Models in Lacan's Stylistics

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> *"I do not think I will give you my teaching in the form of a pill; I think that would be difficult."*
> *"Honey is what I am trying to bring you, the honey of my reflection."*
> *"Watch my Télévision. I'am a clown, Let it be an example to you and don't imitate me."*
> *"The truth…is that which runs after truth—and that is where I am running, where I am taking you, like Actaeon's hounds, after me."*
> *- J L*
> *"Lacan ironically takes with one hand what is given with the other, and his reader finds himself in a game, with the marbles of truth hidden in one of Lacan's fists which, upon opening, frequently turns out to be empty…Lacan seems to be eaten up by his own style, much to the discomfort of some of his readers. As the messenger of mythmaking unconscious, he is as difficult as what he speaks of, that is, dreams, hysterical behavior, and hallucinations."*
> *-E.S. Bär*

In the post-war Western academic world, what has been generally labelled as a new enlightenment starts off with theory as a distinct system of thought and a repository of erudite devices for analysis and interpretation. The works by a galaxy of remarkable French thinkers, such as Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, to cite but a few examples, laid the foundation of a vast theoretical corpus that has been incorporated under an umbrella brand, French theory in the 1960s. The similar intellectual movement began to take shape in Paris in 1919 with surrealism promoted by a small circle of literary men such as André Breton, Louis Aragon, Philippe Soupault and others. In the movement of theory, literary men were replaced by theoreticians. The theoretical *zeitgeist* has been spreading across all fields of the humanities and social sciences on campuses across the English-speaking world since then. From the time of its birth, theory has triggered heated controversies in Parisian universities—its spawning ground—and other continental intellectual circles. The theory, of course, wasn't creation ex nihilo, but as a comeback in a new rigor, and—as some commentators suggest with a mystical passion—was certainly revivified in Paris. It is also undeniable that surrealism was inspired and fostered by psychoanalysis and the movement of theory was pioneered by it. As Theodor Adorno wrote in 1956 that "the currently accepted theory of Surrealism…links it with dreams, the unconscious, and perhaps Jungian archetypes, which are said to have found colleges and automatic writing an emancipated image-language uncontaminated by the conscious ego," (Adorno, 2005, 1113). The origin of theory and theoretical writing, from a historical perspective, goes back to the pre-Socratic Greek philosophy, Parmenides' theory of the One, for example. I will return to this later. However, some scholars sees its birth with Plato. The theory "would have always existed and would be identified with these mixed genres, with us since Plato, say—and a historicizing contextualization that would present Theory [*sic*] as a succession of "schools" or panoply of "tools" (Rabaté, 2002, 17). In his *The Future of Theory*, Jean-Michel Rabaté explores the emergence of critical theory in modern Western

intellectual domain and provides two genealogies: the Hegelian and Heideggerian philosophical legacy and the avant-garde movement of the beginning of the twentieth century. We might add to the list, surrealism as an archetype of theorization, at least in Lacan case, for he was an active collaborator with the practitioners of that literary and aesthetic movement. No theory of text, language or culture can be found without a clear influence of the above sources. However, the sordid truth today is that scholars from all fields within the humanities agree that the theoretical works of Derrida and Lacan stand out among others as the most baffling and perplexing for average readers and experts alike. When I was completing my doctorate, I had trouble with a difficult passage from Lacan in French. After spending months on this passage and still looking for clues, in desperation, I approached the French department at my university and asked a professor of French literature for help. As soon as the professor realized I was in the hunt for someone to give me help understand Lacan, she cried out: "Oh, oh, please don't come here, because I don't know a thing about Lacan. In this paper, I wish to put forward an innovative procedure for learning and teaching Lacan's theories and their application for interpreting literature. My attention would be focused on promoting a reading of literature, philosophy and culture with later Lacan and his psychoanalysis, for Lacan was wary about the 'application' of his theories. Still, this was the case with Freud. I would draw a constructive alignment that addressed an intended teaching and learning outcome in order to put this learning and teaching innovation into practice in the classroom. (Brigg and Tang, 2007). Such a perspective on learning and teaching calls for a fitting method of evaluation. This would help me to find new strategies for making reading, learning and teaching of Lacan simple, easy and even a good fun. From there, I would attempt to develop on the evaluation results for a vibrant classroom and effective learning and reading experiences. The next step includes a self-assessment on the prospect of my own professional development as a teacher. I would also examine Lacan's own recommendations to his audience on how he should be read and understood. Nevertheless, Lacan's own systematic endeavors for interpretation and analysis would also be exposed and incorporated into the strategies that I would like to offer in this essay. More importantly, since Lacan's reading and understanding require a cross-disciplinary knowledge, I would present a selected disciplinary terminology of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the rationale for why they must be considered as ineluctable prerequisite for successful comprehension of Lacan. This will, no doubt, help usher those readers into the field who aren't oriented in psychoanalysis. I hope to end by drawing conclusions based on the findings of this research and experience, which might help to enrich and expand the existing methods of teaching and reading the theory and Lacan.

