

# Lacanian Psychoanalysis in Japan: An Interview with Dr. Luke S. Ogasawara

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The following is an interview with Dr. Luke S. Ogasawara, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and director of the Tokyo Lacan School. Dr. Ogasawara studied psychoanalysis in London and Paris during the 1980's and obtained a Diplôme d'études approfondies (DEA) from the Département de psychanalyse - Université Paris 8 in 1988. In this interview I speak with Dr. Ogasawara about Lacan's comments on the possibility of conducting psychoanalysis in the Japanese language, apophatic ontology as a foundation of psychoanalysis, the concept of sublimation in Lacanian psychoanalysis, the effect of globalization on the Japanese language, and mental health in Japan.

**KEYWORDS**

apophatic ontology, on-yomi, kun-yomi, sublimation, globalization, Lacanian psychoanalysis in Japan

**Q1. Can you speak some about your history and trajectory as a mental health professional? How did you first become interested in Lacan? What was your path to becoming a Lacanian psychoanalyst?**

I'm a Lacanian analyst practicing in Tokyo. I was born in 1956 and qualified as a medical doctor in 1981. I was a program associate in the Tavistock Clinic in 1985-1986, and then a student of the *troisième cycle* of the *Département de psychanalyse* of the *Université de Paris VIII*. I obtained the *diplôme d'études approfondies en psychanalyse* in 1988.

I was already interested in psychiatry and psychoanalysis when I was a high school student, and to become a psychiatrist-psychoanalyst was my aim when I entered in the Faculty of Medicine in 1975.

In the first year of my university student life I discovered Jacques Lacan as one of the intellectual heroes of structuralism which was in vogue in those days. Of the texts collected in his *Écrits* I first read *La signification du phallus* with my friends in a university circle interested in contemporary philosophers. How it was difficult and incomprehensible! I would say it was almost traumatic. Because of that trauma the name of Lacan became for me something that will never cease to be written. I suppose all the serious Lacanians had a similar encounter with Lacan in their youth.

In London I had analytic experience with a Kleinian. I chose London as the place of my psychoanalytical training because at that time (in 1985, that is, 4 years after Lacan's death) I had no information about how they formed Lacanian analysts in Paris. In London I met some British Lacanians and participated with them in the *Rencontre internationale du Champ freudien* held in Paris in February 1986. There I met Jacques-Alain Miller for the first time, and I decided immediately to move to Paris to have analytic experience with him.

I learned much from Jacques-Alain Miller about how to read Lacan's texts. He was an excellent teacher and psychoanalyst for me for decades. But as I noticed important mistakes of transcriptions in the texts of Lacan's *Séminaire* he established, my transference to him cooled down. Then I had analytic experience with Colette Soler whom I regarded as the most estimable analyst after Jacques-Alain Miller, and then with Gérard Haddad whose book *Le jour où Lacan m'a adopté* showed clearly that he was one of the most faithful analysts and disciples of Lacan.

**Q2. Lacan visited Japan twice, in 1963 and 1971, and was clearly fascinated by the unique written and spoken structure of the Japanese language, and specifically the distinction between *kun-yomi* and *on-yomi* readings of Chinese characters. Regarding the possibilities of psychoanalysis in Japan, Lacan made a shocking statement: "no one who dwells in the Japanese language has a need to be psychoanalyzed." How was Lacan both correct and incorrect about this assertion?**

Before answering your questions let us ask ourselves why Lacan had to develop his teaching that could seem to be unnecessarily complicated, messy or even incoherent. You might get such impressions from his *Écrits* and *Séminaires* if you look only at the façade of his teaching. But if you look at its foundations you will find something that is much simpler.

What is the practical aim of his teaching? The answer is quite simple: to form and qualify a new psychoanalyst. Why? Because we want to transmit psychoanalysis to younger generations: without transmission psychoanalysis as praxis will perish. And how? Only on the basis of something that happens intrinsically in the psychoanalytical experience as such, not on the basis of something that is extrinsic to it such as the duration or the total hours of the didactic analysis, a thesis presented at its end, etc.

How can we form and qualify a new psychoanalyst only on the basis of his or her own psychoanalytic experience? To answer this question as adequately as possible Lacan thought it is necessary to found psychoanalysis purely,

that is, not only not empirically (biologically, medically, psychologically, sociologically, etc.) but also not metaphysically.

To found purely psychoanalysis: all the teaching of Lacan consists in it. It's quite simple and clear, isn't it? And we can verify our thesis by quoting these three phrases of him respectively from the 1950's, '60's and '70's:

*That is the problem of foundations [of psychoanalysis] which must assure to our discipline [i.e. psychoanalysis] its place in the sciences: the problem of formalization which in fact is very badly engaged (1953, *Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse*, in: *Écrits*, p.284).*

*I'm going to talk to you about the foundations of psychoanalysis (1964, *Le séminaire XI, Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, p.7).*

*There is no sexual relation [il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel] – that is the foundation of psychoanalysis (1977-1978, *Le séminaire XXV, Le moment de conclure, la séance du 11 avril 1978*).*



FIGURE 1

I call the pure foundation of psychoanalysis “apophatic ontology” after apophatic theology. Why apophatic? Because it concerns quite simply the central, fundamental and irreducible hole of Being (das Sein) which Heidegger annuls with a cross, the hole I call rather awkwardly “apophatico-ontological hole” (cf. the figure 1). The apophatic ontology is, so to say, the essence that Lacan extracted from Heidegger’s thinking to found psychoanalysis purely on it.

To distinguish in English strictly “Being” (das Sein) from “beings” (das Seiende) I’ll write “Being” (das Sein) with a capital “B” and “beings” (das Seiende) in plural. And instead of using a cross I’ll strike out the word “Being” and “Sein” with a line: ~~Being~~, ~~Sein~~ because it’s simpler and easier technically.

