobilized in his teachings into a critical style of reading psychoanalytic case studies, which in turn functions as a key aspect of Lacan's pedagogy. Lacan's style of reading performatively shows that there can, indeed, be a way of relating to tradition that is not wholly alienating or antithetical to making a creative contribution of one's own. Continuing to draw from Lacan's teachings on alienating aspects of

becoming a subject in and through language, I show that, just as the psychoanalytic patient must pose a question to themselves, so the student of psychoanalysis must also pose a question to the writer as well as the interpretive community in relation to which they are taking shape as a subject. The reader must engage with the writers of case studies as divided subjects and their written cases as symptomatic productions on both the interpersonal and the institutional levels. This is a matter of acknowledging and working through the transference to authority, a task which itself requires reflexivity regarding the ways in which psychoanalysis encounters history. He demonstrates how case studies can be approached as “open” texts, by attending to what the clinician-writer has ignored in order to put forward their intended meaning.

In Chapter 4, I turned to the “Signification of the Phallus” section of *Seminar V*, delivered in 1957 and 1958, in which Lacan (1998/2017) intervened in the so-called Freud-Jones debate, an institutional conflict that initially took the form of lectures delivered at the annual International Psychoanalytic Congress, subsequently published in English in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in the 1920s and 30s. I claimed that a parallel can be found between the state of French psychoanalysis at the time of these seminar teachings and the state of affairs in which the Freud-Jones debate took place between analysts in London and Vienna. This parallel elucidates Lacan’s pedagogical decision to re-open that fraught series of textual exchanges on feminine sexuality more than two decades after this conflict within the transnational psychoanalytic community had ostensibly been resolved. I argued that Lacan’s (1998/2017) intervention in late 1950s France into the Freud-Jones debate - that is, his (re)reading of Riviere’s case - is his way of announcing the emergence of what would

become the distinct community of Lacanian theory and practice. Through these subversive interpretive acts, which culminated in the articulation of his formulas of desire, forerunners of his formulas of sexuation in *Seminar XX*, Lacan demonstrated that he was not beholden to the psychoanalytic mainstream, nor its fantasized image of Freud as omnipotent Father of psychoanalysis. He thus made a contribution in his own name to psychoanalytic tradition.

I then turned in this same chapter to Irigaray's critique of formalization as an aspect of Lacan's style of thinking as well as his persistence in portraying the feminine as lack. I argued that, ultimately, Lacan and Irigaray are both concerned with the possibility of speaking in one's own name, with countering the bondage, the alienating violence, of identity formation, perhaps most especially in the instance of psychoanalytic identity. Both acknowledge that this task requires a different kind of thinking that does not simply repeat the past, but partakes of the originality of repetition. Lacan appears to do so when he returns to the Freud who discovered the linguistic unconscious and criticizes the Freud who focused too literally on anatomy in his investigations into sexual difference. Yet his formulas of sexuation - perhaps even especially these formulas - bear the marks of their formulation by a subject in a masculine position of enunciation. His reliance on formalization stylistically reaffirms the aspiration to wholeness and mastery entailed in the modern Cartesian project of clear and distinct thinking, despite the fact that Lacan was committed to the claim that the *form*, not just the content, of thought bears ontological and epistemological significance. In terms of form, then, Lacan is not entirely consistent with his own contributions to undermining the pretensions to mastery in patriarchy by underscoring the lack in the Other and the fallibility of the phallus. Irigaray

charges that, to the extent that he aspired to formalize psychoanalysis and thereby eliminate the transformation of meaning in the transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge, Lacan, like Freud, stood in conflicted relation to the position of Father and Master. I claimed that Irigaray's stylistic critique of Lacan's formalizations ironically foregrounds the way in which, broadly, Lacan's teachings, particularly his seminars, have the character of a thought in process, a mode of (re)reading that is also a process of relating. Tangents are frequently taken, doubts or critical questions are brought up without necessarily being resolved. Lacan often thinks against himself, revises his position, and considers alternatives. His is a self-questioning, fluid thinking, rather than the complete system that was the dream of modernity. His teaching is not a self-identical project. All of these characteristics suggest *non-closure*, a style of thinking that declares or admits its own difference. This processual character of Lacan's thinking and teaching provides openings for readings of an "other" Lacan to be enacted, and, ultimately, for a positive encounter with Irigaray to take place.

Finally, Chapter 5 was concerned with one possible site for the emergence of an "other" Lacan that can be understood as "joining with" Irigaray: the *sinthome* introduced in Lacan's *Seminar XXIII*. The *sinthome*, as a critical concept, goes beyond the provision of a methodological framework or toolbox for analyzing hierarchical or oppressive systems, to showcase a positive rethinking of the nature of change, transformation, or development that preserves particularity and resists normativity. Relating to language differently (as *lalangue*) and speaking out of, or from within, the difficulty at hand - as Lacan, Foucault, Artaud, and Irigaray do - does not concede to the same prejudices that underlie formalization. Artaud's essays, which the early Foucault praised as exemplary of

exiled writing, as well as Irigaray's own mimetic style of engaging with Lacan in "Cosi Fan Tutti" and "Mechanics of Fluids," both model ways of writing from within the difficulty that can be applied when producing psychoanalytic case studies.

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