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THE UNCONSCIOUS OF LACANIAN DISCOURSE AS EVENT: INTERVENTIONS IN 'PSYCHOSOCIAL' STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper explores recent developments in 'discourse analysis' in psychology which have drawn on psychoanalytic theory to produce a new subfield of research known as 'psychosocial' studies. The Lacanian tradition of psychoanalysis offers a fruitful way forward for this emerging tradition, addressing questions of 'indeterminacy' of discourse, reflexivity and subjectivity. The terms 'Lacan', 'discourse', 'event' name three aspects of a research programme described in this paper which is concerned not only with the connection between theoretical traditions – Lacanian psychoanalysis and discourse analysis – but also with the connection between different levels of analysis which are usually configured in academic work and popular culture as the 'psychological' and the 'social'. Some traditions of psychoanalysis are concerned with the level of the psychological, as is the discipline of psychology. A range of different disciplines – sociology, political theory and cultural studies, for example – aim to address the 'social'. This paper intervenes in psychosocial studies and situates subjectivity at the interface of politics and qualitative discourse-analytic research.

Introduction

An emerging academic subfield of 'psychosocial' research promises to take psychology and sociology forward, drawing on the insights of both and also incorporating work from cultural studies and linguistics (e.g., Roseneil and Frosh, 2012; Kenny and Fotaki, 2014). In its intent to overcome the dualism between the individual and the social that mars much conceptual and methodological research in psychology, this new 'psychosocial' tradition builds on the turn to language and then the turn to discourse in the discipline (e.g. Harré and Secord, 1972; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysis and 'discursive psychology' have actually, in practice, operated as a fragmented and contradictory tradition, failing to resolve fundamental questions concerning the nature of language and the place of reflexivity in research (Parker, 2005, 2012). One of the symptoms of that failure has been that discourse is often, mistakenly, been assumed to operate in a 'deterministic' way, and an appeal to subjectivity has been made which looks to something 'outside' discourse as agentic substance.

There are now two main psychoanalytic currents of research in psychosocial studies (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008). One looks to the work of Melanie Klein, and conjures into being fantastic images of the mind of the human subject torn by mechanisms of splitting and projection. In this current of research the subjectivity of the research is impelled to a form of

'reflexivity' which is underpinned by 'countertransference' in which underlying unconscious affect is accessed by the researcher and processed as it is turned into language (e.g., Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). This current of research effectively functions as a regression, turning back from the insights of the discursive turn and searching for something underneath or before language. One danger, of course, is that it turns into a form of psychology rather than serving as a critical alternative to it (Parker, 2005). The other current of research looks to the work of Jacques Lacan, and extends the scope of critical discursive psychology to turn psychosocial research into something radically beyond psychology which can then also turn around and reflect on the limits of the discipline (e.g., Pavón-Cuéllar, 2010). There is an emphasis in this Lacanian current of psychoanalytic psychosocial research on the 'indeterminacy' of discourse, and subjectivity is treated as something that arises in discourse and in relation to politics (Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014). Here the 'unconscious' is not seen as something lying outside language but is inhabited by language, and argument this paper explores by taking seriously Lacan's statement that 'the unconscious is politics'. The paper describes the development of a new research programme that intervenes in psychosocial studies as a contemporary form of critical discursive psychology. The terms 'Lacan', 'discourse', 'event' name three aspects of a research programme which is concerned not only with the connection between theoretical traditions – Lacanian psychoanalysis and discourse analysis – but also with the connection between different levels of analysis which are usually configured in academic work and popular culture as the 'psychological' and the 'social'.

Some traditions of psychoanalysis are concerned with the level of the psychological, as is the discipline of psychology, of course. A range of different disciplines – sociology, political theory and cultural studies, for example – aim to address the 'social'. But they then themselves come dangerously close to reducing explanation to the level of the psychological when they take on psychoanalytic ideas. One of the fields of debate that the 'Lacan, discourse, event' research programme is designed to intervene in is that of 'psychosocial studies', and it is there that the problems of the connection between the psychological and the social are addressed, but also where the problems again find expression. The hyphenation of 'psycho-social' is evidence of one attempt to repair a problem which then exacerbates it, for instance (Hoggett, 2008).

