

A Lacanian Subjectivity and the Politics of Resistance in Thailand's Youth-led Protests in 2020-2021: the Hysteric, the Thing, and the Real*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to bring the notion of subjectivity articulated by Jacques Lacan, a French critical psychoanalyst, to study Thai politics. It focuses on Lacanian subjectivity, the notion which must be paradigmatically discussed by amalgamating with other relevant notions, notably, the hysteric, the Thing, and the Real, having the scenario of Thailand's protest in 2020-2021 to be a case study that helps illuminate the relationship between Lacanian subjectivity and politics of resistance. Understanding subjectivity in this route will enable one to avoid reducing subjectivity to the factor of generational division. As Thai politics has hitherto been academically influenced by and discussed via the issues of democratization, a history of political economy, and a consolidation of democracy, all of those non-psychoanalytic perspectives are entwined with the actuality of social movement aims to wither away a political bloc of establishment. Consequently, with such continuity in academic debate, the aspect of subjectivity is unfortunately negated. To bring it back means that addressing subjectivity – a crucial notion in psychoanalysis – with the empirical case study of the Thai youth-led movement in 2020-2021 is committed in this article, which is fueled with a motif in filling in such intellectual lacuna obvious in Thai politics.

Keywords: Lacan, subjectivity, Thai politics, psychoanalysis

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Introduction: subjectivity and politics

Since the 1990s, subjectivity and the act of resistance in politics enacted by people from below against the bloc of political establishment have brought great attention in the Western, especially Anglo-Saxon academia (Gower, 2011; Strawson, 2011; Zahavi, 2005; Bortolan and Magri, 2022; Botsis, 2018). To understand what subjectivity is, this requires one to understand that subjectivity is fundamental to the study of philosophy. In philosophy, subjectivity is the notion that displays a human as being-in-the-world who has been engaged in a process of self-reflection to understand a relationship between himself/herself and the others as beings-in-the-world.

In one classical fashion dating back to the nineteenth century, subjectivity is a being-in-the-world. Subjectivity is the being as part of beings-in-the-world. It refers to the ground of human-being posited at the ontological level. The ontological level of being makes way to leap forward to the being valorized as the absolute Being to which the works of Georg W.F. Hegel and Martin Heidegger incorporate this knowledge about absolute being to be the Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is a ground of subjectivity – the truth-in-itself at display of Hegelian absoluteness (Hegel, 1998, p. 47) – which must be discovered by Dasein, the interrogator of the meaning of Being-in-the-world that is posited as always-already there (Heidegger, 2010, pp. 1-13). In brief, this means that to meet the ground of ontological Being also means that Dasein finally reaches home, so too subjectivity becomes exuberant, and the Being is reified in the end as a totality, in consequence.

However, beginning in the mid-twentieth century approximately in the 1960s, outside the realm of the influential image of subjectivity deemed in the nineteenth century promulgated by Hegel and Heidegger, there was a possibility to treat subjectivity incubated in a course of constant change, a rejection of subjectivity as an absolute Being. Unlike the topographical image of subjectivity said by Hegel and Heidegger that enables absoluteness to subjectivity, this new landscape of subjectivity aims to treat subjectivity as something that has no absoluteness. It can be argued that subjectivity is caught in a process of becoming. It is the subjectivity that displays a pure immanence that which is emerged as an outcome of non-submissive to the Other or the big Other such as a castration of desire thanks to the works of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and of course, Jacques Lacan

(Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Lacan, 2006; 1997; 1998).

Bringing Lacanian subjectivity to the core of politics has had a long history of debate and hence is not unimportant. Not only it is academically significant in terms of the production of knowledge, but also in lessening a concentration on politics based on a state-centrist model. In other words, theoretically driven forward about subjectivity is that subjectivity is an underlying matter that becomes crucial in thinking about politics. By concerning primarily on a living condition of the subordinated people in the face of an oppressive regime and a desperate historical condition such as capitalism and its mode of production subduing the subjects, subjectivity is a matter which will decenter from state sovereignty inclining towards the official decision-making influential to public utilities and reason. Disclosing the element of subjectivity will help capture the worldview of people or subjects who engage in the courses of politics of resistance, including their painful emotions, mood, agony, anger, anxiety, and afflictions caused by the state or establishment better. Again, it is observed that since the 1990s subjectivity has received scholarly debate and critical attention in the literature of political philosophy, political theory, social movement, and international relations (IR) that focus on performative effects accomplished by non-state actors such as protesters, survivors, the disabled people, missing persons, veterans, and so on (Edkins, 2015; 2011; 2003; Edkins, Pin-Fat, and Persram, 1998).

