

# Transference and Change in Discourse\*

## The Psychoanalyst and the Artist

By September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1787, Mozart's friends and loved ones had started to get worried about the Overture to *Don Giovanni*. The work had yet to be written and Mozart himself was slated to conduct its first performance at Prague's National Theater just two nights later.

And yet Mozart, for his part, was the picture of calm. He "already" knew he would write it on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> into the 28<sup>th</sup>, and he even told his wife Constance<sup>1</sup> so when he asked her to stay and talk with him for awhile that evening.

The night began with her telling him stories that made him double-over with laughter, but by 3:00 a.m. he still hadn't written a single note, so she suggested he take a two-hour nap. As soon as he awoke however, the vibrations of the vibrating string his body had been changed into had found their groove and the (musical) steps they needed to take, which he then quickly penned in one fell stroke – a new symbolic configuration had been created. By 7:00 a.m. the Overture was on paper, and the copyist delivered the score to the printer "on time."

## An Undreamt-of Opening<sup>2</sup>

The starting point for the argument to be made here requires allowing oneself to be arrested by the strangeness of this Overture, and the possibilities it opens onto.

Besides the obvious hints provided by the chronology of the affair, what was the meaning of this path Mozart followed? Was there something transpiring to raise this Overture to the level of a work of art? In more general terms, what enables a work to render the person who made it into a creator of art as such?

These questions are particularly resonant for psychoanalysts. The same enigma fuels the "conducting" of the cure, insofar as the transference becomes the sole locus for the changes in discourse which are characteristic of analytic discourse as such. The analyst knows that no matter what other apparent formation he or she has received, and despite whatever his or her institutional affiliation(s), it is only insofar as this operation, which Lacan dubbed "analytic," takes place, that the person who presided over this change may be acknowledged, in the moment of its aftermath alone, as an analyst. The eruption of analytic discourse is an undreamt-of opening (*ouverture*). It presupposes the creation of *a* time, (perhaps all time even), when, in the aftermath, it will be possible to say an analyst was there.

## Onto the Eruption of the Real of the Drive

Mozart, however, is not being invoked here in order to produce a discourse on

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\* Text written in the aftermath of my presentation for a Conference at the Center for Research in Writing and Psychoanalysis at the Sorbonne, September 25<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Nissen, Constance Mozart's second husband, compiled himself the materials for his *Nissen's Biography of W.A. Mozart*, the primary source used here. His death however left the work incomplete, and it was Constance herself who finished and published in 1828 with the help of Feuerstein. Niemetschek had already written a first *Biography* in 1798.

<sup>2</sup> TR: the French word *ouverture* means both "opening" (chance, possibility, etc.) and (operatic) overture.

art<sup>3</sup> based on these well-known psychoanalytic truisms. My fundamental supposition is that the artist and the psychoanalyst are very close to one another in a different way, and that they will both benefit from remaining open to questions that arise from the fact that they may both feel “touched”<sup>4</sup> by the sudden existence of an unlimited Real,<sup>5</sup> whose appearance marks the initiatory moment of the drive as such.

The message the analyst may transmit to the artist is<sup>6</sup> largely conveyed in the way transference leads to a moment in which a beyond of the fantasm appears on the horizon. This new horizon conveys the possibility of creating a new timing, one that is related to what Lacan called “experiencing the drive” (June 24, 1964). The timing (*temps*) in question is “new” because it makes heard, unknowingly and addressed to whomever it may concern, the appeal of the Real of the invocatory drive. The secret this drive harbors is that it is forever making itself heard in unique ways, beyond what is specifically heard by the ears.

How does the Overture to *Don Giovanni* sound when listened to in light of the emergence of the horizon of this new drive timing?

Surprisingly, its music begins to increasingly resemble the Finale of Act II, when the Commander arrives for his appointment with Don Juan.

But given the fact that we know Mozart wrote the music for both Act I and Act II well before the Overture, what made it necessary for him to return to this particular encounter, and what does the Overture itself make heard that is new?

### **The World of “Jouïe-sens”<sup>7</sup>**

As soon as Mozart awoke that morning he heard the call of music, which was in the position of Other for him. Heard with his ears? More likely it was an elusive inner presence suddenly brought into existence by the invocation of the Other as music. His response to this invocation would not have long to wait. A “yes” was immediately accorded to it, leading to the eruption of an undreamt-of moment when the Other and the Subject came into contact, on the scene of an Alterity that is forever new because it

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<sup>3</sup> Which would entail allowing analytic discourse to remain dominated by the discourse of the academic, according to the way Lacan introduced these terms during this 1969-70 Seminar, “L'envers de la psychanalyse” (*The Flip-side of Psychoanalysis*).

