

## Psychoanalysis in Crisis. The Antagonisms of Impossible Non-Relations

*El psicoanálisis en crisis. Los antagonismos de las no relaciones imposibles*

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### Abstract

This essay proposes a reading of psychoanalytic development through crisis. It will be argued that various crisis within and outside of the psychoanalytic field had a determining and constituting role in theoretical and clinical development. The disavowed historical antagonisms that are inherent to psychoanalysis and helped advance psychoanalytic theory, equally created further schisms, perpetuating dialectic of resistance-criticism-revision that maintains the radical potential of the theory and at the same time the destructive other side. The non-relation between particular theories of psychoanalysis and philosophy will be placed in the context of the dialectic that fosters this antagonistic relation, formulating new views and theoretical postulates and equally, the potential for destruction of the radical idea.

**Keywords:** crisis, conflictual theory, Lacan, Freud, Marx, dialectics, failure, psychoanalytic theory, clinic.

### Resumen

El presente ensayo propone una lectura del desarrollo del psicoanálisis a través de la crisis. Se argumentará que diversas crisis, dentro y fuera del campo psicoanalítico, han jugado un papel constitutivo y determinante en su desarrollo teórico y crítico. Los antagonismos históricos repudiados, que son inherentes y han ayudado al avance la teoría psicoanalítica, han dado pie a nuevos cismas, perpetuando la dialéctica: resistencia–crítica–revisión que, por una parte, mantiene el potencial radical de la teoría y, por otra, su carácter destructivo. El desencuentro



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entre las teorías específicas del psicoanálisis y la filosofía se ubicará en el contexto de la dialéctica, propiciadora de dicha relación antagonica, formulando nuevas visiones y postulados teóricos y, al tiempo, la potencialidad de la destrucción de la idea radical.

**Palabras clave:** crisis, teoría conflictual, Lacan, Freud, Marx, dialéctica, fracaso, teoría psicoanalítica, clínica.

## 1. Introduction

Psychoanalysis is in crisis. It has been since its very conception. We might say, to a certain extent; psychoanalysis is a crisis. Relying on the critical text by Althusser, “On Marx and Freud”, as a philosophical bridge would help re-examine the ambiguous relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy. The argumentation of this article relies heavily on the ideas developed by Mladen Dolar in his text ‘*Kratki Kurz iz zgodovine lacanovstva*’<sup>1</sup>, A short course on the history of lacanianism (1983). Taking into account that the psychoanalysis envisioned by Freud is a conflictual theory and its very articulation creates antagonisms, resistances and attacks from the outside, which through the dialectic of resistance-criticism-revision (Althusser, 1991) gets internalised and perpetuated internally. This incessant and self-perpetuating antagonism within psychoanalysis might be one way to approach another persisting difficulty; the encounter of philosophy with psychoanalysis.

The difficulty is not simply within the relationship or non-relationship between the broader field of philosophy and psychoanalysis but rather the multiplicity of disciplines and positions operating within those two fields. Philosophers using psychoanalytic theory (and are criticised for it), philosophers critical of psychoanalysis (who feel that such theoretical undertakings are unproductive), psychoanalysts of the clinic (interested in the advancement of “pure” psychoanalysis), psychoanalysts that practice and use philosophy and psychoanalysis interchangeably as a way to advance theory and practice (and are criticised for the same reasons as above). The aim is not to determine which of these positions or frames of thought are “useful” or productive and which are less fruitful or “harmful” to the theory or practice. The problem was discussed at various times with attempts to elucidate some of the complexities and challenges of philosophy-psychoanalysis relationship. Perhaps a good starting point is an admission that psychoanalysis did happen. It happened to philosophy, “which the latter cannot ignore nor pretend that nothing happened there that concerns it” (Hamza & Ruda, 2019, p. 437).

Psychoanalysis is like a stain that remains, a troubling excess that cannot be articulated neatly and placed into already-existing theoretical notions. The task at hand is an ongoing experiment of encounters between two antagonistic disciplines. Without any pre-established aim or idea of the outcome. With a spirit of co-creativity, and a genuine desire to listen. The

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<sup>1</sup> The references to this work are translations made by the author of the research article.



modest focus of this paper is to approach critically the inherent gaps and inconsistencies, historically disavowed instances of psychoanalytic theory and practice. Psychoanalysis is loaded with historically produced and maintained symptoms, excesses and power struggles, which the psychoanalytic community will need to address.