Above is the significance of subjectivity and its theoretical feature being contextualized in the politics of resistance that has had a long history of debate and argument in Anglo-Saxon academia. Apart from this subjectivity avoids reducing individuals to the ideological apparatuses such as democracy and liberalism but look into their deeper worldview, unconscious; a hidden desire. This is how subjectivity matters. However, subjectivity is a topic that is often omitted in the literature of Thai politics. As noted above, dominant topics in the study of Thai politics are seen around the following issues: a political transition, injustice, the rule of law, a history of Thai political economy, and so on, until subjectivity becomes the topic left unconcerned and largely imperceptible. In the milieu of this lacuna, this research, with a prime focus on subjectivity matter, aims to provide such an intellectual gap in the study of Thai politics, having the event of protest in Thailand 2020-2021 as an empirical support. And this hopefully will let the

subjectivity matter and critical theories associated with it become more scholarly burgeoning and philosophically perceptible.

Put another way, adjacent to the dominant topics described above, this research features the youth protests in Thailand between 2020-2021 as a case study for a focus on subjectivity immersed contextually in the politics of resistance. The rationality behind this choice of selection is in the following. Between 2020-2021, Thailand became once again a political hotspot as a country faced the upshot of protesters – many of them youngsters, notably school and college students – who emerged to challenge a military government under the supremacy of former Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha. Against what is immediately perceived as a pseudo-democratic establishment that hinders the attainment of mature democracy, those lad-led mobs are numerically large in terms of membership registered while enabling the expansion of counterproductive forces against the Thai establishment: the tripartite agencies comprised of military, monarchy, and (the oligarch) merchant. Youth protesters are also unwaveringly knitted and strategically couched by other social sectors such as human rights activists, labor activists, former redshirt activists, advocates of sexual diversity known as LGBTQIAN+, high school students, university lecturers, and Thai diasporas (Hinz, 2022).

No doubt, it is useful to conduct a wide survey on how young Thai protesters are naturally diversified, to the certain extent that many of them are democratically preoccupied with multiple agendas (Wichuta, 2023). But does the act of conducting an empirical survey to cover the Thai ontologized subterranean groups at the stake of the Free Youth Movement umbrella as much as possible academically sufficient? In response, it is worth reflecting on the matter deeply. More of a theoretical discussion relevant to epistemology, philosophy, and new etymology is required, indeed. One resolute standpoint is that a series of crises in Thailand is rich enough to offer more serious theoretical discussions about subjectivity attributable to various strands of academia such as psychoanalysis, post-structuralism and of course Thai politics.

Therefore, an attempt made in this research about subjectivity and the politics of resistance while resorting to Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis associated with the notions of the hysteric, the Thing, and the Real will help disclose aspect of subjectivity in Thai politics focusing on the case of the 2020-2021 youth-led pro-

tests in Thailand. Antecedent to this research, subjectivity is implied in a few existing literature about Thai politics. Such literature is often rooted in a non-psychoanalytic insight drawing primarily from politico-sociological factors such as class, ideology, and generation. In terms of subjectivity, it is hinted in the non-psychoanalytic literature that young Thai protesters are dominantly the middle-class base (Patpicha and Panarat, 2020; Kanokrat, 2021a). In terms of subjectivity, it is also suggested that those protesters have embraced liberal ideologies such as wokeism, liberalism, feminism, and so on (McCargo, 2021). Those protesters who are labelled as generation Z have had subjective worldviews different from their predecessors (Kanokrat, 2021b). Of course, in some extent, those non-psychoanalytic viewpoints are essential in illustrating subjectivity in political resistance against the Thai authority. But more of a theoretical discussion on subjectivity from a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective will help deepen a debate on the same matter: debating subjectivity in a Lacanian fashion, precisely, is a primary focus.

