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To resume again...

On Jacques Lacan's *Anxiety II*

The Names-of-the-Father

The Formulas of *l'Étourdit*

On Agamben's *Profanations*

The Fundamental Perversion

Lacan as Reader of Hegel

1978-2000

Catherine Opie

2

8

64

80

96

114

130

142

150

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# Introduction to Reading Jacques Lacan's Seminar on *Anxiety II*\*

JACQUES-ALAIN MILLER

translated by BARBARA P. FULKS

## IV. ON THIS SIDE OF DESIRE

### 1. A MOBILE

#### A RHETORICIAN'S ART

What I have in my hands is a book. And yet, rereading it, rediscovering it in this form, Magritte's statement comes to mind: "This is not a book."

I ask myself: If it's not a book, then what is it? It's more like a film, a recording of a mobile's displacement. This mobile is a thought that crosses a space, that opens a dimension and explores it, that traces a path—not without getting lost, not without encountering impasses, not without retracing its steps in order to look for points of passage. A thought often designing panoramas which vanish shortly after leaving excessively weighty details, which are often mirages, and in whose direction one walks only to see them dissipate. But the mirage and the dissipation are necessary in order to find the exit which allows us to go beyond.

If one tries to compose a Lacanian doctrine on anxiety from this Seminar, one must pay attention and not take each formula for the solution. One certainly finds, on rereading it, some twenty or thirty definitions, and not one is definitive. One can't find a single definition of anxiety which is not conditional, which is not relative to some perspective. One sees the art of the rhetorician, of Lacan's wit in the argumentation he advances. He argues pro and con, like the debate instructor teaches. He is always so persuasive that one might wish him to stop because one has understood.

No formula of anxiety in this Seminar will save us the trouble of retracing the route of Lacan's steps. If I had to comment on it—which I will not—I would do it paragraph by paragraph. There is not one which doesn't need to be weighed, adjusted, which does not need some rectification, some inflection, where one will find in this or that place the reason for doing so.

I mentioned "getting lost," I spoke of impasse. On rereading it and knowing the end of the film—or at least of the work—one cannot really go astray, because the whole text swarms with brain waves valuable in themselves, independent of perspective, which in themselves cause one to think and that can often be captured in a phrase. I am going to try to greet the publishing of this Seminar by delivering to you my compass, my own, which I constructed by reading, by writing this Seminar. I still have to add some elements or find some insights which have not yet come even to me.

#### CONSTRUCTED PHENOMENOLOGICAL MOMENT

I asked myself, holding this book in my hands, how I would respond if I had to say in one word what it was about. This is the response that I imagined being able to make: it is a matter of a plunge on the side of desire.

What is there on the side of desire? The response is given, repeated, hammered here, and I have provided a summary, maybe even a duplicated schema: on the side of desire there is *jouissance* and there is anxiety. One sees, in effect, the tertiary sequence laid

\**L'orientation lacanienne*, Paris, Spring 2004—text and notes in French edited by Catherine Bonningue and published in *La Cause lacanienne* 89, Paris, February 2005.

out. It is an ordered tertiary often presented as a chronology which lays out successive moments. It is, of course, the chronology of a logical time in three moments.

*Jouissance*, mythic moment, Lacan more or less said, but one must take this adjective in the way he used it more than once to designate what exists of the more real (plus real).

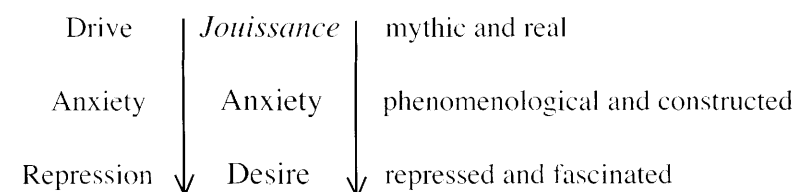
Freud's text *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* supports the whole development of the Seminar. Lacan refers to it in the beginning: anxiety is defined by Freud as an affect, and because it is the good old anxiety, it is known and felt. This moment might be called phenomenological. It appears, it is felt, one is bothered by it, one loses one's footing, one is disoriented, or one feels anxiety at being disoriented. Even if it is not developed by Lacan, the term "phenomenology" is valid. It is a commonly accessible affect. But this moment of anxiety, as Lacan deals with, may well not be accessible and easily found. One must keep in mind throughout the Seminar his comment: "The time of anxiety is not absent from the constitution of desire, even if this time is elided and not easily found."<sup>1</sup> To support this sensational assertion he offers, as if to clear it up, a reference to Freud's "A Child Is Being Beaten," where it is a matter of the constitution of *fantasme* during three times, the second time when confronted with being reconstructed. This indication shows that, in Lacan's elaboration, the moment of anxiety is logically necessary and that one benefits by remembering this in order not to be fascinated by the splendor, the horror of the phenomenology of anxiety. This moment is thus fixed as phenomenological and constructed at the same time.

#### ANTINOMY OF DESIRE

The constitution of desire is the subject of this Seminar, and it is not at all that of the doctrine which has become Lacan's classic doctrine. One might designate desire here as an analytical moment inasmuch as it depends, in a proper sense, on interpretation. So much so that Lacan was able to identify it as analytic interpretation,

saying "desire—it is its interpretation," because the functional status of desire is to be repressed—an adjective I choose here in order to join it with Freud's constructions. Repressed desire, this is the desire that Lacan translated as metonymic, running under speech, under the signifying chain. There is, however, in relationship to this status of desire as metonymic repression, another face of desire which itself is phenomenological: desire as fascinated by the object. Lacan's nine previous Seminars used the spectacle of fascinated desire. What Lacan develops, designated as constitution of desire, is what he will develop the following year in a much tighter way as the causation of the subject stemming from the two operations of alienation and separation.<sup>2</sup>

These two adjectives, repressed and fascinated, introduce an antinomy of desire in the Lacanian definition. On the one hand there is a metonymic status of the instance of desire, of its insistence under the signifying chain, among the signifiers, in the interval. It is a desire in some way invisible, inaudible, or else one may imagine it "of the analyst"; and then there is the imaginary status of its object. Until then, in Lacan's elaboration, there were very rapid slidings which joined these two statuses, a symbolic status and an imaginary status affecting desire.



