

## A very short introduction to the analytical experience

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Before starting my short speech, I would like to express my special thanks to Mr. Yu and all the other members of the Association for welcoming me to your yearly seminar and allowing me to have this precious opportunity to speak about my research work, especially my book *Jacques Lacan: starting from zero* (疾風怒濤精神分析入門), whose 2<sup>nd</sup> edition I have just published two months ago.

I came here in Taipei to meet my partner, who has been studying Taiwanese Mandarin at the Language Center of Taiwan University, so it was purely by coincidence that I knew your group and found this seminar held during my stay in Taiwan: a coincidence that nearly broke out my atheism to make me believe in a sort of divine power of destiny. What wonderful experience I am having now!

Given the short notice I was given, I had to prepare this speech in a great hurry, in a language that I am not so used to speaking; thus, the following text may contain some grammatical errors and inappropriate expressions. I apologize for this in advance.

I begin by expressing my profound respect for the activities of this association. The word “praxis (實踐)” that contains your English name, indicates the very fact that you are oriented not only to the Lacanian theory but to his particular practices of psychoanalysis, that is not the case of Japanese Lacanian. In Japan, acceptance of Lacanian psychoanalysis began in Lacan’s lifetime. Just six years after the publication of his *Écrits*, namely in 1972, the first volume of Japanese translations appeared, and the third and last volume was published in 1981, the very year when Lacan died.

However, this does not necessarily mean that Lacanian psychoanalysis took hold in Japan: the translation contained so many errors that Japanese readers could not understand; even translators might not grasp correctly what they were translating. How can a high-quality translation be obtained without understanding? However, Japanese translations of *the Seminars of Jacques Lacan* have improved their quality in terms of linguistic correctness and readability.

More serious problem is found in the following fact: Lacanian psychoanalysis has been studied only from a viewpoint of the French contemporary thoughts or that of the psychopathology, that was highly developed in Japan due to the works of Bin Kimura (木村敏), Tadao Miyamoto (宮本忠雄)

who was one of the translators of *Écrits*, but there have been few “psychoanalysts” in the strict senses of the term, who have worked through what Lacan called “analytical experience”(expérience analytique) in his/her own analysis. Not a few Japanese philosophers or critics certainly have fragmental knowledge about Lacan, that isn’t necessarily correct, but few people know what Lacanian “praxis” is, for they are content to extract some philosophical discussions from Lacanian texts, saying that cliché “Lacanian theory is too complicated and speculative to be applied in clinical practices”. However, do they know the real meaning of “clinical practice”?

What the praxis is: We can answer this question by pointing out the original purpose of Lacanian psychoanalysis. In effect, this concerns the main subject of the first part of my book. Please do not mind allowing me to take a short detour. This is a small introduction to the Lacanian psychoanalysis. Many similar books have ever appeared in Japan; rather, almost all books on Lacan published in Japan have an advertising slogan “introduction to Lacan.” Even Lacan’s *Télévision*, the publisher called it “introduction to Lacan by himself” when appeared its Japanese translation. Nothing but a lie. In Japan, we could not publish any Lacanian books if we did not pretend that it was just an introduction.

However, I do not mean that there are no introductory books worthy of this name. In fact, there existed a few good introductions or studies on Lacan, like *Lacan against Lacan* written by Masaaki Mukai (向井雅明), my former analyst who gave a preface to my book, and *Everyone is delirious (Tout le monde délire)*, by Takuya Matsumoto (松本卓也) on whose work Mr. Yu’s speech was based. My book owed their works a lot, but they seemed, on the other hand, a little difficult for beginners who do not have any knowledge about Lacan and psychoanalysis, namely, for readers who want to start from scratch, “to start from zero.” Therefore, I decided to add one more introductory book to the Japanese Lacanian scene.

There was also another reason, that concerns what I said just now: no introductory book clearly explained the very purpose of the psychoanalytical clinic, not similar neither to that of psychiatry nor that of clinical psychology, the original “goal”(in French “fin”) of psychoanalysis on which Lacan insisted since he had begun his project of “return to Freud,” confronted to the American ways of psychoanalysis that corresponds to a medicalization and psychologizing of analysis. The independence of psychoanalysis from any other “mental cure” is the starting point for Lacanian theories and techniques. It must not be considered a sort of political dispute, but the struggle to defend the very cause of analysis against a social control took in the name of “mental health.”

We can find a negative form of the analytical purpose: psychoanalysis does not aim to reestablish the patients’ mental health, which they are supposed to have originally before some unfortunate

incident occurred and made them sick. I quote an important passage from Lacan's "Preposition of 9 October 1967",

This experience is essential if it is to be distinguished from therapeutics, which is not only a distortion of psychoanalysis through relaxing its rigor. / I shall observe in effect that there is no possible definition of the therapeutic other than that *it is the restitution of an initial state* — a definition that it is precisely impossible to give in psychoanalysis. (AE:246)

What does Lacan call "the restitution of an initial state," which defines the therapeutics, if not that of the mental health that patients are supposed to have as their initial and authentic state? However, the purpose of restitution could never define psychoanalysis.