This article uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to illustrate subjectivity of the Thai youth protesters. In principle, Lacan views subjectivity that “it can be seen that the subject’s division does not have to be pinned together in a single body” (Lacan, 2006, p. 657). From this viewpoint, Lacan’s thinking of subjectivity departs from language that tends to determine subjectivity to a particular category or belonging. From this, it is implied that subjectivity refers to a thinking of the subject about the world, society, and people that challenges the symbolic order, such as repressive power, authority, and authoritarianism. So, in terms of politics of resistance, it can be said that Lacan’s subjectivity highlights the repressed desire of those subordinated subjects wanting to challenge the oppressive regime. This aspect compels one to bring other concepts, namely, the hysteric, the Thing, and the Real together. In this case, the Thai political gathering uprisings in Thailand in 2020-2021 are portrayed and heuristically discussed, through the lens of a Lacanian subjectivity, which will shed light on a nature of subjectivity that is different from a generational divisive factor. In order to grasp the true nature of subjectivity – one that belongs to the Lacanian category indeed – Soravis Jayanama’s recent work shows Thai youth protesters irreducible to the generation Z, but rather and mostly likely a Thai wokeism. According to Soravis, it seems in some ways that those Thai young protesters are controversially the emblematic of the McGowanian left form of

Lacanian enjoyment (*jouissance*), opening towards the fruitful thought that interpreting the Thai youth as depoliticization and simultaneously apolitical is insufficient. Ensured from Soravis, most sensible of all is to say that their reactionary politics from the ex-timate position of non-belonging to the Thai society make them just the “cute” wokeism and not the “red” revolutionary Left (Soravis, 2024, pp. 181-182).

Aside from enjoyment suggested by Soravis, this article recommends that other Lacanian notions can also endorse subjectivity of the Thai youth protesters. This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section introduces in brief about Lacanian subjectivity. The remaining sections bring Lacanian subjectivity promulgated in the first section to amalgamate with other relevant notions, such as hysteric, the Thing, and the Real, by putting it in the context of political resistance having the scenario of Thailand’s protest in 2020-2021 to be a case study that helps illuminate the relationship between Lacanian subjectivity and politics of resistance.

Lacanian subjectivity: a brief understanding

This section offers an introduction to Lacanian subjectivity, which explores the work of Jacques Lacan, a prominent psychoanalyst. This section provides a brief understanding of Lacanian subjectivity, or, subjectivity that is articulated by Jacques Lacan, a critical psychoanalyst. Lacanian subjectivity is a phenomenon of the self that illustrates a division in the subject. In its essence, Lacanian subjectivity is insurgent by nature (Lacan, 2021; 2017; 2008). Keywords of Lacanian subjectivity are the notions of dissonance, excess, and the split from the whole. But prior to achieving this understanding of subjectivity as the social and the psychological dissent, it must break from the consonance, that is, ego-consciousness in relation to the Other such as the order of language, as will be described below.

To begin with, under modern society that displays the relationship between society and men, it appears that consonance is permanent. In a modernity where all men are related to the order of language – the symbolic order as the Other – the subject as a speaking being, especially his or her desire, is constituted by the objective phenomenon thanks to language thrusting upon their mind that shapes a reflection of the world to the subject. As such, what emerges following the Other is the object cause of desire that forms ego-consciousness for the subject.

Ego-consciousness and the object cause of desire has resonated have resonated with one another. This relationship between the subject and the object cause of desire intimated to it culminates in the mirror image of thought (Lacan, 1998, p. 126): a consonance.

However, Lacan rejects such consonance. Consonance becomes later a dissonance. This makes sense because not everyone satisfied with modern life is satisfied with modern life, such as a society of competition, materialism, industrialization in a society of competition, materialism, industrialization, and consumerism. An internal division in a subjectivity begins here, that is, to be a dissonance. Following Lacan who renounces subjectivity that is consistent to ego-consciousness, so a subjectivity that is united with the object cause of desire is symptomatic (Fink, 1995, p. 44). This means that subjectivity that is presupposed as the absolute being in relation to the cause of desire, which is presupposed as the absolute being in relation to the cause of desire, is impossible. Karl Marx's proposal on communism can be set as an example of breaking away from this ego-consciousness of a capitalist modernity. Lacan insists that "the Other presents itself to the subject only in an a-sexual form" and he also continues that the desire of the Other is "the prop, the substitute-prop" (Lacan, 1998, p. 127). Lacan in the same way as Marx is looking for dissonance, no doubt.