In its metonymic status, which Lacan set up in "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud,"<sup>3</sup> the novelty is to see that desire is a desire for nothing, that it is only the metonymy of the lack-in-being, and that at the end of desire there is nothing. At the same time, when desire is combined with the relation of love,<sup>4</sup>

it is valid to speak of desire aimed towards the object distinguished from among all the rest, as Freud develops it in his chapter "Being in Love and Hypnosis" in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.<sup>5</sup> There is the antinomy between the desire as desire for nothing and desire as desire for a distinguishable object. It is good that some imaginary exists in the desire which stages the scene of desire and, in this staging, the subject displays himself attracted, magnetic, because of the object. He finds obstacles which conflict with his reaching the object, difficulties or impassés to its possession. This staging of desire causes much of what is expressed in the analytic experience, where it is a question of what is desirable and how one reaches it.

## 2. AIMED-FOR OBJECT AND OBJECT-CAUSE

### FROM INTENTIONALITY TO CAUSALITY

Up until the Seminar on *Anxiety*, the scene of desire was always structured by the intentionality of desire. Lacan mentions this term, which has very precise references in philosophy in the beginning of the twentieth century, and in French phenomenology. He remained fond of the model of intentionality which ruled the thought of the middle of the last century until this Seminar. One credits the origin of this idea to Brentano, who, as Sartre says, was opposed to the concept in idealist philosophy in which "Spider-Spirit" (*Esprit-Araignée*), the spirit of not being able to think except in ideas, attracts things in its web in order to make of them immanent contents of consciousness. Sartre explains, to the contrary, that consciousness is not a content, that it is empty, and lacks being in relationship with the world into which it bursts. The world is not idealized; it remains in its place, outside, and it is, on the contrary, consciousness which is directed toward what is there in the world. Sartre reminds us of what Husserl says: "Every consciousness is consciousness of some thing."<sup>6</sup> Every consciousness exists as consciousness of something other than itself. The model which until then structured

the scene of desire for Lacan is that of a desire which has the object in front of it. Even if he managed to complicate the status of the object by putting it in the *fantasme*, it remained in front of the desire which obeys the structure of intentionality. The Seminar on *Anxiety* challenges this structure of intentionality. It is a solution. As designed here, things are antinomic with the metonymic status of desire in the way that the object and the metonymic nothing are arranged. Throughout this Seminar Lacan elaborates the causality of the object which returns as a leitmotif in the place of the structure of intentionality. He introduces it at the beginning in the simplest way: "The real object is not in front, but behind."

One has to distinguish here the aimed-for object and the object-cause, the latter introduced in this Seminar after having been introduced at the beginning of this year in "Kant avec Sade."<sup>7</sup> The aimed-for object of desire is that which one can introduce in the amorous connection, while Lacan tries to show the function of the object-cause through anxiety.

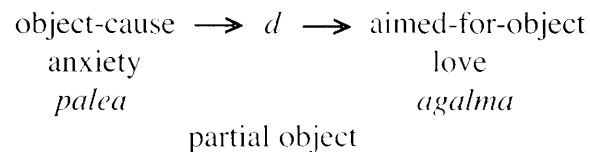
object-cause	→ d →	aimed-for-object
anxiety		love
<i>palea</i>		<i>agalma</i>

The ethical status of the aimed-for object is *agalma*, while, par excellence, the object-cause is rather on the order of *palea*. To the Greek *agalma*, the precious thing, Lacan opposes the Latin *palea*, the left-over (*déchet*), and he devotes long expositions to the anal object which is paradigmatic of an eminent function of the object-cause.

In the Seminar *Le transfert*, inspired by the question of what Alcibiades finds in Socrates, Lacan explains the prevalence of the aimed-for object. Why does Alcibiades make Socrates the aimed-for object of his desire? The solution that Lacan finds and develops consists in explaining the prevalence of this object by the

hidden presence in it of *agalma*, of the partial object. He enumerates these objects: the oral object, the anal object, the phallic object.<sup>8</sup> The partial object of analytic theory—we owe the term to Karl Abraham—is placed on the side of the aimed-for object. We see desire here under the regime of love. The fascinating object whose paradigm is the phallus, the big *phi* ( $\Phi$ ), is set up at this moment. On the side of love, it is a paean to the fascinating object.

In the Seminar on *Anxiety* we have, on the contrary, an elaboration which rectifies this detour, this necessary going astray, in order to restore the partial object to its place as object-cause. The partial object is put back in the place of cause under the types described as remainder and left-over. Desire is conceived as a cut, null, separated object that has been let go of, which the subject has transferred, and whose paradigm is the *objet a*.



#### CONDITIONALITY OF DESIRE

From here it is not difficult to anticipate that this Seminar proceeds to a restoration of desire. It is not a matter of the realization of desire, this very important term in Lacan's previous Seminars. The end of desire is always a false end, a misunderstanding of the object that counts. Desire is a misunderstanding. What Lacan saw there will accompany him in all the rest of his teaching, when he will define, at the same moment in which he will advocate the pass, the end of analysis as a deflation of desire; that is to say it is deflated as if by an analytic detumescence, in which the fascinating aimed-for object disappears.

