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The Adversary

As the preceding chapter already renders abundantly evident, Lacan's call for a "return to Freud" is, in part, a declaration of war against almost the entirety of the international psychoanalytic community (apart, perhaps, from the SFP). Maybe the more appropriate title of this second section of "The Freudian Thing" would be "The Adversaries," since they are legion. Anyhow, just as Freud himself anticipates and addresses "The Resistances to Psycho-Analysis,"¹ so too does Lacan see fit preemptively to go on the offensive against his expected enemies early on in this *écrit*.

The opening paragraph of this section succinctly characterizes the Lacanian "return to Freud" (i.e., "the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis," as per the subtitle of "The Freudian Thing"). Lacan declares:

The meaning (*le sens*) of a return to Freud is a return to Freud's meaning. And the meaning of what Freud said may be conveyed to anyone because, while addressed to everyone, it concerns each person. One word suffices to make this point: Freud's discovery calls truth (*la vérité*) into question, and there is no one who is not personally concerned by truth.²

The first sentence of this quotation (a line I also quoted a while ago) has a Heideggerian stylistic ring to it, which likely is no accident given Lacan's fascination with Martin Heidegger during the 1950s. The second sentence nicely captures the unity-in-tension between universality and particularity operative in Freudian analysis. On the one hand, Freud's accounts of psychical life ostensibly encompass the full range of humanity in its entirety (i.e., they are universal qua "addressed to everyone"). On the other hand, these accounts, grounded on a distinctive conception of the unconscious (as distinct from, for example, Jung's collective one), emphasize the irreducible idiosyncrasy and uniqueness of each and every psyche; "the meaning of what Freud said" is particular since "it concerns each person." Each person's life, loves, and possibilities, the most cherished and important things to him/her, are intimately shaped and steered by unconscious forces and factors. Hence Lacan subsequently remarks that, "there is no one who is not personally concerned by truth."

Given that "Freud's discovery" in the singular is, for Lacan, nothing other than the unconscious, this passage announces that the relation between the Freudian unconscious and "truth" (*la vérité*), whatever the latter might turn out to be in what ensues, is one of the (if not the) core concerns of "The Freudian Thing." Without yet defining truth *à la* Lacan—both he and I will do so in due course below—suffice it for now to note that *la Chose freudienne* comes to be identified by Lacan with the truth(s) of a knowing, thinking, speaking (subject of the) unconscious, the *Es*-as-\$ (i.e., It/Id-as-split-subject) of *ça parle*. This Thing also is what gets embodied by Lacan later as the goddess Diana.

Lacan quickly proceeds to predict that his audience will be uncomfortable with and wary of his recourse to the word "truth." The second paragraph of this section states:

It must seem rather odd that I should be flinging this word in your faces—a word of almost ill repute, a word banished from polite society. But isn't it inscribed in the very heart of analytic practice, since this practice is constantly rediscovering the power of truth (*pouvoir de la vérité*) in ourselves and in our very flesh?³

Lacan's preliminary invocation of the specifically analytic conception of truth almost certainly contains an implicit reference to a famous line from Freud's "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (i.e., the case study of Dora), especially considering his subsequent characterizations of truth later in "The Freudian Thing"⁴—"He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore."⁵ Already foreshadowing the subsequent third section of "The Freudian Thing" ("The Thing Speaks of Itself"), this "power of truth" (*pouvoir de la vérité*) designates an unconscious (more specifically, the "speaking being" [*parlêtre*], the subject of the unconscious [\$] irreducible to the ego, of the it/id that speaks [*ça parle*]) that inevitably manages to express itself no matter what defense mechanisms (repression, etc.) are brought to bear against it. The repressed unconscious is never completely silenced and reduced to impotent nullity, never entirely repressed—hence Lacan's recurrent insistence on other occasions that, "repression is always the return of the repressed."⁶ This insistence entails, among other consequences, that the repressed always returns, namely, invariably resurfaces in whatever (dis)guises within consciously experienced reality.⁷

Additionally, the well-known Freudian one-liner I just quoted is situated in the context of a discussion of hysteria, a psychopathology often involving conversion symptoms (i.e., psychosomatic-style bodily pains and impairments). When Lacan mentions "the power of truth... in our very flesh," he clearly has in mind not only the conversion symptoms of hysteria, but also Freud's chattering fingers, traitorous pores, and perhaps even physical parapraxes, the bungled actions of "the psychopathology of everyday life."⁸ Indeed, in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* itself, Freud speaks of truth along the same lines stressed by Lacan in "The Freudian Thing."⁹ At one moment in this 1901 text, he pointedly observes that, "It may, in general, seem astonishing that the urge to tell the truth is so much stronger than is usually supposed" (*Man darf ganz allgemein erstaunt sein, daß der Warheitsdrang der Menschen soviel stärker ist, als man ihn für gewöhnlich einschätzt*).¹⁰ Freud's "Warheitsdrang"—this would be a drive-like pressure, as in the *Drang* of

the Freudian drive (*Trieb*), of/to truth (*Wahrheit*)—is absolutely central to Lacan's reflections in his 1955 *écrit*.

