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Domenico Cosenza

Fake interviews on Lacan: With Domenico Cosenza

Fake Matt Wolf – What generated your interest in psychoanalysis and Lacan in particular?

Real Domenico Cosenza – My interest in psychoanalysis started when I was a student of the Italian Liceo Classico, and my first encounter with the Lacan's text happened in my first degree in the University of Milan, my city, where I studied philosophy. In this period I wanted to do the university carrier of philosophy, and Lacan was for me in absolute the psychoanalyst that more was synthonised with the most important questions of the philosophic discourse. But my decisive meeting with the psychoanalysis happened at the moment to finish my degree in philosophy, when I lived the crisis of my project and decided to begin my first analysis. I started with an Italian analysand of Lacan, Carlo Viganò, in Milan, and 8 years after I began a second long tranche of analysis in Paris with Jacques-Alain Miller. There, I experimented that a real meeting with the analysis is ever a meeting with one's own symptom, it's not only an intellectual experience but an ethical and clinical experience. While I was doing my training in analysis, it became ever clearer for me that the most important force of attraction in Lacan was in the other side of its teaching that I couldn't appreciate enough before, when I was a student of philosophy: the clinical dimension and its force of orientation in the analytical practice. I found out that all the extraordinary knowledge and interest of Lacan for the other fields – as philosophy, literature, linguistic, anthropology, logic, mathematics, topology,... -wasn't a form of erudition or a new philosophy, but a way to take some elements in the other field of the knowledge as tools for clarifying the basis of the analytical experience.

Lacan deconstructed the analysand and analyst. Please explain these definitions according to Lacan in more detail.

Lacan's teaching is a constant effort to elucidate the fundamental basis of the psychoanalysis. The analytical session is the theatre of this operation. The word "analysand" is a real invention of Lacan. This invention was necessary in Lacan for distinguishing "analysand" and patient. An analysand isn't a patient. A patient is someone the has a symptom that produces in himself a pain and asks to a therapist (a medicine, a clinical psychologist,..) to care it. An analysand is someone that recognize to have an implication in the disaise that lives, and that is working in analysis on the enigma of his symptom. Lacan shows clearly that there isn't any analysis if there isn't a transformation from the position of the patient to the position of analysand. This change is named in Lacan "subjective rectification". When this change is produced, at the same time it's happened that the analyst has found his position in the analytic discourse: he isn't a therapeute that know and care a patient, but a force that causes and sustains the analytic work of the analysand. This change isn't obvious, and it's possible when in the session we experiment the activation of the analytic transference.

Why does Lacan name the analyst “a subject supposedly knows”?

This definition of the analyst is connected with the Lacan's theory of the transference, in particular with his most important and famous definition: the transference as subject supposed to know. When we chose an analyst, this choice is ever connected with some singular details that we think to find in the person of the analyst and that aren't understandable for the reason. It needs an analysis for isolating these details that are written in the unconscious of the analysand. But an essential condition for choosing an analyst is to suppose to him a knowledge on the enigmatising things of the desire. For this reason the analyst is supposed to know. But for Lacan the analyst is only the destinatary of the transference, the condition for putting the transference to work in analysis. In reality the source of the transference is in the unconscious of the analysand.

Lacan, like Freud before him, addressed the transference in a number of different ways through the development of his theoretical work. How Lacan defines transference, countertransference?

Lacan introduces a cut (coupure) in the analytic theory of the transference. He shows that this key-concept of the psychoanalysis is not reducible to the feelings experienced for the analysand to the person of the analyst. This affective dimension is the imaginary side of the transference, where all is played in a dual and specular relationship. The transference theory as subject supposed to know shows the structural dimension of the analytic transference, where the analyst is only someone who accompanies the analysand to open the door of his unconscious and to enter in this dimension. The real subject supposed to know isn't the analyst, but the unconscious of the analysand.

The countertransference is for Lacan a symptom of the analyst, a difficulty to maintain his symbolic position in the transference. Countertransference is something that every analyst experiences in his practice, and when it happens the person of the analyst remains trapped and identified in a point of the discourse of the analysand. This event produces in the analysis a stagnation of the work and a block of the analytical processing. For this reason is so important for an analyst his analysis and a regular control of his practice with other analysts.

