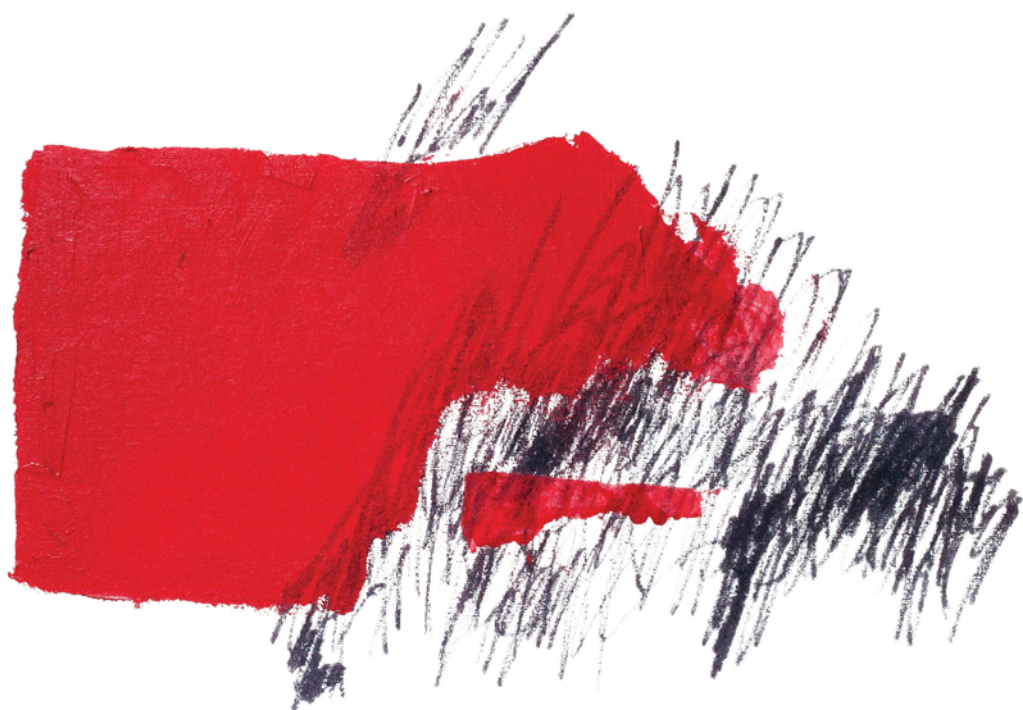


LACAN'S CLINICAL TECHNIQUE

Lack(a)nian Analysis



Antonio Quinet

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Spanning a career of nearly thirty years as a writer and a practising psychoanalyst, **Antonio Quinet** from Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) is one of the founders and member analysts of the EPFCL-Brazil (Psychoanalysis School of the Lacanian Field Forums).

As an international lecturer and four-language polyglot *par excellence*, he has been a guest speaker all around Latin America as well as in Australia, England, the United States, Spain, and France. His busy teaching, clinical, and lecturing schedule has also taken him all over Brazil, where he is currently one of the country's most outstanding scholars and thinkers in psychoanalysis. As one of the first translators of Lacan into Portuguese, he collaborated on *Seminars 2* (1985), *7* (1988) and *Television* (1993) and many other miscellaneous texts published in Brazil.

A graduate in medicine from the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) where he majored in psychiatry, he later moved to France and obtained the Certificat d'Études Spéciales de Psychiatrie at the Université Paris-Sud and the degree of Ancien Interne des Hôpitaux Psychiatriques de la Région Parisienne (A.I.H.P.R.P). Dr Quinet is guest professor at the Psychiatric Institute of the Universidade Federal of Rio

de Janeiro (UFRJ), where one of his ongoing projects has been interviews with ward interns.

From 1979 to 1989, Dr Quinet lived in Paris, continuing his studies with Lacan's students at the École de la Cause Freudienne and receiving the Diplôme d'Études Approfondies du Champ Freudien (University of Paris VIII—Vincennes) with a Master's Thesis on Psychosis in Freud and Lacan and went on to become Assistant Professor at the Psychoanalysis Department at the same university. And under Alan Badiou, Dr Quinet also defended his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Paris and published his thesis (*Un plus-de-regard*, 2003) in France and Brasil. Dr Quinet is currently co-editor of the French-language psychoanalytical journal *L'en je-Lacanian*. The French edition of his book *Psychosis and Social Bonds* is forthcoming in 2017.

