

ysis and Culture

Editor

READING SEMINARS I AND II

LACAN'S RETURN TO FREUD

Seminar I: Freud's Papers on Technique
Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in
the Technique of Psychoanalysis

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The Paris Seminars in English

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while surreptitiously introducing far more complex issues in analytic theory, epistemology, and ethics.

Jacques-Alain Miller devotes his first three talks to outlining Lacan's development prior to Seminar I, presenting the philosophical backdrop of Lacan's early explorations, and allowing us to understand the questions foremost in Lacan's mind in the first few seminars. Françoise Koehler explains Lacan's early (1930s) interest in and critique of Melanie Klein's work. Anne Dunand highlights Lacan's borrowings and later divergences from Lévi-Strauss' structural approach. My paper, "Logical Time and the Precipitation of Subjectivity," explores the presuppositions at work in Lacan's 1946 article "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty." And Slavoj Žižek explains Hegel's early and enduring influence on Lacan.

Turning to Seminars I and II themselves, Colette Soler, Marie-Hélène Brousse, and Éric Laurent present many of the most basic notions constitutive of Lacan's theoretical perspective in the mid-1950s and thereafter, including the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real; full speech and empty speech; transference, countertransference, identification, and interpretation; the other, the Other, and the subject; Lacan's reconceptualization of the Oedipus complex; and so on.

Robert Samuels shows how Lacan's categories—real, imaginary, and symbolic—can help us better understand the historical development of Freud's technique. My paper on "The Nature of Unconscious Thought" explains Lacan's models of the functioning of the symbolic order in the unconscious, first developed in Seminar II and then in "The Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter.'" Jacques-Alain Miller provides an exceptionally clear introduction to Lacanian diagnostic criteria, which are already visible in Lacan's early seminars. Françoise Gorog, Claude Léger, and Dominique Miller present specific cases which fall into the different diagnostic categories, giving us a sense of the wide variety of clinical phenomena Lacan helps us understand.

The reader will note that we have included at the end of this volume the first English translation to appear in print of Lacan's article from the *Écrits*, "On Freud's 'Trieb' and the Analyst's Desire." It is a fine companion piece to Seminars I and II as it emphasizes the central role of the analyst's desire in psychoanalytic practice, a notion which, while not explicitly stated in those seminars, makes sense of much of what Lacan says in them. This 1964 text is also alluded to in a number of the papers presented in this volume.

Jacques-Alain Miller and Seuil have been kind enough to allow us to include this text here; the royalties associated with it and with the cover photo were generously covered by Barnard College, which financed the index of this book as well. Miller has also provided us with a short commentary he made on this article by Lacan in the course of his 1993-94 seminar, *Donc*. In addition, we have included two talks given by Miller in the United States, "On Perver-

sion" and "A Discussion given by Colette Soler."

Rather than summarize related aspects of Lacan's background on this

Richard Feldstein, the journal *Literature and Psychoanalysis* and cultural studies seminar (several week long seminars) *freudienne* (ECF, the journal) (after his death) giving the Miller—head of the University of Paris VII (which brought him into contact with Lacan in time). With the assistance of Roger Williams University and enthusiasm were of many members of the first in June 1988 on Seminar XI (see the University of New York

The members of the participants, and Alain Miller, Colette Soler, Vincent Palomera, Françoise Gorog, the Department of Psychoanalysis, a number of other not be included in sincere apologies to Darian Leader, Stephen Grigg.

Maire Jaanus, *Structure and Negativity* the author of *Being and Nothingness* in *Freud*. Slavoj Žižek, Slovenia, and

On behalf of all of the speakers was for many of the talks relating Lacan's view

ON FREUD'S "TRIEB"
AND THE PSYCHOANALYST'S DESIRE¹



Jacques Lacan

The drive, as it is constructed by Freud on the basis of the experience of the unconscious, prohibits psychologizing thought from resorting to "instinct" by which it masks its ignorance through the supposition of morals in nature.