The innovative teaching activities help us, on the one hand, to achieve constructive alignment and, ensure successful learning outcomes on the other. From a theoretical point of view, a constructive alignment allows a teacher, "to set up a learning environment that encourages the student to perform those learning activities, and then assess the outcome to see that they match those intended outcomes" (Briggs, John & Catherine Tang, 2007, 52). In a practical setting, the working of the alignment came to my notice whenever I observed students tried independently answer my questions about the difficult concepts from a selected Lacanian theoretical writing and seminars. I detected even their higher level of self-directed learning experience when, in a collaborative manner, students admirably activated and put the theory into practice in order to explore various dramatic texts of this course.

As a point of departure, I would like to preface my arguments with some testimonials about the widespread disaffection towards the writing of the two leading French theoreticians, Derrida and Lacan. "I have friends who are still awake weeping at 3 am with nightmares about trying to understand Derrida in time for their final exams" (Hary, Johann, 2012). "Reading Jacques Lacan is like being trapped in a cave whose entrance is blocked by a huge rock. Outside, one hears the hammerings and heavings of the rescue mission that has rushed to the scene" (Malcolm Janet, 1983). In the same manner, even experts' responses aren't favourable. The French philosopher, Allain Badiou, who arguably is the most prominent living Lacanian expert who shared long friendship with him writes, "Lacan's stylistics in many ways seem closer to the meanders of the unconscious: it seizes in a statement what precisely escapes every conscious reflexive order…[his] style mixes in a completely remarkable way the syntactical labyrinth of the language" (Badiou, cited in Smith, Jason, 2014, 40). Lacan stenographer, Maria Pierrakos, who took down his seminars verbatim for 12 years in her steno-machine—just as in a Law Court—was cheerful to give her boss a 'gold medal for boorishness'. She writes, "And this is how *homo lacanus* was born, brandishing in the one hand the truncheon of the paradox, and in the other the spear of derision while remaining sheltered within the protection of his dazzling suit of theoretical Armour" (Perrakos, 2006, 43-44). And a philosopher of Boston raises his ire about Lacan in a humorous poem:

> Before you let the patient in, please tell us, Doc Lacan,
> The latest dope from Lévi-Strauss, Derrida and de Man…
> Can dialectic referents be structured after Hegel?
> Will nominal concretions truly supersede the bagel?
> And does the signifier really mean the signified?
> O merde, Lacan, your patient just committed suicide.
> (Cited in François Cusset, 2008, 63)

Nowadays, such pugnacious condemnations are inexorably shared within the departments of the humanities and social sciences, where learners as well as academics find Lacan hard to grapple with. As above testimonials bear witness, the teaching theory has overturned the conventional belief that the study of natural science is harder than the humanities. The theoretical interests push theory into a scientific field, "theoretical interest, the satisfaction of which is the work of science" (Hegel, 2004, 42). That is why, "students of Chemical engineering…are in general better at getting out of bed than students of art and English" (Eagleton, 2004, 40). A considerable part of the comprehension of Lacanian text shares borders with impossibility. Even so, Lacan's impossibility has to be taken in Aristotelian sense. Aristotle identified impossibilities with a romantic weight, "with regard to poetic effect, a plausible impossibility is preferable to what is implausible but possible" (Aristotle, 1996, 45).