Currently adjunct professor of the graduate-level Programs in Psychoanalysis, Health, and Society at the Universidade Veiga de Almeida (UVA) in Rio de Janeiro, where he teaches and coordinates graduate-student research projects on Subjectivity in Health Science Practices as well as Psychoanalysis and Theatre. Dr Quinet founded the Unconscious On Stage Theatre Company, to stage his own plays and provide opportunities for professional actors interest and theatre and psychoanalysis.

A life-long lover of the arts, literature and theatre, Dr Quinet made his debut as a playwright and director with the staging of *Charcot's Lesson* (2004), followed by *X, Y e S—Strindberg's Intimate Theatre* (2005), and *Artorquato* (2006)—based on the life and work of Torquato Neto (2006) in Rio de Janeiro and major Brazilian capitals. From 2007 to 2009, the Unconscious On Stage also put on *Óidipous, Son of Laius* (2007–2009) in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and other Brazilian cities. *Freudian Variations 1: The Symptom* (2010–2011) received its international debut in Rome, Italy, and then in Brazil's major capitals. Other plays include *Open up, Hysterics!* (2012), first staged in Brazil and then as *La leçon de Charcot—théâtre hystérique* in Paris (2013). *The Act—Freudian Variations 2* had a successful season in Brazil (2013–2014). All of his plays have been published in Portuguese in Brazil.

In 2007, he appeared acting in the role of Dr Freud in his own play *Hilda and Freud: Collected Words* at the Freud Museum in London and in many major cities in Brazil and Latin America (translated in Spanish as *Hilda y Freud—La laguna creativa* and performed in Argentina and Colombia). The play, published by Karnac (2015), has been performed

to critical acclaim throughout Brazil and mostly recently, Dr Quinet was invited to stage it with his company in Melbourne, Australia (2017) during an international seminar where he was the keynote speaker.

The author of eleven books (several translated into Spanish and French) published in Brazil on psychoanalysis including *Theory and Psychosis Clinic* (5th ed., 2011), *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (5th ed., 2016), *A Further Look: Seeing and Being Seen in Psychoanalysis* (2nd ed. 2004), *Charcot's Lesson* (2005), *Psychosis and Social Bonds* (2nd ed. 2006), *The Strangeness of Psychoanalysis—Lacan's School and its Analysts* (2009), *The Others in Lacan* (2012), etc. His latest *Oedipus to the Letter* (2015): an in-depth examination of Greek tragedy in Lacan and Freud, shortlisted for Brazil's most prestigious literary award—the Prêmio Jabuti—in the category of psychology in 2016. His prolific output also includes numerous articles, reviews, and essays both in Brazilian and international specialised journals and media as well as many book chapters.

As co-author, editor, and organiser, Dr Quinet has also published: *Jacques Lacan: Psychoanalysis and its Connections* (1993), *Psychoanalysis—Convergences and Controversies* (2001), *Detours of Desire—Depression and Melancholy* (1999), *In Desire's Aim* (2002), *Love and the Couch* (2013), and also *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis* (2013), shortlisted for the Prêmio Jabuti in 2015.

Dr Quinet's Lacanian clinical technique book *As 4+1 condições da análise* (1991) is now in its fifteenth edition and has been a best-seller in Brazil and Latin American (translated into Spanish as *Las cuatro condiciones del análisis*, 1996) psychoanalytical circles. *Lacan's Clinical Technique—Lack(a)nian Practice* (Karnac, 2017) is a greatly updated and expanded sequel of the book's core ideas on clinical technique.

Further information at: <https://www.antonioquinet.com/>



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PREFACE

Darian Leader

What do psychoanalysis and theatre have in common? According to most of the histories of Freudian practice, analysis begins where theatre ends. After his initial awe at the theatre of the Salpetriere, where patients acted out to the suggestion of their doctors, Freud moved from a clinic of the eye and the visible to a clinic of the ear and the invisible. The rule of free association and the use of the couch, we are told, signalled this decisive break from the space of the spectacle.