The two paragraphs immediately following this appeal to Freudian truth introduce the topic of defenses. Later in "The Freudian Thing" (for instance, in the sixth section, "Resistance to the Resisters"), it becomes evident that this topic is one of the biggest bones Lacan has to pick with the ego psychologists in particular. Lacan's remarks here point in the direction of the claim that post-Freudian ego psychology creates for itself intractable, insoluble problems, both metapsychological and clinical, by too sharply distinguishing between, on the one hand, a surface of defense mechanisms mobilized by a conscious ego and, on the other hand, a depth of unconscious memories and energies. These analysts are "not content to recognize as unconscious the defenses to be attributed to the ego"¹¹; the "very duality that sustains them"¹² is that between defending conscious ego and defended-against unconscious id. The questions Lacan raises in these two paragraphs are intended to stir up confusion in the reader—with this confusion being, for Lacan, the inevitable consequence of adopting the ego-psychological approach in question. The path originally departing from Anna Freud's defense analysis (which, in Lacan's eyes, is also a defense against analysis itself) and running through the Hartmann–Kris–Lowenstein triumvirate deposits its follower in the disorienting and dangerous "Bondy forest"¹³ (now a northeastern suburb of Paris, Bondy, as a forested region during the Middle Ages, was a perilous haunt of violent criminals). Such a traveler finds him/her-self lost in darkness and unable to distinguish between "trees" and "bandits."¹⁴

At the start of the subsequent fifth paragraph of this section of "The Freudian Thing," Lacan speaks of "*les gros sabots*" (the big clodhoppers).¹⁵ He depicts his analytic foes as putting the awkward, clunky clogs (*sabots*) of their framework (i.e., an ego-psychological analysis of defenses) on the feet of the dove as a Biblical image for truth (more specifically, as the sure sign by which John the Baptist would recognize the true Messiah). Thus burdened, the dove no longer can carry aloft the truth. And, not only is truth (i.e., *la Chose freudienne comme vérité*) thereby grounded—these "clodhoppers" (as per Fink's apt translation) both are entirely unfit for dove's feet (with shoes in general being as

foreign to birds as bicycles are to fish) as well as “swallow up the bird occasionally”¹⁶ (i.e., the truth gets buried and hidden in the unwieldy trappings heavily-handedly slapped onto it).

Lacan has his post/pseudo-Freudian rivals retort by accusing him of being an “ideologist.”¹⁷ Given Lacan’s preceding reflections on the American-immigrant assimilationism of these analytic rivals, this is meant by him to be taken as a case of the proverbial pot calling the kettle black. Moreover, Lacan’s employment of the French phrase “*les gros sabots*” suggests that his opponents are akin to graceless country bumpkins who can be heard approaching from a mile off, with the clumsy stomping of their clog-shod feet. That is to say, Lacan easily can anticipate in advance their approaches and reactions to him.¹⁸

Additionally, Lacan has these clods appeal to the economic dimensions of analytic discourse (i.e., descriptions of the circulations, distributions, and [im]balances of psychical energies) in justifying themselves—“‘Our criterion,’ they cry, ‘is simply economic, you ideologist. Not all organizations of reality are equally economical.’”¹⁹ Lacan replies—“But at the point at which truth has already been brought to bear, the bird escapes unscathed when I ask, ‘Economical for whom?’”²⁰ Analytic truth (i.e., the dove) flies away from these analysts to go off elsewhere intact—and, therefore, to be potentially retrievable by an appropriate “return to Freud.”

Lacan’s critical question suggests several points. To begin with, he insinuates that his ego-psychological foes have profited both libidinally and financially from their corruption of Freudian analysis. Pandering to American capitalist ideologies of supposed freedom and individualism, these immigrant analysts have gotten rich (financial profit) in post-War America by popularizing theories and therapies in which they enjoy the status (libidinal profit) of being authority figures whose own egos are thrust forward as embodying the standards of adaptation, autonomy, health, rationality, reality, sanity, and the like.