Based on dissonance, essentially what the subject realizes as an object cause of desire as the Other as a being presence-at-hand is just "substitute-prop" cause of desire, which is impossible, disclosing a-sexual form of life. Because of the substitution of the cause of desire, what the subject genuinely desires remained alienated to the Other, it is "a-sexual" form-of-life. It is most likely to threaten an abolition of the existing order of language. In other words, to understand dissonance, one can determine the desire of the Other as the cause of desire. But the subject takes it as the lack. This is why, for Lacan, in front of the lack "man cannot aim at being whole, once the play of displacement and condensation to which he is destined in the exercise of his functions marks his relation, as a subject, to the signifier" (Lacan as cited in Tarabochia, 2014, p. 225). Outside the signifier of the Other, which is the lack that causes condensation and displacement, what Lacan is looking for is what is true and that is a position of subjectivity that Lacan is interested in.

Looking for what is true shows Lacan's attempt to understand subjectivity. Looking for what is true really needs an understanding of the lack and an attempt to cope with the lack altogether. It begins with the subject experiencing the lack because of the signifier of the Other as a being presence-at-hand. Once the subject has experienced a lack, the subject predicates the lack upon itself as an inevitable consequence. But this is not enough, for what concerns the subject is also a position of his or her genuine thought outside the Other is not enough, for what concerns the subject is also a position of his or her genuine thought outside the Other, such as Marx as the example given above. This is a rationale behind Lacan's articulation of the divided subject (the barred S or \$) to realize an internal division between a conscious ego and the subjectivity as the worldview being repressed (Chiesa, 2007, p. 6), thus negating a homeostasis with the desire of the Other. In short, in the Other what is disappeared is the subject qua desire that sustains a "condition for the manifestation of what is true" (Chiesa, 2017, p. 143). In other words, lack is not an end in itself but is a condition for looking for what is true or something that exceeds a premonition of the symbolic order. Lack is a condition of excess (Žižek, 2023), this; this is a position of Lacanian subjectivity.

Juxtaposed with above, the excess is a position of Lacanian subjectivity that is fully explicated. To recapitulate, instead of accounting for the subject as a speaking being in relation to the Other that informs and instills in the subject about what to take as an object cause of desire, Lacan's emphasis on a divided subjectivity appears to cope with a symptomatic lack following such complexity, thereby inducing one to grasp the excess – beyond satisfaction in the premonition of the Other – in terms of desire. He encourages a phenomenon in terms of a refusal of the subject to be submissive to the desire of the Other. This viewpoint suggests an exit from the labyrinth while enabling one to grasp Lacan as a thinker antecedent to a Deleuzo-Guattarian "line of flight" (Badiou and Roudinesco, 2014, p. 63) pertaining to an excess. In addition, Lacan also takes the Other as a fantasy regarding a knowledge about the world constituted in the subject, while the subject seems to have a self-pleasure to such an acquisition of knowledge. Due to fantasy obfuscates one from seeing what is true, which can be deemed as the Real, and which will be described below.

Despite fantasy is being "the world of being, full of knowledge", there

is no such thing as a genuine subjectivity incorporated in fantasy; for what is true is always outside the Other such as fantasy. Similarly, in his seminar *Desire and Its Interpretation* (1958-1959), Lacan highlights a structure of desire called “the slit in desire”, in which the subject is drawn centripetally towards the center that represents the field of the symbolic order. Symbolic order or the universe of language contaminates the subject’s worldview, and this intrusion of the symbolic order regarded as the Other produces otherness in the subjectivity. If this world of being is taken in full as a knowledge as a cause of fantasy, it will spoil the genuine position of the subjectivity. This is the trap that Lacan guides everyone to avoid it. In Lacan, literally, “the subject designates himself in the slit, and he designates himself, strictly speaking, as what must be filled by the object” (Lacan, 2021, p. 418). Yet, Lacan, in his understanding of subjectivity, shirks from this phenomenon of the slit in desire that he takes it as the trap. Against this trap, Lacan decries the Other such as a fantasy that it is just “the artifice occupies the place of the subject, and shows him to be truly reduced to the miserable function that is his. Insofar as he is in his fantasy, the subject is the slit” (Lacan, 2021, p. 419). Against both the cases of the Other and fantasy, Lacan critically raises the question “isn’t it obvious to you that, in both cases, the subject is reduced to the artifice of the slit?” (Lacan, 2021, p. 419).