## 2. A brief history of psychoanalysis

To situate this question in a historical continuum and have a better grasp of our current predicament, it would be helpful to look back at the very start and the conception of psychoanalytic thought. More concretely, to locate the theory within the antagonisms and crisis that gave psychoanalysis its articulation. Freud's discovery and positioning of psychoanalysis as theory and practice occupy a particular space that cannot be reduced to any of the classic sciences. To put it in Lacan's words:

Psychoanalysis can't be reduced neither to neurobiology, neither to medicine, nor pedagogy, psychology or sociology... However, all these different fields gave the decisive turn (*un flexion decisive*), and it is from all these fields that psychoanalysis must draw its information. Hence, the institute, far from isolating the psychoanalytic thought into the enclosure of the doctrine, will make the host and welcome every confrontation with related disciplines. (Dolar, 1983, p. 48)

Lacan was aware of the persistent attempts to locate and associate psychoanalytic thinking in a broader scientific context, either to medicine, psychology or other humanistic fields, in order to subject psychoanalysis to revisionism and neutralise, water down the radical idea itself. When Lacan took on the presidency of Société psychanalytique de Paris (SPP) in 1953, replacing Sach Nacht - who took over the institute which would be in charge of the formation of the analysts - he wrote the proposition for the new program that took on a different turn, opposite to his predecessor who located psychoanalysis in a strictly scientific neurobiological discipline. Lacan's critique was directed precisely at this historical tendency to neutralise Freud's radical ideas, reducing them to particular sets of less threatening theories. Equally, he suggested that various disciplines influenced by psychoanalysis derive certain information from it, which does not make psychoanalysis superior but rather the opposite. He proposed a form of relationality, a meeting of theories and practices. This process of relationality between psychoanalysis and other disciplines should not be interpreted as a balanced or collaborative project with a joint mission to establish a new *Weltanschauung* nor necessarily a constructive exchange. The encounter can very well be extremely destructive. What Lacan is suggesting and what is at stake in this exchange is precisely the confrontation with the outside, the spontaneous encounters which is the only guarantor for the possibility of what Badiou calls the truth procedure (2005).

These antagonisms and the crises inherent to the psychoanalytic idea go further into the turbulent past, possibly to the very beginning of psychoanalysis as such. It is not a coincidence

that Freud's invention; the theory, gave birth to the crisis as the other side of the radical idea. The theory was met with resistance and criticisms, outright aggressive negation and attempts at annexation and revision. There are a few aspects to this situation that need to be considered. One is the Althusserian dialectic of resistance-criticism-revision. Freudian theory of the unconscious admittedly something 'true', hence dangerous, by its very articulation triggers the process of annexation in the worse case and revision at its best. The continuous dialectical cycle produced has the following logic, in Althusser's words; "the adversary always ends up by penetrating it and producing a revisionism that provokes internal counterattacks and, finally, splits (scissions). A conflictual science, Freudian theory is also a 'scissional science' and its history is marked by incessantly recurring splits" (Althusser, 1991, p. 19).

The second aspect is the question of knowledge and power related to it. The need to preserve knowledge and the power was the inevitable consequence of continuous attacks from the outside. Early on this was a concern for Freud and his circle of followers. The first suggestion came from Ernst Jones to establish a secret committee that would function as a keeper of knowledge. In 1913 the committee was established with Ernst Jones as the chairman and other members, close followers of Freud, Sándor Ferenczi, Otto Rank, Hans Sachs, and Karl Abraham. Later another member joined the group Max Eitington. The first attempt to protect and divulge the psychoanalytic thought was indeed a foundation of a secret society. We could say that the question of power and control was at the very centre of psychoanalysis from the very beginning, a constitutive part of the theory and the psychoanalytic institution. The committee founders saw themselves as the keepers of the secret, tasked with protecting its origin and purity. Making sure that it would not fall into wrong hands of foreign reactionary forces, or suspicious entities, that might spoil the original idea.