As the immediately subsequent paragraph corroborates, Lacan’s barbed question “Economical for whom?” also alludes to a distinction absent from ego psychology (as well as non-Lacanian versions of analysis generally) but pivotal for Lacan himself, namely, that between ego and subject (economical for whom, the ego [*moi*] or the subject [*sujet*]?).

Borrowing heavily from philosophical modernity, Lacan develops a conception of subjectivity proper as unconscious, with the ego correspondingly being stripped of a subject-like standing (as an agent or actor capable of reflective, deliberative self-determination) and demoted to the position of an overdetermined object whose seeming autonomy and spontaneity are false masks covering over other determinants pushing and pulling it about.²¹ In his “*Notes en allemand*” for the first (oral) version of “The Freudian Thing,” “the meaning of the Freudian revolution” is that, “the unconscious subject is external (*excentrique*) to the ego.”²²

The next (sixth) paragraph of this section of “The Freudian Thing” involves Lacan highlighting the anti-intellectual temperament he has come to expect from the rest of the post-Freudian analytic community. What he foresees at this juncture is that:

the adversary snickers: ‘We get the picture. Monsieur has a philosophical bent. Plato and Hegel will be showing up any minute now. Their stamp suffices. Whatever they endorse should be discarded and, anyway, if, as you said, this concerns everyone, it’s of no interest to specialists like us. It can’t even be classified in our documentation.’²³

As I noted at the end of my preceding paragraph here, Lacan’s idea of subjectivity-beyond-the-ego is integral to his critique of ego psychology, with him drawing broadly and deeply from the history of modern philosophy in developing this analytic theory of the subject. His derisive “adversary” views such a theory as merely the frivolous speculative decadence of a French intellectual dilettante (“Monsieur has a philosophical bent”). Perhaps partially based on a distorting exaggeration of Freud’s wariness *vis-à-vis* philosophy—because of this, Freud does not utilize the philosophical concept-term “subject”—Lacan’s hostile, dismissive interlocutor reflexively rejects everything associated with the entire Western philosophical tradition from ancient Greece onwards (“Plato and Hegel will be showing up any minute now. Their stamp suffices. Whatever they endorse should be discarded”). This narrow-mindedness is of a piece with the quite non-Freudian transformation of psychoanalysis into a medical specialization (an issue I already touched upon above). Analysts trained according to a medicalized model of analysis (“specialists like us”) tend

either not to be interested in philosophy and the “human sciences” as a whole (the French label for both the humanities and social sciences) or to adopt a “sour grapes” attitude to the liberal arts education medical students usually do not have the time and energy to pursue (but that Freud and Lacan insist is essential to analysis, both theoretical and practical).

Lacan then proceeds to observe that, “if Freud contributed nothing more to the knowledge (*connaissance*) of man than the verity (*vérité*) that there is something veritable, there is no Freudian discovery.”²⁴ Considering that Lacan’s Freudian Thing is nothing other than unconscious truth, this should be taken as a warning that, as will be seen below, there is much more to the Lacanian *Chose freudienne comme vérité* than the simple positing of the effective existence of repressed verities. This assertion, by itself, does not distinguish Lacan’s version of analysis from other versions (nor analysis *überhaupt* from “the line of moralists in whom a tradition of humanistic analysis is embodied, a milky way in the heavenly vault of European culture in which Balthazar Gracian and La Rochefoucauld are among the brightest stars, and Nietzsche is a nova as dazzling as it is short-lived”²⁵).

Subsequently in the same paragraph that opens with this cautionary observation, Lacan begins to single out the distinctiveness of the “Freudian discovery.” He specifies that:

Freud was able to precipitate a whole casuistry into a map of Tendre, in which one couldn’t care less about an orientation for the offices for which it was intended. Its objectivity is, in fact, strictly tied to the analytic situation, which, within the four walls that limit its field, can do very well without people knowing which way is north since they confuse north with the long axis of the couch, assumed to point in the direction of the analyst. Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that arise within this field. A unique experience, a rather abject one at that, but one that cannot be too highly recommended to those who wish to get to the crux of mankind’s forms of madness (*folies de l’homme*), for, while revealing itself to be akin to a whole range of alienations, it sheds light on them.²⁶

The “casuistry” in question here would be all of the sophistry and rationalizations of (self-)consciousness, the prime example being the loads

of specious reasoning repeatedly and regularly poured out by analysands during their sessions (i.e., “the analytic situation...within the four walls that limit its field”). Starting with Freud’s self-analysis (especially its dream interpretations examining the casuistry of the dream-work and manifest dream-texts as exemplified in such specimen dreams as that of “Irma’s injection”) and contemporaneous initial clinical efforts with his patients of the 1890s and early 1900s, Freud brings to light the topography of the psyche, namely, “*une carte du Tendre*.”²⁷ This reference condenses allusions to courtly love and feminism (matters addressed by Lacan at length elsewhere, most notably *Seminar VII* of 1959–1960 [courtly love] and *Seminar XX* of 1972–1973 [feminism]) as well as to the Freudian mapping of mental life. These two sets of allusions also overlap with each other, given both Freud’s insights into the importance of the maternal figure in psychical ontogeny as well as the fact that his first patients were primarily women dismissed as manipulative malingerers by the male mainstream medical establishment of the time.