I guess that Lacan invented his *mathème* (Lacan called *mathèmes* the symbols he invented under the inspiration of mathematical logic, such as A, a, \$, S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, etc.) the barred subject \$ from Heidegger’s ~~Sein~~. So we can call the hole of ~~Being~~ the hole of the subject \$ too (cf. the figure 2).

What we call desire in psychoanalysis can be defined as the apophatico-ontological hole. Desire is the apophatico-ontological hole: this is the apophatico-ontological definition of desire in psychoanalysis. And this definition is suggested by Freud in a passage quoted by Lacan in chapter VII *Zur Psychologie der Traumvorgänge* (though it is not psychological but metapsychological) of *Traumdeutung* where it is said that the core of our Being [der Kern unseres Wesens] consists in the unconscious desire [unbewusste Wunschregungen] which cannot be seized, inhibited nor destroyed [unfassbar, unhemmbar, unzerstörbar]. I would add that the apophatico-ontological definition of desire is what enables us to establish the connection between apophatic ontology and ethics of psychoanalysis.

The apophatic ontology can be developed as a topology of the hole of the subject \$ and a dialectical process

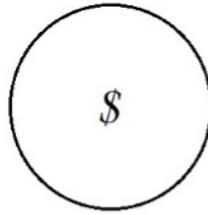


FIGURE 2

of its dissimulation and revelation. In this perspective we can consider what Heidegger called *Geschichte des Seins* (History of Being) as a dialectical phenomenology of the hole of the subject \$:

0) the “archaeological” phase of the History of Being (cf. the figure 2): in principle (en archè) the hole of the subject \$ was open. It is irreducible, that is, its obturation or its dissimulation are impossible.

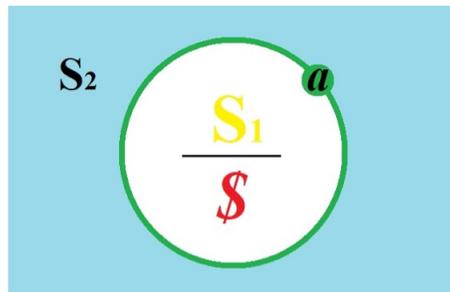


FIGURE 3

1) the metaphysical phase (cf. the figure 3): the hole is obturated by Plato's  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$  (which is formalizable with Lacan's *mathème*  $S_1$ , the master signifier) and the subject \$ is repressed and hidden in the locality of what doesn't cease not to be written (Lacan's definition of impossible). This is what Freud called *Urverdrängung* (archi-repression: in French they say sometimes *archi-refoulement* or *archirefoulement*, so why not archi-repression in English?) — we can say: archi-repression of the archi-desire of the subject \$ or archi-repression of the subject \$ as archi-desire. The whole metaphysics is characterized by this obturation and dissimulation of the hole of the subject \$ by the master signifier  $S_1$ , that is, something that is ideal or transcendental: to ontos on, *ens qua ens*, *substantia*, what is called Being in the traditional ontology, God as *causa sui*, that is, God which Blaise Pascal called “God of philosophers and savants” in its difference from “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”, the transcendental subject or the transcendental ego, etc. If Heidegger says that metaphysics cannot think of Being as such it is because the hole of the subject \$ is archi-repressed and hidden by Plato's  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$   $S_1$  and this archi-repression itself is hidden and forgotten for metaphysical thinking. The obturation of the apophatico-ontological hole by the master signifier  $S_1$  and the simultaneous archi-repression of the subject \$ give us the structure of what Lacan calls alienation (topologically) and the discourse of university (mathematically, that is, with *mathèmes*) (cf. the figure 4).

2) the eschatological phase: we can consider that the metaphysical phase of the History of Being is over around the end of the 18th century, that is, around the end of the period Michel Foucault called *l'âge classique*. Heidegger detects the fulfillment (*Vollendung*) of metaphysics in Nietzsche's thinking, especially in his concepts of *Wille*

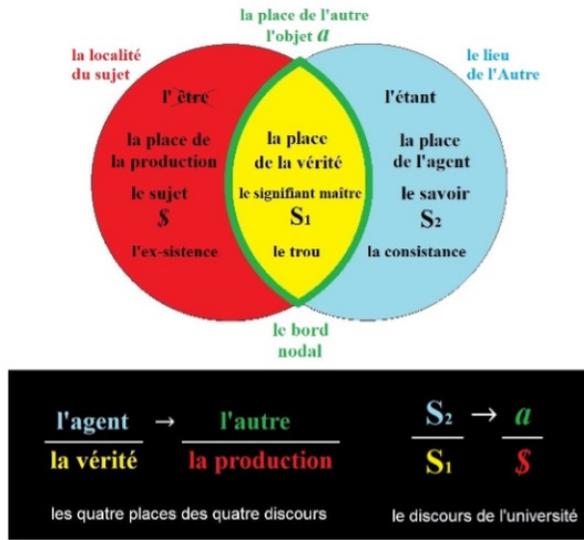


FIGURE 4

zur Macht and ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen (cf. his lectures on Nietzsche: Gesamtausgabe, Band 6). What happened then? The obturation of the apophatico-ontological hole by the metaphysical S1 is annulled by the effects of modern science and capitalism so that the hole opens itself and reveals itself as a break or a hiatus. What Freud discovered under the name of the unconscious is nothing other than this apophatico-ontological hole being revealed. Because this gaping hole gives you an intolerable angst (angst of nihil, of death and of guilt or sin – in short what Freud called *Kastrationsangst*) you will know nothing of it (as Freud says of his case Wolfman: *er wollte von der Kastration nichts wissen*) by its re-obturation (by posing new master signifiers S<sub>1</sub>: for example *Wille zur Macht* and *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's thinking) or re-dissimulation (by proliferating new objects a: *ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* for the philosopher of *Wille zur Macht*). Thus the eschatological phase of the History of Being where we are living actually since the French revolution is characterized by the gaping hole of the subject \$ and the fierce resistance against its coming out. What Freud called superego is nothing other than Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* which never ceases to desire Mehr-Macht (surplus power). And what Lacan called *désir de l'Autre* (desire of the Other) is also nothing other than *Wille zur Macht*. So we can say that in the structure of alienation the archi-desire \$ is alienated and represented by the desire of the Other S<sub>1</sub> (cf. the figure 3). This structure is described by Lacan with his formula: « un signifiant S<sub>1</sub> représente le sujet \$ pour un autre signifiant (a ou S<sub>2</sub>) » [the signifier S<sub>1</sub> represents the subject \$ for another signifier (a or S<sub>2</sub>)].

