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Après Coup: A Debate

Editorial Note

The response by Jamieson Webster e Marcus Coelen to one of our *12 Questions*—

Many philosophers are particularly interested in the thought of Jacques Lacan. What value or meaning do you attribute to the Lacanian après-coup?

Addressed to psychoanalysts and philosophers on the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy—raised the question of *après-coup*, one of the most overlooked, complex, and controversial of Freudian concepts, originally referred to as *Nachträglichkeit*. A concept for which no satisfying translation has ever been found in any language. A concept which has been revisited on psychoanalytic ground over the last decades by Jean Laplanche and more recently Sergio Benvenuto. The concept—as recouped by Jacques Lacan around the notion of *retroactivity*—revealed a critical theoretical potential capable of upsetting all of what has been constructed in psychoanalysis around the idea of a linear one-directional timeframe from the past to the future, and has proven to be crucial to the most relevant questions within psychoanalytic theorising. The history of *Nachträglichkeit*, as considered by diverse authors, shows how the very meaning of psychoanalysis is at stake.

By bringing to the forefront the question of *après-coup*, Webster and Coelen have reconstructed significant moments in the history, interpretations, and re-readings of the concept, concerning the role played by various authors after Freud. At the same time, they have opened the question on the reactions of the so-called psychoanalytic establishment with respect to this concept; in particular, they make a critical reference to an article on this topic by Jonathan House published in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* in 2018, with the subsequent publication of House's response and Webster and Coehlen's further reply, as well as Patricia Gherovici's clarification. As a result, we decided to open a special section on our website for the debate surrounding *après-coup*.

Taking advantage of this special section, we publish here a 1989 conversation on *Après-coup* between J.-B. Pontalis and Sergio Benvenuto.

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