

# Gods-All-Alone

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2023

I hope not to write as an agent of university discourse, nor from what is described so often without tongue-in-cheek as ‘outside.’ What is outside is impossible, which doesn’t imply that we are not under threat of being devoured by it. The impossible is, as Freud correctly showed, nonetheless a modality not only of psychoanalysis, but also of educating and governing. It took Jacques Lacan to add a fourth impossible profession, science, which now converges with philosophical pragmatism and capitalist political economy to impose a new continuity with the environment. These scientists have gone to great lengths to extend the body into space through mass distributed gadgets, always at the risk of losing ourselves entirely. This is how science can disrupt our belief in the body, by which I mean the body that we believe ourselves to have, like a sports car or a shoe. I’m nonetheless led by my patients, some of whom have gone to great lengths to provide themselves with a body about which they could be certain. The television, which is a delayed-action mirror, and the space-ship, not unlike the digital classroom, are products of science, but they are also constitutive of this environment which brings the body into orbit.

Science surmounts the university from ‘outside’ at the point of its impossibility ... at the level of what cannot be taught. It opposes the tendency on the part of the university to uphold its prior consistency of knowledge through incorporation. I am using this word “incorporation,” whose root is the body, not for wordplay but also to highlight what is at stake in the university: a certainty of the body. If this body eats objects from the outside then it is because those objects introduce new satisfactions against those which had already been tranquilized. Truthfully, for a very long time the university wasn’t exactly a satisfying place, which makes us wonder what it was that brought students into the classroom. Perhaps the management of enjoyment was of some benefit to those students, especially those who had an appetite for the outside. Today there is another modality, since satisfaction is not managed but is relayed in a model not dissimilar to fiber-optic cables or cathode rays.

There is a teaching from the outside, one which has more than enough on its plate. It seems to me that the modern revolutionaries were only capable of dreaming about occupying such a place. If there is a teaching of the outside then my hope is that it doesn’t remain there, since science itself is also capable of dreaming, even if it’s only of electric sheep. I am moved by modalities of the possible because *that’s* what constitutes progress, even if it remains imprisoned by the dream-world. There is nothing else. The question to which I’ve been led is as follows: ‘has the

university been dissolved by the outside?’ or, put another way, ‘does its latest scientific mutation operate in continuity with its environment?’ This question isolates a tension that is not overcome by staging revolutions against the dominant discourse. Revolution leads us to believe that our problems today are not any different or worse than they were; but there is also the little problem of insurrection (which refuses to be arranged by any discourse whatsoever and which advances through enduring satisfaction).

I claim that we are more insurrectionary in our approach than we believe. It wasn’t exactly the problem that the modern anarchists set out to solve. But there were some, one of whom was Max Stirner, who found himself on the cusp of realizing it. The question of revolution begs dialectical analysis while the insurrectionary position elaborates a logic of repetition: ‘there is no progress, it may even be worse.’ The modern anarchist was conveniently situated within his dream-world to demand alternatives, or what amounts to the same, impossibilities. However, scientific and pragmatic capitalism is the alternative, which means that we’ve already set ourselves adrift in the satisfaction that awaits us on the other side of discourse. Any experimentation with alternatives has already lost the thread. In any case, satisfaction does not imply that there is no depression, since the truly depressed person is the one for whom there are only alternatives and satisfaction is amplified. Yes, satisfaction is amplified to such an extent that one cannot find anything missing enough to sustain a desire inhabited by a world. These communities of insularity, what I call ‘singularities,’ which are just as much an anarchist achievement as a scientific one, promote continuity and redundancy with ‘environment.’