If theory is hard to grasp, its teaching is even harder. A deep approach to teaching can help learners to get hold of the context and the knowledge to deal with theory. Thus, to master a perplexing poststructuralist theoretical text with multiple contexts, multi-layered ambiguities, and a cross-disciplinary framework in a classroom, a learner would be desperately in need of a teaching innovation. The teaching innovation I propose here contains the following four modules: First, orientation, which means familiarizing learners with the key concepts in Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. Many scholars prefer to add to their textbooks or course

materials a pertinent glossary of Lacanian psychoanalysis with entrenching abstract definitions. Reading such glossaries, especially when one is dealing with inaccessible theories, a learner runs the risk of parroting technical terms in an intangible way. What I propose, instead, is a preliminary conceptual knowledge that allows a learner to assimilate and cross-reference pertinent concepts with the whole body of the theory. This knowledge has to be taught at the beginning of the course and must be dealt with in the classroom the way a mechanic uses a "manual for assembling" an appliance (Eagleton, 2014, 117). Second, understanding the nature and enigmas of Lacan's theory with confidence, which will allow a learner to demystify Lacan and overcome phobias about his theories. Such a technical know-how helps a learner to comprehend Lacan's unique writing style, rhetorical devices, multiple contexts, theoretical reasoning, and his wide range of sources. Third, a reading with signposting the text in order to make sense of what Lacan says. This way, a reader acquires the skills for drawing a trajectory of the thoughts and arguments discussed throughout the text. I shall return to this point in a moment. Fourth, keeping students enthusiastic about the subject matter by stimulating their interest and motivation in the classroom.

Let us explore the question of constructive alignment, an inescapable element of profound learning. By taking my cue from theories of Briggs and Tang, I designed effective alignment for a 13-week course entitled 'Lacan & Theatre: Writing for Performance and Literary Theory'. This postgraduate course was intended as part of the Master of Fine Arts (writing for performance program with the National Institute of Dramatic Arts-NIDA (University of New South Wales, Australia). In addition to key Lacnaian theoretical concepts, the following dramatic texts were selected for Lacanian critical investigation:

> Sophocles: The Law and pure desire in *Antigone*
> Aeschylus: Self and the other in *The Persians*
> Shakespeare: Subject and the Object *a* in *Othello*; the disintegration of Kingship in *King Lear;* and tragedy of desire in *Hamlet*
> Moliere: Madness and 'gentle soul' in *Les Misanthrope*
> Artaud: genesis of theatre of the absurd in *Jet of Blood*; and the *jouissance* of the polymorphous perverts in *The Cenci*
> Beckett: the Subject realizes himself in Other (mouth) in the *Not I*; and the suspension of the subject in *The Endgame*

After successfully completing this course, the learners developed noticeable abilities to take an independent analytical position in relation to every literary and dramatic text they chose to analysis. By designing alignment, I managed to incorporate the intended learning outcomes in my weekly written Lesson Plans. This allowed me to devise multiple teaching activities in the classroom and monitor the progress of students' learning. A written lesson plan—containing relevant timetable and a statement about the learning outcomes—was made available electronically to students, for one-hour lecture and one hour seminar ahead of each weekly class. I utilized blended-learning together with a wide-range of learning activities with the help of new technology and the use of traditional white board. When needed, I also encouraged collective Internet browsing in order to bring about an outcome-based teaching and learning environment in the classroom.

The course outline, which contained an introduction, learning outcomes, course description and an objective weekly timetable demanded essential and optional texts and readings,

deadlines, assignments, etc. Copies of the essential and some of the optional readings were made available to students in a separately printed *Reader* before their enrolment. During the first six weeks of the course, I used multiple teaching strategies in order to address three learning objectives: empowering students enough to overcome their fear of Lacan and his hieroglyphic style, sustained classroom motivation, and getting students interested in the course materials. This method endowed students with power to build confidence in reading Lacan and overcome their uncanny feelings about his theories. Throughout the semester, I have noticed student's growing engagement in various classroom activities. The learners started to demonstrate their skills in communicating and debating the challenging theoretical concepts, including their practical use, fairly soon. The use of whiteboard, diagrams, handouts, and anecdotal material concerning Lacan's methods of delivering his seminars and his writing greatly helped increase interactive learning in the class. Doing so remarkably facilitated deep learning methods among the learners and encouraged grasping Lacan's difficult theoretical conceptualization and mathematical formalization. Tailoring the course material to students' needs helped me manage the task of facilitating the learners' intrinsic motivation with lesser efforts. In the course of this stage in teaching, most students developed a state of mind filled with feelings of 'I-can-and-I-will'' read and understand Lacan. In the same fashion, in the seminars, I made all attempts to describe various sources of Lacan's theory, his exceptional style of writing and his compulsive use of rhetorical playfulness and word-play such as ellipses, ironies, puns, metaphors, and excessive borrowings, and so on.