Then we could say that psychoanalysis consists in this: to become capable of letting come out the apophatico-ontological hole (the hole of the subject \$) which will reveal itself, as it will reveal itself of itself (as Heidegger says to define what phenomenology is: apophainesthai to phainomena: *Das, was sich zeigt, so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt, von ihm selbst her sehen lassen*) by abandoning all the vain efforts of resistance against its revelation.

In this sense we could define psychoanalysis as practical (that is, not speculative) phenomenology of the subject \$ (not the subject as *substantia* but as the apophatico-ontological hole).

And we could formalize the process of psychoanalytical experience mathematically as the transformation from the discourse of the university to that of the analyst and topologically as the transformation from alienation to

separation (cf. the figure 5):

The subject \$ in the discourse of the analyst which reveals itself as an open hole is the de-alienated and sublimated desire which Lacan calls the desire of the analyst. This de-alienation and sublimation of desire characterizes the end of the psychoanalytical experience. In other words, "to be a psychoanalyst" (which is to be written as "to be a psychoanalyst") is the sublimation of desire. If you have attained the sublimation of desire you can be a psychoanalyst, and to be a psychoanalyst you must have attained the sublimation of desire.

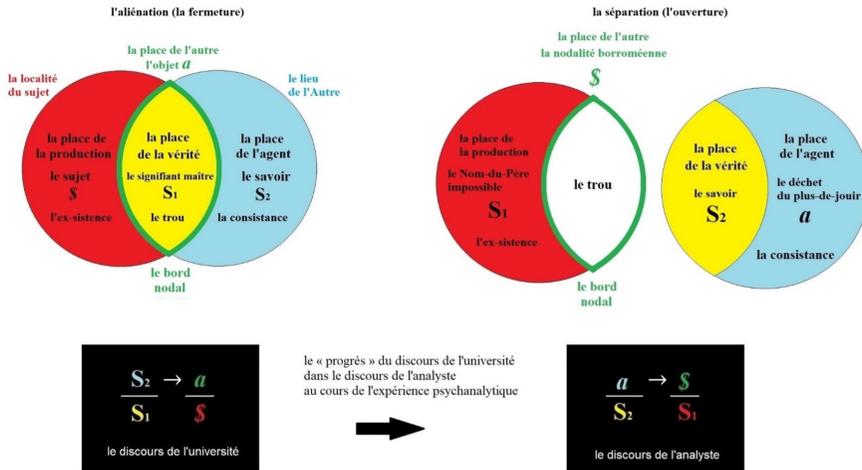


FIGURE 5

Well, now I'll try to answer your questions. Why does Lacan say, "no one who dwells in the Japanese language has a need to be psychoanalyzed"? (cf. my [blog article](#)). Because those who are dwelling in the Japanese language are very much satisfied with the discourse of the university where they are living such that they have no need to "progress" to the discourse of the analyst. Or, in other words, they won't "progress" to the discourse of the analyst because of the very strong resistance against such a progress due to the fixedness of the master signifier S<sub>1</sub> in the place of truth in the discourse of the university.

How is this fixedness conditioned by the characteristics of the Japanese language? Because of the duality of *on-yomi* and *kun-yomi*, as Lacan says. Or we can quote another remark of his about Japanese: "Japanese people speak Chinese in their own national language" (cf. *Autres écrits*, p.498).

To say it more precisely, the Japanese language contains in it innumerable Chinese words imported from China since the 5th century CE. In texts they are written in Chinese characters and in speech they are pronounced in an imitatively Chinese way (this is what is called the *on-yomi* of Chinese words in Japanese). Those Chinese words pronounced in an imitatively Chinese way in speech have as such no meaning in the Japanese language per se so that their meaning must be allotted *a priori* to them (that is what is called the *kun-yomi* of Chinese words in Japanese). In consequence nobody can say something that is meaningful in Japanese without a meaning that is given *a priori*. It is exactly this peculiar linguistic condition that brings about the fixedness of the master signifier S<sub>1</sub> in the place of truth in the discourse of the university, which we could call master significance (*la signifiante maîtresse*) because it is situated in the place of the signified.

In the Japanese language and, in consequence, in Japanese society in general the master significance is given

*a priori* so that whatever one says or whatever one does not say in Japanese the communicated meaning is the same: the master significance  $S_1$  is given *a priori*. This is the condition in cultural anthropology called a high-context culture. The psychopathological condition characterized by such a fixedness of the master significance  $S_1$  is called paranoia. Paranoiac master significance is called in German psychiatry *Wahnbedeutung* (delusional significance).

Because of this fixedness of master significance  $S_1$  in the Japanese language, you cannot think in Japanese – “think” in the sense of Cartesian “cogito”.