Operating as sacred members of the secret sect would, elaborating on the theory and subtle messages of the texts (Dolar, 1983, p. 41). To secure the secret alliance, Freud gifted all the members a golden ring with greek inscriptions. It was a symbolic act that registered belonging and the status of members, testifying to their purity of thought and the mission they were entrusted with. The committee dissolved in 1924, ten years after its constitution in 1913. The same year was reestablished by Anna Freud after Rank's dispute with Ferenczi. In 1924 Abraham died, followed by Ferenczi in 1933, which marked the final dissolution of the committee. The reasons for dissolution and periods of difficulties were various - of internal and external origin - however, these antagonisms point to the precarious relationship between power and knowledge at the core and the need to protect it. The first group fell apart, partly because Freud outlived most of the members that were supposed to carry on his teachings, but equally, the internal tension and disagreements started to grow. Theoretical postulates were becoming ever more diversified, and many members were unable to find common ground. Soon the purity of the theory was not threatened from the outside; the threat was real within. The ring was no longer a guarantee of the possession of the truth as it perhaps was at the beginning. The symbolic gesture located in the physical ring that Freud generously gifted to the few chosen members worked on the imaginary level, identifying the members with

the sacred truth, and imbuing them with the possession of mystical and spiritual knowledge (power). This could have been partly the reason for the beginning of the break, namely, losing sight of the importance of theory itself, relying purely on magical apparatus that gave them the security, that they belong.

The second way Freud tried to protect his teachings was by establishing an international institution, the *International Psychoanalytic Association* (IPA). The idea came to form Sandor Ferenczi at the second psychoanalytic congress in Nuremberg. Today in 2023, IPA counts more than 13.000 members in 67 countries and more than 2.000 cities worldwide, this year it will organise its 53rd congress. There has been a significant growth of the association since Freud, and the seeming success of psychoanalytic thought and its institution did little to counter the original problem of psychoanalytic practice and its theory. The overwhelming success might have to an extent impeded the resolution of the question of the authorisation of the psychoanalyst. The institution started to vouch for the adequacy and desire of the analyst. In other words, it assumed the position of the big Other, assuming the responsibility and the right that should have been on the side of the analyst in question. By occupying the other-suppose-to-know position, the institution spoke from a place that by definition cannot be the locus of the truth. The paradoxical character of psychoanalysis and the reason why it caused so much resistance, attacks and attempts at revisionism, - apart from the revolutionary theoretical discovery - lies precisely in this lack of structure and scientific procedures that seemed to be organising the 'traditional' scientific fields such as medicine. There were no strict rules, guidelines who could conduct psychoanalysis and no ethical committees and regulations. Such rules and regulations that exist today in modern practice, might have contributed to the institutionalisation neutralising the radical potential of psychoanalysis.

It is well known that Freud allowed some members to practice even though they were never analysed. For Freud at the time, the successful outcome of an analysis with patients was sufficient. At this point, a question arises about the meaning of success in analysis. What does it mean when we say that the analysis was successful? What are the measurements that determine success and finally, success according to whom? Since the establishment of the practice of psychoanalysis, a prerequisite for each psychoanalyst was that they needed to be analysed. Which brings forward another question, if each analyst needs to be analysed himself, then who created the first analyst? If we accept that self-analysis is not possible, there is always the need for another to initiate the process, someone that 'supposedly knows'. Reading through '*The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*' (Freud, 1995), it would seem that Freud found his analyst in Fliess, he ascribed the position of the-other-suppose-to-know to his friend and colleague - albeit Fliess consciously never took on this job - which meant that unwittingly, Fliess was part of the articulation of the psychoanalytic theory. So in this sense, it was Fliess that facilitated Freud's thinking that eventually led to the formation of the psychoanalytic theory. Whether Fliess was apt to occupy such a position



or not is questionable (his theoretical postulations were dubious), yet that was irrelevant to Freud's truth procedure. "The truth effect needed this illusion for it to be constituted" (Dolar, 1983, p. 59).

The truth emerges out of an error, or failure, as Lacan suggested in the seminar *Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-1954*. "In analysis, truth emerges in the most clearcut representative of the mistake - the slip, the action which one, improperly, calls *manquée* [missed, failed, abortive]" (Lacan, 1991, p. 265). The psychoanalytic process can be seen as an ongoing series of failures, and mistakes that cannot be anticipated or regulated, failure will persist and point to the unconscious. This procedure has almost nothing to do with the analyst, as the knowledge is on the side of the analysand and it has very little to do with the analyst's particular orientation and understanding of the analytic process. As Freud's case portrays, Fliess the analyst was truly lacking in a radical sense, he was not even aware of the process that was taking place between himself and Freud. In this sense the problem is twofold, not only is the practice based on failures and internal antagonisms - which for a traditional science might be challenging to accept - but equally, the knowledge on which it relies does not come from the so called 'expert', but rather from the subject, patient, the-one-that-supposedly-does-not-know. This impossibility could be the locus and the core of what can be defined as a conflictual theory, as suggested by Althusser, and why it might provoke such perpetuating resistance and internal and external attacks as is the case for Marxist and psychoanalytic theory. It could be argued that the particular case of conflictual or conflicting theory has another logic located in mechanism of the '*negative capability*' initially formulated by John Keats in a letter to his brothers, George and Thomas, on 22 December 1817 (Keats, 2012, p. 277). While Keats considered this particular capability or sensitivity in relation to artists such as Shakespeare, suggesting that these artists possess the ability to tolerate uncertainty and doubt. Bion later took the notion of the negative capability and developed it further. He connected it to the situation often encountered in psychoanalysis, namely the ability to tolerate the pain of not knowing and resisting the comfort that theory might offer in such moments, allowing the uncertainty itself to exist (Bion, 2001). In some sense, what artists and psychoanalysts have in common might be the ability to hold two opposing, contradicting ideas, allowing for the possibility of some third reality to emerge.