It is important at this point to come to unpack the very tempting signposting activities in the classroom reading, which I am trying to posit, among others, as an analytical tool to follow for bringing up appropriate learning outcomes (2010). The signposts invigorated students to develop a sense of direction and control over their reading of the text. In one seminar, I collaboratively read one whole lecture (26 pages) of *My Teaching* (a collection of three lectures Lacan delivered in 1967) with students and signposted a number of concepts that Lacan accentuates in his text:

> …in the beginning, there was not the origin. There was '**the place'** (p.4)…Everyone thinks they have an adequate idea of what psychoanalysis is. 'The unconscious…well…it's the unconscious.' Nowadays everyone knows there is such a thing as an **unconscious** (p.7)…the mystery surrounding some of the words we use, words that have their own shock effect that make sense. The word 'truth', for example. What is '**the truth**'?…it [truth]comes out quite naturally, emerges from the well. It [truth] comes out, but that isn't enough. It [truth] speaks. It says things, usually things we were not expectation. (p.15)…The origin of my teaching is very simple. It has always been there because time was born at the same time as what we are talking about. My teaching is, in fact, quite simply **language**, and absolutely nothing else. (p.26) (Lacan, 2008)

The four psychoanalytic concepts I pinned down here in bold are what I mean by signposting. The terms: *the place, the unconscious, the truth and language* hold key to the meaning of all twenty-six pages. Lacan lays emphasis on language in his entire teaching, because for him, the language we use makes us also at the same time. At the same time, language constitutes the lack and its consequential human desire. With the help of the introductory conceptual knowledge, everyone in the class understood what Lacan sought to impart, with little effort. By piecing together these correlative concepts, the learners found it easier to solve the underlying theoretical jigsaw. The key concept, the *place*, in Lacanian terminology means, the signifier, the subject, the phallus, the position of the analyst, a presence of an absence, a

marker of the repression, a locus of the lost Thing in the real and so on. The *unconscious*, of course is the cogito of the Lacanian psychoanalysis, and its contents insist and reveal themselves in a literary text as slips, typos, bungled actions—the Freudian Parapraxes, for example. For Freud, the parapraxes were repressed manifestation of amorphous drives, but for Lacan they are signifiers that index the signifying chain of language. The *truth* is also a polysemic concept in Lacan's teaching, which implies in this context, the truth about desire. Lacanian truth is like Nietzschean truth; it is not an exact, crude, or universal reality as science claims it, it is rather meaningful only in language as fiction, false appearance, errors, etc. Like the *unconscious*, language is another perennial concept in Lacan's epistemology: "My teaching is, in fact, quite simply language, and absolutely nothing else" (Ibid, 26). Language for Lacan is at once a thing that splits the subject and changes him into being. Besides such concepts, Lacan's vague statements, and unacknowledged borrowings from multiple sources such as philosophy and literature have also been signposted.

Like contours in a map, these signposts allow a reader to interact with Lacan's text, for they highlight the focal points of the passages. Besides, they help us to nutshell the passages and make the meaning of the concerned text manageable. As such, by concentrating on the gist of the text, we could save ourselves from wandering in the blind alleys of Lacan's usual opaque rhetorical extravagance and circumlocutory style. In other words, signposts do the work of the pinpoints of light, which helps us to carve an inroad into every nook and cranny of Lacan's writing style. This is exactly what Lacan advises us in "Radiophonie"—an interview with Lacan in 1970 in Belgium, "I always place buoys by which one can navigate in my discourse" (Lacan cited in Jean-Luc Nancy, 1992, 13). Mathematics is thus a way of formalization for Lacan through which he tries to bring psychoanalysis closer to a scientific discourse, a discourse which is different from an intuitive and subjective assumption. There are numerous quasi-mathematical formulas and mythemes for fantasy, drive, demand, discourses, desire, etc. in Lacanian epistemology, where mathematic appears to be a symbolic way of expressing the truth which remains always outside the grasp of the language. This explains Lacan statement that "*mathematical* par excellence", means 'transmissible outside of meaning'" (Lacan cited in Justin Clemens and Adam Bartlett, 2012, 197).