In response, Lacan’s argument about subjectivity as a dissonance from the Other, such as fantasy and the universe of language, prevails in *Formations of the Unconscious* (1957-1958). Detached from a fantasy that stitches desire in unity, subjectivity is reconciled with a hysterical subject, a kind of subjectivity opposing the Other (Lacan, 2017, pp. 376-377). The example is the psychopathology of everyday life, such as “the stumbling over words, holes in discourses, wordplay, puns, and ambiguities (Lacan, 2008a, p. 27): a split from the slit in desire; a split from the whole. In brief, the essence of Lacan’s subjectivity is not a slit in desire but a split from desire. Lacanian subjectivity is a split from the whole, a dissonance, and excess. And this can be entangled with other Lacanian notions such as the hysteric, the Thing, and the Real helpful to offer understanding of an understanding of the subjectivity of the Thai youth protesters in 2020-2021.

Lacanian subjectivity, hysteric, and subjectivity of young Thai protesters

This section explains the essence of Lacan's hysteric, which is assimilated to a subjectivity as the split from the whole, a dissonance, and excess as described above. Hysteric is a woman's desire which is mystically indefinable. And this mystical character of desire is discovered by Freud via a Dora case. The case that allows Freud to conclude that the hysteric is "the repressed thought struggling for expression" (Freud, 2013, p. 34). This means that a repression is not submissive, but active in seeking a way to break a wall of civilization, repression is not submissive but active in seeking a way to break a wall of civilization. Unlike the Freud of the Oedipus complex, this Freudian version is "a return of the repressed" while it is noted that the hysteric is incalitrant in seeking not a repression: it is a radical subjectivity. Hysteric is a radical subjectivity. It challenges the big Other with the question "who, "Who am I for you?" (Lacan, 1997, p. 171). Hysteric critically re-examines himself or herself in relation to the desire of the Other, a Che Vuoi? (Lacan, 2006, p. 690), pertaining one to grasp one's autonomous selfhood. Hysteric can elude the Other. It is a force that obstructs a totality of the whole, so the hysteric is piercing the hole in the center, the totality of the whole, so the hysteric is piercing the hole in the center of the whole.

Piercing the hole in the center of the whole means that the hysteric operates like a machine. Lacan suggests hysteric literally as "a historical machine" (Lacan, 2007, p. 35). When the hysteric ensembles, politically, it operates like a signifier of a comrade. A comrade is eminent in making possible an event possible. It can disrupt a historical condition and redirect everything anew. Many hysterics assembled can become a tremendous force that threatens the center by making the center torn asunder. When the center faces a disruption, the hysteric is filled with a genuine desire that shows a real passion in emitting the sign of truth. So, truth is relevant to a passion and desire that strive to bring a historical change, politically, and this is the way to get to know a subjectivity, which strives to bring a historical change politically, and this is the way to get to know a subjectivity that is prone to be rebellious in the course of political resistance.

The political scenario in Thailand enables the illumination of hysteric as Lacanian subjectivity. Thai youth protesters can be interpreted in some extent

as a Lacanian hysteric. On December 14, 2021, a situation of protest was reported by the South China Morning Post that the young Thai activists aimed to challenge a constitutional monarchy amidst the existence of the *lèse-majesté* (The South China Morning Post, 2021). Assembled in a central area of Bangkok, they acted in defiance of the authority and the extra-constitutional power of the conservative elites. Reading this matter in from a Lacanian perspective, in terms of subjectivity, it can be said that Thai protesters are the Lacanian hysterics assembled. They negate the Other, namely the monarchy and militaristic-style democracy. In other words, defying monarchy and the junta-led democracy highlights that the subjectivity of the Thai youth protesters is the hysteric: a young historical machine that which can be related to the Thing.

Lacanian subjectivity, the Thing, and subjectivity of young Thai protesters

This section explains the essence of Lacan's notion of the Thing which is assimilated to a subjectivity as the split from the whole, a dissonance, and excess as described above. What is the Thing? In response, it is called *das Ding*. And this indicates that there is a repressed substance constituted in the subject and which must be invoked. The Thing resembles the hysteric. It is a repressed feeling of the subject that returns to the center to make aloud its voice. Once the Thing speaks, the subject who is the Thing is no longer the familiar person to us. The entity such as this, which is familiar and unfamiliar at the same time represents the Thing, offering to us the strange mix feeling.