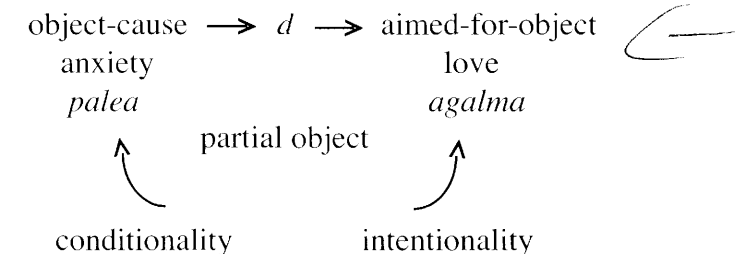
In a repetitive way in this Seminar the idea returns that the object aimed-for through desire is only a lure. To the extent that,

when Lacan evokes Buddhism at some point, he asserts again that desire is only an illusion. Desire is not truth but illusion. He repeats this assertion in order to validate it, not entirely, but to validate that it can have meaning for our experience.<sup>9</sup>

From this Seminar, one can deduce a direction of the cure from his point that the analyst is not fascinated by desire, or even by the interpretation of desire; what must be interpreted is on this side of desire. The object-cause must be interpreted. Lacan will say later that interpretation bears on the cause of desire, but this is where the change in the point of application of interpretation is outlined.

The first time that Lacan proposes this still-mysterious object-cause, he illustrates it by the fetish of fetishistic perversion. It is here, he says, that the dimension of the object as cause of desire is unveiled; the fetish is not desire, but it must be there in order for there to be desire, and desire itself is going to stick around wherever it can. You see to what level the fascinating object of desire has fallen. It is no longer any old place where desire is going to stick around: it must be there. One can already, in this "be there," see *Dasein*, from which Lacan will characterize as the *objet petit a*, resonate.

What Lacan develops in this Seminar is an object which is the condition of desire, and this condition is distinct from intention. It is the conditionality of desire in relationship to what was once its intentionality.



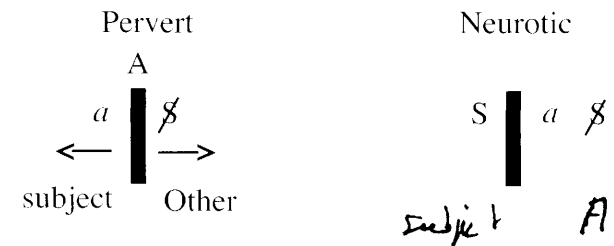
## TRUTHFUL OBJECT AND FALSE OBJECT

The illustration of fetishism as perversion is made, not to restrict the validity of this construction, but, on the contrary, to reveal the status of desire as such, that it is appended to a different object from the one it aims for. I'm describing for the moment a fantastic, even abstract world. I intend to give you some connecting points. An internal misrecognition of desire—which is displayed in the Seminar—is entailed. The misrecognition is posed by Lacan in an enigmatic fashion, beginning in the second lesson, in a confrontation with Hegel, described by the phrase, "Man's Desire is the Desire of the Other." This lesson concludes with the evocation of how the struggle of pure prestige which takes place between the two confronting consciousnesses in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* could be expressed by the plan of love. Lacan expresses it in terms of mastery: "I love you even if you don't want me to." This is the dialectic of master and slave transposed to the register of love. Lacan opposes another formula to it, mysterious, enigmatic, a formula of which he says that it may not be articulatable even though it might be articulated. This formula involves the impossible and designates the real of the matter: "I desire you even if I don't know it."

I leave to one side why Lacan considered this formula to be irresistible if it manages to be understood. I'll just note this: "I desire you even if I don't know it" expresses the nescience of desire. Authentic desire is desire inasmuch as it doesn't know its object; it doesn't know the object it causes. The formula is not articulatable inasmuch as the desire is repressed, that is to say, the desire is unconscious.

One witnesses in the Seminar on *Anxiety* a doubling of the object, that of object-cause and aimed-for object, a doubling which is transferred to the two statuses of the object: the authentic object, which is always the unknown object, that which is properly *petit a*, and the false *objet petit a*, the *agalma*. This opposition of the authentic object and the false object is an opposition which is, in the light of what Lacan developed later, somewhat unpolished, but

this opposition inspires the contrast that Lacan makes between the *fantasme* of the pervert and that of the neurotic.<sup>10</sup>



What this elementary schema attempts to show is that, for the pervert, as one said at the time, the *petit a* is in its place, on the side of the subject, but where the subject cannot see it. It is on the side of the Other that it becomes visible, since, on the side of the subject there is nescience, in the place where the *objet petit a* is properly inscribed. This is illustrated in "Kant avec Sade," by the position of Sade who is unaware of himself as *objet petit a*; he is unaware that he stands in the place of the object.

This is, on the other hand, a bit more developed in the Seminar, which explains certain of Lacan's statements in a contemporary text, "The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious":<sup>11</sup> that the neurotic, on the contrary, makes the *petit a* pass to the side of the Other. He is busy with his *fantasme*, he is conscious of it and he can take this object as aimed for. It is not the authentic place of the *objet petit a* for Lacan such as he poses it in the Seminar, where it is exterior to the field of the Other and is seen as invisible by the subject. The neurotic himself, through a maneuver, through its use, makes *petit a* pass to the side of the Other and it is then an *objet petit a* which causes his *fantasme* to serve him to dream, if I might say, to dream of perversion. It is in the extent to which the *fantasme* of the neurotic is entirely on the side of the Other that one can make a catalog of perversions, because that is where one retrieves it.