The map of Tendre presents the imagined topography of the fictional land of Tendre. It arose out of the seventeenth-century salons of certain well-educated French aristocratic ladies (i.e., *les précieuses*). Tendre is a land of affectionate affects, and the map depicts the route suitors must follow in order to find love.²⁸ Hence, Lacan is suggesting that, out of the (self-)deceptions of consciousness, Freud extracts and illuminates a secret set of psycho-subjective orientations in which affectively charged connections with significant others are determinative. When later referring back to “The Freudian Thing” in both *Seminar VIII* of 1960–1961 (on transference) and *Seminar XXI* of 1973–1974 (immediately following the twentieth seminar on love and feminine sexuality), Lacan associates the truth (*vérité*) of *la Chose freudienne* with the amorous and the sexual²⁹ (an association to which I will return below).

In the preceding block quotation, Lacan goes on tacitly, but clearly, to touch upon the topic of transference. More precisely, he has in mind the pivotal role in the work of the analytic process played specifically by one sense (of two) of what Freud means by the phrase “transference neurosis.”³⁰ In another *écrit* (“Introduction to Jean Hyppolite’s Commentary on Freud’s ‘Verneinung’”), Lacan pithily encapsulates this process thusly—“The subject...begins the analysis in speaking about

himself without speaking to you, or in speaking to you without speaking about himself. When he will be able to speak to you about himself, the analysis will be over.”³¹ I would suggest a more precise sequencing of this: from, first, “speaking to you without speaking about himself” (i.e., the initial presentation for, and opening phase of, analysis, in which the analysand exhibits to the person of the analyst the, so to speak, “false self” of his/her more public ego); through, second, “speaking about himself without speaking to you” (i.e., the middle phase of analysis as dominated by transference neurosis, in which the analyst is addressed not as him/her-self, but, instead, as one or more significant others from the analysand’s life, with the analysand unconsciously revealing to the analyst his/her, as it were, “true subjectivity” in and through the transference); to, third, being “able to speak to you about himself” (i.e., termination, involving a dissolution of the transference [neurosis], as the end phase of analysis).

The above block quotation stipulates that the identification of the (place of) the analyst with the orienting point (i.e., north) on the map of Tendre is a “confusion,” but a fruitful one crucial to analytic insight. This identification is nothing other than the transference neurosis, namely, the analysand’s unconscious misidentification of the analyst as the guiding star qua *Ur-Other* (first and foremost, the *Nebenmensch als Ding* of Seminar VII, the maternal Thingly [m]Other as the Real of *la Chose*) of his/her libidinal economy (i.e., the land of Tendre).³² As Lacan rightly remarks, analyses of the transference phenomena pivotal to the technique of clinical psychoanalysis reveal the constellations and configurations underpinning the full spectrum of psychical subjectivities, ordinary and extraordinary, from the normally neurotic person on the street to the extremely psychotic person in the asylum (“Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that arise within this field. A unique experience, a rather abject one at that, but one that cannot be too highly recommended to those who wish to get to the crux of mankind’s forms of madness (*folies de l’homme*), for, while revealing itself to be akin to a whole range of alienations, it sheds light on them”). From Freud onward, analysts maintain that transference phenomena are ubiquitous throughout human life well beyond “the four walls that limit” the “field” of “the analytic situation” strictly speaking.

The next two paragraphs of this section of “The Freudian Thing” involve Lacan voicing two criticisms of his “adversary.” First, he mocks the unthinking rigidity of certain IPA types who cling fiercely to the practical details of the analytic situation (for example, the length and frequency of sessions, the fee scale and payment arrangements, and the use of the analytic couch with the analyst’s chair positioned behind the head of it). Lacan comments, “I have even heard a zealot of supposedly classical psychoanalysis define the latter as an experience whose privilege is strictly tied to the forms that regulate its practice, forms that cannot be altered one iota...having been obtained by means of a miracle of chance (*miracle du hasard*).”³³ This “miracle of chance” is nothing other than Freud having alighted upon, through practical experiments in treating patients over the course of the 1890s and early 1900s, the rules and regulations (or, rather, rules of thumb and recommendations) for the clinical setting and techniques of “classical psychoanalysis.” Of course, Lacan’s practice at this time contains innovative modifications to this therapeutic set-up (most [in]famously, his “variable-length sessions,” for which he was expelled from the IPA in 1963) violating Freud’s original letter in the name of his living spirit. Obviously, Lacan views the “zealotry” he dismisses here as mindlessly sticking to a dead letter after having killed off the figure of Freud (again as Actaeon).