With this strange mix feeling, the Thing is the signifier that one has a queer feeling towards it. It used to be something that one is familiar with but now no longer. For instance, a little girl that used to oblige her mother who one day begins to stand up against her mother. From this example, it can be said that the Thing or the little girl in this case has an ability to shock her mother, including us, of course. According to Lacan, this shock comes after "the fact is [that] I sometimes make the Thing itself speaks" (Lacan as cited in Johnston, 2017, p. xxi). The Thing shocks everyone because the Thing is beyond the pleasure principle. To be the Thing means to suggest one to be perceptible to the life of someone who enjoys any abstracted things that detach from modern society including its moral obligation and regulation. To be the Thing is to be a surplus-enjoyment (*jouissance*)

(Lacan, 2008, pp. 54-56), and an ability to have enjoyment in surplus means that the repressed persons can finally unleash something that they hold deeply in their mind for so long. To unleash something that has been repressed for so long means to enjoy in surplus, to challenge and transgress moral obligation, to violate the existing repressive law, and to eventually relieve: to be the Thing is to acquire surplus-enjoyment, a *jouissance*.

According to the relationship between the Thing and surplus-enjoyment, Lacan is grateful to Lefevere-Pontalis's effort of his creative reading of Freud (Lacan, 2008b, p. 57). Following Lefevere-Pontalis, Lacan notes that a great discovery of Freud is that desire is not identical to a lack. Instead, to see how desire exposes itself is to see how it is related to a surplus enjoyment. Freud's significance is centered on a repressed unconscious that returns to find metaphorically a home to enunciate itself (Johnston, 2017, p. xxii). By treating desire no longer as the lack, this is how the Thing is conceptually useful in thinking about the politics of resistance. With this understanding of the Thing, desire is no longer the lack. Desire is unlimited and does not subordinate to a system of castration. An example, of course, is Cleopatra's nose. Lacan notes to Cleopatra's nose that this desire can shake the whole world once it enters the world in an extreme fashion (Lacan, 2006, p. 342) and this is the Thing in his opinion.

The Thai political scenario sheds light on the Thing as Lacanian subjectivity. In terms of subjectivity in relation to a context of political resistance, young Thai protesters can be interpreted as the Thing: the Cleopatra's nose. On December 11, 2020, it was reported that there was a Thai pro-royalist mother who wanted to pay back those adolescent protesters by urging other Thai parents "to write their children out of their wills as youth-led protest movement grows" (Ford, 2020). As a pro-royalist person, she posted on her social media appealing to everyone that "write in the will that you will bequeath your assets to a relative or a charity organization if your children continue to go to the monarchy-abolishing mob. Photocopy the will and put it at the front door, so that they see it when they enter and exit" (Ford, 2020). She even told her daughter that "you are not my daughter anymore if you go to this protest" (Dusita, 2020). Despite this objection, the youth-led protests resumed. "We do not want absolute monarchy," they shouted at the rally site. "Reform not abolition," they added, referring to a call to reform the highest

institution” (The Bangkok Post, 2021).

From the declaration that they want to reform and but wish not to abolish a monarchy, in terms of the subjectivity of the young Thai protesters as the Thing, two considerations are worthy of note.

First, it does makes sense to say that a Thai pro-royalist mother is shocked by the Thing, in this case, her daughter. The reason is her daughter, that she is once familiar with is no more whom she is once familiar with, is no longer the person that she is familiar with. Because her daughter is the Thing that starts to speak, it causes the mother an ambivalence. As a mother, she loves her daughter while at the same time, she is intolerable to her daughter as the Thing that speaks. This is the reason why the Thing generates a strange mix feeling and the Thai case helps shedding mix feeling, and the Thai case helps shed light on this issue.

Second, given that her daughter participates in the protest to defy a monarchy and militaristic style democracy, her ambition to join the protest represents a surplus-enjoyment. As said earlier, enjoyment in Lacan is always a surplus. It needs a transgression to the law and moral obligation. Transgressing the given law allows the subject to acquire enjoyment which is always an enjoyment in surplus or jouissance. And this dimension illuminates in the daughter of the Thai pro-royalist mother. Perhaps, similar to the Thing, her daughter can be said as the Real in Lacan’s notion.