The unconscious as psychosocial resource

There are two steps in the process of linking the three aspects of our research programme, 'Lacan', 'discourse', 'event' (Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014). The first step is to articulate the two traditions of Lacanian psychoanalysis and discourse analysis, and the second step is to open up the research to a series of cultural-political and political-economic questions which cluster around and are sometimes named as 'event'. We will look at those two steps in a moment. The aim here is to disturb the sets of assumptions that are sedimented when traditions accumulate a

theoretical and methodological apparatus (Parker, 2005). There is nothing much more disturbing to mainstream psychology and sociology than the notion of the 'unconscious', and so that will operate as a conceptual site within which to stretch the strings of categories that define mainstream research, and then to bend them and break them and reassemble them into something new. In fact, the 'unconscious' itself is not only the conceptual site for this work, but is something that will need to be transformed as we proceed. The unconscious gives us an opening, but it is also part of the problem.

The 'unconscious' as conceptual site already subsists in hosts of contradictory commonsensical accounting resources; that is, mutually incompatible turns of phrase, rhetorical tropes, semiotic material which people draw upon to narrate and explain what they think and feel to each other and to themselves (Billig, 1999; Parker, 1997). Culturally dominant sets of such resources include biological, spatial and spiritual versions.

There is, first, the idea that it is biological, that the unconscious comprises physiologically hard-wired predispositions of individuals – for sex and aggression and perhaps also for bonding and nurturing – signs of which that are released into the public domain, leaked out in such things as jokes and slips of the tongue, 'Freudian slips' as people would say. In this way nature, from which we are alienated under capitalism, at least, reminds us of its existence by sending messages or posing threats. This notion of the unconscious is seedbed for some forms of contemporary psychoanalysis that prefer to speak of 'attachment' rather than ambivalent love relations, and it is the notion of the unconscious from which other forms of contemporary psychoanalysis flee to find refuge in neuroscience (e.g. Fonagy, 2004).

There is, second, the idea that the unconscious is spatial, that the unconscious consists of a place in which the most intense confused assemblage of thoughts whirl around, fuelled again by irrational instinctual forces but operating by fragmenting and combining thoughts. This unconscious is inside the mind conceived as a kind of container, a box of horrors and delights, of something which wants to pop itself open and display its contents to others. This notion of the unconscious is voiced in the kinds of psychoanalysis that are preoccupied with containment precisely because they know that otherwise something will spring out, and it is lampooned by critics of psychoanalysis who can only see in it evidence of the old hydraulic model they used to make sense of something they could never really get (Mitchell, 1986).

And there is, third, the idea that it is spiritual, of the unconscious as something even more subterranean, as not merely a collection of individually enclosed sinkholes but as separate entry points into and intimations of a deeper humanity. This unconscious is a place that speaks of our separation from each other but also of what we share, common responses, ambitions, dreams, and, most importantly, the hope that at least part of us is already touching the others. This is the mystical domain of archetypal constellations that can be interpreted by someone schooled in their true meaning, in forms of psychoanalysis that were separated off from the main tradition of work for many years but which have now

sought to reconnect with it, and it is a notion of the unconscious that enables us to access something meaningful in what is only apparently nonsensical on the surface (e.g., Samuels, 1993).

Against these three dominant sets of cultural resources for 'understanding' what the unconscious is, and then for understanding it too easily in forms too close to commonsense, it is necessary to turn to some quite different and counter-intuitive notions of the unconscious. Actually, the turn to an unconscious that questions rather than confirms commonsense also corresponds already with a turn to 'discourse' that questions rather than confirms what we think language is. Discourse is often assumed to be either the mechanical apparatus for the communication of thoughts and feelings that pre-exist language, or to be the wrapping for thoughts and feelings as they make their way from one head to another, or to be the medium and veil of even more transcendent experience. Radically different notions of the unconscious therefore entail radically different notions of discourse, as we shall see in a moment, and it is possible to trace a journey from Freud to arrive at a Lacanian conception of the unconscious and discourse (e.g., Hook, 2014). The search for a different way of speaking about the unconscious brings us now to the first step in the research programme as we first look at why Lacan is important and articulate Lacanian psychoanalysis with discourse analysis (Parker, 2011).

