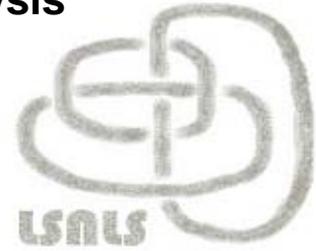


The psychoanalyst's passion

Concerning *effet-de-formation* in Psychoanalysis

Pierre Naveau



Preliminary remark

The expression, 'the psychoanalyst's passion' is an expression that cannot fail to surprise. Indeed, the term *passion* is opposed to that of *action*. Does not the psychoanalytic act imply that we should be speaking rather of 'the psychoanalyst's action'? In consequence, the question arises as to what is aimed at in the expression, 'the psychoanalyst's passion'. In what way is such a usage useful?

Problematic of the contribution being proposed — Three problems arise in relation to what Lacan calls 'the passage from psychoanalysand to psychoanalyst': the return of the blunder, the return of the tragic and the return of the fantasy.

The alternative

Psychoanalysis is being approached here from the perspective of the field that is proper to it. But how is a field defined? It is defined by means of the orientation given to it, this means that an action is being undertaken. The undertaking that Jacques-Alain Miller is pursuing under the title Lacanian Orientation, shows that the field in question is created at the same time as it constitutes the object of an elaboration. From this point of view, within the field of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalyst in *formation*¹ is confronted with an alternative: either a certain, precise, orientation, or the worst. Since, as is said on occasion, the worst can always occur.

What is the worst? It is when the subject is left to slide down the slope that has been bred in him, into the gaping mouth of the preconceived idea known as 'the fantasy'. One needs to hold on

to the rope — this is an expression that Lacan chose to use — it stems from the fact that it is enough for the rope to be let go of, for what is bred in the bone to come out in the flesh. This is why one cannot make use of the term ‘passion’ without this usage being the object of a close discussion. It is indeed necessary to hold on to the rope.

Action and passion

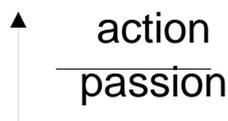
As is shown by the use that Lacan made of the expressions ‘signifying effect’ [*effet de signifiant*] and ‘passion for the signifier’, there is a close relationship between the terms ‘effect’ and ‘passion’. Thus, there is a link between the *effet-de-formation* in psychoanalysis and the psychoanalyst’s passion.

The psychoanalyst’s passion is not ‘the passion for psychoanalysis’ that Lacan denounced, taking the example of Donald Winnicott’s ‘lapsus of the act’.² There is a right way to evoke the psychoanalyst’s passion, and this is what is at stake here.

The compass that can serve to orient us in the context of this differentiation is a relationship — the relationship that exists at the very heart of the analyst’s discourse, between action and passion:



At the departure point of the functioning of the discourse, there is a vector that leads from passion towards action:



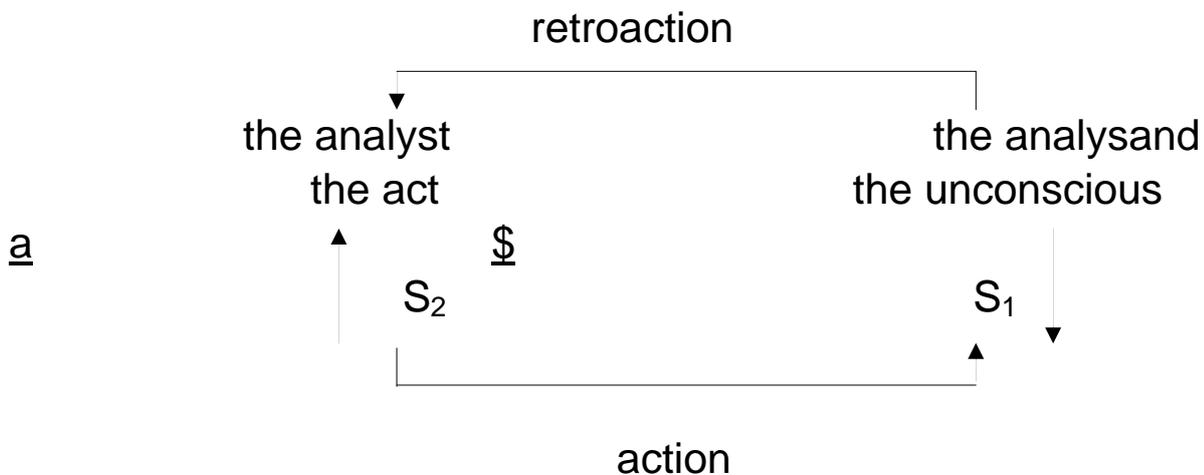
Relative to this point of departure, it is apparent that there is an antinomy between the psychoanalyst’s *formation*, such as it must be conceived, and the worst, that is to say, to put it briefly, the fact of the subject being left to its own devices, to its division (\$). For example: the destiny of the subject’s division is not the

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same in the hysteric's discourse and the analyst's discourse. Writing ($\$ \rightarrow$) and writing ($\rightarrow \$$) do not lead to the same consequences. Subjective division does not occupy the same position in relation to orientation, that is to say, in relation to *the action of the cause*. There is a differentiation between a subjective division that is 'oriented' ($\rightarrow \$$), and a subjective division that is 'dis-oriented' ($\$ \rightarrow$), even while, in the hysteric's discourse, this division occupies a position of being in control of the process.