It seems that what defines such a theory is the ability to hold seemingly incompatible positions, tolerating the tension and not allowing it to collapse into either side. This is the rare point where psychoanalysis can be extremely 'successful'. For the mechanism of the labour of the negative to work so to speak, the process requires a particular condition. Strict regulations, rules and codes of conduct might not affect it favourably. Lacan was very aware of this and his whole oeuvre was an attempt to not only return to Freud, in other words, to just reread Freud but perhaps even more importantly, reestablish the conditions that would make this rereading possible and Freud's teachings developed further.

The decisive moment for Lacan and the evolution of psychoanalytic theory was marked by the first crisis, the schism that brought to the foundation of the *Ecole Francaise de psychanalyse*,

later to be named *Ecole freudienne de Paris* (EFP) and the renunciation of the international recognition (regulation) of IPA. The direction and task set out for the new organisation are perhaps most clearly expressed in the well-known beginning of the *Founding Act* of 1964:

I intend this title to present the body where a work is to be accomplished - which, in the field Freud has opened up, restores the cutting ploughshare of its truth - which brings the original praxis that he instituted under the name psychoanalysis back to the duty that is incumbent on it in our world - which, by an assiduous criticism, exposes the deviations and compromises that deaden its progress by degrading its use. (Lacan, 1964, p. 1)

### 3. A brief history of Lacanianism

Perhaps the most noted example was Lacan's position on the question of didactic analysis and his short sessions, 'variable length session' which incidentally caused the first of the many internal crises the psychoanalytic community encountered and needed to work through. There was a historical question that persisted, that of the formation of the analyst. The urgency involved defining the didactic analysis and the procedure, a ritual that would determine the analyst in formation. This differentiation and proposition of the didactic analysis presuppose that there is a difference between analysis and didactic analysis, equally the set of rules defining the length and frequency of this ritual that analysts in training were supposed to submit to. The question arises when we consider the procedure of analysis, the strictly prescribed rules about the ways this analysis should unfold, and how this connects to the guarantee that the analysis was satisfactory. Are rules in themselves a guarantee, and if so, how can the rules deal with the reality that the didactic analysis is aiming at? To these conundrums and practical complications, Lacan offered an elegant solution, namely, he postulated that every analysis is a didactic analysis. Psychoanalysis as such is always already didactic. There is no special technique or process that would define this other kind of analysis. For Lacan, the analysis ends when the analysand becomes an analyst. Whether he decides to practice or not is their responsibility and decision. The school is not implicated in this decision. "Lacan claimed that the analysis has an end, it is not an endless process that always leads to the production of new connections and signifiers, it has its end and that is precisely the pass, the passage from psych-analysand to a psychoanalyst" (Dolar, 1983, p. 53). The question that presents itself is why the institution found Lacan so disturbing, while on one hand the critique of the short sessions was used to discredit Lacan, isolate and limit him to theoretical work, away from the praxis, on the other hand, it points to the real risk, not the psychoanalytic theory and practice as such, but to the hegemony, the ultimate authority of IPA. Persistent attacks on Lacan from the inside and outside, prohibition of the short session frame, the endless debates about the didactic analysis, and emphasis on rules uncover a greater fear and concern. What was the institution afraid of? If strict rules are not followed, if analysis nevertheless continues to 'work', despite variable frames, it might suggest that psychoanalysis does not need an

institutionalised power structure, and that it can function without the big Other imposing the rules and regulations. What IPA effectively stands for is the desire of the master, which invariably comes to one desire only, to accumulate the power (knowledge) with a mystified and sacred status.