Lacan’s subjectivity and the Thai protesters as the Real

This section explains the essence of Lacan’s notion of the Real which is assimilated to a subjectivity as the split from the whole, a dissonance, and excess as described above. Articulating the Real is a mission of this section. Understanding the Real requires one to distinguish between reality and the Real. To begin with, reality forms a wholeness as it keeps dangerous element elements out of sight of everyone. The Real is a traumatic element that is intolerable to everyone seeing it. And this is why reality needs to hide the Real to maintain everyone’s pleasure. Unable to be pressed down, the Real insists on coming back to not just haunt reality, but to inform that reality is entirely false since its inception. This is why reality is impossible because of the Real (Žižek, 2014, p. 15). Encountering the Real, the reality needs to start from zero, so too the subject’s understanding of the world

is capsized and it starts again almost from the beginning. In this sense, the Real is a trauma in its essence. The Real is a trauma because it is fundamentally an element unfit to for reality. The Real is not-all (pas-tout). The Real is a shocking element that compels an inversion of reality from its half-saying (mi-dire) to another: from inside to outside, or from something that is known to the unknown, reality is superficial wholeness (Lacan, 2016, p. 91).

Lacan's understanding of the Real as not-all (pas-tout) in relation to reality to be superficial wholeness is developed from his interpretation of André Breton, a French surrealist. Following Breton, Lacan summarizes the Real as the "peu de réalité" to refer to the incompleteness of reality (Lacan, 1998, p. 95). Reality is always-already incomplete. But this reality as of incompleteness is always confused by us as the absolute wholeness. In fact, it is never like that in the first place. What is being treated as wholeness is a superficial delusion. Until something that can cut into it shows up, and that is the performance of the Real. With the Real, reality is enormously symptomatized. As the baptised reality has never continued without sin, reality is scant. The reality is scant as the baptized reality has never continued without sin. The symbolic order or the universe of language that symbolizes all existents is incomplete, but everyone fails to see it. The reason everyone fails to see is because reality is a fantasy. Reality is fantasy because reality tries to keep away the traumatic image of the Real out of our sight. In short, reality is fantasy, reality is not the Real, the Real cuts reality or to make it torn asunder.

Here, the cutting of the Real refers to the Real shreds the veil of fantasy that sustains reality. It is this operation of the cut that opens a wound to the universe of language called the symbolic order. Although the reality is torn asunder, this wound is positive, not negative. It arouses the subject to think critically about reality that the subject lives in. In other words, the Real informs another side of reality that the subject lives in, but is often dismissed for encountering (Lacan, 2006, p. 558). In short, the Real is the wound in the chain of the symbolic order only insofar as the Real is emblematic of "the enlargement of the cut in the signifying chain where it could be said to reside, insofar as it is the most radical element in the discontinuous sequence of the chain" (Lacan, 2006, p. 558). The Real makes symbolic order reversible while the imaginary of reality as a superficial wholeness is being dismantled because of the Real.

The Thai scenario sheds light on the Real as Lacanian subjectivity. To form a subjectivity radically enough in politics requires first and foremost an encountering with, first and foremost, encountering the Real. Without this condition, subjectivity in terms of politics of resistance will not be capable of attaining a politico-economic change. If the Real is a trauma, so in the Thai case, a trauma will be probably about the political involvement of the extra-constitutional elites. In one's observation, such an elite who is the non-political representative of people gains exuberant wealth because of people's tax (Unno, 2022, p. 2). So, to identify the Real is to identify Thailand's politico-economic structure. It is the structure that favors the Thai political establishment, notably, favors the Thai political establishment, notably the military, the monarchy, and the (oligarch) merchant.

Encountering the Real in terms of politico-economic establishment including its impact such as economic disparity etc. is significant, otherwise the politico-economic establishment, including its impact, such as economic disparity etc. is significant. Otherwise, subjectivity in terms of politics of resistance will be less radical. Politically, subjectivity suitable to be radical subjectivity capable of threatening the symbolic order such as the politico-economic establishment depends on the ability of the subjects and capable of threatening the symbolic order, such as the politico-economic establishment, depends on the subjects' ability to encounter, even identify with, the Real. Subjectivity, which is less radical to this, often fails to encounter the Real. Encountering the Real, in this case, is a prior condition for the emergence of the radical subject in terms of political resistance.