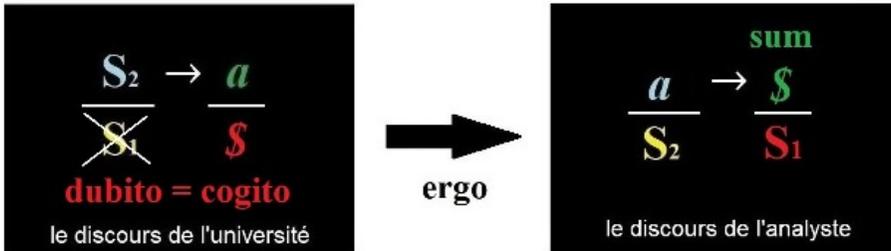


FIGURE 6

As Lacan explains it in the session of the 29th January 1964 of his Seminar XI, cogito consists in *dubito* (what Descartes calls *doute hyperbolique* or *doute méthodique*) which consists in foreclosure (*forclusion*) of the master significance  $S_1$  supposed *a priori* in the place of truth in the discourse of university. For Descartes, the master significance  $S_1$  to foreclose is the truth of medieval Scholasticism. In consequence of the foreclosure of  $S_1$ , a structural transformation occurs from the discourse of the university into the discourse of the analyst where the subject  $\$$  comes out as the apophatic-ontological hole (cf. the figures 5 and 6). This is what occurs in the Cartesian “*cogito ergo sum*” and what is expected to happen in psychoanalytical experience.

But in the Japanese language that doesn't happen because of the fixedness of the master significance  $S_1$  conditioned exactly by its linguistic characteristics. So nobody thinks in Japanese nor needs psychoanalysis. They are quite satisfied in their discourse of the university.

It is exactly this fixedness of the master significance  $S_1$  in Japanese society that made Alexandre Kojève speak of the snobism in its pure state of Japanese civilisation and Roland Barthes of *L'Empire des signes* (Empire of signs) which would mean absolutism of the master signifier  $S_1$  in Japan.

Nevertheless, there are a relatively small number of Japanese who are not satisfied in the discourse of the university because of a kind of instability of the master significance  $S_1$  in their existential condition. If they are fortunate enough to find Lacanian psychoanalysis they come to see me for their analytical experience. If not, they let themselves be heavily medicated with anxiolytics and antidepressants by psychiatrists who have now no need to think in their job thanks to the DSM-5. Yes, the DSM since its third edition published in 1980 has had a real effect of idiotisation for Japanese psychiatrists in general.

### Q3. Is Lacan's later theorizing regarding the *sinthome* more conducive to describing the functioning of Master signifiers in the Japanese language?

Certainly the term *sinthome* Lacan introduced in his teaching in the *Séminaire* of the year 1975-1976 dedicated to James Joyce is the old orthography of the word *symptôme* (symptom), but Lacan indicated clearly its homophony in French with “*saint homme*”, that is, saint:

*Joyce le sinthome fait homophonie avec la sainteté, dont quelques personnes ici peut-être se souviennent que je l'ai télévisonné (Le séminaire XXIII, p.162).*

*Joyce le sinthome is a homophone of saint homme. Some people here remember probably that I talked of the saint in Télévision.*

Then what did he say in *Télévision*? This (cf. *Autres écrits*, p.519):

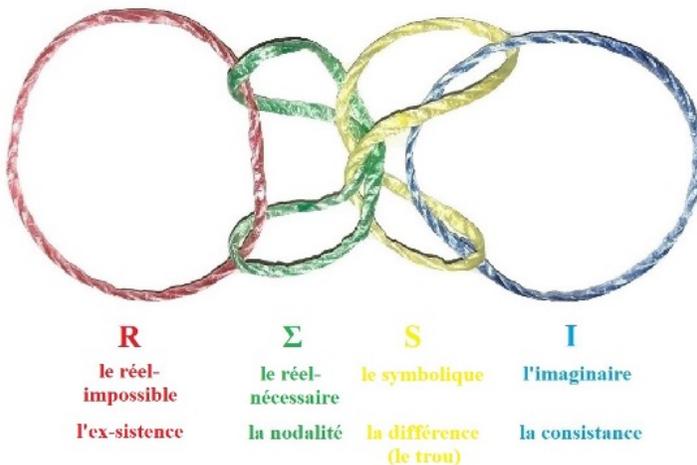
*C'est qu'on ne saurait mieux le [psychanalyste] situer objectivement que de ce qui dans le passé s'est appelé: être un saint.*

*That is, we could not situate the psychoanalyst objectively better than by referring to what was called in the past "being a saint."*

We must remember that Lacan said is always in the context of the problematics of formation and qualification of a new psychoanalyst: someone in his or her analytic experience passes from a position of analysand to that of analyst when he or she attains to the existential structure of being a saint, as far as a saint is someone that the Catholic Church canonizes according to certain criteria.

And why did Lacan talk of being a saint suddenly here in *Télévision* which was written probably in November and/or December 1973? We can recall that he talked in the *Séminaire XX (1972-1973) Encore* of mystics such as Hadewijch of Antwerp, saint Teresa of Avila and saint John of the Cross. So we can consider that when he talked of being a saint in *Télévision* it is in line with the problematics of mystical jouissance as jouissance beyond phallic jouissance and surplus jouissance (*plus-de-jouir*), that is, the problematics of jouissance of sublimation or sublimational jouissance.

Therefore, we can think that when Lacan talks of *sinthome* he thinks of the sublimation of desire as the condition of the end of analysis.



**FIGURE 7**

In *Séminaire XXIII (1975-1976) Le sinthome* Lacan formalizes sinthome with the fourth ring  $\Sigma$  of the Bor-

romean knot, which knots the three other rings together in a Borromean way (cf. the figure 7). So we can say the function of the fourth ring  $\Sigma$  consists in “nodality”, the term used by Lacan in the *Séminaire XXI* (1973-1974) *Les non-dupes errent*. This function is that of the place of the other in the four discourses (I put the same color green for the place of the other in the four discourses, for the ring  $\Sigma$  and for the edge of the apophatico-ontological hole).

In the discourse of the analyst the *sinthome* corresponds to the subject  $\$$  which comes out as an open hole and is the sublimated desire of the analyst. In the discourse of the university the *sinthome* corresponds to the object  $a$  which is the signifier of the symptom in its ordinary sense.