Lacan's 'psychosocial' unconscious

Lacanian reformulations concerning the unconscious resituate it in relation to language and, in the very process of doing that they throw into question the idea that the unconscious is a specific delimited domain to which one particular definition can be attached. It throws into question even the value of using the term 'unconscious' to refer to this domain. Lacan's (2006) return to the meaning of Freud entails refusing to give any ontological consistency to the unconscious – refusing to treat it as an object – while according it epistemological weight as a historical phenomenon. Freud's (1915) dictum that the unconscious knows no time, finessed by Louis Althusser (1971) as meaning that it is eternal, is turned upside down by Lacan's (2006) repeated comment that Freud 'invented' the unconscious. This route to a social definition of the unconscious through Althusser is also an opportunity to emphasise the 'aleatory' character of the unconscious (Romé, 2104). This attention to the role of chance in signification opens up a historical dimension of the unconscious. This, rather than, as is commonly said by psychoanalytically-sympathetic historians who would like reassurance that it was always there, that it was 'discovered' (e.g., Ellenberger, 1970). The implications of this historicising of the unconscious as such then bear on what is constructed and described in the clinic as something pertaining to that domain rather than shining through it from somewhere else. This then forces us to ask in what ways what is named as the 'unconscious' is qualitatively different inside the clinic from what it is, if that is what it is, outside (Parker, 2011).

The fluidity of specification of what the unconscious is goes alongside Lacan's desubstantialising of every other element of psychoanalysis such that the definition of each element depends on the relation in which it stands to the others. This permits different chains of equivalence between the 'unconscious' (for example) and other terms while simultaneously unravelling any attempt to construct a fixed hermetic system of which the complete architecture can be traced all at once or for all time. So, to say, as Lacan does, that the unconscious is 'the discourse of the Other' and that 'the Other does not exist' is to pose a question about the existence of the unconscious itself. This indeterminacy of definition allows Lacan to deconstruct the commonsensical images of the unconscious as precisely being the conscious alibis for what speaks from beyond consciousness, as being the attempts to represent what cannot, by definition, be represented. Freud's dream of a royal road to the understanding of the unconscious is not of a place, but of the route.

No one of the different diametrically opposed theoretical resources that Lacan uses to speak of the unconscious, should be understood as being the simple opposite of the commonsensical images. To say that the unconscious is not primordially-existing in the human animal before it enters language is not either to say that it is simply a cultural artefact or effect of language, even if it is something that inheres in the chain of signifiers. To say that the unconscious is not a space internal to the individual is not either to say that it is only external to the subject, even if it is radically exterior. To say that the unconscious is not transcendental is not either to say that it is purely material, even if the signifier has a certain sort of materiality. The unconscious is what is produced as a gap opens up between nature and culture, and that is why the recoding of origin myths in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958/1972) is useful to Lacan. It is what lies on the apparent surface of language as it loops around to turn from being outside at one moment to what then seems to be inside the subject, and that is why topological figures are used in the later seminars (Farrán, 2014; Voruz and Wolf, 2007). It is what insists in the repetitive material inscription of signifiers in the life of a subject as something that is assumed to be meaningful to others, the Other, while actually nonsensical to the subject themselves, and that is why the use of Ferdinand de Saussure's (1915/1974) structural linguistics (which was also so important to the development of discursive psychology) is pivotal to the development of Lacan's work.