It's a nice story, but as Antonio Quinet shows, theatre has never been lost in psychoanalytic practice. The error here is to equate theatre with the visible effects of suggestion, rather than with the more fundamental question of drama and its function in human life. Quinet has a unique perspective here: a psychoanalyst trained in the Lacanian orientation, he also writes, produces and directs plays, working closely not only with his patients but also with actors and all those involved in the *mise en scène* of drama.

In this book he introduces the essentials of Lacanian clinical technique effortlessly and with great humour. Conceptual issues are linked directly to the clinic, and the rationale of the Lacanian approach is explained with clarity and ease. Transference, the use of the couch, the modulation of time, the place of money and the form and aim of interpretation are

all explored carefully and succinctly. But running through these discussions is the overarching question of analysis as a kind of theatre, with the analyst as actor.

If Lacan's early advice to the young analyst was to do crossword puzzles, his later work implies, as Quinet shows, both a textual practice and a dramatic one. Lacan may have begun by elaborating a theory of interpretation, but he would later nuance this with his concept of the analytic act. And indeed, when we survey the numerous examples of Lacan's clinical style, we find plenty of word plays, yes, but the interventions that have the most powerful effects are those which involve a theatre, as Lacan uses his body and his voice to touch, to mimic, to reach and to impact his analysands.

To the analysand's talking cure, Quinet opposes the analyst's acting cure. But this is a special kind of acting. Focusing first on the desire of the analyst, Quinet shows the centrality of the utterance, the conveying of the interpretation rather than its content as such. The analyst performs, acting out the *semblant* of the object, in a strange kind of role-play. This isn't exactly show-business, as he reminds us, but practices constitutive of theatre are equally formative of the analytic encounter. Theatre, after all, has always been about how to convey those things which cannot be said directly.

In a sense, this is the logical consequence of Lacan's position from the late 1950s that desire is incompatible with speech. If desire cannot be given any ready propositional form, it will articulate itself in different ways, in the cracks and furrows of discourse, and in the relations—or sets of relations—between terms. To put it as the Russian Formalists did, what cannot be inscribed as a meaningful proposition will take the form of a relation.

When Theseus set sail for Crete, he tells his father he would hoist a white sail if he was successful in his mission of killing the minotaur. After he slays it, he forgets his promise, and his father throws himself off a cliff. In the first part of this story, a son deliberately kills a non-human adversary. In the second part, a son accidentally kills a human non-adversary. The Oedipal proposition is not directly sayable, and is inscribed not in the first or the second part of the story but in the relation between the two parts. This is the structure of Lacanian desire, which eschews any propositional representation.

If you take this seriously, as Lacan did, analytic practice has to change. New ways have to be found to access what is unsayable, to

touch the points of real in each person's life. Analysis here is not simply a subversion of everyday forms of dialogue, but involves a more radical engagement with the real, an engagement which, as Quinet shows, means that the body and the voice have to be put into play. This is the kind of theatre that Quinet has in mind, and we will be both instructed and delighted at how he introduces it to us in this book.



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PRELUDE TO THE AFTERNOON
OF AN ANALYST

But where and how is the poor wretch to acquire the ideal qualifications which he will need in his profession? The answer is, in an analysis of himself, with which his preparation for his future activity begins.

—“Analysis Terminable and Interminable”, Sigmund Freud

This is not a do-it-yourself book or a step-by-step manual for psychoanalysts. You will not find any easy recipes or a tidy formulaic and prescriptivist approach to Lacanian praxis. Each of the chapters herein is an autonomous essay that can be read independently or studied as a separate unit from the others.

Psychoanalytical technique is grounded in and subordinated to the structure of subjectivity and psychoanalytical ethics. The main treatment guideline is getting the analysand to speak and plunge into free association. This golden rule of psychoanalysis stands above all others. Nevertheless, Freud highlighted some key “initial conditions” such as tentative treatment (preliminary interviews), use of the couch, and the handling of time and money. Accordingly, Lacan lays down a transference strategy as *semblant* and interpretation tactics as poetical. Nonetheless, hovering far above these initial considerations is the analyst’s own

analysis—the key prerequisite for effective psychoanalysis. This book is an overview of the Lacanian concepts related to analytic practice and a summation of my own thoughts as a clinical practitioner.