Topological figures, diagrams, optical models' graph such as, four graphs of desire, torus, Mobius strip, Schema-L, Schema-R, Klein's bottle, the cross-cup, Borromean knot, and so on are like difficult Chinese puzzles for Lacan's readers. He uses these illustrative figures and metrics in a post-Euclidian geometry for he saw topology as the real structure and a function of "the cut (*coupure*), since the cut is what distinguishes a discontinuous transformation from a continuous one" (Evan, Dylan, 1997, 208). However, in different periods of his teaching, Lacan's topological strategy, according to prominent Lacanian, Ellie Ragland, was to develop "a psychoanalytic logic based on a topological structuralism he also called "a science of the real" (Ragland, Ellie, 2004, 49). It is impossible here for me to explore this field in Lacan fully in this essay.

It is important now to venture forth the key features of Lacan's stylistic and methods of argumentation. An overriding characteristic of Lacan's style is a meandering way of developing his psychoanalytic concepts by drawing on a multitude of disciplines such as philosophy, linguistics, mathematics, anthropology, theology, literature and so on. These disciplines are the loci from where his theorization and argumentation arise, but, to be more specific, philosophy and literature form a hinge around which his thoughts nourish

themselves. Like psychoanalysis, philosophy is a Lacanian parable from beginning to end as Žižek maintains that "with regards to other schools, the first thing that strikes the eye is the philosophical tenor of Lacan's theory" (Žižek, 2006, 3). However, Lacan, would be the first to disagree with Žižek for he always tried to distance himself from philosophy. In answer to a question by his audience, once he said, "and I can't see what would lead to my name's being added precisely to a list of philosophers which doesn't seem to me to be entirely judicious" (Lacan, 2007, 145).

Another usual procedure in Lacan's argumentation is analyzing and synthesizing ideas from various sources, which is one of the several reasons that makes his text identical to avant-garde literature, brimming with obscurity, opaqueness, and allusive web. My experience with students reveals the fact that this aspect of Lacan and French theory as a whole, encumbers learners with a heavy and unbearable amount of learning materials. More importantly, this fact makes the retention and progression of learning rather difficult and constrains the learning of so many theoretical strands. Lacan's polysemic and perplexing concept, the One with the capital O is a noticeable example. This concept appears in his *Seminar X; Seminar XIX; Seminar XX* and elsewhere. In order to develop this concept, he blends and analyzes concepts from philosophy, theology, and mathematics. He takes his lead from Parmenides' notion of the One-Whole as God and one Being, from which all things emanate, including man, "Man himself is that being that has the distinctive characteristic of being addressed by Being itself" (Heidegger, 1998, 104). For Parmenides, the One was an original and motionless substance as only the one and homogeneously existing being. Lacan, then, examines another shade of this notion from his reading of Plato's forms or ideas from which everything in the sensible and abstract world is copied. Lacan's next point of reference in relation to the One is Neo-Platonist pantheism—Oneness and the unity of existence. He explores the concept of the One further by reading mystical writings in monotheistic religions and in Hinduism and Buddhism. He singles out the works of two Christian theologians, Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine for his investigation. From Freudian *Totem and Taboo* and Levi Strauss' structuralist anthropology, comes the primordial father, as an example of the One who wasn't subject to castration. From Frege's mathematics, he borrows the relationship between the One and the Zero.   As an empty space, the Zero defines Lacan's concept of the decentered subject of the unconscious that exists outside the signifying chain. After his exhausting amount of readings, however, Lacan glosses at length and incorporates this concept in *Encore—Seminar XX,* as he states, "There's such a thing as One" (*Y a d' l'Un*), when I stressed that, when I truly pounded that into you like an elephant all of last year, you see what I was introducing to you" (Lacan, 1999, 128-129). He concludes that, the One is the signifier that represents the subject for another signifier. The One is the first signifier and transcendental signifier that makes the articulation of the signifying chain possible.

A similar synthesis-cum-analysis approach is being played out in Lacan's theorization of the concept of the Object *a*. This concept came about in Lacan from the Kleinian meta-psychological concept of part object. (Kristeva, 1980) By way of illustration, Lacan borrows the notion of *agalma*, from ancient Hellenistic culture and presents it as a typical example of the Object *a*—the object cause of desire. The *agalma* was a sacrificial object, gift, image or ornament offered to Gods on the altar of the ancient Greek temples. In Plato's *Symposium*, the typical example of this partial object for Lacan is Socrates and that core of his personality, which turns out to be the object of Alcibiades' passionate love. From Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Lacan picks up the 'lead casket', which contains a picture of Portia. The inscription on the lead casket signifies the importance of the object in

the casket. The inscription "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath," (*MoV*: 2. 7.11-12), reiterates what Lacan means by the Object *a* as the most precious thing hidden in a worthless and ugly shell. In Socrates case, Lacan reminds us of his proverbial facial ugliness and the outer cover of his precious core.