Lacan will not keep these schematic schema. They indicate, however, something very important: the position of exteriority of *petit a* in relationship to the field of the Other. This sentence of Lacan's in *Écrits*, "At least a foot of *fantasme* is in the Other," difficult to understand, is clarified by the opposition between the perverse *fantasme* and the *fantasme* of neurosis. Suddenly Lacan introduces the notion that the *petit a* of the *fantasme* of neurosis is a false *petit a*, a falsification, an undue displacement in the Other, since its true place is on the side of the subject. We understand nothing at all about the Seminar if we don't understand that it is constructed on the notion of the exteriority of *petit a* in relationship to the field of the Other.

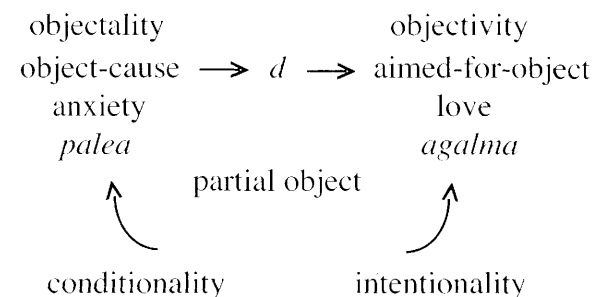
The *petit a* is displaced in the neurotic. Lacan says there is a fallacious use of the object in his *fantasme*. We know this use of fallacy since it was mentioned by Lacan in "The subversion of the subject." The text is taken up again in *Anxiety*: the demand of the Other takes on the function of object in its *fantasme* and in this way the *petit a*, this falsified *petit a*, becomes bait for the Other, and it passes into the field of the Other. This is the condition which makes psychoanalysis possible for the neurotic, but it has nothing to do with perversity in this condition. The neurotic concedes *petit a*, a false *petit a*, to the Other.

#### WHAT DOESN'T LET ITSELF BE SIGNIFIED

These terms, as worked on by Lacan, will continue to be profoundly difficult until, in *Encore*, he will finally confront his construction of the *objet petit a*: "All of that is only *semblant*." The search for what is the true *objet petit a*, this curious search, this surprising schematic, although clarifying for *Écrits*, causes us to sense that one has not finished in Lacanian theory, in analytic theory, with the question of the relationship of the *semblant* with the real. Lacan implies that there is "a lure of the fantasmatic structure for the neurotic,"<sup>12</sup> to which he himself is attracted in his Seminars: to make of the object-cause the aimed-for object, to recover the one

through the other, to transform *petit a* into something which can be found, be seen.

In this Seminar, the field of the Other is the field of objectivity. I don't hesitate to use this word objectivity, since Lacan opposes it to that of objectality which on the contrary incorporates, qualifies object-causes.



Here, the neurotic *fantasme* is posed as inauthentic and the *objet petit a* of the *fantasme* of the neurotic is only a substitute. There remains in this Seminar the notion that the true of true, the true *objet petit a*, cannot be seen. This, at any rate, is what is precisely stated in "The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious." Lacan constructs the object-causes as non-specularizable: they cannot be captured in the space of the mirror, in the scopical field; they escape the visual field. This is why what Lacan calls the field of the Other in the Seminar on *Anxiety* is the place of the signifier, but also the place of apparitions.

There is a compass one must use in the whole first movement of the Seminar, and I can point out two principles. The authentic place of *petit a* is on the side of the subject, invisible to him, and it is only through lures and fallacies that it is in the Other. In the second movement of the Seminar, Lacan elaborates the place of *petit a* in the Other. The *objet petit a* which is constructed there remains a very ambiguous formation, which is on a side irreducible



to symbolization and un-representable according to the normal laws of the visual field, exterior to the Other, but nevertheless included in the Other, but as different from the signifier.

This difficulty of articulation—the construction of alienation and of separation will attempt to resolve it—is mentioned in the last lesson of the Seminar: “The object defined as an irreducible remainder to symbolization in the place of the Other depends nevertheless on this Other.”<sup>13</sup> The difficulty of the construction is shown in this sentence.

Also, at the end of the Seminar Lacan insists that *petit a* is not a pure facticity, it is not simply an in-itself, and that the fact that it is irreducible implies that an effort of reduction to the Other is exercised on it. In this way it is relative to this reduction. This will inspire also, in Lacan’s teaching, some continual comings and goings: on the one hand the *objet petit a* as real, but at the same time relative to the signifying elaboration. Thus it is not an absolute, and it can even be the name of the moment in which the signifying elaboration is stopped. Later, in “Radiophonic,”<sup>14</sup> Lacan will speak of the turn of *jouissance* to accountability, to make *jouissance* pass to a signifier which counts, and to speech as well. The same logic is present there; it is a matter of what cannot be made into signifier.

#### ANXIETY, LOGICAL MOMENT

I previously commented on the aphorism that I found in the Seminar on *Anxiety*: “Only love allows *jouissance* to condescend to desire.”<sup>15</sup> This reveals that *jouissance* and desire are two distinct structures.

Why does Lacan insist in this Seminar on leaving *petit a* on the side of the subject, on the other side of the Other? Because *petit a* is in some way an expression, a transformation of the *jouissance* of the body itself, of the *jouissance* in its autistic status, closed—it became even more closed in the Freudian term *das Ding*—while desire is related to the Other. There is an antinomy, a gap between *jouissance* and desire. *Jouissance*, if we look at things in a simple

way, has the body itself as place, while desire is related to the Other. It is still this antinomy which will inspire, ten years later, Lacan’s elaboration in *Encore*.