It can never be often enough repeated, given the obstinacy of psychologists who, on the whole and per se, are in the service of technocratic exploitation, that the drive—the Freudian drive—has nothing to do with instinct (none of Freud's expressions allows for confusion).

Libido is not sexual instinct. Its reduction, when taken to an extreme, to male desire, indicated by Freud, should suffice to avert us to that fact.

Libido, in Freud's work, is an energy that can be subjected to a kind of quantification which is as easy to introduce in theory as it is useless, since only certain *quanta* of constancy are recognized therein.

Its sexual coloring, so categorically maintained by Freud as its most central feature, is the color of emptiness:² suspended in the light of a gap.

That gap is the gap desire encounters at the limits imposed upon it by the principle ironically referred to as the "pleasure principle," the latter being related to a reality which, indeed, is but the field of praxis here.

It is from precisely that field that Freudianism hews a desire, the crux [*principe*] of which is essentially found in impossibilities.

Such are the outlines moralists could have discerned therein were our times not so prodigiously tormented by idyllic exigencies.

That is what is meant by Freud's constant reference to *Wunschgedanken* (wishful thinking)³ and the omnipotence of thought: it is not megalomania which he denounces thereby, but rather the reconciliation of opposites.

This might mean that Venus is proscribed from our world, implying theological decline.

But Freud reveals to us that it is thanks to the Name-of-the-Father that man does not remain bound [*attaché*] to the sexual service of his mother, that aggression against the Father is at the very heart [*principe*] of the Law, and that the Law is in the service of the desire that Law institutes through the prohibition of incest.

For the unconscious demonstrates that desire is coupled with⁴ prohibition, and that the Oedipal crisis is determinant in sexual maturation itself.

Psychologists immediately turned this discovery into its opposite in order to draw from it the moral of the importance of maternal gratification—a form of psychotherapy which infantilizes adults, without recognizing children any better.

All too often, the psychoanalyst toes the same line. What is eluded thereby?

If the fear of castration is at the crux [*principe*] of sexual normalization, let us not forget that, as that fear no doubt bears upon the transgression it prohibits in the Oedipus complex, it nonetheless brings about obedience thereto,⁵ by stopping its slippage in a homosexual direction [*l'arrêtant sur sa pente homosexuelle*].

Thus it is, rather, the assumption⁶ of castration that creates the lack on the basis of which desire is instituted. Desire is desire for desire, the Other's desire, as I have said, in other words, subjected to the Law.

(It is the fact that a woman must go through the same dialectic, whereas nothing seems to oblige her to do so—she must lose what she does not have—which tips us off, allowing us to articulate that it is the phallus in its absence⁷ which constitutes the amount of the symbolic debt: a debit account⁸ when one has it, a disputed credit⁹ when one does not.)

Castration is the altogether new mainspring Freud introduced into desire, giving desire's lack the meaning that remained enigmatic in Socrates' dialectic, though it was preserved in the recounting of the *Symposium*.

The *ἀγάλα* in the *ἔρω* proves to be the motor force [*principe*] through which desire changes the nature of the lover. In his quest, Alcibiades spills the beans regarding love's deception and its baseness (to love is to want to be loved) to which he was willing to consent.

I was not allowed, in the context of the debate, to go so far as to demonstrate that the concept of the drive represents the drive as a montage.

The drives are our myths, said Freud. This must not be understood as a reference to the unreal. For it is the real that the drives mythify, as myths usually do: here it is the real which creates [*fait*] desire by reproducing therein the relationship of the subject to the lost object.

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There is no lack of objects involving profits and losses to occupy its place.¹⁰ But only a limited number of them can play the role best symbolized by the lizard's self-mutilation, its tail being jettisoned in distress. Misadventure of desire at the hedges of *jouissance*, watched out for by an evil god.

This drama is not as accidental as it is believed to be. It is essential: for desire comes from the Other, and *jouissance* is on the side of the Thing.