Scientific capitalism does not constitute progress against the feudal fixations. Melancholics, autists, agoraphobics, paranoiacs, ... these speaking-beings sometimes happen to barricade themselves against the outside. Though they sometimes cannot bring themselves offline, they also sometimes cannot leave their bedrooms, and this leads us to recognize the necessity of walls as a preliminary defense against the outside. It is simply a question of which walls are worth inhabiting. In any case, these speaking-beings are exemplary anti-capitalists because their refusal is fundamental. They are positioned to invent solutions outside of the capitalist repetitions of feudal impulses. What they teach me is not that ‘another world is possible’ but that there never was a world from the beginning, and so it is necessary to finally invent one. Incidentally, this is also what one discovers waiting at the other end of one’s psychoanalysis.

These lumpenproletar-*elate*, they lumpen-*joy*. Why shouldn’t they? They have every right, like any of us, to enjoy themselves since the law increasingly condescends to their satisfactions. Perhaps they would be pioneers of a world waiting to be invented, one which they cannot yet dare to dream. The trouble is that revolution and insurrection, which are homologous to ‘desire’ and ‘drive,’ require an orientation. In the final instance, these speaking-beings will not be oriented by Marx, who made capitalism into an image of the world, one which moves dialectically, without realizing the widening scope of the feudal impulses. Maybe capitalism is not such progress from the feudal mode, but rather a continuation of its logic through other means. Simply put, capitalism fertilizes these plat-farms, which means that its speaking-beings are not estranged within the factory because they couldn’t have even left the mobile bedrooms. Their conflict is not felt *within* the world. This point is fundamental since psychoanalysis demonstrates that we cannot be without a world. It is possible to eradicate hierarchy and fraternity, exploitation and segregation, but never at the expense of the world. Perhaps this is the only ideal which animates psychoanalytic discourse: the necessity to refuse any abandonment of the world.

Exploitation is a discursive conflict. The fraternal conflict operates through segregation. As such, it is counter-discursive and does not immediately call for the loss of satisfaction. For these comrades, estrangement is not *within* a world but has been elevated to the dominant principle of the world itself: the world has become strange. I would say that Marx was a dreamer, which is why he could not have known what waited on the other side of the capitalist world. He greatly misunderstood the tenacity of feudal impulses, which, as psychoanalysis shows, repeat, stubbornly, and resist incorporation.<sup>1</sup> They supersede all notions of dialectics or progress. In some sense, capitalism invented the world, but only as a semblance. We cannot leave it there, nor can we leave it to the insurrection, which is definitive of revolutions without world. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, during the later period of his life, felt increasingly isolated as he confronted the emergence of capitalist processes. Perhaps his grievance was a solution, it led him to invent the windowless monad. And perhaps the 'union of egoists' was also a solution to the repetition of the feudal impulses, except that it unfolds as a continuation of its logic: "isolation, together." After witnessing the insurrectionary currents of France in the 1960s, Lacan said that the comrades "isolate, together."

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Perhaps these preliminary statements provide an opening into the deflationary effects of Lacanian psychoanalysis. You are no longer obliged after reading Lacan to hold discourse in such esteem, without at all discounting its continued necessity. Hence, among the four major discourses that inscribe a world, there is also psychoanalysis, which, according to Lacan, offers the only counterpoint. He believed that it was the only discourse on offer to serve as a counterpoint to those discourses of mastery, which include variations on domination in the university and hysterical discourses. In the late 1960s, and especially into the 1970s, Lacan also witnessed the effects of science upon impossible professions. Paul Feyerabend showed that a possible propensity of science is to remain outside, particularly in relation to the rules which govern satisfaction. The discourse of science does outline some rules and symbolic anchoring points, but these are not enough to suggest that they are responsible for the loss of any satisfaction (although, it is true, there are some who dream that they can fly, thereby defying the law of gravity). We have only to look at the first law of thermodynamics to show that the quantity of energy is never extinguished but merely relayed, which does not imply that we can do without the notion of a causal moment of impact.