Lacan’s second criticism of this “adversary” targets a specific sort of (pseudo-)analytic reductivism, a crude, vulgar boiling down of anything and everything to “the preoedipal mess.”³⁴ Continuing to mock rigid IPA classicists, he portrays them as believing that the clinical “forms” and technical “rules” to which (unlike him) they so inflexibly adhere “provide access to a reality that transcends the phenomena of history (*une réalité transcendante aux aspects de l’histoire*), a reality in which a taste for order and a love of beauty, for example, find their permanent ground—namely, the objects of the preoedipal relation, shit and all that other crap (*merde et cornes au cul*).”³⁵ There are several aspects to this line of critique worth noting.

First of all, Lacan himself denies that analysts have valid and legitimate “access to a reality that transcends the phenomena of history” (*une réalité transcendante aux aspects de l’histoire*). The “history” in question here would involve, to employ terms utilized by Freud, both ontogeny

and phylogeny. Actual analysands on analysts' couches are speaking subjects (i.e., \$s as *parlêtres*) who have become what they are through an ontogenetic life history always-already mediated by the socio-historical matrices of big Others as symbolic orders (i.e., phylogenetic structures such as trans-individual, trans-generational languages, institutions, practices, etc.). Moreover, as per both Freud and Lacan, the protracted processes of subject formation also entail the temporal dynamics of *Nachträglichkeit/après-coup* in which unmediated (pre-)history, whatever it might have been, is liquidated. This history is replaced, through "deferred action" (in James Strachey's English), by the past-as-subsequently-remembered, namely, a history "re-transcribed" periodically and perpetually on the basis of later events and contexts (such as an Oedipus complex that, once passed through, retroactively renders the pre-Oedipal, as it was in itself [*an sich*], forever after inaccessible in its pure, unadulterated status within the subject's pre-history). Therefore, Lacan's analytic opponents never even manage to get their hands dirty with the history-transcending "shit" (*merde*) they think themselves capable of handling.³⁶

The reductive mindset Lacan derides here is one simplistically treating all of the features and facets of (post-)Oedipal subjects as nothing more than mere "reaction-formations"³⁷ *vis-à-vis* "the preoedipal mess" ("a reality in which a taste for order and a love of beauty, for example, find their permanent ground—namely, the objects of the preoedipal relation, shit and all that other crap (*merde et cornes au cul*)"). This accusation of reductionism broadens Lacan's indictments of his post/pseudo-Freudian rivals in the international analytic movement to include Kleinian object-relations theorists in addition to ego psychologists.³⁸ Incidentally, the somewhat unusual French phrase "*cornes au cul*" probably contains references (ones explicitly made by Lacan on other occasions) to its occurrences in both: first, François Rabelais's *La Vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel* (approximately 1532–1564), in which the horns of Actaeon-the-stag are symbolically associated with cuckoldry (Lacan thereby suggesting that analysts obsessed with "shit and all that other crap (*merde et cornes au cul*)" are unfaithful to the Freud Lacan casts as Actaeon in "The Freudian Thing")³⁹; as well as, second, "The De-Braining Song" (*La chanson du décervelage*) from Alfred

Jarry's 1888/1896 play *Ubu Roi* (in addition to indicating that analytic fixations on the supposedly pre-Oedipal are brainless, one of the sequels to *Ubu Roi* is 1897's *Ubu Cocu* [*Ubu Cuckolded*], with Freud as a king cuckolded by his traitorous followers feigning their fidelity to him—and, of course, *Ubu Roi* evokes another famous play, namely, Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*).⁴⁰