#### Q4. The Oedipus complex is a cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory. How or how not is the Oedipus complex a feature of Japanese culture and subjective experience?

Certainly Freud said that the Oedipus complex is the core of neuroses, but for Lacan what is the core and the foundation (the basis, the ground) of psychoanalysis is not the Oedipus complex, but the castration complex, that is, the apophatico-ontological hole supposed to be the hole of the lacking phallus ( $-\phi$ ) of the mother's body (cf. the figure 8).

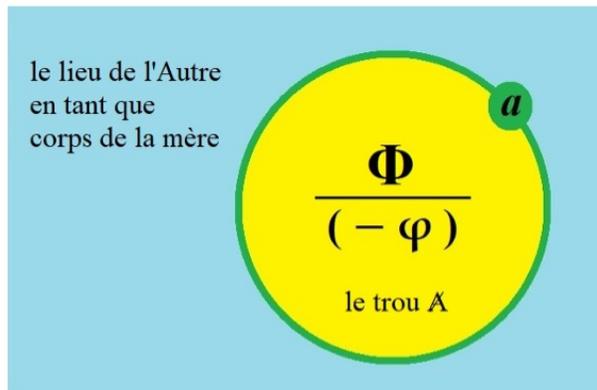


FIGURE 8

Why does the apophatico-ontological hole get the signification of the hole of the lacking phallus ( $-\phi$ ) of the mother's body? Because of the supposition that the phallus  $\Phi$  – the paternal phallus, or more precisely the patriarchal phallus (der Phallus des Urvaters) – can obturate the hole and satisfy the mother's desire: if the phallus can obturate it so it must be the hole of the lacking phallus. Thus, it acquires the phallic significance ( $-\Phi$ ).

But, in fact, the apophatico-ontological hole is impossible to obturate. There is no phallus that can obturate it. That is the meaning of Lacan's formula: *il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel* (there is no sexual relationship) which he presented to us in that form for the first time in his *Séminaire XVI* (1968-1969). He said it in a more Freudian terminology already in 1953: *la mythologie de la maturation instinctuelle* [the mythology of the maturation of sexual instinct] (*Écrits*, p.263). That is, the phallus  $\Phi$  under the primacy of which the genital organization is to attain as the final stage of maturation in the development of libido (or of sexual instinct) according to Freud's presupposition is in fact impossible, i.e. it does not cease not to be written.

It is because of the impossibility of the patriarchal phallus  $\Phi$  that the sexual instinct is essentially the death drive: where you expect sexual jouissance in the genital relationship you will only encounter the apophatico-ontological

hole as the hole of death, nihil and sin. The sexual instinct will drive you necessarily to that fatal encounter. All of psychopathology consists in resistance against that and denial of that.

Then what can Lacanian psychoanalysis give to us? The possibility of sublimation in so far as Lacan teaches to us that "*l'amour est la sublimation du désir*" [love is sublimation of desire] and "*seul l'amour permet à la jouissance de condescendre au désir*" [only love allows jouissance to condescend to desire] (cf. the session of the 13 March 1963, *Le séminaire X L'angoisse*).

The condition of psychoanalysis is the analyst's desire as sublimated desire. A psychoanalyst must have attained the sublimation of desire – that's why his own experience of psychoanalysis is indispensable. The analyst's desire as sublimated desire can in its turn lead an analysand to a sublimation of desire. That constitutes the end of analysis.

At the very end of his *Séminaire XXV* (1977-1978) *Le moment de conclure* [the moment of conclusion] Lacan shows us a trefoil knot (cf. the figure 9) :

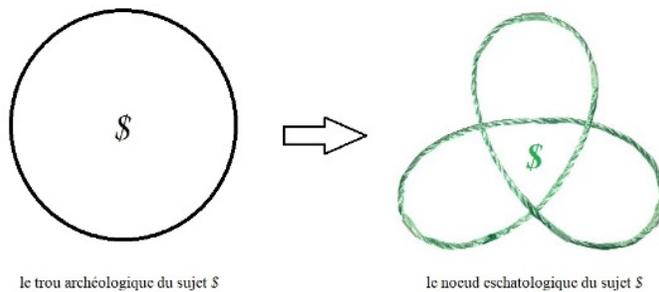


FIGURE 9

So we could say that in psychoanalysis as a dialectic of desire the hole of the subject \$ comes out finally in the form of a trefoil knot as the symbol of the sublimation of desire. We don't know if that is *the* conclusion of Lacan's teaching. But we could work under its sign.

#### Q5. In what sense is Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* the *Vollendung* (fulfilment) of metaphysics? Why does Heidegger think this?

I really recommend you read Heidegger's *Nietzsche* (Gesamtausgabe, Band 6). I'm convinced that it's one of the most interesting and exciting books ever written about Nietzsche and in all the domain of philosophy in general. And I think it's the most recommendable of Heidegger's books for beginners, more readable than *Sein und Zeit*.

Heidegger regarded Nietzsche as the philosopher of *Vollendung der Metaphysik* in so far as in his turning-upside-down of Platonism (*Umdrehung des Platonismus*) the history of metaphysics came to its achievement and revealed the structure characterizing metaphysics as such, that is, the apophatico-ontological hole obturated initially by Plato's  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$  and now coming out as the *Ab-grund* (foundational abyss) of metaphysics. The *Wille zur Macht* is Nietzsche's paranoiac effort to re-obturate the hole, the effort Nietzsche called classical nihilism – heroic and powerful classicism in its difference from Wagner's weakling romanticism.

