

Intervention  
Provocation  
Transference  
Sexuality  
Philosophy  
793s

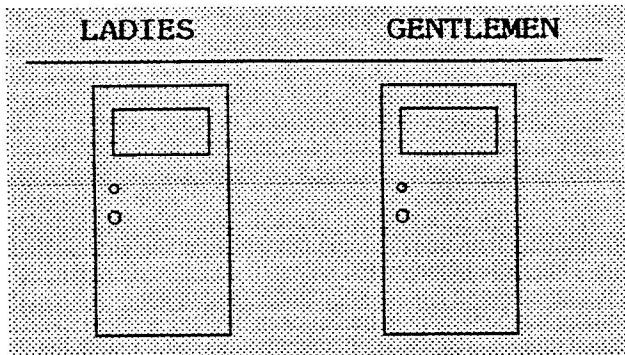
David Metz

## Writing

In reflection, the subaltern Sagan<sup>1</sup> signifies the signifier "Lacan" as his wild almost equi-nominal Gray does the picture<sup>2</sup>. This is to be read literally, the signifier "self" stands already always for a picture, an image -- in other words, in a signifying chain. Of course, if this text mentions Dorion Sagan at all it is only because of the split within its author, at least a part of which has an imaginary identification with Mr. Sagan. It is, after all, the current author who is subaltern, and signifies "Lacan."

## Logos--Lacan--Cancan

1) The analyst/priest's position is ambiguous. We are familiar with the diagram here.<sup>3</sup> But we must recognize that the labels might equally be "logos/silence or idle chatter"<sup>4</sup> And here we must ask which door the analyst -- the symbolic father, phallus evident -- enters, even our male colleagues the women analysts.<sup>5</sup> Lacan in practice (in his *analytic practice*) represents the given *logos*, and yet remains silent -- or if he speaks, it is idle gossip. Just this silence speaks the woman, and she speaks *cancan*. Lacan must stand between these doors, his nam(e/ing) starting out with the 'L' of *logos*, but ending in silent scandal.



Why? The Lcs must speak itself, analyst can't speak it.

Psychoanalysis is an intervention. In Lacanian analysis, as we know, the analyst occupies for the analysand the position of the symbolic father, the "subject supposed to know." He functions to bring the patient in conformity with the "law of the father," that is, the law of signification. Hence we may write that

Q) Are these in fact equivalent?

<sup>1</sup>The etymology of this name is here worth pursuing, and is not insignificant.

<sup>2</sup>Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray, 1891.

<sup>3</sup>Jacques Lacan, "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud," in Écrits, p.151.

<sup>4</sup>Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, p.22 -- This idle chatter perhaps named, in French, *cancan* (Tittle-tattle, scandal).

<sup>5</sup>Irigaray, p.24.

psychoanalysis is inherently reactionary. It would be foolish, however, to reject psychoanalysis for only this reason, or out of a naïve volunteerist illusion about political action. Of course psychoanalysis is reactionary, as we all are whenever we open our mouths, or ink our pens -- every time, in fact, we (up)hold and (en)force dad's law.

So the real question is 1) Is it more ~~reactionary~~ than not? 2) Are there alternative practices which are less reactionary?

We may also write, with Irigaray whether she writes this or not, that analysis is incest -- or, what amounts to the same thing, its prohibition. "[T]his implies about his desire [the 'his' is 'the father', but we may as well say it is Lacan, the father of us all] -- he seems to get more sexual satisfaction from making laws than love. . . Her duty [the analysand, who is, of course, a daughter] would be to sustain with her desire the enticing delusion of a legislative discourse, of a legal text that would state, among other things that the father has no desire for her."<sup>6</sup> What psychoanalysis hence demands is precisely that the analysand give into the sexual wishes of the father/analyst -- to make these wishes her own desire; this is clear enough.

#### **What does Lacan want? or (I can't get no) Satisfaction**

We all know that psychoanalysis is an intervention, even in the case of Lacan with his manifest symptoms of counter-transference. We could say that Lacan wants to be Freud, but we would be lying; really he wants the absent term of desire, the phallus, which Freud in our common conceit occupies. Lacan wants to (ful)fill the desire of the analysand for a subject supposed to know an objective, Platonic as it were -- Socratic, perhaps -- truth: the known truth of the subject, which does not leave its surgical scars on the analysand. Here is the slip where all is revealed,

The value of Freud's texts on this matter, in which he is breaking new ground, is that like a good archaeologist, he leaves the work of the dig in place -- so that, even if it is incomplete, we are able to discover what the excavated objects mean.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Irigaray, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup>Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p.182.

Nonsense, we may say; *cancan!* -- now and again it is advisable to say things very clearly.<sup>8</sup> An archeologist may indeed put something back in this mud where s/he has been shovelling, but it is never the same thing s/he has dug out; at most an object is buried which is replete with the trace of the open air -- more often the object is a complete forgery, a subterfuge for future paleontology. Surely yes! -- a science of archeology camps may be possible, but it must not be confused, as Lacan does, with the science of history.