In the penultimate paragraph to this section, Lacan proceeds to protest that, “the motor force of analytic experience...cannot simply be this mirage-like truth that can be reduced to the mirage of truth (*cette vérité de mirage qui se réduit au mirage de la vérité*).”⁴¹ That is to say, treating everything other than pre-Oedipal pee pee and caca (i.e., all the myriad features of the mature, [post-]Oedipal speaking subject on the analytic couch) as “the mirage of truth” (i.e., as superficial sublimatory façades to be analytically collapsed back into their primitive, infantile points of purported origin) is itself nothing more than a “mirage-like truth” (i.e., a specious semblance of the Freudian discovery). But, Lacan's ensuing depiction of unconscious truth (*vérité*) in “The Freudian Thing” portrays it as expressing itself even within attempts at falsifying it such that it always nevertheless manages to manifest itself via such falsifications (once more, “repression is always the return of the repressed”). So, just as the proverbial broken clock still is right twice a day, the pseudo-Freudian falsifiers of Freud (i.e., non-Lacanian analysts) nevertheless cannot help but disseminate and make resonant Freud's genuine insights despite themselves:

It all began with a particular truth, an unveiling, the effect of which is that reality is no longer the same for us as it was before. This is what continues to attach the crazy cacophony (*la cacophonie insensée*) of theory to the very heart of worldly things (*au vif des choses humaines*), and to prevent practice from degenerating to the level of the wretched who never manage to leave them behind (it should be understood that I am using the term to exclude cynics).⁴²

Freud's discovery of the unconscious and invention of psychoanalysis irreversibly and irreparably break the history of the world in two, as Friedrich Nietzsche might put it (“It all began with a particular truth,

an unveiling, the effect of which is that reality is no longer the same for us as it was before"). The truths of this epoch-making breakthrough are so powerful that they cannot but succeed at affecting and shaping the real world (i.e., "the very heart of worldly things (*vif des choses humaines*)") even in and through the most grotesque distortions of these same truths (i.e., "the crazy cacophony (*la cacophonie insensée*) of theory").

From Freud's time through today, the international psychoanalytic scene has remained characterized by proliferations of fissiparous movements, orientations, schools, and their sub-divisions (again, "the crazy cacophony (*la cacophonie insensée*) of theory"). These steady multiplications are suffused with "senseless" (*insensée*) factional antagonisms and much narcissism of little differences amongst competing analytic theorists and their adherents (as, so to speak, so much sound and fury, *Sturm und Drang*). Despite (or, perhaps, within) the apparent contradictions and conflicts between different, seemingly incommensurable theoretical camps, *la Chose freudienne comme vérité* is sufficiently potent enough "to prevent practice from degenerating to the level of the wretched who never manage to leave them behind (it should be understood that I am using the term to exclude cynics)." I understand these "wretched" to be "cynics" qua those analysts of such an extreme anti-intellectual bent, ones inclined towards a clinical-technical pragmatism, that they either ignore analytic theory altogether or are agnostically, shallowly eclectic in their occasional careless borrowings from an unsystematized hodgepodge of various theoretical sources.

This would mean that Lacan is alleging that such pragmatists are even worse than convinced, card-carrying ego psychologists or object-relations theorists, all of whom are at least guided by explicitly elaborated and integrated metapsychological frameworks. The practices of the practical-minded who, in their anti-theoretical cynicism, eschew such theoretical guidance are doomed never to move beyond ("to leave... behind") the pre/non-analytic "reality" of quotidian common sense (i.e., "worldly things"), with its stupid, everyday thoughtlessness. Analysis thereby gets reduced to pop-psychological clichés. Corresponding to how Lacan bristles at non-Lacanian analysts' criticisms of him for excessive "intellectualizing" (for example, as highlighted above, "Monsieur

has a philosophical bent”), he counters by contemptuously hurling accusations of anti-intellectualism against these same critics and their ilk.

The final paragraph of this second section (“The Adversary”) of “The Freudian Thing” foreshadows the famous prosopopoeia narrated in the immediately following third section. Lacan begins this paragraph by indicating that the popular success of Freudian psychoanalysis by the middle of the twentieth century (in part thanks to the popularizing efforts of the analysts critiqued so harshly in this 1955 *écrit*) has rendered Freud’s “truth” (*vérité*) difficult, if not impossible, to “recognize” (*reconnaître*) properly.⁴³ Considering the link between the ego and *méconnaissance* in Lacan’s theory of the *moi*, perhaps it could be said that, for him, the ego-psychological “establishment”⁴⁴ of Freudian *vérité* renders this truth misrecognized. In the third section to follow, entitled “The Thing Speaks of Itself,” Lacan intends to make this truth speak again of and for itself, thereby dispelling the complacent understandings *cum* misunderstandings (i.e., recognitions qua misrecognitions) surrounding the “established” (or also establishment) version of accepted (pseudo-) Freudian wisdom. Paraphrasing Karl Marx apropos G.W.F. Hegel, Lacan intends to extract the “rational kernel” of Freud’s texts from the “mystical shell” of (post/pseudo-)Freudianism, with the latter as the institutional and cultural (mis)receptions having accreted around the former.