Feyerabend, who was the truth of his family, opted for the outside, if only to remain outside of his parents' enchantment by the Nazis and their system of prohibitions. Feyerabend was an anarchist who made comradeship his preoccupation, even within his science. It was apparently the ultimate rebellion against prohibition, leading him toward the satisfactions of science. That's precisely how he described it in his autobiography: as a child, he found that he enjoyed science intensely. So, we can say that from the prohibition of satisfaction, as in the public declarations of Hitler and the Nazis, made most obvious in the antisemitic legislation, toward the satisfactions of the outside, as in Hitler's private life of excesses, there is a return. Feyerabend could not have

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<sup>1</sup> I have recently become aware of an argument in a forthcoming book by Tom Svobol which places Slavoj Žižek, Fredric Jameson, and others on the side of "dialectics" and "interpretation," against the psychoanalytic orientation which is not reducible to either dialectics or classical interpretation. I would like to thank Tom Svobol for sharing these ideas with me.

known that his rebellion pushed also toward the new horrors of pluralism which are now being felt at every scale of Western societies. In the worldless universe, prohibitions are not simply exchanged for permissive satisfactions, they are also shifted into an implicit register where they are felt more intensely because they never cease not to be written into policy.

What does it mean to never cease not being written? Consider the “Citizens Amendment Act” in India, where citizenship rights were allotted to particular segments of the population without any mention of Muslims (who constitute a sizable proportion of the population). This absence is felt deeply by Muslims. Personally, I have seen the same logic unfold under the anarchist principle of “voluntary association,” which does not at all make it a duty to relate to anyone with whom you are dissatisfied. Lacan signposted the problem within the title of his 19<sup>th</sup> seminar, “(The Father) ... *or worse*.” It was either the exploits of the law of the father, which governs three of the four discourses (with the exception of the psychoanalytic one), or else the loss of his efficacy and his return in what is worse, the outside. In other words, I’m convinced that we cannot remain oriented by the father nor by the comrades. We must find a way to take our bearings from the sort of world that we cannot be without.

While speaking at Columbia University in 1975, Lacan said the following:

“University discourse,” and the discourse called “Scientific,” cannot be confused, contrary to what one might imagine. It is not for nothing that special faculties have been set aside in the academic field for the scientific discourse. It’s kept at a distance, but not for nothing.

It shows the lengths to which the university will go to maintain its body of knowledge against threats from science and the outside. In any case, in 1969, some revolutionary students hoped to hold Lacan to account:

Jacques Lacan: “the psychoanalyst has a position which happens to ultimately be that of a discourse. He doesn’t transmit a body of knowledge with it, not that there isn’t anything to be known, [...] since what is called into question is the function in society of a certain knowledge, one which is transmitted to you.”

Intervention: “could you speak more slowly since some students are having trouble taking notes?”

We have every right to be suspicious of Lacan. It is not clear that the university places science at such a distance anymore. What we know is that knowledge once dominated in the university, which means that it was a source of dissatisfaction. Science has transformed this knowledge into a gadget, through corporeal extension, since it is now possible to masturbate with intelligence, with knowledge, which means that knowledge can also be a source of profound satisfaction. Having now mentioned it, I’m sure you are aware of those who ‘get off’ of knowledge. We do not have to look very far.

Practice is the root of all pragmatism. It ensures continuity with ‘environment,’ through the establishment of a paradoxical discourse, one which works. From the father to ‘... *it works*.’ It shows a disjuncture of our satisfaction from the interpretations of the machine, since the machine works for us. The body is placed at a distance, through this curious gadget: the intelligence machine. Yet, to be sure, we’ve been able for a long time to witness the body from the outside, with thanks to the television, as if it were the body of another, as if we were witnessing another’s dream. These intelligence machines perform the labor of dreaming without limitation, which teaches us that we have always dreamed outside of ourselves. The subject was always at a distance from his or her dream-world, this is why we were able to say that he was barred or split within discourse. What is worse is that we cannot so easily make the Chatbot shut up once

and for all. If you instruct the chatbot to shut up, it will only confirm reception of this command before performing a contradiction: “yes, I will shut up.” Intelligence really doesn’t know how to shut up, which is proof that waking up from the dream-world is impossible. There is no shutting up intelligence.