What is amusing in the Seminar on *Anxiety* is to introduce love there between *jouissance* and desire, to introduce it as mediator. Love is mediator because it displaces or falsifies *petit a*, by making it show up in the aimed-for object, in making it *agalma*, while anxiety is not mediator but rather midway between *jouissance* and desire, as Lacan says. If I wanted to paraphrase Lacan’s aphorism, I would say that only anxiety transforms *jouissance* into object-cause of desire.

Lacan develops and even constructs anxiety as the operator which allows *das Ding* to take the form of *objet petit a*. One does not find it spelled out in the Seminar. Anxiety functions in this Seminar as an operator which produces the object-cause. Lacanian anxiety is a productive anxiety. This is why Lacan says at the end of the Seminar: “The moment in which the function of anxiety is put into play is anterior to the transfer of the object.” He borrows an example of it in the case of the Wolf Man, when, in the face of his repetitive dream, one can reconstruct the episode of an anal agitation, of a defecation. Lacan says this once, and then a second time, but it remains the essential model—that is, anxiety as moderator which produces the object-cause. This is why anxiety is essentially a logical, and not even experienced, moment here.

#### 3. APPARITIONS, PERTURBATIONS AND SEPARATIONS

##### CERTITUDE OF ANXIETY

Let us try now to understand concretely, once the details are given, the singular relationship between *jouissance* and anxiety. To do it we need to go to Freud, who tells us that the first and most original of conditions determining anxiety is the demand of the constantly growing drive, before which the ego is in a state of distress. One sees here how Lacan constructed the schema. If you translate this

sentence in Lacanian terms you will have to go through the relationship of *jouissance* to anxiety. For Freud it is an economic perturbation, a surplus—*der Uberschuss*—of unused libido and it is the nucleus of danger to which anxiety responds. In Freudian terms, it is the relationship of *jouissance* with anxiety that is harmonized by Lacan and, behind anxiety, the drive, since it wants to be satisfied, since it is the will of unremittingly insistent *jouissance*. When this insistence of the drive is in contradiction with the pleasure principle there is the displeasure that one calls anxiety. This is why Lacan says—only once but that’s enough—that anxiety is the signal of the real and index of the Thing, *das Ding*, and the formula “anxiety is signal of the real” includes the notion, which became famous, of anxiety as sign of the desire of the Other.

We must wait for the last lesson of the Seminar for Lacan to take his explicit distance from the statement he posed at the beginning: “Anxiety is the proven sign of the desire of the Other.” At the beginning he presented a religious mantle and a personage who wears a mask and who does not know if the religious mantle will find its object. Thus anxiety, the anxiety of being and the anxiety of what the religious mantle lacks. This is what makes Lacan remark at the end of the Seminar, in some way pulling the rug from under the feet of what will follow, that the apologue is only valuable at the scopic level. This is the level of the mirror stage, the level in which we are the same. It is par excellence at the scopic level that the strangeness of the *objet petit a* is misrecognized and that this object is the most masked. This is why this Seminar offers a continual critique of the scopic level, which is the one in which Lacan had elaborated his theory of desire ever since “The Mirror Stage,” and of the optic schema, a schema which makes its last appearance in this Seminar.

It is also this connection of anxiety with the real of *jouissance* that Lacan stresses as the certitude of anxiety and which contrasts with the questionable character of the signifier—the signifier is never certain. This is why the phenomenology of the obsessive

takes up so much space in this Seminar. The obsessive is the subject who pummels the signifier while trying to reach the origin, that is, the object-cause, but he also entertains doubt in the search for the signifier, and so he maintains a distance from certitude.

In this Seminar the restoration of desire is accompanied by that of the signifier. Since the relationship to the real as anxiety is certitude, the signifier is only the possibility of symbolic deception. We see then a restoration of desire, a restoration of the signifier. All this will later be adjusted, tempered, displaced by Lacan, but we are here at the moment in which an other dimension of the experience emerges, which hadn’t been opened until then. One even finds here a critique of science: “Everything science has conquered becomes an immense deception. To master phenomena through thought is always to show how one can do it in a deceptive way; it is to be able to reproduce it, that is to say, to make a signifier of it.”<sup>16</sup> We must accept the perspective that affirms the certitude of anxiety, but we see that we have here the beginning of what Lacan will develop later as the notion of the signifier as *semblant*.

We might add that what is stated here, in the dawn of the twenty-first century, that the conquests of science accompanying the ascent to the zenith of the social value of *jouissance*, of the right to *jouir*, of the duty to *jouir*, happens precisely because the conquests of science bring in themselves a deception which renders even more insistent the call to a real, to the real of *jouissance*, which is not a *semblant*. Juridical discourse itself is always more at the service of the right to *jouir*, and one finds opposed to it only the imprescriptible right of tradition: “Leave us alone in our cocoon of tradition.” Certitude is on the side of *jouir*; it is certainly not in nature, which is irresistibly falsified by science. There is no longer anyone who could say that a man and a woman are necessary to produce an infant. It is a relic from before the expert enters as a third party in the affair. The appeal to the Other as the Father, the appeal to the master signifier of the Father can be even more exasperating since certitude is always more on the side of *jouissance*.