That we inhabit a domain of being that is un-conscious to us while, at the very same time being inhabited by something that is un-conscionable gives to human action a sense of inevitability that is itself subverted every time there is human action. This is why Lacan (1964/1973) treats 'repetition' as one of the four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis, for example; repetition appears, in commonsensical discourse and even in some psychoanalytic description, to be the mechanical reproduction of the same whereas it is actually, Lacan insists, what takes the human being as a speaking being beyond the realm of mere reminiscence. There is something unconscious of repetition, but that is precisely makes possible the emergence of something new (Barciela,

2014; Gerber, 2014). This will be important when we turn to one of the other statements of equivalence Lacan (1966-1967, p. 205) makes when he says that 'the unconscious is politics'.

Discourse analysis as precursor of psychosocial research

One of the first cartels formed in Lacan's school was on the theory of discourse (Miller, 1968). That Lacanian tradition of work on discourse is something that we connect with in due course, but there is a particular journey we need to take through discourse analysis first to grasp why an articulation of Lacanian psychoanalysis with discourse analysis is taking the form it is now.

The term 'discourse analysis' is as deceptively closed and certain about what it signifies as is the term 'psychoanalysis' (Parker, 2012). But, just as psychoanalysis encompasses a gamut of theoretical traditions battling for hegemony of the field, so discourse analysis is a field of debate fuelled and hobbled by the institutions that pretend to speak for it. In part, the problem is, again, one to do with the existence of competing academic traditions. Psychoanalysis was already fractured before there were attempts to assimilate it to forms of academic debate, to what Lacanians refer to as the 'discourse of the university', and analysis of this university discourse alongside the discourse of the master, hysteric and analyst has been a useful resource for Lacanian social theory (e.g., Boni, 2014; Braunstein, 2014). Discourse analysis was, on the other hand, from the beginning divided along academic disciplinary lines.

This is why the discourse analysis which has roots in the academic discipline of linguistics is very different from discourse analysis that was developed in sociology. One paradox there being that some of the discourse analytic work most attuned to questions of power and ideology was actually produced in the process of disentangling itself from linguistic analysis, with some of the best 'critical discourse analysis' having its roots in linguistics (e.g., Fairclough, 1995); while, on the other hand, some of the most reductionist and empiricist versions of discourse analysis was produced from within sociology by those aiming to produce something more rigorous, that which goes under the heading of 'conversation analysis' (e.g., Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). So, linguistic discourse analysis then shifts more toward a political focus, while sociological discourse analysis becomes allergic to politics. In each case there are counter-tendencies, attempts to rein things back to research more in line with the ethos of the host discipline, attempts which prove the rule.

This division of discourse analysis along academic disciplinary lines is also, and here we see a second paradox that is very important now for us, why some of the discourse analysis emanating from the field of cultural studies has tended to be mired in a kind of psychoanalysis that is quite reductionist, taking the description of internal mental processes on good coin (e.g., Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), while some of the discourse analysis that was produced from within the discipline of psychology has ended up being much sceptical about any psychological or quasi-

psychological account, even a quasi-psychological account that says that it is really psychoanalytic (Frosh et al. 2001).

One reason for this paradoxical relation to psychoanalysis in discourse analysis on the side of cultural studies, particularly in Britain, is that the influence of Antonio Gramsci's (1971) counter-position of the 'war of manoeuvre' which characterised the Russian Revolution (that is, mobilisation of the population to overthrow the State) and a 'war of position' which was more appropriate to Western Europe (that is, partial contradictory alliances which would shift power relations in and against the State) led to a privileging of 'local' over 'global' strategies. This led to interpretations of Gramscian strategy that emphasised discursive strategies that would involve alliances across social classes (Anderson, 1976). One particular interpretation of a Gramscian struggle for 'hegemony' in politics that was so important to the emergence of 'Eurocommunism'. This was a centrifugal force within the Third International which was neither European nor communist (Mandel, 1978), and was accompanied in academic research by a concern with 'positioning' in which a political 'war of position' was elided with 'positioning' in discourse itself. A particular kind of talk, of discourse conceived of as potentially fluid and open as it redefines what politics is, is fore-grounded in this work; the discourse of identity then connects with psychoanalytic theories of identity and, in some cases, becomes reduced to it.