Unconscious and act

The analyst is here considered from the point of view of the dialectic of his *formation*, that is to say, as analysand and analyst at once. The subject's division in question ($\$$) is therefore the division between analysand and analyst. From the moment that it is a matter of the 'passage from psychoanalysand to psychoanalyst', the subject's division can, in fact, be approached in accordance with one of two distinct modes – either from the side of the analysand or from the side of the analyst. Furthermore, from the perspective of the analyst's discourse, this dialectic of the *formation* can be envisaged as being situated within the confines of the frontier between the unconscious and the act. So it is that two sides are in opposition at the very heart of the analyst's discourse:



The arrow of action implies the act of the analyst, whereas the arrow of retroaction brings the unconscious of the analysand

into question, since, in either case, the analyst either was an analysand or still is one.

Two threads are knotted together here — one of ‘division’ and the other of ‘decision’. These two terms here evoke, in one way or another, the dimension of the *cut*. The division between the analysand and the analyst takes place in an oriented field from the moment that it is approached from the analyst’s discourse. Thus, the division in question no longer lies within the error of its former ways, it does not err; it calls for decision, if it is oriented, that is to say, if it is seized at the moment that the step is taken, by the decision to commit. From passive, it becomes, in a way, active. Relative to the division between analysand and analyst, the analysand, if he is an analyst, accomplishes a leap, makes a jump, over the fault of this division. The divided subject (\$) makes itself object (*a*). The unconscious passes to the act. The frontier is crossed. The paradox of the analyst’s passion is that it is active, and not passive. This is a paradox that Paul Claudel had noted in his *Journal* — the word *passion* is formed contrariwise to the movement that animates it, for, according to him, *passion is indeed action*.

Thus, a reflection is being initiated apropos the *effectus*, which in Latin designates not only the effect, but also the effective realisation. *Efficio* means “I realise,” in the sense of, “I do what I must in order that that which might obstruct my path should not come to pass.”

But it may happen that a step backwards is taken. This is precisely the phenomenon that is aimed at in the affirmation that the worst can always occur. The subjective division is then disoriented, since the rope is let go of. In these cases, the tethering to the analyst’s discourse is undone. A position reversal takes place from (\rightarrow ;) toward ($\$ \rightarrow$). In point of fact, such a step backwards constitutes a step back toward the fantasy ($\$ \diamond a$).

From the lapsus to the mot d’esprit

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The *formation* of the analyst is consonant with the formation of the unconscious. If it is true that the *formation* of the psychoanalyst supposes the act by which the passage from analysand to analyst is brought about, it is therefore necessary, as has already been underlined, to put the accent on the frontier between the unconscious and the act, and also on the way that this frontier can be crossed in both directions.

The *formation* of the analyst has nothing to do with form and the aesthetic. It is linked to the fault and to the ethical. The *formation* of the analyst is due the history of a fault — the fault between truth and knowledge (cf. Lacan's evocation of 'the return as such of truth in the fault of a knowledge'³). A psychoanalyst was initially an analysand, that is to say, a subject that, at the end of analysis, can be identified with a symptom, in other words, with a lapsus, graspable, as Lacan indicated in his seminar on Joyce and the knot from 1975-6,⁴ in the dimension of nodality between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. The act of enunciation, which is accomplished in the course of the pass, entails the transformation of this lapsus into a *mot d'esprit*. This supposes that a third party has taken cognisance of such a mutation, that is, that the *mot d'esprit* has been heard. To give an example of an insight into what is at stake in the fault of a subject's history: "Ah, well I never, so it was that! My father's voice, it wasn't what I thought it was then. It wasn't the voice of seduction, but the voice of the superego."

In the pass, the mutation of the lapsus into the *mot d'esprit* is accomplished by means of the account of a history. But the word *hystorisation*, coined by Lacan,⁵ implies that the word history be divided between tragedy and comedy, that it not be understood in the same way as when one places oneself on one side or the other of the division. Should he take the decision of *passer à l'analyste*, the analysand's effort, at the end of his analysis, lies in hearing the subjective drama that was his own in a different way, that is to say, to hear a tragedy with a different ear — as a comedy.

In this way a transformation occurs. On one hand, during the analysis, the history that is being recounted consists of the weave of contingent and traumatic events, sometimes comic, more often than not tragic. On the other hand, the history recounted on the occasion of the experience of the pass tends to produce a witticism. Thus, a reduction has taken place — from the *roman* to the *nouvelle*, as Éric Laurent once said, quoting a comment of Lacan's.⁶ Thus, there is a change of direction from history in its tragic dimension to history in its comic dimension. As the word *hystorisation* allows us to understand, history is a fiction — it is something that one invents. But, when it achieves a witticism it is apparent that such a history, well, there cannot be another like it, nothing else like it gets invented.