The second problem related to the question of the analyst in formation, as well as the first problem was the status of qualification or authorisation of the psychoanalyst. The well-regulated psychoanalytic community had a clear protocol and centralised power in the form of IPA that set out standards and conditions that applied to analysts in formation. In doing so, the central power, the knowledge bearer took on the responsibility for the decision of who is the new member of the club, to some extent perpetuating the antagonism that was created with the first secret committee in 1913. Lacan's response to this power imbalance was in line with the first solution of didactic analysis, more problematic and radical in the eyes of the psychoanalytic authority. Although he never stipulated the question of authorisation in the '*founding act*', he mentioned it in passing in the internal document concerning the list of the members of the school. Later this principle appears in the '*Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School*'; "the psychoanalyst derives his authorisation only from himself" (Lacan, 1964, p. 1). The postulate was aiming toward redefinition or rethinking of the relation between the analyst and the institution, who is in the position to judge and announce the moment of authorisation. The question of the authorisation in the context of what Althusser developed in his dialectic and corresponds to the revisionism that inevitably neutralises the radical potential of the psychoanalytic theory. The organisations, regulations, diplomas and ethical commissions were one way of standardising and regulating the psychoanalytic field. Not just on the side of psychoanalysts but equally, regulating and influencing the experience of the analysand. Various regulating measures possibly did the most damage and contributed greatly to the annihilation of the psychoanalytic experience.

In a structure that is not rigidly regulated, where self-authorisation is the guiding principle, the school has nothing to say about one's motivation and desire to become an analyst. What is of interest to the school, however, is the structure of the psychoanalytic experience. It is the only productive component of the social bond that keeps the school together, like the invisible glue - Lacan once illustrated this effect with the play of words, 'L'ecole - colle' - meaning that the psychoanalytic experience must be translated, transmitted, theorised and even formulated to some extent. In the strict sense, undergoing a non-regulated formation is a much harder frustrating undertaking, than a well-formed, institutionalised training. In the case of the former, the analyst in question is expected to testify about his experience and produce knowledge that would serve as an advancement of the psychoanalytic theory, whereas in the latter, the analyst is not requested to do much more than repeat the knowledge that is passed to him, in that sense, perpetuating the university discourse. However, the crucial question of the desire remains open, namely, how does one 'decide' to become a psychoanalyst? It is not a question that can be answered once and for all, it is a process, a never-ending questioning of the desire itself, which is never settled and at home. Various problems with desire have been



discussed in length and particularly the one of the analyst. The general idea (idealisation) of the position of the analyst can very quickly fall into one of the socially constructed categories of helpers and healers that can be very soothing to the analyst himself. Today is no less so, modern-age heroes are sought and equally quickly found, even amongst the most skilled and experienced analysts. To return to the question of regulation and with that the regulation of the desire, psychoanalysis as an impossible profession cannot and should not have the same rules and guidelines as perhaps professions that are sometimes confused or linked to the practice. While Lacan and his 'liberalism' within the school certainly did not make things easier for the members (and the external psychoanalytic community), it did open up the question of desire and placed it in the highest regard, the most important link. Difficult and confounding notion such as liberalism is often linked to our conception of freedom within the confines of neoliberal capitalism, which allows us to freely enjoy our freedom to choose and re-invent ourselves as and when required. Lacan's use of the term might point to the other side of liberalism, which constitutes the radical un-freedom, in practice means gradual awareness of this constitutive lack of freedom and continuous questioning of the desire itself with the utmost rigour. The seeming paradox of the position of the analyst lies between the fact that nothing can define her - a particular technique, special knowledge, etc. - a part from the analysand that creates her role in that precise moment of the analysis. She is not an analyst when she is walking down the street or buying groceries when an analysand lies down on the couch - appears on the screen, in case of new online sessions mode - at that moment she becomes an analyst. The other paradoxical aspect is on the side of the analyst's desire. It has been conceptualised as the anti-narcissistic desire par excellence.

The radical component of the psychoanalytic theory is precisely in the desire which is not to say that eventually, there is a 'discovery' of the true desire that leads to complete identification, that guided by this desire the psychoanalysis itself will somehow be able to revolutionise the social field and make our existence in the society a much happier experience. Considering that humans at the basic level are narcissistic, in other words, guided by self-interest, these narcissistic tendencies will be transferred through desire almost inevitably. This concerns the image of the idealised psychoanalyst that supposedly should be an anti-narcissistic subject, which indeed is the image of the perfect other, the other with the knowledge. If we accept the postulate that the analyst's desire should be radically anti-narcissistic, that through the process of analysis, he is purified of the fantasies and self-gratifying drives, we disavow the very ideology that we claim to be destructive and alienating.