The remainder of this section-concluding paragraph sets up the prosopopoeia of *la Chose freudienne comme vérité* by depicting Freud’s truth as a nude female (about which I will say much more in the next section). Basically, the last lines of this second section of “The Freudian Thing” heap further scorn on those analysts who, doing no better than falling into line with popular bastardizations and caricatures of Freudian analysis, search for their truths by trying to screw around with the orifices purportedly associated with their analysands’ imagined infantile sexuality (i.e., looking for Diana by poking around in “an unseemly and even malodorous place (*lieu malséant voire malodorant*)”).⁴⁵ One might even say that such analysts abuse their positions by fucking their analysands in more than one sense.

By clear and sharp contrast, Lacan concludes this exchange with “The Adversary” by depicting the real unconscious, the symbolically suffused one that speaks (*ça parle*), as “the jewelry box in which every precious

form must be preserved intact” (*l’écrin où tout forme précieuse doit se conserver intacte*).⁴⁶ As the unconscious-structured-like-a-language of Lacan’s “return to Freud,” this locus of truth is built around preserved forms, the Freudian unconscious being both: one, timeless and un-forgetting thanks to its constitutive ignorances of linear chronology and logical negation/identity⁴⁷ (with its preservation intact of ontogenetically accumulated traces blocking direct, unmediated access to presumably primary, primitive bases in analysands’ life histories); as well as, two, produced by, and productive of, formations of the unconscious as themselves often elaborate, intricate, and ornate crystallizations of a thinking and speaking subjectivity of a high degree of cunning and sophistication. The structures of such unconscious forms are “precious.” However, these illuminating, transparent gems turn out to be pearls before swine (or, in this case, before Freud’s unwittingly traitorous hunting dogs) rooting around in the muck for supposed formless flesh and old secretions of milk, feces, urine, and ejaculate.

This priceless image of a “jewelry box,” a proverbial invaluable picture worth a thousand words (as with most images mediated by the symbolico-cognitive webs woven by both primary- and secondary-process psychical activities), unquestionably is a reference to Freud’s famous case study of Dora (“Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” [1901/1905]), more precisely, to a “jewel-case” (*Schmuckkästchens*)⁴⁸ featuring centrally in one of Dora’s dreams carefully unpacked by Freud.⁴⁹ Without the space here to do exegetical justice to Freud’s brilliant dream interpretations—these are fine specimens of, so to speak, the crown jewels of his early, turn-of-the-century triumph of discovering the unconscious in and through the *via regia* of dreams—it is crucial to observe that the jewel-case of Dora’s dream is interpreted as a disguised representation of her vagina (with Freud positing a tendency for the female genitals to be depicted in dreams as, among many other things, boxes⁵⁰). Hence, Lacan’s contrast between his adversaries’ pseudo-Freudian “unseemly and even malodorous place” and his own properly Freudian “jewelry box in which every precious form must be preserved intact” is not one between the embodied and the disembodied.⁵¹

Rather, through Lacan’s implicit reference to the example of Dora’s *Schmuckkästchens*, he subtly insists on distinguishing between the body

of interest to his ego-psychological and object-relations adversaries (in this instance, the raw flesh of the vaginal orifice as the natural locus of innate sexual impulses, with these impulses composing a primitive unconscious confused with the id qua seat of animalistic instincts) and the body dealt with by Freudian–Lacanian analysis strictly speaking (here, this same orifice as overwritten by Imaginary-Symbolic mediators, by images and signifiers akin to the decorations and embellishments on a jewelry case making it such that, to paraphrase Freud, a vagina is never simply a vagina). As per Lacan’s “return to Freud,” the bodies, sexualities, and libidinal economies with which the distinctively Freudian unconscious is tied up become inextricably intertwined with the vast, sprawling webs of complex matrices of socio-linguistic mediation far exceeding and irreducible to anything simplistically archaic or infantile. Moreover, Fink notes of the French word he translates as “jewelry box” that it also has a more archaic significance—“In old French, *écrin* is occasionally used to refer to a box for precious items of any kind, including the bones of a king, which would perhaps allow it to be rendered as ‘casket.’”⁵² Thus, with Dorá’s *Schmuckkästchens* of Freud’s case study (as I have parsed it throughout the present paragraph) as also Lacan’s *écrin* in the latter’s various senses, one arrives at a recurrent Lacanian motif: the “cadaverizing” symbolic order overwriting and mortifying the living flesh of the human host organism, with this order’s signifiers simultaneously annihilating and preserving, in a dialectical convergence of opposites, the finite singular being subjected to them. Furthermore, in properly unpacking this *écrin*, one (re-)finds the remains of Freud-the-king.