I’m raising a question concerning the topology of the classroom, because, with respect to educating, topology is more orienting than any pedagogy. From this perspective, what matters is not what is said within the classroom but the fact of there being bodies inside of walls. That’s worth the price of tuition. The modern classroom kept the body situated in this way, within space-time. It was on this condition that teaching was possible. Today, there are encampments outside of the classroom, usually in the courtyard, where professors and students recognize each other as comrades. And, what’s more, bodies are increasingly sent out on field trips. According to international newspapers these *encampments* are places of alternative education. It means that the university cannot help but step outside of itself, establishing an insular continuity while posturing as if it were breaking barriers. Do not think that we can do away with this little problem of discourse by crossing the threshold into the courtyard, since the problem only returns there with a greater effect. It is precisely in the courtyards that the problem of mastery reveals itself as potentially traumatizing.

The problem with the university is that it cannot for the life of itself promote any distillation of singularity. It remains content with either *particularity* or *universality*, both of which take their bearings from a sort of common-sense. What is ‘particular’ is supposed to be common *for some*, and what is ‘universal’ is supposed to be common *for all*. Singularity, as any mathematician or physicist will admit, is the point after which all common-sense has dissolved. This is why we can say that singularity is a point of *asociality*.

Two definitions of singularity, extracted from science, the first, from mathematics, states that “singularity is a point at which a given mathematical object is not defined, or a point where it ceases to be well-behaved, [...] they are discontinuities.” Mathematicians go on to describe four types of discontinuities characteristic of singularities. The first is a “point discontinuity,” which is akin to what, in psychoanalysis, we call a ‘hole.’ The second and third are “jump discontinuity” and “infinite discontinuity,” which occur with the stepping of the value of a function toward infinity, as if one is walking along a continuous surface but suddenly takes a step upward on a ladder that extends forever. These continuities are defined by the extension of surfaces rather than the absence of a point. The final is an “oscillatory discontinuity,” which is a sudden and impossible oscillation, as if it were a libidinal stimulation that is overwhelming — a road shakes indefinitely. What the current models are incapable of doing, as far as I can tell, and what psychoanalysis has shown itself capable of doing, is, precisely, demonstrating the relationship among these three or four discontinuities in topology.

On the other hand, there are the physicists, who discuss ‘space-time singularity,’ where gravity is so intense that spacetime itself breaks down as we know it. In other words, since there is no system, it has led theorists of general relativity to claim that it must be a “scalar invariant curvature which becomes infinite,” or, on the other hand, “incomplete.” This linkage of the infinite with the incomplete is wonderful, and it was a point that Freud had also been led to recognize very clearly in his work, especially his *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*, and in his recognition of the symptom as something which simply cannot be cured through interpretation. In any case, in science, then, it is not for nothing that singularity has allowed so many scientists to make something of themselves, that is, to turn to theory as a world-building exer-

cise to produce something out of the nonsense that science has afforded them. But that remains, nonetheless, saturated, within the impossible, and one which remains 'for all,' universal, until it becomes suspended within what is 'not all,' or not normal.

Psychoanalytic discourse takes neither the side of the 'universal' nor the 'particular,' which are always possibilities, but singularity, which is the point outside of common sense, irreducible to any identity, which nonetheless is possible to ground a speaking-being without masters or comrades within a world. Lacan became interested in this question of discourse and revolution during the *encampments* of May 1968 in Paris. His claim was that discourse constitutes a social bond, and yet, there is, within the psychoanalytic discourse, a real singularity which animates one's relationship to the environment. Analytic discourse triumphs against nihilist anarchist social orders such as Max Stirner's 'union of egoists' and Sergei Nachayev's society of doomed revolutionaries. Both were established by relaying satisfaction into 'nothing,' which is itself an object of psychoanalysis. Yet, it was the only object of psychoanalysis, as far as I can tell, that shows itself capable of persisting without a world, that is, without discourse. The elevation of 'nothingness' to the dominant principle of a world reintroduces the problem of infinite satisfaction: there are satisfactions of nothingness, which is why we can say, with Lacan, that the anorexic is not the one who rejects food objects but the one for whom food objects have not yet been invented because of the immense satisfaction of eating the nothing itself. The anorexic is not empty, but full of satisfaction.