How to conceptualise the impasse posed by the desire and possibly move beyond it? Dolar makes a convincing argument for the dialectical reversal at stake with the *passé* and potentially offers an indication of how to move forward with the paradoxes of the analyst's desire. If we look for a similar dialectic that is at stake with Lacan's notion of the traversal of the fantasy, we could find it in Hegel's '*Absolute knowing*'. Albeit Lacan would only reluctantly admit the similarity between the *passé* and absolute knowing, the argument suggests that these two dialectical movements, seemingly endless, could evolve indefinitely, arguably have their

precise ending. It could be argued that the dialectical movement of knowing as a process can end only with the end of history or the end of life, the physical death. The ending in absolute knowing poses another paradox since the starting position indicates that absolute knowing, knowing everything, and reaching a point where no new knowledge is possible, is in fact impossible. However, the crucial aspect of this movement and the reason why the dialectics of knowing has its limitation and an end is within another impossibility, an antagonism between the knowledge and the truth. These two dimensions are inherently split, which cause numerous crises on many levels of knowing, to some extent drive the desire toward resolution of antagonisms and knowing is never really resolved. What might seem as the absolute knowing, where the subject finally managed to overcome all the internal and external antagonisms, and moved beyond the split is effectively something else entirely. This reading of absolute knowing would entail that the void was finally filled and that truth and knowledge coincide perfectly, leaving no gap behind. Logically what this movement would mean is the disappearance of the subject itself, since the lack experienced and the gap between knowing and the truth is the place of the subject. In other words; “The absolute knowing is nothing more than inconsistency reflected onto itself. The gap between the knowledge and the truth is the gap within the truth itself, the moving away and inconsistency perpetuated, is the thing in itself” (Dolar, 1983, p. 62). This reading of Hegel’s notion of absolute knowledge is far from an idealised positivistic happy end, on the contrary, it points to the subject’s destitution. This coincides with the depressing reality of the end of the analysis, not a relief and a better quality of life, but a brutal realisation of the depressive character that we tirelessly try to obfuscate. The mechanisms of disavowal, and denial can be useful as they keep us at least on some level oblivious to inherent and irreducible antagonisms, which through the process of analysis become only more painfully evident. The antagonisms don’t disappear. Equally, attempts at thinking the irreducible power struggle - that seems to be perpetuated through the very ambitious aim to get rid of it altogether - seems to come back in an even stronger form. The question of power - and the somewhat aporic attitude of the psychoanalytic community when it comes to taking the responsibility and examining the power relations that are inevitably perpetuated - continues to present a political dimension at the core of the psychoanalytic cause.

#### **4. The political dimension of psychoanalysis**

The question of psychoanalysis and power becomes even more complex when the third aspect enters the field. The relationship between psychoanalysis and politics. A singular moment in the history of psychoanalysis was the event of May 68’. It is possibly one of the rare moments when psychoanalysis directly influenced and helped shape a certain political landscape. Apart from the advent of the Frankfurt School in 1930, psychoanalysis was far from the socio-political discourse, let alone engaging in its very articulation. With such influence and force that psychoanalysis intervened in the events of May 68’, came the ever-present problem of the power related to knowledge. Despite the radical arguments that