In consequence, the passage from *lapsus* to *Witz* is an inaugural *effet-de-formation*, which is grasped in the pass. One finds oneself at the edge that separates the side of the unconscious from the side of the act. This inaugural *effet-de-formation* implies an affect corresponding to the sentiment that, on account of this history that one has recounted, *there is nothing left but to laugh about it*.

The return

The fact of the subjective division being situated within an oriented field encourages *strong opinion* (Nabakov), the taking of sides.

But the problem that arises relative to the *effet-de-formation* in psychoanalysis is what Lacan isolated as *the blunder*.

If the axis of the *formation* of the analyst is the passage analysand/analyst, the step which is thereby taken means that there is a relation between, on the one hand, the division unconscious/act, and on the other, the division *lapsus/mot d'esprit*. And if this problem of the blunder arises, it is articulated by means of a movement that goes away and then returns, in the sense that one speaks of the 'recovery' and 'relapse' of an illness. The blunder provokes a step backward, crossing the frontier in the oppo-

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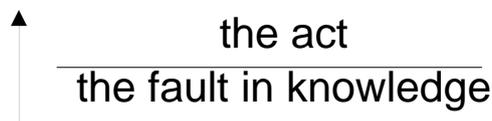
site direction. In this respect, it is important — this has already been underlined — to bear in mind that the frontier between unconscious and act can be crossed in one direction or another.

In the circumstance of a supervision, an opposition takes form between the analyst considered from the point of view of his unconscious qua analysand, and the analyst considered from the point of view of precisely his act qua analyst. But sometimes a lapsus of the act is highlighted during a session of supervision. Might it not be said then that the lapsus of the act is the consequence of the interference of the unconscious in the act? The effect produced is that of a return of the blunder in the analyst's action. A gap opens in the frontier that separates the unconscious and the act. For example: an analyst, during a session of supervision, hears himself saying, after an interval of several years, the same thing that was said to him one day by his analyst. The return of the blunder entails in some way a crossing of the fantasy in reverse, in the sense that the frontier between the unconscious and the act is crossed by the fantasy. The tragic trips over into the comic. The return of the blunder is, at that moment, the sign of a step backwards, of a return of the fantasy. This *traversée* of the fantasy in reverse signals a *travers*, a mistake, that must be dealt with. This is what Lacan evokes when, in his 'Discours à l'EFP', he affirms, "The correction of the desire of the analyst, according to what is said, remains possible, by taking up the analysand's staff once more".⁷

The epistemological dimension

The psychoanalyst's passion has nothing to do with the analysand's passion. In point of fact, the analysand's passion consists in giving an agalmatic value to his subjective division ($\uparrow S/a$) — which maintains him in repetition. As for the psychoanalyst's passion, it is situated at the level of the fault between truth and knowledge and it is animated by the epistemological dimension, that is, by the desire to invent knowledge ($\uparrow a/S_2$). If one takes the point of view of this epistemological dimension, which is the sup-

port of the cause of the desire of the analyst, does not the *effet-de-formation* emerge, as was underlined at the beginning, in the effort that the analyst accomplishes of not abandoning himself to his mistake, of not allowing himself to go toward the worst, of not allowing himself to slide down the slope that was bred in him? With that, the spirit of timeliness, which the spirit of psychoanalysis encourages, demands that time be refused any temporisation, that the opportunity be seized. As one is fond of saying after Freud, *the lion pounces but once*. Is this the *effet-de-formation* in act? Being at the place of the gap means not wasting one's time in not – in not wanting to say, read, write, know, realise, etc. The psychoanalyst's passion is linked to a want, in particular, a want to know. And this will to know ($\uparrow \bullet / S_2$) animates the psychoanalytic act ($a / \bullet \rightarrow$). The analyst's ethical decision, which consists in making the cause of desire function, implies that the passion for the fault in knowledge, for the lacuna in the signifying field, be articulated to the act that breaks from repetition:



The act, which is accomplished on a particular occasion and which is written ($a \rightarrow$), is supported by the opening of a fault in unconscious knowledge ($S_2 // S_1$). In the analyst's discourse, disjunction ($//$) is the support of implication (\rightarrow). Each time that the analyst accomplishes an *act*, on the condition that there then be effectively *something of the analyst*, the *effet-de-formation* is renewed.

Translated by Adrian Price

1. Throughout this paper the French signifiers *formation* and *effet-de-formation* have been retained in view of Lacan's celebrated quote, *il n'y a pas de formation du psychanalyste, il n'y a que des forma-*

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tions de l'inconscient, “there is no *formation* (training) of the psychoanalyst, there are only formations of the unconscious”, [TN].

2. J. Lacan, *L'acte psychanalytique* in *Autres écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 378.
3. J. Lacan, *Du sujet enfin en question* in *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 234.
4. J. Lacan, *Ornicar?* No 8, p. 19.
5. J. Lacan, *Preface to the English-Language Edition of Seminar XI in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan, Hogarth Press, 1977, p. ix.
6. This witticism is untranslatable on account of the novelty assimilated into the French term for short-story having been assigned to the extended form ‘novel’ in English, [TN].
7. J. Lacan, *Discours à l'École freudienne de Paris* in *Autres Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 266.

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