Meanwhile, on the side of psychology there were tendencies that took to discourse analysis that had been influenced by the 'radical psychology' and 'anti-psychiatry' traditions, and discourse analysis was, first of all, useful to them because the competing claims about the nature of the individual could be reframed as competing discourses (Parker, 2005). The main concern for psychologists who then used discourse analysis as a resource to develop what is now called 'critical psychology' was not in updating psychology and enabling it to work more efficiently by looking at the language that people used to describe themselves. Rather, it was to turn discourse analysis around to study the discipline of psychology itself, psychology as a set of stories about human beings that had a particular power because of the institutions it was embedded in. One of the lessons of the earlier 'radical psychology' was that psychoanalysis was too-often waiting in the wings, waiting for psychologists who had been schooled to treat it with contempt as non-scientific to conclude that the problem with psychology was precisely that it claimed to be scientific and then to fall into its arms, to embrace the complete account and worldview of psychoanalysis and end up as evangelists for it. The new generation of critical psychologists working with discourse analysis were, instead, as well as heeding those warnings, influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (1975/1979, 1976/1981) who provided an account of discipline and confession that perfectly captured what psychology was about and included psychoanalysis as a practice in the broader compass of the 'psy complex' (e.g. Ingleby, 1985).

Again, there are counter-tendencies in both cultural studies and in psychology; cultural studies researchers who, taking up the work of Gilles

Deleuze, for example, are more sceptical about psychoanalysis (e.g., Clough with Halley, 2007), and critical psychologists who, enamoured with Melanie Klein, are completely sold on psychoanalysis as the way to go (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). It is that second paradoxical crossing of paths, often marked by misrecognition if not outright incomprehension and hostility, of cultural studies and psychology, with some contributions by linguistically and sociologically oriented discourse analysis, that has given rise to two things; as a positive effect, the emergence of the broad interdisciplinary field of 'psychosocial studies'; and, as a negative effect, the spectre of 'determinism' in discourse analysis.

Psychosocial studies has been a place where cultural studies researchers taken with psychoanalysis have encountered some psychologists fleeing from their host discipline, and psychosocial studies has been a flag that some critical psychologists can rally under and are then happy to cross disciplinary boundaries and make use of debates from cultural studies, and, to an extent, sociology and linguistics. While most discourse analysis in practice emphasises the provisional and positional nature of language, caricatures of discourse analysis, including by adherents of some different traditions of discourse analysis sharpening their knives against their rivals, have made it seem as if the task is the description of the bars of the cage of language and the lesson is that there is no way out (Parker, 2012). The supposed problem of 'discourse determinism', the idea that the study of discourse leads to what is taken to be an 'anti-humanist' refusal of the creative capacities of human beings to reflect upon the language they are using (that is, a muddling together of theoretical anti-humanism with an anti-human stance in research) also leads to a search for a core of human agency which some, rather curiously, find in psychoanalysis. Whatever the confusions and misapprehensions at work here, they are so powerful that it forces us to answer them, and to find a different answer with new theoretical resources that will also re-energise the field of discourse analysis and even, at the same time, of psychoanalysis, an answer that we call 'Lacanian Discourse Analysis' (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2010).

Discourse analysis within the political discourse theory tradition inspired by the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) stands outwith these debates, touching them at moments, in some of the debates over the role of identities, signifiers and ideology (e.g., Glynos, 2014). But they have succeeded in holding a distance from psychoanalysis as such while using some of elements of Lacan's own work as a resource, ambiguous, even ambivalent about whether that work was, for them necessary or one of a number of metaphorical devices to enable them to do discursive research. They then connect again with psychoanalysis around the notion of the 'act' or the 'event'.