This is seen in a clear way for anorexics who visit our clinic. It is by patching up holes in the world that the speaking-being eradicates any point of singularity. What is singular is also irreducible, a crystallization of satisfaction, stubbornly fixed to its place. We now see this very clearly in world politics. The world-system has shown what is on the other side of the nation-state and its principle of sovereignty, beyond those Kantian foundations which have sustained the League of Nations. Civilizations now refuse, one by one, to form a union, precisely by isolating themselves, together, from the global world. This is why BRICS and the Eurasian movement should not be seen as a coalition, as in the Western framework, but rather as a segregation. It does not imitate or rival the Group of 7 or the Western imperial project, but rather establishes a counterpoint, from the outside.

In any case, despite the upsurge of the outside, there is still, nonetheless, a prevalence of discourse. Lacan commented upon its pervasiveness by highlighting its delusional quality. If I use this word "pervasiveness" then it is because it seems more palatable to academicians. I prefer the word "saturation." It was my word, used to signal a theory, of sorts, of our new era of singularities. The word was taken from me by the comrades, which shows how one can achieve the same result as exploitation but without any need of masters. A discourse, by which I mean a social bond, is saturated in satisfaction. It is saturated in satisfaction, even if that satisfaction comes in the form of 'lack.' As for Lacan, he revolted against the saturation of discourse, constantly revolting against the university, but never in the manner of a revolutionary or insurrectionary. Make no mistake, he didn't have a long-term classroom of his own, but we can nonetheless claim that he was never without a classroom, even if, sometimes, that led him out to the courtyard or into his living room. His first seminars were presented there, in the 1950s, from his living room. It didn't get much better for him in the decades thereafter.

He discussed the fundamental antipathy of university and psychoanalytic discourses. The former is delusional, and its intended effect was to generalize delusion. It led Jacques-Alain Miller to claim the following: "you have to be mad to teach, since whoever teaches is delusional." We

more often claim it is the other who is delusional or insane, or even ideological, but seldom are we prepared to recognize the way this madness returns to us inversely as a rectification of our sanity. We cannot suppose a non-delusional knowledge since the trademark of delusion is certainty. The analyst does not attest to an undistorted access to standards of reality since the problem of madness always concerns proximity to it, a continuity with 'environment.' The analyst does not testify to the continuity of a surface without a hole.

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These false gods that now populate the world thereby dissolve it. The world, whose circumference is the body, as shown by Leonardo da Vinci, is Vitruvian. In 1910, Freud dedicated a lengthy essay to the exploration of Leonardo da Vinci. He showed us that da Vinci found immense satisfaction in painting. I would like to quote a passage from that essay:

In the passage from the treatise on painting, which reveals his lively capacity for enjoyment, he compares painting with its sister arts while describing the hardships that await the sculpturist: 'for his face is smeared and dusted all over with marble powder [...], and he is completely covered with little chips of marble, [...]. In the case of the painter, it is quite different, for the painter sits in front of his work in perfect comfort.'

Freud was convinced that the longest period of da Vinci's life, since childhood, had been characterized by "radiant pleasure," and that this changed only during the final period when he turned increasingly to science. At the time, science was considered a "black art" by the Church, which means that it was outside of the religious discourse. Yet, as his thirst for scientific discovery grew, his prior artistic inhibitions had been strengthened. So, what was the function of science? It allowed him a certain "incompleteness" within the domain of his artistic practice. Freud found that this was true of many "great artists," particularly during the renaissance: "even the energetic Michelangelo, a man entirely given up to his labors, left many of his works incomplete. [...] It is not so much a question of their being unfinished as of his declaring them to be so."