To Lacan transference has symbolic and imaginary aspects. Please explain.

Transference is a process that exists in the human life, in the relationships between people, but in the analytical situation happens a specific transference, an artificial transference said Freud, where the analysand feels particular passions for the person of the analyst. Freud said also that transference is a form of love, an artificial love necessary for the analytical work. Transference is in the same time *Übertragung*, displacement, and Freud found out it in the mechanisms of the dream before to find it in the work with his hysteric patient Dora. In the analytic relationship the analysand put in the person of the analyst something that concerns his/her unconscious relationship with the Other. Lacan clarified this structure of the analytic transference, distinguishing the imaginary dimension and the symbolic dimension. In the imaginary dimension are concentrated all the nuances of the passions that the patient experiences for the figure of the analyst in a specular and dual relationship, that oscillates between love and hate. In the symbolic dimension of the transference we find the axis of the analytic process, where the analysand can find out the unconscious coordinates that guide his passions to the analyst, as a substitute that embodies its other fundamental in analysis. The imaginary dimension is focused on the dual and specular relationship between patient and analyst; the symbolic dimension introduces a third cardinal element: the relationship between the analysand and his unconscious. The unconscious of the analysand is the ground, the spring, the subjectum supposed to know of the analytic transference for Lacan.

How sexuality affects the mental states of people according to Lacan?

We can say that the unconscious same is sexual in its rith, in Freud et Lacan. In Lacan's advanced teaching the unconscious isn't reducible only to the language and to the signifier chain, as he taught before in his classic teaching in the '53 in the formula "the unconscious is structured as a language". The unconscious is drive, it's a specific libidinal economy, it's a way of *jouissance*. Psychoanalysis shows that sexuality is an enigmatic and singular dimension for the human being, irreducible to its biologic explanation that's universal. His analysis shows to the analysand his singular way of satisfaction in the field of the sexual desire. But in particular the analysis conduces the analysand to discover that 'the sexual relationship doesn't exist'. This famous sentence of Lacan means that it's impossible to do One with the Other, to be the same thing and to have the same experience of *jouissance* with our partner – illusion that it's the myth of the love in our tradition from Platon, and necessary mirage in every falling in love.

We can see ambiguity and paradox are fittingly used as narrative tropes in modern literature to examine the complexities of the psyche. Please explain.

Ambiguity and paradox are in the structure of the unconscious, in its logic of functioning. For this reason, at the same time, before Freud and after Lacan recognized that literature has the capacity to anticipate in artistic and intuitive form the psychoanalytic discoveries on the functioning of the human being. Freud saw Sofocle's Oedipus for elaborating his Oedipus complex, and Shakespeare and Dostoevsky (and may other writers) gave him very important ideas for elaborating key-points of psychoanalytic clinic. At the same time, for Lacan it was essential to read Edgar Allan Poe before and James Joyce after to clarify the structure of the unconscious. For this reason we shoudn't think the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature in a psychologistic perspective. The essential isn't to isolate in the texte the psychology of the autor. It's much more interesting to show in the texte of an artist the emergency of a new creation in its production than to reduce his work to his psychology. In this meaning it's more the literature that teaches to psychoanalysis than the other way round. More in general, there's an important affinity between the practice of literature and the analytical practice: both are, as said very well Jacques-Alain Miller, "an effort of poetry", a radical work of enunciation where is implicated the singularity of the writer and of the analysand.

To Lacan, both the analysand and the analyst are sick and need to be cured. Please explain.

I don't know if "sick" is the best way for expressing Lacan's idea on this point. It's sure that for Lacan the analyst isn't an ideal figure of therapist but he is the product of his analysis, he was before an analysand that worked or his symptomatic dimension that limited his life. It's a fundamental rule of analysis: for analyzing someone, it needs to have been before analysed for another analyst.

More in general, the condition of the human being is marked for the language, he is in the grip of language, and psychoanalysis works specifically on the symptomatic effects of the language in the body of the speaking being. Lacan arrived, in his last teaching, to define the language as a parasite in the body of the speaking being. In this perspective, he said that "everyone is crazy" in a certain way.

Bio:

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