Acts, events and questions about subjectivity and reflexivity

To some small extent, but with some significance for the way that we make sense of the history of the emergence of 'act' and 'event' as a 'history of the present', the political discourse theory tradition around

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) was an important mediating force in the development of this research programme we call 'Lacan, discourse, event'. There are a number of other precursors that can be articulated with that political discourse theory tradition (e.g., Frosh, 2014; Pêcheux, 2014; Stavrakakis, 2014). It was, after all, Laclau and Mouffe who facilitated the publication of the first works by Slavoj Žižek (1979) in English, and it was Žižek who then championed the work of Alain Badiou (2005) and then worked with Badiou – as what is sometimes known in the UK as the 'gang-of-two' – to revive the idea of communism, to 'repeat' Lenin and, some would say, to risk dragging us back into some kind of nostalgia for Stalinism (Budgen et al., 2007). Whatever political assessment we make of the consequences of those moves, even of the claim that a conference in London about the idea of communism was actually itself an 'event' in Badiouian terms (Douzinas and Žižek, 2010), what Laclau and Mouffe set in train was a series of conceptual debates which for many reframed Lacan's 'act' as if it were almost entirely equivalent to an 'event'. Žižek's claim that an authentic act changes symbolic coordinates is usually interpreted, for example, as meaning that the act of an individual – and most of the examples that he gives are of individual acts – has an explosive effect on the symbolic coordinates of those around them (cf., Homer, 2014).

For Lacan an 'act' is, at different points in his work, either what human action always already is, it is what marks human activity as different from mere behaviour – that is the way he describes it in Seminar XI (Lacan, 1964/1973) – or it is the 'psychoanalytic act' which is the transition point in which the analysand – Lacan's term for the patient in analysis – becomes an analyst – which is the way he describes it in Seminar XV (Lacan, 1967-1968. The second way of putting it is more intense, but it is not at all clear that this 'act' need necessarily be something public, and could even operate as something that momentarily changes the 'symbolic coordinates' for the analysand, if we want to use those terms, without even being noticed by the analyst (Koren, 2014; Negro, 2014). If such an 'act' entails disentangling oneself from the Other, accepting that the Other does not exist, then it would not necessarily be performed for someone else, on the terms of the Other (Orozco Guzmán et al., 2014). For Badiou the 'event' is something more specific and dramatic, and each of the four domains that he specifies as being where an 'event' takes place and the question of 'fidelity to the event' is posed – that is, of love, politics, art and science – require the subject to take a position, a new position, to become something new in relation to them (1998/2001). Notwithstanding the differences between 'act' and 'event', it is Badiou's (1988/2005) description of 'event' that tends now to frame the way that Lacan's 'act' is understood.

Taking seriously Badiou's conception of the 'event' in relation to discourse, discourse analysis (Gómez Camarena, 2014; González, 2014) and then 'Lacanian Discourse Analysis' raises at least two questions; questions about boundaries between domains, if not between disciplines. The first question concerns what kind of domain discourse analysis subsists in. Is it a science, as would have been hoped for once upon a time

in linguistic discourse analysis, and a hope evoked by current developments in sociological discourse analysis? Is it an art, something of the kind aimed for in cultural studies concerned with the performance of identity in everyday life as well as in popular representation of and contest over identity, and something that psychologists escaping their old scientific frame might want to participate in? Is it politics, as some practitioners of discourse analysis would hope their academic inquiries to become as they try also to be relevant to the real world? Or is it love, the love of the couple sometimes described by Badiou as if love operates in a heterosexual matrix or something like it, or perhaps even the transference love that drives clinical psychoanalysis? In each of these spheres of action, the stakes of the event or act are that truth appears as a function of discourse (García Valdez, 2014; Herrera Guido, 2014).

Or, the second question, is the indeterminacy, surprise, unpredictability of discourse that we attend to in our analysis concerned not so much with what happens in a particular domain, with what happens, say, in 'the clinic' or in 'society', but precisely in what disturbs the boundaries between domains? Instead of defining 'act' or 'event' as something that happens in this or that place, perhaps it would be possible to notice how the transformation it effects necessarily changes the symbolic coordinates which separate one place from the others. It is that question of 'place' and what is to be a subject that is not of a place that is posed by the unconscious, by what disturbs our consciousness of ourselves in our place (Neill, 2014).