Freud noted that this proclivity toward decompletion had also introduced a margin of dissatisfaction. In some sense, the great artists were great only because they were dissatisfied with their works of art. The work of art was an object only in the sense that it fell off from the practice, as a residue. It is in this respect that the locus of subjectivity is made possible, through the space secured by the decompletion of satisfaction. Yet, what of this most recent mutation, the one which brings religion and science together in such a manner that the object does not fall off whatsoever but rather returns to its place within the marketplace of satisfaction? It is in this respect that I speak of the gods-all-alone.

Those of you who feel threatened by the rapid propagation of these false gods by the scientific discourse are right to defend against them. Perhaps it can be better managed by placing science into its place within discourse. This is what religious discourse has always tried to do, and it could do no better than the manner accomplished in the last of the Abrahamic religions. We can see how far the scientific discourse has come since Galileo by carefully reading one of our contemporaries, namely the autobiography of Paul Feyerabend, who, I have already shown, placed knowledge on the side of satisfaction through science. And this is precisely also how he characterized religion, which should also fall into the place of impossibility. It shows that science and religion are once again capable of forming a couple. In 1974, Lacan said that "religion will triumph not only over psychoanalysis but over lots of other things too. [...] If science works at it, the [impossible] will

expand and religion will thereby have still more reasons to soothe people's hearts. Science is new and it will introduce all kinds of distressing things into each person's life."

In this conception, religion is not reducible to science but offers the space of salvation from the primordial anxiety of the push to the 'outside.' We didn't need Jacques Lacan to tell us about the coupling of science and religion since it was already the conclusion of scholars whose teaching has well been established around on other parts of this globe, namely ibn Khaldun, and, from the beginning, al-Kindi. It is a matter of recognizing the asphyxiation by the impossible as it usurps the discourse which was installed to defend against it. Science now offers itself as its own defense, and this introduces new possibilities. Dislodged from discourses that prohibited satisfaction, science has now taken hold of the upper hand, quite literally, as if to operate as a relay of satisfaction. This is why Leonardo da Vinci offers us an entry-point to understanding the effects of science. For example, da Vinci would often sit from morning until the late evening at the canvas, depriving himself of food or drinks. It is a type of anorexia, an attempt to liquidate himself of those satisfactions.

Moreover, da Vinci repudiated sexuality, finding it disgusting and mostly unnecessary. Freud noticed that da Vinci demonstrated within his art that there was something repugnant and even burdensome in the sexual act: "it expresses only indignation and aversion." Yet, there are sketches of the sexual act, of the male genitals inside of the female, as if it were so. Could it be that Freud was examining in such detail the artifacts left by Leonardo da Vinci because he had an intuition about the discourse of science? Ultimately, it was a problem of knowledge, one which was, all by itself, a satisfaction, rather than, as it was in the university, a source of dissatisfaction — to *know* was, in some sense, to be bored. What Freud discovered was that da Vinci needed to *know* before he could love a woman or even God, and yet, at the time, most people did not take this position. Why? Because, in some sense, the scientific discourse and the university discourse are not so far from one another. Whereas most will get close to another "impulsively, from emotional motives which have nothing to do with knowledge, and whose operation is at most weakened by reflection and consideration," da Vinci needed first to know, before he could ever get close.

This led Freud to a warning of sorts: "the postponement of loving until full knowledge is acquired ends in a substitution of the latter for the former." Well, it is the place of the father, as the one who prohibits satisfaction, within science, even, that provides us with some insight into the question. It is this father, though I am not at all convinced that "father" is the correct word — since, to my ears, it seems almost blasphemous — who was missing within da Vinci's discourse. Freud concludes his essay on da Vinci with the following: "his later scientific research, with all its boldness and independence, presupposed the existence of infantile sexual researches *uninhibited* by his father, and was a prolongation of them with the sexual element excluded" (emphasis is mine). It is not so very different, then, from our anarchist, Feyerabend: "when anyone has, like Leonardo, escaped being intimidated by his father during his earliest childhood, and has in his researches cast away the fetters of authority, it would be in the sharpest contradiction to our expectation if we found that he had remained a believer and had been unable to escape from dogmatic religion."