<sup>4</sup> “To touch is not to think.” (Delacroix)

<sup>5</sup> “Unlimited” in the sense that it is not bound by the limits of meaning defined in the realm of conscious and unconscious thinking activity, or what has come to be labeled the fantasm. The analyst will have already encountered this (Real) during his own cure during moments when the framework of identification is breached, something that is “beyond analysis and which has never been touched upon. Until now it has only been approached via the analyst...the experience of the Subject (S) is thus brought back to a plane where the drive may appear from the reality of the unconscious.” J. Lacan “Les quatre concepts de la psychanalyse.” (6/24/1964). *Seuil* p. 245-46.

<sup>6</sup> Considered here independently of his chosen medium: rhythm, light, color, etc. From the present standpoint, the artist is some who unwittingly hears the unseen and unheard appeal, and who responds through the production of the work of art itself. At least, at any rate, insofar as said work effects a division. For example if a painting makes the invisible visible, then the painter may be acknowledged as a creative artist. That is, at least, according to the argument being made here, from the perspective of which it becomes possible to contend further that psychoanalyst is an artist whose primary medium is the signifier.

<sup>7</sup> TR: This Lacanian neologism literally means “I hear sense (or meaning),” but is also pronounced the same as *jouissance*.

is pure signifyingness as such.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, once this elusive signifying presence was *invoked*, it quickly became *invocatory* in turn.<sup>9</sup>

What is crucial to point out, however, is that Mozart first had to spend a few hours distracting his thinking activity through sleep in order for this musical eruption to occur. As with dreams, the Real of a previously unseen and unheard (of) appeal, the sound of music, is only able to surface via a “hole” in<sup>10</sup> thinking activity as such.

Mozart’s response to all this was written in his musical score. His invisible gesture brought a new symbolic configuration into existence, breaching the limit barring access to Beauty, and invoking the appearance of something unseen and unheard, whose presence steers us in the direction of nothing less than *das Ding*, the Human Thing itself.

An other world was made heard, as when Lacan said “Jouïe-sens” in a way that enabled us to become open to an impulse (*mouvement*) never before heard or seen, an “experiencing of the drive” otherwise interpreting the already heard and already seen borders of the fantasm itself.

### **Mozart’s “Witty” Laughter (*Esprit du rire*)**

Thus as already mentioned, in order for Mozart to be in a position to hear what he had been incessantly waiting for, in order for him to be “duped” into experiencing a moment of signifyingness, he was required to undergo a period during which his thinking activity would cease. Incredible as it may at first seem, a similar cession of the discourse of conscious thinking is necessary in order for the call of the Other to be heard in a way that yields a witticism (*mot d’esprit*).

Mozart’s wait was worth his while therefore, since the stakes underlying the Overture itself turned out to be high indeed. Before this unexpected new arrival entered the scene, the thinker in him had transfigured his laughter into a form of mockery: he was bent on not playing the fool. But then this invisible impulse in him bore into the visible and audible elements of his laughter and transformed it. The image of Mozart’s face filled with laughter then came alive, and with his ear trained to this new arrival, it carried him away. No doubt his thinking half, to whom this new receiver in him was addressed, judged him foolish for letting this happen, and foolish for placing his trust in this foolish laughter itself. It was foolish to risk using laughter to make heard and seen that the new presence residing in him impatiently awaited the fleeting passage of signifyingness itself. But, in the end, it is clear this kind of topsy-turvydom always appears when wit (*esprit*), the smuggling spirit (*esprit passeur*) of signifyingness, passes through.

### **And the Heresy of Don Juan’s Cry**

Thus nothing is as it was before, the Overture opening onto the field of the unlimited undoes past judgments, leaving us free to imagine that the reason why a receiver out there was able to pick up on the changed nature of Mozart’s laughter, then conveyed by wit, was because the cry of Don Juan had already resonated with it in a

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed what is at issue here is not restricted to the sound of music in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, and the way in which it arose from the pure symbolism of signifyingness as such. What is at stake here is in close proximity to interpretation *in* the transference in the way Lacan conceived it, insofar as the “disturbance” that is registered, the change in discourse in question is not related to meaning, but to the signifyingness at the origin of what he called the *mi-dire*, or “part-saying.”

<sup>9</sup> The essence of what is known as a reversal in the invocatory drive.

<sup>10</sup> Meaning it does not arise from thought alone or primarily.

similarly heretical mode.

According to the argument here therefore, the sheer signifyingness of Don Juan's cry enables a new interpretation of Mozart's laughter, and it was because this cry was still resonating within him that he was inexorably drawn back to it. The limited is not able to assume the burden of limitlessness. It renders thinking activity speechless.