#### Q6. How specifically do modern science and capitalism change the status of $S_1$ and cause

**the apophatic-ontological hole (which for Lacan is the lacking / desiring subject) to reveal itself? In so far as science and capitalism bring about a new relation to the  $S_1$ , do they function similarly to a psychoanalyst?**

For modern science what exists really is only what can be analyzed scientifically including what is potentially analyzable, that is those things that we cannot analyze for the moment because of technical conditions but that we will be able to analyze if some technical difficulties are overcome. And for modern capitalism what exists really is only what is exploitable for the production of surplus value including what is potentially exploitable, that is those things that we cannot exploit for the moment because of technical conditions but that we will be able to exploit if some technical difficulties are overcome. So modern science and capitalism revealed that which is to ontos on (what really is) for metaphysics – for example, Plato's  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$ , God as *causa sui*, transcendental subject – is nothing more than *Denkgemächt* (a pure fabrication of thought) and thus induced the end of the metaphysical phase of the History of Being and the beginning of the eschatological phase.

Lacan says in *La science et la vérité* that, “the subject on which we operate in psychoanalysis cannot be other than the subject of science” (*Écrits*, p.858). That is, Freud discovered the unconscious and invented psychoanalysis only when the apophatico-ontological hole (the hole of the subject  $\$$ ) revealed itself as a gape under the effect of modern science (and modern capitalism) which discarded as mere thought fabrications those metaphysical and ideal  $S_1$ 's obturating the hole of the subject  $\$$ . But now we have in front of us those “obscene and ferocious” master signifiers  $S_1$  in the place of the hole, such as what Marx called *der absolute Bereicherungstrieb des Kapitalisten* (the absolute enrichment instinct of the capitalist), Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht*, Freud's superego, etc. We try to free ourselves from their domination in psychoanalysis by foreclosing them into the place of the impossible (what doesn't cease not to be written) (cf. the figure 5).

In the metaphysical phase of the History of Being they believed in the eternal master signifier  $S_1$  (metaphysical God) capable of obturating the hole stably and eternally. Now that science and capitalism tell us that such a master signifier doesn't exist, we are under the domination of master signifiers which don't cease to demand “more and more” to keep their obturating effect in the place of the hole. In that sense Lacan reduced the Freudian superego to the categorical imperative “*Jouis!*” (Have more and more jouissance! Don't cease to get more and more jouissance!) That's exhausting, and that will finally bring about the extinction of humankind because of the climate catastrophe. We must free ourselves from the capitalistic master signifier. It's really urgent.

**Q7. Could you elaborate any further on the concept of the analyst's sublimated desire, perhaps in relation to non-sublimated desire? Are there any cultural practices in Japan (possibly Zen Buddhism, for example) that aim towards or facilitate sublimated desire?**

The topological structure of alienation and the mathematical structure of the discourse of the university (cf. the figure 4) are formalizing the archi-repression of the subject  $\$$  by the master signifier  $S_1$  where the subject  $\$$  as archi-desire becomes alienated and represented by the desire of the Other  $S_1$ .

The psychoanalytical experience begins in the structure of alienation (that is, in the structure of the discourse of the university) where knowledge  $S_2$  is the ego in the terminology of Freud's second topography, the master signifier  $S_1$  the superego, the subject  $\$$  the id (*das Es, le ça*) and the surplus jouissance (*le plus-de-jouir*) a the pregenital libidinal object.

Lacan says that “*dans l'inconscient, ça parle*” (in the unconscious something speaks), that is, we hear the word of the subject  $\$$  (in Heidegger's terminology: *das Wort des Seins*) through the object a in so far as the object a in the

discourse of the university is what Lacan calls a formation (*Gebilde*) of the unconscious. So the structure  $a / \$$  (the right side structure of signifier / signified in the structure of the discourse of the university) is formalizing the formula: "*dans l'inconscient, ça parle*".

The transference is conditioned by the supposition of what Hegel called absolute knowledge (*das absolute Wissen*) in the place of the subject  $\$$  in the structure of the discourse of the university. That's what Lacan called *le sujet supposé savoir* (the subject supposed to know). That means: the analyst  $a$  knows the truth of Being. (in Heidegger's terminology: *die Wahrheit des Seyns*).

N.B.: the "truth" in this expression: "the truth of Being" is not the "truth" of "the place of truth" of the four discourses. The "truth" in Heidegger's terminology is Being itself while the "truth" of the "place of truth" is the metaphysical "truth", that is, the Platonic .

You cannot arrive at the end of analysis in so far as you stay within the structure of the discourse of the university where the archi-desire  $\$$  is repressed, alienated and represented by the desire of the Other  $S_1$  (i.e. the superego) and where the metonymical sequence of the surplus jouissance  $a$  is gliding on the archi-repressed archi-desire  $\$$  (that means: pregenital objects cannot really satisfy the desire ).

Freud thought that the psychoanalytical process can finish when you have gotten rid of all fixations on pregenital objects and arrive at the genital organization which is the final stage of maturation of libidinal development and where you could obtain a full satisfaction of the sexual instinct in genital relationship (the phallic jouissance). But Lacan revealed that such a satisfaction is in fact impossible because there is no sexual relationship (*il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel*), that is, because the phallus  $\Phi$  under the primacy of which the genital organization could be attained is impossible (doesn't cease not to be written).

In his article *Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse* written in 1937, that is, two years before his death, Freud seems to have arrived at the insight that to reach the phallic jouissance is in fact impossible and that instead of the phallic jouissance you can only encounter finally the castration angst, that is, the apophatico-ontological hole as the lack of phallus ( $-\phi$ ) you discover when you have gotten rid of all the dissimulations by the surplus jouissance  $a$ .

Freud thought that this impasse constitutes the limit of psychoanalysis. But Lacan transformed this impasse to a pass (*la passe*) by way of the sublimation of desire: if you can never satisfy your desire, neither genitally nor pregenitally, you can sublimate it by abandoning the phallic jouissance (which is in fact impossible) and the surplus jouissance  $a$  (which is in fact a correlate of the archi-repression of the archi-desire  $\$$ ). And Lacan formalized this process in the structural transformation from the discourse of the university into the discourse of the analyst (cf. the figure 5) where the hole of the subject  $\$$  comes out as such, de-alienated, that is, liberated from any obturation and any dissimulation. That constitutes the sublimation of the archi-desire  $\$$  in which the end of analysis consists.