The politics of psychosocial research

When Lacan connects his statement 'the unconscious is politics' with Freud's (1924, p. 178) statement that 'anatomy is destiny' it has the effect of disturbing the relation between the terms in each of the statements as well as the relation between the two statements (Álvarez, 2014). Lacan draws attention to the political status of the unconscious, and in a much deeper more thorough-going way than would be commonly thought. It is not merely that the unconscious underlies politics because 'politics is unconscious' or that the unconscious is political because what we think and what we un-think, what is out of conscious awareness is political. What speaks of and from the unconscious is always politics because it disturbs our consciousness of ourselves in our place. Freud's statement 'anatomy is destiny' is sometimes read as endorsing biological determinism, but, as Lacan points out, the practice of anatomy is a practice of cutting up the body; it is the cultural, symbolic practice of the cutting that then gives to the biology its destiny, as if it were always destined to be so, in that way, in that anatomical form.

An 'act' or 'event' in discourse analysis is 'unconscious' in this kind of way, and that unconscious aspect can either be closed down around what we think we know about the unconscious as part of a theory of the subject or it can be opened up as something that also necessarily pertains to the politics of research. It can be closed down and sedimented as psychoanalytic theory which accompanies discourse analysis, enabling the

discourse analysis to carry on interpreting texts and promising to provide deeper and more interesting interpretations. That would be the way of some forms of discourse analysis in psychoanalytic psychosocial studies, digging away and confirming that psychoanalysis is true everywhere and always. Or it can be opened up so that what emerges in discourse escapes not only the supposed determinism of the discourse, the idea that people will say this or that because this or that discourse is operating, but also escapes the determinism of the psychoanalytic theory which tells you that this is what you will be find.

The un-conscious dimension of politics, for example, is where the subject positioned according to hegemonic sets of social relationships or forms of identity does not only speak in line with the statements that define them, repeating those statements, reiterating them as a performance of identity in a determinative matrix of relations with others. It would be where something other to politics as it usually understood comes into play. That something other may be conceptualised in a particular political discourse as 'the personal is political', but it enables the experiential dimension of engagement with politics to be found in places that are not usually thought of as being 'political' so that consciousness is politics and, as part of the process of consciousness-raising, so that the unconscious is politics (Roberts and Malone, 2014).

The un-conscious dimension of academic research, as an another example, is where the subject positioned as investigator does not only speak according to the script that demands neutrality and objectivity, a script that accords them subject-status on condition that they are not a subject and consigns those who are investigated to the position of object on condition that they speak as if they are subjects. Something other comes into play when a kind of reflexive questioning of the position of the researcher begins, and when that questioning does not only concern a restricted agonising 'reflexivity' about the journey of the researcher and their ethical position; something of the unconscious comes into play when the conditions in which research questions are formulated are questioned, and a connection with the politics of research is made so that the reflexive work is no longer contained within the academic frame, when consciousness of that frame is politicised, and when what is unconscious to the frame is turned into politics, when the unconscious is politics (Saville Young, 2104).

This is why the 'indeterminacy' that we are concerned with in this research programme, 'Lacan, Discourse, Event', is what occurs inside the text as 'textual indeterminacy' and outside it as the unconscious. And just as we recognise that there is no outside of the text, we also take seriously the other side of dictum, one also emphasised by Derrida, that there is no 'inside of the text' either, in the sense that what takes place there cannot be enclosed and self-sufficient. That is also why when we start with Lacan in discourse analysis we always end up somewhere else that we did not expect. Conscious of one thing, and giving up the attempt to confine what we know in that conscious control that defines most research, we come closer to what is un-conscious as 'act' or 'event'.

This journey through psychosocial studies with an attention to the 'indeterminacy' of discourse thus provides us with a different way of thinking about subjectivity and reflexivity in research (Parker, 2005), it connects our research with politics, and it thereby re-energising a critical discursive approach inside and against psychology.

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