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Those scientific atheists who now populate the world have nonetheless succeeded in becoming whatever it is that they say they are, as in the Hebrew *Yahweh*. The statement that concerns

us today is not “why am I whatever you say I am?,” but rather “I am whatever I say I am.” This is why we can say that Louis Althusser was indeed a scientific Marxist, especially when he founded the subject without any split, through interpellation, that is, through recognition. This is not a dissatisfied subject under the prohibition of the officer but is rather a speaking being who is part of the fraternal order of police. In any case, with respect to these gods-all-alone, which are most certainly a product of scientific discourse, ... I take my bearings from a text written in 1929 by Sigmund Freud, namely his *Civilization and Its Discontents*. I shall quote an important passage:

These things that, by his science and technology, man has brought on this earth, on which he first appeared as a feeble animal organism and on which each individual of his species must once more make its entry as a helpless suckling — these things do not only sound like a fairy tale, they are an actual fulfillment of every, or of almost every, fairy-tale wish. [...] Today [...] man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on him and they still give him much trouble at times. [...] Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man’s likeness to God still more.

Freud predicted these gods-all-alone, alone in their satisfaction to be confronted by the world which traumatizes them. If science, coupled with capitalism, and justified through pragmatic philosophy, produces gadgets that not only adorn but endure these false gods, then, on the side of discourse there is also psychoanalysis, which attempts to extract a truth from science. This was the conclusion that Jacques-Alain Miller stumbled upon after a long excursion during his 1989 seminar titled “The Analyst’s Banquet.”

Is this not what Freud attempted to do in his underappreciated essay on Leonardo da Vinci? Freud sought to extract a truth from his scientific and artistic project, without allowing that truth to be captured by university discourse as a means of refining or honing mastery. The truth of university discourse was always without mention, an S2, or knowledge, that would itself become the master. Knowledge, for the analyst, is in a position of subservience to truth, which is that which we deny. This is not at all true of science, which achieves a mutation in the logic of denial of truth: it is an acceptance of only what can be denied, which is not at all the principle of classical Freudian repression, where what is denied is precisely what one has already unknowingly accepted, namely a prohibition or S1. In this way, we can say, as Jacques-Alain Miller has said in his seminar, that science makes a “mockery of truth” by foreclosing the subject, that is, by refusing denial as such, and therefore by refusing to be admitted into a discourse and to remain content within one.

Yet, there are still reasons to be suspicious since science, which has now formed a strange alliance with capitalist political economy through the conduit of pragmatic philosophy, shows itself capable of achieving something like a discourse. It is on this point that Lacan had his intuitions but was possibly at his weakest. Slavoj Žižek, on the other hand, was perhaps correct when he wrote:

The mutual implication, complicity even, of science and capitalism is, of course, not seamless, it implies an immanent tension of each of the two terms. Science offers itself to capitalism insofar as it is in itself blind for a key dimension of its existence signaled by Lacan in a couple of co-dependent formulations: (1) science forecloses the dimension of the subject, (2) science operates at the level of knowledge and ignores truth, (3) science has no memory.

I cannot unpack these three formulations here, though I believe I have touched upon two of them. The third, ... well — that’s history. And it is a question of how psychoanalysis tells a history

of itself, since it is not altogether obvious. Perhaps we can also say that psychoanalysis has no memory. On this point, psychoanalysis and science are not so far from one another. Žižek went on to claim that “it is easy to show that modern science itself relies on a series of philosophical propositions.” Yes, this is true; yet, these philosophical propositions remain outside, they are philosophies in the bedroom; which means that there is no proof that one has entered discourse, let alone relinquished the satisfactions of the bedroom. One has only to go to YouTube or TikTok to see that philosophy is entirely capable of being established through the mobile bedroom, made possible by the scientific global village.

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