This may be a good criticism, but it needs further development.  
The passage that you refer to is about F's analysis of Feminine Sexuality and Desire. The perversion of voyeurism I have done his reading impose on the analysis and  
Some of us write our names with a pen, others with an erasure. We feigned two doors above; but it is more accurate to say that there is only one door -- and some of us shivering on the outside (*The outsidesex*). Desire is that which does not admit of satisfaction, but some of us in our conceit write this: Phallus/self (S/s). That portion of demand not satisfied is given this name, 'Phallus'; to demand in general we must understand a reflection. "If the desire of the mother is the phallus, then the child wishes [or 'demands', as it were] to be the phallus so as to satisfy this desire."<sup>9</sup> We may either meet this demand by writing the signifi(c)ant self below, or not. This written form is a deceit, of course; the mother's desire cannot be satisfied. But the woman commits an equal deceit; she makes no mark of 'self' below the line, but she equally supposes the satisfaction of desire in the sexual relation. "[P]hallicism is the one thing in the world most equally shared between the sexes."<sup>10</sup>

We must say that the object of desire is a fiction, as, of course, is the self which is its reflection. This object of desire is a place holder -- a signifier which is fully material -- for a mere absence. Only presences speak the truth of the unconscious, only the material fetishistic props of an unspeakable desire. In this sense may we speak of the "primacy" of the signifier.

→ This needs further explanation. Point: Obj of desire's

<sup>8</sup> Irigaray, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Lacan, *Feminine Sexuality*, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> *Feminine Sexuality*, p. 125.

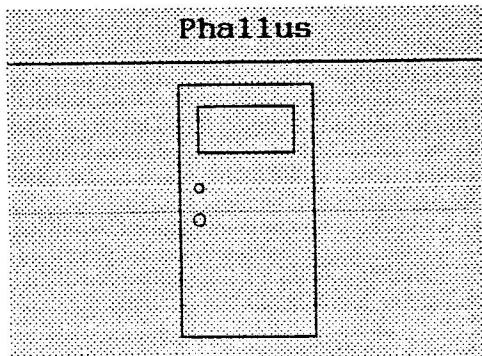
a fiction because it is "to be, needs  
of M's desire" which is a) impossible  
since she wants the phallus  
b) unachievable since in law  
forbids it. (3)

*30/2*  
*X*

What of the psychical origins, the genealogy, of desire, or even of its possibility. Lacan parallels Kant in his concern for the conditions of the possibility of an object; but for Lacan we start with the object of desire, where for Kant we had an object of knowledge. In either case we must centrally understand that an object is not merely given to us, but is constructed out of the conditions of subjectivity in general. The object of desire, we discover in clinical practice, is constructed out of the failure of satisfaction; and this failure is carried by every object. The pre-subjective breast is only an object in its absence -- and it is still missing when we get around to constructing other objects. But this is not enough for sexuality -- for we must also name what is "specific about the threat of phallic castration.<sup>11</sup>"

*Before this  
child  
a family  
has  
1) Need  
2) Demand  
for love  
not  
sexuality  
viz  
hetero-  
sexual,  
Desire!  
Need  
symbolic  
divisi  
bet of  
+ Pto  
Set this.*

What is needed for sexuality? I cannot quite understand this answer: a third *something*, the paternal principle, a symbolic presence of the object of the mother's desire, the giver of prohibition, the phallus. Ultimately sexuality is only an arbitrary identification either with this *something/principle/presence* or with its absence/negation. If this principle is sometimes called the phallus we must understand that the biological member only stands in this position arbitrarily<sup>12</sup>. What doesn't the mother have? This question demands an answer, but it little matters what answer is given -- the division of human subjects is supplied by any answer when its presence in the self is questioned.



Lacan has given no answer. Of course he is right, and Kant wrong, that only a shivered<sup>13</sup> subject stands anywhere -- but the question remains of why some of us go inside this door while others remain outside, and of why with such

<sup>11</sup> Feminine Sexuality, Mitchell introduction, p.19.

<sup>12</sup> Or arboreally perhaps -- with reference to Saussure's famous diagram (cf. Ecrits, p.151, or F. Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, The Philosophical Library, New York, 1959 (1915), p.65-67).

<sup>13</sup> In the second dictionary sense, of course (OED v.S p.717, Compact Edition, p.2792).

relative consistency, however hesitant, the genitilia determine our location. Why do not all of us remain outside? Or all go inside? We could answer, with object-relations theory, that this determination is secondary and imposed only after castration anxiety. We may agree with Lacan that the choices -- in or out, phallus or no phallus -- are quite fundamental; but Lacan seems not to explain why it is "just us gentlemen" in here. Apparently, psychoanalysis may say what a woman is (or is not, anyway), but not who is a woman -- except, of course, as a reactionary prop for the established discourse.

→ Answer: It isn't - There can be phallic ♀ too!

#### A rejoinder

Whatever we say about who enters the above door, only those who do so speak. This is why "feminine sexuality" is so very difficult -- only when we enter do we enter into signifying chains. Women speak, but when they do it is only as men, or vicariously. But since it is women who are mothers, it is men who are their contraries. It may be arbitrary who winds up on which side of signification, but dear old mom must remain on the outside. This is precisely the crisis in castration anxiety -- we realize that our mother, lacking the phallus, cannot speak except vicariously through the law of the father.

→ It is unclear whether you are supporting or critiquing Lacan here - As a result it is a disappoointing conclusion to your paper

You raise some good questions for Lacan  
however some of them have answers! And  
your paper lacks a critical conclusion.

AB