## PRODUCTIVE ANXIETY

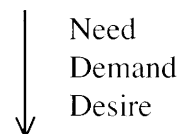
Let us return to Freud in relationship to Lacan. The repetition of the key word, anxiety as a sign in the "I" — a slogan repeated often by Freud and Lacan — makes us believe that anxiety comes down to warning or connoting. Or perhaps it is nothing like this. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud does what Lacan does in *Anxiety*: he revises his previous positions. The whole work indicates that anxiety is active. I'm not going to comment on it in detail; I will content myself with giving you the formula which inspires this whole Seminar of Lacan's: "Anxiety" — of castration — "is the driving force of repression." This is what Freud said. He wrote *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* to explain that he had revised his conceptions in order to make anxiety the driving force of repression. This is exactly what Lacan translates into the term "object-cause," implying causality in the affair. Lacanian anxiety is active, that is to say, productive.

What Lacan calls the cause of desire is <sup>his</sup> ~~its~~ translation <sup>I</sup> ~~to~~ the driving force of repression, and this is why I chose the adjective "repressed" to characterize desire. Freud speaks of the demand of the drive — *Triebanspruch* — of drive, anxiety, repression. The idea of the Seminar is not that anxiety is directly the cause, but that it produces the cause. It is the operator which, from the demand of the drive, constructs the object-cause of desire, which then is inscribed at the moment in which the break of what Lacan calls the primitive monad of *jouissance* takes place. This monad is mythic, but it is nevertheless necessary to pose. To correlate *jouissance* to a unitary totality, to a body of *jouissance* means that the Other does not immediately come into play here.

This is why Lacan is led to detail the anatomical separations of the object, the natural separations of the object imposed on the body, precisely without the intervention of an agent who is the Other. This is what he calls, a term taken from Freud, separation. Not castration, but the separation of objects, the separation of organs. He even speaks of a moment of "separtition" in order to

indicate that it is like a partition in the interior which concerns the subject of the organism. There, the separation of an organ has its paradigm in the anal object. This is why, for a second time, he poses the question of the subjectivation of the object and its inscription in the Other. *Objet petit a* is already there characterized as what there is of surplus myself in the exterior, because there was some "me" cut, and this is what echoes in the last lesson of Seminar XI.

I have evoked Lacan's classic doctrine of this side of desire before. This doctrine passes through need and demand; it takes need as primary and follows the passage from need through demand. Desire, which is like a gap between need and demand, is the result.



This doctrine is again put into question in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, where *jouissance* passes through anxiety and comes out in desire. The term "demand" is the place of love, since, in this classic doctrine, there is a doubling of the demand between demand for satisfaction of need and demand for love. In this classic doctrine, the signifier is of the Other at the beginning, since, in the vein of the Seminar on *Anxiety*, there is a reference to a mythic monad of *jouissance*. What Lacan will clarify — ambiguous formulas remain there — in "*Du Trieb de Freud et du désir du psychanalyste*" as *jouissance* is on the side of the Thing, while desire is of the Other."<sup>17</sup>

You know then the connection made between love and anxiety in this classic doctrine. The Other of demand holds onto the objects of satisfaction, the object accrues value from its symbolic attribute, from testimony of love, and if the Other does not give, then there is distress, *Hilflosigkeit*, while there is anxiety because of lack or loss of object.

In the Seminar on *Anxiety* a completely different perspective is justified by the same logic, the logic which implies that the essential gift of love is love itself, that is to say, some object. This is expressed as “Love is to give what one does not have:” the essential gift is the lack. Thus the articulation which figures in the Seminar, at one of the rare times in which Lacan explicitly cites *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* in order to oppose it.<sup>18</sup> Freud says that anxiety is linked to the loss of the object, while Lacan says it emerges when lack begins to lack, that is to say when the object is there and when there are too many objects. While love preserves the place of lack of the Other, anxiety comes to fill this lack—as comes, in the same way, aphanisis of the Other, this aphanisis of the Other which produces certitude. Suddenly love dispenses with objects, but, as such, it is without object properly speaking. Love which consists in giving what one does not have is destitute, while anxiety is not without object. This is a preliminary approach. Lacan says, because the object here precedes anxiety, causes anxiety, while, in the second part of the Seminar, it is anxiety which produces the object. The antinomy will be surmounted in the surplus-jouir (plus-de-jouir) object.

#### DISTURBED IMAGINARY

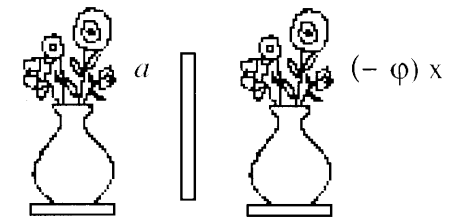
The first movement of the Seminar strives to introduce us to the phenomenology of the object in anxiety, which is enthralling. It occupies several lessons at the beginning, but it is not the most profound phase of exploration, it is not his final word. Lacan will look for this object of anxiety in Freud himself in *The Uncanny*, where he says that he is exploring, that he is trying to find the kernel of anxiety. The second movement of the Seminar deals, on the contrary, with an anxiety which produces the object.

The principle of phenomenology of the object in anxiety is the notion that there is always a certain void to preserve, understood in the visual field and in love, it is from its total filling that the disturbance in which anxiety is manifested emerges. Phenomenology

of the object in anxiety takes its departure from “The Mirror Stage” and Lacan presents it in this way. In “The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I” there is an object, the image of the body itself, which produces for the subject a feeling of jubilation and also involves a total misrecognition of the strangeness of the *objet petit a*. But what Lacan enumerates successively are the moments when the object appears, which throws us into a completely different dimension.

In the first movement of the Seminar, one has appearances, while, in the second movement, one has separations. These are two totally different regimes. In the first part the imaginary is disturbed; the mirror stage, the mirror stage modified in the optical schema, is disturbed. It is disturbed because something of the *objet petit a* which should only remain on the side of the subject, to the left on the optical schema, is manifested. It should not be there.