Freud's second topography concerns the pluralizing quartering of the subject that results therefrom—yet another opportunity not to see what should strike us, namely that identifications are determined by desire without satisfying the drive.

This occurs because the drive divides the subject and desire, the latter sustaining itself only in the relation it misrecognizes between that division and an object which causes it. Such is the structure of fantasy.

What can the analyst's desire thus be? What can the treatment to which the analyst devotes himself be?

Will he fall into the kind of preaching that discredits the preacher whose noble feelings have replaced faith, and adopt, like him, an unwarranted "direction"?

One cannot but note here that, apart from the libertine who was the great writer of comedies of the century of genius,¹¹ no one, not even during the Enlightenment, has challenged the physician's privilege, albeit no less religious than others.

Can the analyst take cover behind this ancient investiture when, secularized, it is moving toward a form of socialization which can avoid neither eugenics nor the political segregation of the anomaly?

Will the psychoanalyst take up the torch, not of an eschatology, but of the rights of a primary aim [*fin première*]¹²?

What then is the aim [*fin*] of analysis beyond therapeutics? It is impossible not to distinguish the two when the point is to create an analyst.

For, as I have said, without going into the mainspring of transference, it is ultimately¹³ the analyst's desire which operates in psychoanalysis.

The style of a philosophical conference inclines everyone, so it seems, to highlight his own impermeability.

I am no more unable to do so than anyone else, but in the field of psychoanalytic training, the process of displacement makes teaching cacophonous.

Let's say that, in teaching, I relate technique to the primary aim [*fin première*].

I regretted in concluding that, on the whole, Enrico Castelli's profound question was left aside.

Nihilism here (and the reproach of nihilism) relieved me of the responsibility of confronting the demonic, or anxiety, whichever one prefers.

Notes

1. This is a summary of the comments I made at a remarkable colloquium organized in Rome by Professor Enrico Castelli, the second in a series on ethical problems posed by the effects of science—which Enrico Castelli admirably knows how to raise in questioning aporias.

This colloquium, entitled “Technique and Casuistry,” was held at the University of Rome from January 7 to 12, 1964.

I avoided spelling out too quickly, in a way which would not have been controllable, what I have since articulated concerning the drive in my lectures at the *École Normale Supérieure*, which began several days later.

This text was given to the *Atti* of the colloquium to serve as a summary of my paper and my remarks.

2. [*couleur-de-vide* could also mean devoid of color.]

3. [Text in parentheses in English in the original.]

4. [*accroché à*: attached to, hooked onto.]

5. [To the Oedipus complex, it would seem, that is, to an interest in the parent of the opposite sex, or possibly to transgression itself.]

6. [*assomption*: taking or assuming responsibility, taking upon oneself.]

7. [*par défaut*, the expression Lacan uses here to qualify the phallus, has a number of meanings: *juger quelqu'un par défaut*, for example, means to judge someone in his or her absence, or “by default,” that person having failed to show up at the hearing or trial. A *défaut* is a fault, inadequacy, defect, flaw, failing, deficiency, imperfection, shortcoming, failure, etc.]

8. [*compte débiteur* means an account that is in the red, overdrawn, or showing a deficit/debit. Further financial definitions include “account receivable” (from the perspective of a person who owes someone else something) and “blank credit.”]

9. [*créance* means credit, claim, or debt; it can take on the meaning of “account receivable” from the perspective of a person who claims that someone else owes him or her something.]

10. [Cf. *Écrits*, p. 251.]

11. [Lacan seems to be referring to Molière (1622–1673).]

12. [Eschatology concerns the *fin*s dernières, the last or final matters: death, the Last Judgement, heaven, and hell. By counterpoint here, *fin*, which generally means end or goal, also takes on the meaning of matter or concern.]

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13. [I would normally translate the expression Lacan uses here, "*au dernier terme*," by "in the final analysis"; the context, however, makes this infelicitous.]

14. [I wish to express my thanks here to Russell Grigg who made a number of very useful comments on this translation.]

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