Notes

1. *SE* 19: 213–224.
2. Jacques Lacan, “*La chose freudienne, ou Sens du retour à Freud en psychanalyse*,” in *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 405; Jacques Lacan, “The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis,” in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 337.

3. Lacan, "La chose freudienne," 405; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 337–338.
4. Adrian Johnston, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 93–94.
5. SE 7: 77–78.
6. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, book 1, *Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), 191; Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, book 3, *The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 46, 60; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 5, *Les formations de l'inconscient, 1957–1958*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998), 450; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 14, *La logique du fantasme, 1966–1967* (unpublished typescript), session of December 14, 1966.
7. Jacques Lacan, "Notes en allemand préparatoires à la conférence sur la Chose freudienne," trans. Geneviève Morel and Franz Kaltenbeck, *Ornicar?: Revue du Champ freudien* 42 (July–September 1987): 8.
8. Johnston, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, 93–94.
9. SE 6: 279.
10. GW 4: 247; SE 6: 221.
11. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338.
12. Ibid.
13. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338; Bruce Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," in Lacan, *Écrits*, 798.
14. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338; Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 798.
15. Lacan, "La chose freudienne," 406; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338; Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 798.
16. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338.
17. Ibid.
18. Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 798.
19. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338.
20. Ibid.
21. Lacan, "Notes en allemand préparatoires à la conférence sur la Chose freudienne," 10.
22. Ibid.
23. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 338–339.

24. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 406–407; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
25. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
26. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 407; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
27. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 407.
28. Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 798.
29. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 8, *Le transfert, 1960–1961*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001, seconde édition corrigée), 68–69; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 21, *Les non-dupes errent, 1973–1974* (unpublished typescript), session of January 15, 1974.
30. *SE* 12: 154–155; *SE* 16: 444–445; *SE* 18: 18–19; Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 462–464.
31. Jacques Lacan, "Introduction au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la «Verneinung» de Freud," in *Écrits*, 373.
32. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, book 7, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992), 43–71, 83–84, 103, 105–106, 111–112, 118, 126, 139, 150, 186.
33. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 407; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
34. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
35. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 407; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 339.
36. *SE* 1: 233; *SE* 2: 133; *SE* 10: 206; *SE* 12: 149; Jacques Lacan, "Position of the Unconscious," in *Écrits*, 711; Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 5, 329; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 24, *L'insu qui sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre, 1976–1977* (unpublished typescript), session of January 18, 1977; Adrian Johnston, *Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), xxi, xxx, 9–10, 34–35, 47, 141, 193, 218–219, 226–227, 316; Adrian Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume One: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 64–68.
37. Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 376–378.
38. John P. Muller and William J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language: A Reader's Guide to Écrits* (New York: International Universities Press, 1982), 151.

39. Jacques Lacan, "Lituraterre," in *Autres écrits*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), 12; Jacques Lacan, "Discours de Rome," in *Autres écrits*, 146; Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 8, 280; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 16, *D'un Autre à l'autre, 1968–1969*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 40; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 18, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant, 1971*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 114; Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 21, session of February 19, 1974.
40. Jacques Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power," in *Écrits*, 509; Jacques Lacan, "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure,'" in *Écrits*, 553–554; Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 5, 75–76; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, book 6, *Le désir et son interprétation, 1958–1959*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions de La Martinière, 2013), 351; Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 799.
41. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 408; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
42. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 408; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
43. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 408; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
44. Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
45. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 408; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
46. Lacan, "*La chose freudienne*," 408; Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," 340.
47. SE 6: 274–275; SE 14: 96, 186–187, 296; SE 21: 69–71.
48. GW 5: 225.
49. SE 7: 64, 69–70, 72, 77, 90–92; Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 799.
50. SE 7: 97; SE 15: 156, 191, 195.
51. Jacques Lacan, "Some Reflections on the Ego," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 34 (1953): 11–17; Adrian Johnston, "Reflections of a Rotten Nature: Hegel, Lacan, and Material Negativity," special issue: "Science and Thought," ed. Frank Ruda and Jan Voelker, *Filozofski Vestnik* 33, no. 2 (2012): 23–52; Adrian Johnston, "Drive Between Brain and Subject: An Immanent Critique of Lacanian Neuro-psychoanalysis," special issue: "Spindel supplement: Freudian Future(s)," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 51 (September 2013): 48–84.
52. Fink, "Translator's Endnotes," 799.



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