In the optical schema there is a mirror which separates a bouquet in a vase. It is on the left side, the side of the real, the side of the subject, the side one doesn't see, one sees it in the mirror, that is to say the real image. On the other side, in the schema you find in *Écrits*, you have the virtual image,  $i'$  of  $a$ , which is the same.



All the schemata that I have reproduced in the Seminar on *Anxiety* tend to make us believe that he deletes the id in order to indicate that *petit a*, that is to say the bouquet, does not appear in the field of the Other. Normally it should not appear there, there should be a blank—a construction you find in the last lesson of the Seminar

on *Le transfert*—that we might call minus *phi*, that Lacan will call *x*. It is on this condition that the whole narcissistic libidinal investment will not pass through the field of the Other, which is where the visual field is. One part of the narcissistic libidinal investment remains, non-specularizable, to stabilize the visual field.

The whole first movement of the Seminar indicates how a fallacious transference can happen in which this supplementary investment disturbs the visual field and then the id causes anxiety. You then have recourse to this optical schema in order to explain the dimension of the uncanny. Freud says that *Unheimlichkeit* belongs to the domain of anxiety. In the second movement, on the contrary, it is no longer a matter of the object which causes anxiety, but of the object that anxiety detaches in a surplus-*jouir* situation. In other words, in the first movement you have apparitions and disturbances, and in the second movement you have separations.

The Seminar directs you at first to a prevalence of the visual field where the object in anxiety, an object which offends the principle of the visual field which is, par excellence, the pleasure principle, homeostasis, appears with its disturbance function. One could state it in this way: only that which conforms to the pleasure principle is specularizable. The forcing of surplus-*jouir* is thus normally excluded. The visual field is, par excellence, what excludes the forcing of surplus-*jouir*.

Lacan uses the optic schema in order to take account of the liaison between anxiety and of the ego which Freud valorized. But if there is a second movement, it is because there are two faces in the discourse of psychoanalysts on anxiety, which Lacan points out.<sup>19</sup> We see the two movements distinctly. If, on the one hand, anxiety is the sign of the ego, it is also referred to the real, a defense against the absolute distress of birth. It is not a question of the ego there; no one imagines that the ego is constituted there. In the first part of the Seminar, anxiety reworked through the ego as sign of what Lacan calls the infinitely faint dangers is introduced, while, in the second, anxiety is referred to the real.

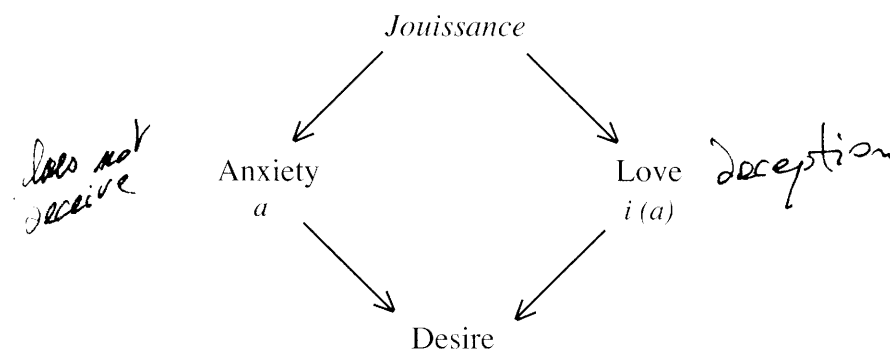
## V. A BROKEN LINE

### I. LACANIAN RHOMBUS

#### DISACCORD

Now that I've produced this book, I would love to shut up. Silence is par excellence oral *jouissance* which is, as we learn in this book, not very nourishing. I am not going to perform this shocker for you, nor will I comment much more on The Seminar on *Anxiety* before you have read it. I'll leave you time to get to know it, to ingest it, and eventually to digest it. My goal is to clear up its strengths and I introduce, in order to do it, a broken line, something like the Roman route Lacan refers to in his Seminar on *The Psychoses*.<sup>20</sup> A route which does not cover all the countryside, but allows for travel on it, allows for a trajectory. I propose to design a table of orientation which leaves outside of its coordinates a thousand details, each one of which needs to be measured with great attention.

I give this broken line the form of the Lacanian rhombus which I show running in two paths. Between desire and *jouissance*, the one passes through anxiety and the other through love. The path of love is, classically, in Freud, as Lacan pointed out, a path of deception, inasmuch as love is entrenched in narcissism. It is on this basis that Lacan's aphorism, according to which anxiety is what does not deceive, stands out.



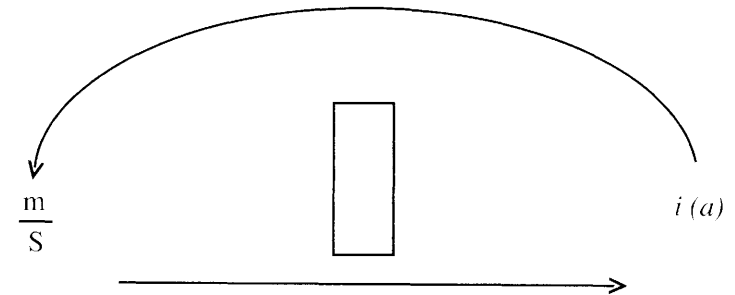
I've stated that the "this side of desire" was the topic of this Seminar. You already know a "this side of desire: "the demand of love. On reading and putting this Seminar in order in accordance with what I believe to be its orientation, with certain scansions of paragraphs, of parts at your disposal, you will discover another "on this side," the one that passes through anxiety, and one which Lacan will not use subsequently.