psychoanalysis helped to produce, the fact that it shaped many leftist politics, or perhaps because of it, the question of institutionalisation and neutralisation of radical ideas was the necessary side effect. Thus started the first attempt at inserting psychoanalysis into the university curriculum, which sparked questioning whether that is possible (or desired?) and how this might affect the idea itself. Eventually, the department was established in a newly established university of Vincennes, the Lacanian department for psychoanalysis, led by Serge Leclaire and later in 1974 was taken over by Jacques-Alain Miller who introduced a more rigorous scientific frame (Dolar, 1983, p. 68). Miller was criticised heavily for attempting to establish psychoanalysis as an academic discipline and neglecting its practical side, the vital aspect of the theory itself. Once the clinical section was established in 1976, the criticisms continued, and Miller was reproached for developing psychoanalysis into mainstream practice and away from its original postulates. The inevitable tensions these transitions caused were also a mark of the end of psychoanalysis in some ways. Numerous events point to a radical change in the very idea and workings of psychoanalysis, internal and external crises that have been perpetuating the ever-growing antagonisms in the field. Psychoanalysis is in itself an antagonistic, conflictual theory, that deals with crisis, has been constituted by crisis, it absorbs antagonisms but equally, creates them internally. This system based on the accumulation of crisis as its basic mode of working, at some point equally needs to neutralise and resolve the building of tensions. The question arises as to whether at some point through this dialectical movement, the internalising of the antagonisms begins to overflow, as it were, a surplus-antagonism is created that becomes difficult to work through. Because nothing can guarantee the development of the theory and psychoanalytic praxis, it is in itself contingent and shaped by random occurrences within the society as well as the psychoanalytic community. The other side of this problem is capitalism and the adherence to market logic and mechanisms that inevitably require the disavowal or negation of inconsistencies and antagonisms inherent in the subject, in the unconscious. Albeit that in itself is an impossibility, the disavowed conflict or symptom will emerge elsewhere, the unconscious cannot be reshaped according to a more convenient social theory of an individual, no matter how much positive thinking one practices. The consequences of this tendency can be seen in many aspects of our social field. The capitalist mode of being has its grounding in the bourgeois ideology, implicating a subject that is conscious of himself, conscious of his needs and political position. In other words, he is aware of the dictations of the capitalist ideology and can fill his position within the given frame; “this subject-of-need is the ultimate and constitutive element of any society” (Althusser, 1991, p. 25). The numerous examples of crisis internal and external generated by the capitalist ideology had a determinate effect and point to yet again an obfuscation of the class struggle that is very much alive, its conflictual violence interpreted almost as a higher, superior form of engagement in this battle.

The long period of repetitions of the internal crisis within the lacanian psychoanalytic community culminated in the dissolution of the *École Freudienne de Paris* (EFP) in 1980. From this scission and definite split a new organisation emerged, founded by Jacques-Alain

Miller in 1992, named the *World Association of Psychoanalysis* (WAP). It could be said that for the first time, the change of direction and association is implicated in the name, namely the world association. It is no longer specific and appertaining to a particular place, it is a worldwide movement. Much could be said about this change and its implications, however, the particular interest at hand is related to further schisms within the newly established organisation and the political implication of this particular psychoanalytic direction. The association yet again reached a point of impossibility the crisis that was somewhat theoretical but equally personal, led to another split in 1998, only six years since its constitution. Two fields marked by two organisations that emerged from one were still the WAP led by Miller and *the International Forum of the Lacanian Field*, led by Colette Soler.

Lacanian organisations were increasingly worried about the popularisation of the psychoanalytic theory, its appropriation by other fields, most notably, certain philosophical traditions. As it was observed in the past, the intrusion from the outside by other ‘foreign’ forces was perceived as an existential threat to the field itself, hence the need to protect and secure the ‘pure’ clinical orientation was yet again at the forefront. It resulted in increased attacks on what can be called a ‘purely theoretical field’, the accusations of theoretical misuse and argumentation that the only ‘true’ lacanian position is the discourse of the analyst and the clinical position. This movement inadvertently started to shape a direct political position, although psychoanalysis as theory and practice was still considered above politics and the field as such would not engage on a political level, which constitutes a disavowal in itself since psychoanalysis deals with the social dimension directly, it is not a theory of the individual, it is not a practice that happens in the isolation of the clinic, far from the socio-economic dimensions of everyday life. When thinking about the possible articulations of the relations or rather, non-relations between various fields such as psychoanalysis and politics, this point should be taken seriously and literally. In line with Lacan, what was paradoxically formulated here could be interpreted as; there is no ‘pure’ psychoanalysis in the strict term, and equally, psychoanalysis is intrinsically social, critical and deals with society and culture as much as it analyses the subject that was formed in relation to these dimensions.

Hence, the ardent refusal to acknowledge these moments of meeting and intersecting of various disciplines, closing off the theoretical space that should be developed somehow in the isolation of the clinical setting, points to another symptomatic antagonism. As noted by Tupinambá, “it seems that from the standpoint of the lacanian field, nothing fruitful could come from any theoretical relation or exchange and its process for psychoanalytic theory and its development” (2019, p. 344). It might be worth suggesting that these antagonisms are not on the side of theoretical and clinical advancement, but it is purely political. It shows once again that the struggle between disciplines is the struggle for power, the accumulation and protection of knowledge that belongs to the ‘true’ heirs of the discipline.