Sublimation is also a sort of jouissance in so far as Lacan said that, "only love enables jouissance to condescend to desire" (*seul l'amour permet à la jouissance de condescendre au désir*) and in so far as sublimation stops the metonymical gliding of the chain of surplus jouissance  $a$  on the subject .

I'll add that when Lacan says "love is sublimation of desire" this love is not eros but agapè. We must distinguish agapetic love from erotic love. And I'll add also that the sublimation of desire has the same structure as *creatio ex nihilo*, the resurrection from death to eternal life and the remission of original sin.

To bring the jouissance of sublimation into question Lacan referred frequently to artistic creations as concrete examples of *creatio ex nihilo*, in particular literary works such as poetic creation of *amour courtois*, (in *Séminaire VII*) and pieces of tragedy, for example, *Hamlet of Shakespeare* (in *Séminaire VI*), *Antigone of Sophocles* (in *Séminaire VII*), *la Trilogie des Coufontaine* of Paul Claudel (in *Séminaire VIII*), etc.

And as it is well known, in his *Séminaire XX* (1972-1973) *Encore* Lacan took up as concrete examples of jouissance beyond phallic jouissance and surplus jouissance, the feminine jouissance. What happens there? That the

structural transformation of the discourse of the university to the discourse of analyst is, so to say, staged on and with the female body where we can see and feel imaginary representations of coming out of the apophatico-ontological hole. Well known pathological examples of corporeal representations of the gaping hole are those cases of acting out such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, self-mutilation, etc.

Of course, those cases are not concrete examples of the sublimational *jouissance* attained at the end of analysis, but imaginary representations of the *jouissance* beyond phallic *jouissance* and surplus *jouissance*. The sublimational *jouissance* attained at the end of analysis is not corporeal, but existential, not of or with the body, but of or with *Dasein*. It is usually a quiet *jouissance*, not necessarily dramatic.

Another characteristic of the sublimational *jouissance* is that it is at the same time a desire — a desire which Lacan called desire of the analyst and which is the condition of possibility of praxis of psychoanalysis. But we can observe such a desire also in creative artists and the indefatigable missionaries of Christianity for example. Such a desire no longer seeks a phallic *jouissance* nor a surplus *jouissance*, but doesn't cease to desire that another person attains the sublimation of desire in his or her turn. That is the true purpose (the eschatological purpose) of psychoanalysis.

Lacan talked of the trefoil knot in the last three sessions of his *Séminaire XXV* (1977-1978) *Le moment de conclure*. It is *de facto* his last *Séminaire* because in his *Séminaire XXVI* (1978-1979) *La topologie et le temps* he didn't talk as much as he had done in his previous one probably because of his worsening physical conditions. You know he died on the 9th of September 1981 because of colon cancer. He had been refusing necessary surgical interventions for the disease.

Anyway, it's my interpretation that the trefoil knot can be the symbol of the sublimation of desire in so far as it constitutes the end of analysis. In the last session of his *Séminaire XXIV* (1976-1977) *L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre* (this is an example of *lalangue* fragments; we can read: *L'insuccès de l'Unbewusst c'est l'amour*, that is, the unsuccess of the unconscious is love) Lacan said that he is striving to invent a new signifier with no meaning for the real — what kind of the real? I suppose he was talking of the real we could attain at the end of analysis. And I suppose he arrived finally in the last sessions of the next seminar at the invention of this new signifier with no meaning in the form of the trefoil knot. In this sense the trefoil knot is a renewed and refined version of the signifier of the lack of the Other  $S(\mathcal{A})$  of which Lacan said in his *Séminaire XII* (1964-1965) *Problèmes cruciaux pour la psychanalyse* that the end of analysis consists in it (cf. the figure 10, *le graphe du désir*).

The graph of desire (*le graphe du désir*, cf. the figure 10) seems very complicated, but its most essential line is that which begins at the subject  $\$$  and ends at the signifier of the lack of the Other  $S(\mathcal{A})$ . This line represents the process of the dialectic of desire where the archeological hole of the subject  $\$$  is first repressed and alienated and then de-alienated to come out finally in the place of the edge of the apophatico-ontological hole (cf. the figure 5). The *mathème*  $S(\mathcal{A})$  is topologically representing the edge of the hole.

The trefoil knot is, so to say, the  $S(\mathcal{A})$  with one more "twist". And the trefoil knot can be a symbol of the Holy Trinity, that is, of God who is Love (agapè), the love which Lacan said is the sublimation of desire.

As for Japan, do you expect something from the Japanese culture as regards sublimation of desire? No, you can't, as Lacan says: "I expect nothing from Japan" (*Autres écrits*, p. 497). Why? Because those who are dwelling in the Japanese language are quite satisfied with their master signifier  $S_1$  so that they don't need the discourse of the analyst.

You mentioned Japanese Zen Buddhism. In fact, it is one of the typical examples of what Alexandre Kojève called snobbism in its pure state in Japanese culture. What they call nihil (*mu*) in Japanese Zen is nothing more than a master signifier  $S_1$  obturating the apophatico-ontological hole.