This is a method of Lacanian reading that Žežik uses in his *Reading Lacan*. He argues that Lacan always finds himself locked up in a ceaseless dialogue with other thinkers when constructing his own text. Such engagement with others also reveals Lacan's own theoretical position as well. Throughout his book, Žežik read Lacan in conjunction with Plato, Aquinas, Hegel, Kierkegaard and others.

> Lacan was a voracious reader and interpreter; for him, psychoanalysis itself is a method of reading texts, oral (the patients' speech) or written. What better way to read Lacan, then, then to practice his mode of reading, to read other's texts *with* Lacan…The Lacanian position will be elucidated through the Lacanian reading of the other text. (Žežik, 2006, 5)

Roudinesco saw this implicit method in a different light. In her account, Lacan made attempts to brand everyone he deals with, from Socrates to Beckett, Lacanians. This according to her, led some Lacanians to create a 'comic discourse' by calling all 'Lacanians in advance'. In a dialogue with Badiou, Roudinesco asserts, "whoever the author he is speaking about may be, Lacan initiates a process of incorporation in his theorization: he thinks the other thinkers are stating the same thing as he is saying. He often judges earlier thinkers or writers to have anticipated his own reflection. We've seen how he was able to argue, not without humor, that Plato was already Lacanian" (Badiou & Roudinesco, 2014, 47-48). However, in my view, such convergence signifies a common ground between what Lacan theorizes, what literature tries to dramatize, and what philosophy conceptualizes. In other words, it is rather a truth that both psychoanalysis and literature explore and reveal.

It is worth pausing to note one final piece of advice that Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan's son-in-law, gives about reading Lacan. Like any other thinker, Lacan has its own strengths and weaknesses, and when using his theory, we don't need to parrot his words.

> Lacan is not an author. His work is a teaching…we must know that following his star requires that we do not synchronize and dogmatize this teaching, that we do not hide but rather stress its contradictions, its antinomies, its deadlocks, its difficulties. (Miller, 1994, 75)

The intensive use of topology and algebraic formulas as, "a new religion of Lacan's mathematics." (Cusset, François, 2003, 3), is another feature of Lacan's theories, which continues to intimidate many students in the humanities. Lacan's association with mathematics, by no means, seems to be embedded in a scientific context as it is the case with Kant, Descartes, Russell and other philosophers. Lacan decontexualizes mathematics and draws upon the logic beneath it as evidence for his own theorization, instead. In short, Lacanian mathematics has a dual-propose: an illustration of/ and evidence for his arguments, and reinforcement of his theoretical claims. Take, for example, the formulas of the metaphor and metonymy that Lacan premised on Freud's concepts of condensation and displacement in a dream, and Jakobson's two axes of language, namely paradigmatic (vertical/selection/metaphoric): syntagmatic (horizontal/combination/metonymic):

1. Metaphoric structure: $f(S/Ś)\,S \cong S\,(+)\,s$
2. Metonymic structure: $f(S...Ś)\,S \cong S\,(-)\,s$

In order to make sense of these formulas, we need to break down each mathematical proposition into its component parts and then locate their meaning and positions in the equation. Let us take into account the formula of metaphor first, which Lacan underscores as "the entire text of this *Écrits* is a commentary on this formula," (Lacan, 1996, xii). In Mathematics, $f(x)$, [f =function and x= input] has to be read: the function of the input is related to corresponding output. This function $f S$ in the formula of metaphor allows a set of mathematical operations on x input that results in a y output. This function for Lacan implies the signifying function in language. The left side of the equation is congruent with its right side. On the left side, S/Ś means that one signifier is substituted and separated for another by the sign (–) or the bar. On the right side of the equation, however, $S (+)$ s means that the signifier is crossing over to the signified (another signifier). The ability to cross over is symbolized by the sign (+). The formula of the metaphor, as a whole, has to be read that the signifying function of one signifier substituted for another is congruent with the crossing of the signifier to another signifier as the effect of the signified. This implies that metaphor produces signification and some sort of meaning. Later, Lacan changes the formula of metaphor, and defines it concisely as "metaphor is, quite radically speaking, the effect of the substitution of one signifier for another in a chain" (Lacan, 2006, 756).