Analysts need not be dogmatic sticklers to Freud's framework. But they must know the "whys and wherefores" of their technical approach and also surrender themselves to the same structure of analytical procedures.

As all speaking beings, analysts too are subject to castration and must be aware that the Other is also castrated and branded by a *lack*: this is what makes the Other so slippery and vacuous. Hence, analysts cannot place themselves in the place of the Other, because, according to Lacan, the Other is lacking.

They may, however, guide treatment to unravel the threads of alienation signifiers and help patients recognise the lack behind desire that no signifiers can cover or disguise. This process allows patients to unhinge themselves from alienating signifiers. It is here that both analysts and analysands come to the place where all utterances have finally been exhausted: this moment represents the potential end of analysis. Analysts can "promise" to lead the analysand to unveil the object of his or her fantasy in the *locus* of the lack—that thing which exists as an answer to the enigma of the Other's desire. Throughout this process, therapeutic effects can be remarkable.

During treatment, analysts do not act as ego-endowed persons with their own agendas and a personal vision of reality, or as desire-driven subjects plagued by symptoms. Rather, they play the role of the *semblant* of analysand's *objet a* and will only be successful if they themselves too have undergone analysis and reached their own lack point. It is at the end of analysis that they will discover the "analyst's desire". This "desire" is the Lacanian ethical operator that guides all the analyst's acts and steers the treatment.

The analyst's desire and act

The analyst's desire is not a formation of the unconscious. It is not to be found in the subject's chain of signifiers, life story, or entangled with the Other's desire. Hence, the analyst's desire is not decipherable and cannot be located among desires and in the aspirations of any pantheon of familial longings. It is not the *prêt-à-porter* desire of the Other analysands can decipher through their parents. We can only know this

desire through our own analysis. The analyst's desire is one brought on by analysis.

The unconscious desire as the Other's desire— that desire belonging to something else which precedes and moulds our own—is handed down from parents to son, from generation to generation. Psychoanalysis has invented no wheel or gunpowder here. The Greeks knew as much before us. After all, says Lacan, the subject's very desire belongs to the Other, since it is "dated", "received", and interwoven with the desires of those occupying the Other's throne in the subject's mind. The very signifiers the infant is bombarded with since or even before birth are the ballast and meanings of the Other's desire: they are baggage the child will haul along throughout life.

The analyst's desire is not bound to the desire of being or having a phallus: it is not desire connected to the demand for love or sex, and much less a clear-cut answer to the Other's burning desire. It is neither desire as passed down from father to son, from analyst to analysand or any other kind of bequeathal. The analyst's desire is not found in Freud's *Traumdeutung—The Interpretation of Dreams*. That seminal text is a precious record of Freud's desire to analyse himself: a stunning portrait of self-discovery and self-knowledge in which the young analyst learns that the true interpreter of dreams is himself.

The desire Freud discovered in the formations of the unconscious (i.e., dreams), is one linked to something lacking and is therefore always an unfulfillable want. It is a desire knotted in sexuality and signified in the child's earliest representations. It is desire running wildly after signifiers and images to represent, construct, depict, and stage itself. Desire is obsessed with its linguistic signifier "selfies", yet these only reveal it incompletely, because it is always slipping away along the signifier chain; you cannot catch it by the tail.

The analysand's desire for knowledge differs from that of the analyst's. In pursuit of knowledge, analysands, as subjects of their desire, hike along the pathways of sex in the great psychic hinterlands of love—that undiscovered country where their frustrations are reborn and re-enacted in relationships. But the analyst's desire is the cause that empowers analysands to decipher their own selves.

The analysand's "desire for knowledge" is like a "desire for gold" and it is embedded in the formations of the unconscious. Analysands chase after answers like diggers after gold: they think this knowledge is supposedly part of the Other's treasure. Analysands, like Alcibiades who