Now we must look for a positive form of psychoanalytic purpose. In my introduction, I found this in one of the latest Lacanian notions: singularity. What defines a singularity? The largest definition of the term will be *something avoiding any designation and classification in the register of the grand Other*, in the symbolic order where the subject of signifier was produced, losing his/her proper "being" (être) and divided into the "sense" of the grand Other and the missing "being" of her/himself. Singularity concerns this "want-to-be," *manque-à-être* of the subject. It means there is something that a subject lost since the first symbolization, in the very moment of what Freud called "primary repression" (Urverdrängung in German), something thus s/he is always looking for in the metonymical economy of desire. Here, one can refer to the famous object *a*, the object-cause of desire. The Lacanian subject is defined by its lack of being; in other words, the subject is defined not by what s/he has, but by what s/he does not have. Object *a* is an object that ultimately represents what the subject does not have, and this is why it is situated at the lack of the grand Other, which overlaps with the subject's own lack of being, namely what s/he originally lost.

One question is posed here: How could an analytical subject, analysand, deal with her/his own object *a* and the phantasm getting around its hole? We can declare that finding one's own way to get along with the object *a* is the very purpose of psychoanalysis, but you could not have missed the fact that a subject could find *only a singular way* of the relationship with object *a*. Any other person, even an analyst, can never find a solution in the place of an analysand. The subject should find, rather, invent, *create from nothing (ex nihilo)*, a response to the lack of his/her being, represented by object *a*, without any authorization of the grand Other. Now we understand what Lacan said in the same article quoted above, the famous phrase "the psychoanalyst derives his authorization only from

himself' (AE:243). This passage does anticipate the conception that Lacan would elaborate on his last days. It will be clear that what he calls "psychoanalyst" doesn't mean a profession but all the subjects who have worked through her/his own analytical experience and found by him/herself a singular way to get along with the real of desire. The singularity worthy of the name can exist only with the self-authorization of the subject. This is singular because only the subject who has it authorizes it to be singular. This circular reasoning shows us the only possible way to define singularity.

It also shows us what distinguishes psychoanalysis from any other treatment aimed at restituting mental health. As far as what is called "mental health" is determined based on some universal criteria, it could never do without excluding the singularity of the subject. Here, we can see why singularity can be expressed in the form of "symptoms". Lacan argued in 70s a subject's identification to his/her own symptom. Apparently, this term symptom does not mean what is diagnostically defined under the power of a medical authority, but it is what invents a subject; it is called a symptom because it derives from the singularity of the subject and thus goes against any universality of mentally healthy criteria. If some mental cures aim to assimilate patients into an ideal state of well-being, psychoanalysis aims to help analysands to create some "new" things that no other person could realize in the world, although the grand Other doesn't accept it.

The above is what I wrote in the first part of the book, except that I did not use as many technical terms as today for the convenience of beginners. You can see that it is a very elementary topic of Lacanian psychoanalysis, but the problem was that even such a basic theme of Lacan wasn't sufficiently known by readers interested in psychoanalysis. Thus, first of all, I had to pinpoint in my way the fundament of Lacanian psychoanalysis, from which you can begin the explanation. Independence of psychoanalysis and self-authorization of singularity by analysand, I decided to consider them as what can found Lacanian clinic and theory. Such a work of foundation or justification of psychoanalysis lacked Japanese introductory books in those days.

In the rest of the book, I explained, based on this fundamental viewpoint, several classical concepts of Lacan and psychoanalysis, such as free association, interpretation as scansion, triad of IRS (the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real), theory of signifiers, Oedipus complex, enjoyment, object *a*, and phantasm. You know these concepts seem a sort of philosophical speculation, but in order not to ignore their clinical values, I was always looking for in the clinical scenes or everyday life some concrete and appropriate examples that can illustrate these abstract notions. I think for this reason my book could have not bat reputations by readers, to the extent that a Korean translation and its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition were published in these years.

To finish my short speech, I would like to emphasize the very fact that it was nothing else but my own analysis that allowed me to write this book. I am not a psychoanalyst but a researcher of the history of thoughts, but at the same time, I have been an analysand who had undertaken to put myself in the analytical experience. If my book is different from other introductions, this may be due to this experience. Here we see why Lacan often uses the term of “experience” to describe psychoanalytical clinic. Psychoanalysis does not aim any conquest of the unconscious by the consciousness. It is not a practice that tries to tell patients what “means” their unconscious, but to let them *experience* their own divided subjectivity in the middle of the unconscious. As Lacan said in his seminar on *Transference*, even at the end of the analysis, we can conceive that there remains an unconscious reservation, but

It is not after all a raw unconscious, it is a flexible unconscious, an unconscious plus the experience of this unconscious. (S8:221)

It is such an “experience of the unconscious” that psychoanalysis provides an analysand, an experience where a subject learns how to play on her/his own unconscious, like a musical instrument that s/he knows how to play. I hope from the bottom of my heart that your association may give you an occasion for the very experience that only psychoanalysis can provide you.