However, as said earlier, there is something called reality that always makes the Real hidden from everyone's view. Reality needs a language to form understanding towards an understanding of it. As said earlier, reality is the effect of the universe of language. Again, by the action originated in this universe of language that everyone is whirled into it, what happens as a result is that the dangerous element – a traumatic encountered – is decently sidestepped. While language in its operation is eminent in forming a wholeness of universal thinking including the subject's understanding of the world in its totality, its performance is concealing something much more radical: reality hides the Real while making reality itself incomplete.

The Thai scenario deeply reflects this issue. Identifying with the Real,

namely the Thai politico-economic establishment, is urgent and necessary. This urgent task will be detailed in the next chapter. But this existence of the Real, that is, a politico-economic establishment, remains the not-all. As the not-all, it is not endogenous in but dissuades from the wholeness of reality orchestrated by language. Because the language covers over the Real, it blocks everyone from grasping the Real. Again, instead of taking into account the Real, the language covers over the Real. Language deflects everyone from addressing Thai politico-economic establishment, the traumatic Real. In effect, what the language operates is to let everyone understands Thai politics based on these understand Thai politics based on the following issues.

(1) The issue of corruption is the first one that represents the performance of language that the more it keeps saying the more it hides the Real. Following the protest and political polarization, what is often considerably blamed is an act of corruption of the politicians. Instead of encountering the Real to uproot the politico-economic establishment, this language that keeps blaming on politicians and their acts of corruption deflects everyone from encountering the Real, making reality incomplete. It is no surprise that this operation of language in its formation of incomplete reality leads to a failure to form economic class politics. The trauma of politico-economic establishment is there but is unlocatable because of the language emphasizing corruption.

(2) Next to the corruption, another language in its operation to form incomplete reality while preventing the Real is to highlight protests in a division of generation. Simply by saying that protests in Thailand is about a division between the young generation Z and baby boomer are about a division between the young Generation Z and baby boomers is a deflection of the traumatic Real. This language glosses over the Real, making the Real which in the Thai scenario is a politico-economic establishment to remain there, unmoved.

(3) Last but not least, language that forms incomplete reality while preventing one from encountering the Real is about the multiple agendas of the young Thai protesters (Wichuta, 2023). Instead of addressing or encountering with the Real – a politico-economic establishment – a survey is short of addressing a genuine structure that is collectively impactful to everyone. It is the Real that everyone encounters. And once and for all that the Real is disclosed, there is only one

possible radical politics based on a politico-economic perspective. A play of language such as multiple agendas in protests etc. seems to imply that there are many scenarios in politics, and politics from the politico-economic perspective is one among them. In fact, it is many politics that the liberals and postmodernists find such political grammar fascinating that must be avoided. The reason is because such utterance will leave a politico-economic establishment to resume itself on the one hand, and such utterance is not responsible for economic problem impacting us all, that such an utterance will cause a politico-economic establishment to resume itself on the one hand, and such an utterance is not responsible for economic problems impacting us all on the other

Conclusion

This article sheds light on an abstract notion of Lacanian subjectivity by having a youth-led protest in Thailand as an empiricism that lets Lacanian abstract knowledge more concretized. As subjectivity including psychoanalysis remains a small focus in the study of Thai politics, this article brings a dimension of subjectivity obtained from Lacan's intervention in a psychoanalysis discipline to study Thai politics. In terms of subjectivity associated with political resistance, instead of exploring subjectivity through a difference of generation as noted above, it can be said psychoanalytically that defying monarchy and militaristic style democracy means that Thai youth protesters are the hysterics challenging the Other. It may succeed, or it may fail. Whether it gets a new master or not is a matter of the future. In addition, defying a monarchy causes anger and ambivalence to their own pro-royalist parents. Defining the Thing, the Thing is reified as a signifier of something that causes the unfamiliar to something that is once familiar with. The Thing is uncanny: it is the presence of the known constituted with the being-alienated in the known. As Thai youth protesters are the Thing to their parents, the Thing is a subjectivity of them. Juxtaposed with this is the Real which in the Thai case is politico-economic structure, identifying with the Real allows protesters to form subjectivity in politics of resistance more radical than a negation of the Real, which in the Thai case is a politico-economic structure. Identifying with the Real allows protesters to form subjectivity in a political course of resistance more radical than a negation of the Real, albeit multiple agendas to be the operation of language

that stands as a preclusion of the Real encountered. Certainly, this will expand Lacanian subjectivity in the context of politics of resistance in another dimension, having a Thai political economic context associated with it.

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