The formula of metonymy, by contrast, has in its left side, the signifying function of the relation between one signifier and another; and to the right, the resistance of the signifier to cross over to the signified is denoted by the sign (-). The sign (-) symbolizes the split between the signifier and the signified. The metonymic structure has to be read as the signifying function $f S$ of the link between one signifier and another (S…S) is congruent with the preservation of the bar which sustains itself as an un-crossable barrier but produces some effect of the signification. The sign $\cong$ in both formulas means that the two corresponding sides fit, slide and flip with one another. The sign (-) and (+) have not to be taken as mathematical symbols but as a *bar* and a *crossed bar*. In short, the sign (-) means that the crossing of the signifier into the signified is barred; and the sign (+) denotes the possibility of the sliding of one signifier into another signifier, which functions as a signified.

Metonymy is important insofar as it defers one signifier and links it to another—guaranteeing its indestructability as well as its forward motion. This rhetorical figure, for Lacan carries human desire and fantasy along the signifying chain of the discourse. Since the signifier is inherently self-signifying, the metonymic structure produces a lack in the signification and meaning. This lack in meaning or producing an effect other than the meaning describes Lacan's notion of signifierness (*signifiance*) that he outlines in Encore*: Seminar XX*. The *jouissance* and other manifestation of the real are examples of this aspect of the signifier that justifies Lacan's mathematical formulas in general and these tropes in particular justify that the "mathematical formalization" is "the most advanced instance of signifierness," (Charles Freeland, 2013, 139). Lacan summaries the significance of these tropes for literary theory and criticism, when he states that "in this vertical substitution is produced an effect of a poetic signification which is that of poetry or creation. Metonymy that sad structure, horizontally laid out, offers up only lack" (Gallop, Jane, 1985, 129). In his "The Agency of the letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud (*Écrits*)," Lacan heightens the function of a metaphor to a 'poetic spark' "in close proximity with "paternal mystery" (Ibid). Following Jakobson, Lacan in this celebrated lecture specifies the metaphor as a dominant mode in

poetry, and metonymy as the dominant trope in prose and realist novel. Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, view Lacanian metaphor as a locus, "where the vocabulary of linguistics and psychoanalysis are combined" (Nancy & Labarthe, 1992, 102). Both tropes are crucial for Lacanian literary theory for both represent the primacy and insistence of the signifier that lead to a perpetual interruption of the signified and indestructability of the signifier. The metonymy through its deferment, carries the presence and absence of the object of desire, "Sometimes the metonymic object is a presence (engendering joy); sometimes it is an absence (engendering distress)" (Barthes, 2002, 173). The Figures of speech for Lacan even in an analysand's language function just like the signposts showing a roadmap for a clinical analysis, as he says, "May one of your ears become as deaf as the other one must be acute. And that is the one that you should lend to listen for sounds and phonemes, words, locutions, and sentences, not forgetting pauses, scansions, cut, periods, and parallelisms" (Lacan cited in Bruce Fink, 11). This perhaps explains why Lacan calls an analyst a 'rhetorician', (Ibid, 15).

In a more practical setting, Lacan's formulas are not restricted to metaphor and metonymy as merely figures of speech. Both tropes go much beyond their rhetorical facets. Lacan attempts to take into account the core features of these tropes as well as the complex processes they undergo within language, the unconscious, literature, and culture as a whole. The metaphor allows one signifier to be substituted for another, or to be more precise, the signifier functions as the signified. Likewise, the unconscious speaks metaphorically but sustains and insists in a metonymic chain. In other words, both master tropes function as "two facets of the play of the unconscious," (Lacan, 2006, 755), but they can reveal and hide the unconscious desire at the same time. Figures of speech and rhetoric order and structure the unconscious, which explain simply what Lacan meant by his famous statement that the unconscious is structured like language, and it is structured *by* language. Most specifically, in the unconscious like in language, one signifier is referred to the other and the signified is always missing, where the metaphor and metonymy operate the sliding and slipping of the signifiers. (to be concluded)