Roland Barthes' expression *L'Empire des signes* means the domination of seeming (*semblant*). Everything in Japanese society and culture is a seeming because the Japanese master signifier  $S_1$  won't cease the archi-repression of

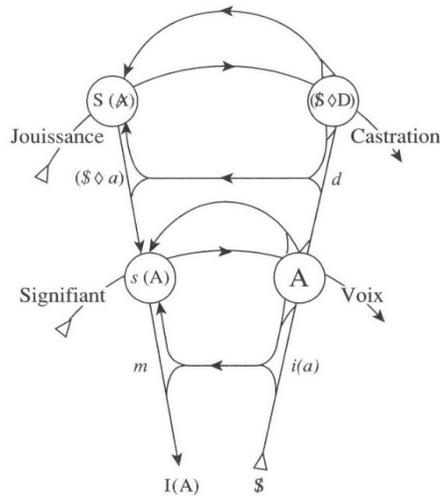


FIGURE 10

the truth of Being  $\$$ . That is creating an unbearable situation for discriminated people in Japan, especially for women.

What you could expect from Japan is only this: the extinction in the near future of the people whose mother tongue is Japanese. The total fertility rate of Japan was 1.41 in 2016 because it is very difficult for Japanese women to bear and bring up children because of their economical, sociological and psychological condition in Japanese society. That means there will be only two thousand Japanese in 3000 CE. In reality we will have sooner or later the occupation of the Japanese archipelago by the Chinese capital (not by the Chinese army) and / or a massive immigration from China, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc. so that the Japanese language will sooner or later be spoken only in nursing homes for the elderly. You will see that Japanese society as it is now will perish because of the Japanese language and of the paranoia conditioned by the Japanese language which we call ideology of the Japanese Conference. The Japanese Conference is an ultranationalist political organization dominating *de facto* Japanese society by means of the ruling party LDP the members of which almost all belong to the Japanese Conference. According to the results of the national election in 2019 we can estimate that 80 – 90 % of Japanese voters are paranoiacs of the Japanese Conference. How Japanese society as it is now will perish because of the Japanese language – that will be an interesting subject for sociological and historical studies maybe after the 22nd century.

**Q8. I understand Descartes systematic doubt, but how does *je pense donc je suis* summarize what happens in analysis? Isn't that the discourse of the Ego? I thought Lacan inverted this: « *Je pense où je ne suis pas, donc je suis où je ne pense pas* » ; « *je ne suis pas, là où je suis le jouet de ma pensée. Je pense à ce que je suis, là où je ne pense pas penser* » (Écrits, p.517).**

As indicated in figure 6 Lacan's interpretation of "*cogito ergo sum*" is implying the structural transformation from the discourse of the university into the discourse of the analyst. To think of such a structural transformation makes the difficulties we have when we read such authors as Heidegger, Lacan, etc.

The *cogito* is situated in the structure of the discourse of the university where the *sum* is to strike out: *sum* because it is the sum of the subject  $\$$  in the place of what doesn't cease not to be written. That is, in the discourse of

university we must say: *sum*, i.e. *non sum* (I am not).

The *sum* as far as it comes out after the ergo is situated in the structure of the discourse of the analyst where the *cogito* as the transcendental ego  $S_1$  of thought (*Denken*) and cognition (*Erkennen*) is foreclosed into the place of what doesn't cease not to be written. That means: *non cogito* (I don't think).

**Q9. In my dissertation *Psychotherapeutic Subjectivities*, I characterize Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as a form of therapy predicated on the University discourse. Since you propose that the Japanese language is itself a form of University discourse, does this make CBT a popular psychotherapy modality in Japan?**

No, not at all. Japanese patients prefer being heavily medicated with anxiolytics and antidepressants because words in the Japanese language are meaningless for them and CBT depends also on language. Japanese society is the example *par excellence* of modern nihilistic society.

**Q10. To what extent have the demands associated with globalization affected mental health in Japan? Is it common to link mental health conditions to pressures or changes associated with globalization? Would you consider the phenomenon of *Hikikomori* as an example of a psychopathology caused by globalization?**

In my own clinical experience of patients of self-seclusion which is very limited (less than ten patients I examined by myself by a home visit and some more patients whose parent or parents came to consult me) almost all of them were schizophrenics. I have no opinion on the psychopathology of self-seclusion in general.

As for globalization, if we think of globalization *lato sensu* it began with Christopher Columbus and the whole Japanese society was unescapably challenged by its effects in 1853 when some US navy warships came to Japan. This event triggered the end of the more than 200 years of isolationism and the Japanese society was forced to open itself to the global effects of modern science and capitalism. What happened then in the Japanese language? Innumerable words and ideas of the Occidental civilization were translated and introduced in some decades of the later half of the 19th century. And such flows of importation of Western words and ideas have never ceased till today. Curiously enough, those Western words are translated in Japanese with Chinese words (principally combinations of two Chinese characters) which are pronounced in an imitatively Chinese way (*on-yomi*) so that they have no meaning in the Japanese language per se. And after 1945 innumerable American words are continuously introduced without proper translation, that is, they are pronounced in an imitatively American way so that they are also meaningless in the Japanese language per se. The result is this: that the Japanese language can no longer function as a language. You could hardly imagine the situation: those who are dwelling in the Japanese language must speak not only Chinese in an imitational way but also American in an imitational way in their everyday life in their own country. They can no longer think in a proper sense of this word "think". The whole Japanese society is now petrified in its paranoiac ideology of ultranationalism and patriarchalism. In this lamentable situation the most vulnerable people are Japanese women. Their frequent psychopathologies are anxiety, depression, and acting out such as eating disorders, self-mutilations, etc. It's difficult for them to imagine a happy marital life. The result is the low fertility rate which makes Japanese society unsustainable as it is now. As I told you already you will see Japan as it is now disappear in some decades because of the Japanese language.

To finish, I can add a case history of a young Japanese woman who was a psychiatric patient of one of my colleagues. He treated her psychopharmacologically for several years because of her depression and self-mutilation.

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One day she decided to study in a Canadian university and began to live there. When my colleague met her accidentally after two or three years (when she came to see her parents in Japan) he was surprised that she was very well, cheerful, with no psychiatric or psychological treatment. You can see only in this case how Japanese society is toxic and noxious for Japanese women.