Nevertheless, there are instances where the meeting of philosophy and psychoanalysis produced unique conditions for the articulation of the inherent necessity for the theory to be re-examined and constantly interrogated. The movement that was formed was faithful

to this idea, of habitual meeting and re-examination of the philosophical - Marxist and psychoanalytic theory, the same way that Marx himself claimed at the very start of the formation of Marxist thought. The theory is not a static set of ideas and rules that exists in the time-space continuum, but on the contrary, exists only at the specific time when it engages with the world, with the conditions and problems, including other theoretical frameworks. The movement composed of intellectuals appertaining to different traditions of thought and professional engagements, whether philosophers, psychoanalysts or a mixture of both, continued the tradition of critically engaging with the problems of their respective fields, seeking to overcome the limitations that inevitably occur in any discipline, as each theory is in itself lacking. Names such as Alain Badiou, Michel Pecheaux, Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, David-Pavón Cuellar, Slavoj Žižek, Alenka Zupančič, Mladen Dolar, Jelica Šumič Riha and many others, have constructed a theoretical basis that functions like a bridge between philosophical and psychoanalytic schools of thought and continues to do so. This group of intellectuals - engaged in a common task, each offering their interpretations and singular position in the common antagonism - is perhaps a clear example of what happens when two or more conflicting traditions meet. There are many instances where the members of this movement or the theoretical co-affluence itself faced attacks and accusations for revisionism and misappropriation of the lacanian theory. There was an impossibility, inability to remain impartial toward this particular formation and theoretical articulation. The question rises here as to why the lacanian establishment - or at least part of it - had such a violent response to this purely theoretical psychoanalysis. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the radical confrontation of a certain 'truth' produced and the fact that it happened outside the field 'pure' clinical psychoanalysis. "The painful truth was precisely in that the clinic is not a sacred holy grail that can be possessed and with it all the power and knowledge, as Alenka Zupančič made this painfully evident" (Hamza & Ruda, 2019, p. 436). Namely, the practitioners do not possess some kind of inherent superiority when it comes to the use of theory, the fact that one is a clinician in itself means very little, as Lacan himself stated on many occasions, there is no guarantee. The attacks and accusations from the clinical side toward the 'mere theorists', who are engaging in metaphysical musings and conceptual formulations seem to be depriving psychoanalysis of its true radical potential, of the only truth which is the real. The traumatic core of this event is precisely in the very real effects that some 'mere theories' from theorists had within the social and political construct, outside of the academic often isolated world. This points to the fact that theory itself can have very real effects and implications in the real, and that does not necessarily involve clinical reality.

So far, psychoanalysis as theory and practice was criticised, resisted, revised from within and by the outside forces. Sometimes involving only the narcissism of small differences and at others, more serious shifts and schisms were at stake. It has been fetishised, used only as a sort of fashion, accused of being an elitist practice (which at times certainly was and is), it was perpetuated in the university knowledge and reproduced ad infinitum without any real theoretical breakthrough and novelty. As it has been discussed in length, these mechanisms



are inherent part of the workings of the theory such as the conflictual theory of psychoanalysis and the articulation of the consequences will continue to pose challenging and necessary investigations.

## 5. Conclusion

Perhaps the question of the non-relation between psychoanalysis and philosophy will remain open, as creating any forced links and translations, inserting one set of theories into another, might result in the annihilation of any radical potential that might persist in psychoanalysis as well as in philosophy. Translation of ideas one into the other would lead to losing both psychoanalysis and philosophy. The collaboration or co-creation might be happening precisely at the point of antagonism, a point of impossibility, where the powerful disagreements remain unsolved, the most radical point might be the one that either sides cannot accept. When one is faced with an impossibility, a point that is incompatible with the frame of thinking or a notion that one is reluctant to accept - as sexuality might be for philosophy - it creates the non-relation that might generate a critical engagement. A non-relation that in retrospect could very well redefine respective fields. In the same way, certain psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic organisations which violently defend the position of "pure" analysis as the only way to truth, rejecting any connection or part in the political debate and action or philosophical implication of psychoanalytic theories. With this very notion, disavowing the inherent position of psychoanalysis within the socio-political space, hence acting out the political unconscious; that which was not consciously elaborated within the subject or the organisation and the field of thought. In the end, it comes to desire and the motivation that drives the perspective disciplines and questioning of the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy. What is behind the desire to think about the impossible relation between two antagonistic theories? Could it be a way to perpetuate the ending, without critically engaging with the disavowals on both sides? This is the question that remains open not simply to perpetuate the dialectic of absolute knowledge, nor the dialectic of resistance-criticism-revision, as these will inevitably be part of the working through, but more importantly, to re-constitute a space where such mechanisms could effectively take place for better (or worse).

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