The Overture is thus an opening that is both inevitably desired and that inevitably leaves (room for) something to be desired, something that cannot be boxed up in a "cassette."

This thing does not pretend to be the truth and is not based on words. It is related to the form of analytic discourse Lacan returned to in December 1978 at Vincennes.

In that seminar, he did not multiple to infinity the scope of what the analyst has to offer the analyzand, because for him this offering remained the ever-elusive agent of change known as object (a): "there are four discourses, and each one takes itself to be true."<sup>11</sup> Only analytic discourse takes exception to this." Object (a) is a cause of desire because it can never be appropriated.

## **An Encounter Between Mozart and Lacan**

What is both astounding but also demonstrative of the richness of Lacan's thinking, and the way he and Mozart unexpectedly crossed paths, is that it is possible to locate these four discourses in the cry of Don Juan itself.

The listener who is transfixed by egoic and superegoic facts and proofs, S2, will simply hear the same cry over and over, and will make sense of it terms of the discourse of the university – he cries out in horror at his own damnation.

The discourse of the Master-Teacher will fail to hear it in the first place. Don Juan saved his Master-Signifiers, S1, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and then withdrew behind a curse without knowing he was saying something that concerned his own self-knowledge: the misfortune that befalls all those who become involved in scandals.

The discourse of the Hysteric will make heard that there is an existent,  $\mathfrak{S}$ , which divides the human voice, and which is fueled by the existence of wit, the "smuggler (*passieur*) of the Real." Thus from the perspective of hysterical discourse the cry in general, and Don Juan's cry in particular, is open to infinite interpretation because it is a pure vowel – "Ah." It is the Overture as opening itself because it appeals to the existence of a still indeterminate part of the Subject to come,  $\mathfrak{S}$ .

What makes this appeal possible is a transformation (*transfert*) of the division, to be heard at the heart of the cry, into a cry from the heart. The *Burlador* of Seville's locus of despair exists because it has first been constructed as lost.

The cry of Don Juan is a work of art, a discovery, the only one worthy of the name, because it opens onto the horizon, farther than the eye can see, of the promise of an Other world, a world of signifyingness that it begins to resonate, beyond (questions of) good and evil...

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<sup>11</sup> The discourse of the Master, based unconditionally on the authority of Master-Signifiers and S1 positioned as its sole agent, in effect kidnaps the Real. The knowledge of the master (or teacher), S2, which governs the discourse of the academic, takes the Real into account but in a way that masks and supervises it. The discourse of the hysteric writes this same Real with the bar that crosses through the Subject –  $\mathfrak{S}$ . In this way it transmits the message that there exists a point of departure, beyond or other than in words, for analytic discourse to enter into existence.

## **An Offer Never Before Seen**

So the curtain was able to rise and the sound of the Overture's 191 measures was indeed heard.

Having heard it otherwise than before following the experience of hearing the music (*son*) in Don Juan's voice, Mozart transmitted through his music (*son*) that part of himself he had been able to laugh with.

The fluidity of the impulse music transmitted to him became his guide, or perhaps it would be better to say he gave himself over to it.

The initial chords of the Overture are "tutti orchestra," held for several bars and punctuated from within by syncopated bursts. A recent rendition of the Finale even worked these same rhythms and chords into its themes.

Then the characters enter the scene. First the Commander, accompanied by funereal quarter-eight-quarter rhythms, then Don Juan, to the rhythm of syncopated chords. Something unthinkable in words is made heard here by the sound of music that returns in the Finale: a dialogue between Don Juan's vortex of ascending and descending scales, and the plodding sounds of the Commander's quarter-eighth-quarter rhythms.

To any and all who might be ready to receive it, the Overture, for its part, offers us something neither seen nor heard before, seeking to make otherwise heard, in advance, the themes of the Finale to come.

## **Revisiting Punctuation (*Scansion*)**

Mozart was called upon here to be our guide, insofar as the act of *hearing* things which are hidden, rather than looking to see and know them, leads to the experience of the exceptional discourse we now call "analytic."

An attempt was also made to demonstrate that upsurges in signifyingness are what drive discursive change. Indeed in this respect it may be surmised even further that these stakes are always present in every session, the time when analyst and analyzand meet, even though the effects of meaning are incessantly working to make us forget this.

Thus the main reason why the punctuated session is such an important aspect of analytic practice, is that signifyingness is only able to enter into existence during those moments when thinking activity has withdrawn into "mourning."

Will the analyst come to hear this signifyingness, when the body of the analyzand conveys it into existence through his voice? Will the analyst's body, or more precisely his voice in turn, manage to make heard the division of the Subject,  $\mathfrak{S}$ , such that what he says in some way accords with what it is saying?

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