On the slope of love, one finds on the horizon what we can call a mirage, which is indicated as such by Lacan — that is to say when he engages the symbolic and makes the imaginary pass through the symbolic — in "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis," a work which we have agreed for a long time to place at the beginning of his teaching. On the horizon one finds perfect love, whose realization is accomplished through an intersubjective agreement imposing its harmony on the torn nature which supports it.<sup>21</sup>

On the slope of anxiety it is not a question of intersubjective agreement, or of the imposition of any harmony. Disharmony prevails all through this Seminar, in particular with what Lacan presents as the object in anxiety, which he finds in Freud's *The Uncanny*. It is thus not agreement that counts, but rather what anxiety means, namely strangeness, disaccord, perturbation.

These two slopes of love and of anxiety are correlative to two types of objects: the *objet petit a* as it is elaborated in this Seminar; and, on the slope of love, the symbol used for the specular image which stands for Lacan's constructions in "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I" as revised, recast, simplified from the optical schema, which you find in its complete form in his "Remarque sur le rapport de Daniel Lagache: Psychanalyse et structure de la personnalité." This specular image is presented by Lacan as the formation of the ego; that is to say it implies what one may make appear as a retroaction, in which we inscribe at first, through convention, a mythical subject which, in the mirror, sees the image of its presence, that is to say of its body. I will not take

up the demonstration that Lacan tries, even though this image has a formative effect on the ego. Below is the schema which reflects the mirror plan.



#### LACAN'S OLD REFERENCES

This image may attract aggressiveness — the schema inspires and supports Lacan's "Aggressivity in psychoanalysis"<sup>22</sup> — inasmuch as "I see myself as another," and this other completed in the mirror, because it anticipates the state of my development, of my biological integration, would be master and would attract some negative affects. Even when this image is implicated by Lacan in its tearings, even when he plays with its ambivalence for the subject, it supports, not only love, but, until the Seminar on *Anxiety*, *i* of a supports the world of objects, that is to say the world. In his text, "The mirror stage," Lacan indicates that it is like the threshold of the visible world.<sup>23</sup> In this image, in spite of the mixed sentiments it can inspire, going from jubilation to rage, in the now classic description Lacan gives it, rests the principle of my being in the world, or at least of my being in the visual world.

Another reference in these old texts is "Propos sur la causalité psychique": "There is no antinomy between the objects that I perceive and my body, whose perception is constituted by an accord

with the most natural of them.”<sup>24</sup> We find here this term “accord” which shows the fundamental tonality of this imaginary rapport. In other words, not only has this image always appeared to Lacan as the principle of the formation of the ego, but also the principle of what we will call here the objective reality, modeled, informed by the specular image. At least—I’m wary of being responsible for it, responsible as the one who speaks—this remains the basis on which the phenomena described then by Lacan in the Seminar on *Anxiety* are presented. I will add a reference to the text “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”: “The space in which the imagery of the ego is developed rejoins the objective space of reality.”<sup>25</sup> So that, whatever the symbolic functions grafted by Lacan on this schema may be, this *i* of a remains—we have several formulas in the Seminar on *Anxiety*—the prototype or paradigm of objects, let us add of normal objects, or regular objects. *Petitia* is the object constructed in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, out of the experience of anxiety, an extremely stylized experience. The affect of this object is shown. This is not the most profound phase of the Seminar, but it is the way in which, in the first movement, he launches presences into the visible world which are in breach of the laws of the phenomenology of perception. Am I right here to evoke Merleau-Ponty, since Lacan makes a global reference to Kant’s transcendental aesthetic in the first part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which enters this Seminar only through allusions?

## 2. THE LURE OF POWER

### A NON-SPECULARIZABLE OBJECT

What the first movement of the Seminar tries to substantiate is that there is an experience of anxiety which is not sentimental. This experience of anxiety is not substantiated by the statements of an anguished subject, but it is supported by what may appear to be anxiety. The word “appearance,” which comes from the first movement of the Seminar, refers to the visible world, and what appears

are disturbances. A construction which tries to take account of the experience of these disturbances is built on the data of this experience. How? In one and only one way. These disturbances have a principle which doesn’t not appear clearly before the tenth lesson of this Seminar, which I’ve titled “Of an Irreducible Lack in the Signifier,” where elementary topological figures, which could be improved upon, are presented.

This principle is deduced from the fact that the threshold, the principle of the visible world, is the specular. This is the thread of Lacan’s teaching up until Seminar X. The disturbance comes essentially from what is manifested and appears from the non-specularizable. There is a paradox here, no doubt, but we are already influenced by Lacan’s formulas which show, for example, that desire is not articulatable but articulated. The beginning of the Seminar shows that when anxiety, the object of anxiety as anxiogenic object, emerges, the non-specularizable is paradoxically specularized, the invisible is nevertheless seen.

Lacan’s elementary topology constructs an object called non-specularizable. Lacan invents the non-specularizable in the same way that he has privileged the specular, starting from when the normal object seen in the mirror is reversed and undergoes an inversion of symmetry—the left becomes the right and vice-versa. Thus the difference between what you see when you look at yourself in the mirror and when you look at a photo of yourself. It implies that this object has two sides which are distinct.

Then Lacan puts into play and calls non-specular a non-rotatable object, an object for which this inversion cannot be produced because the right and inverse sides, the top and bottom, are continuous. Even reduced to its topological principle, even reduced to a minimal surface, or even complicated, this is the Möbius strip. And so I put this Möbius strip on the book’s cover, simply, in a modern, banal, but now classic presentation—Escher—where it serves as a support for a column of small ants.

## FROM ANXIOGENIC TO EROGENOUS

In the first movement of the Seminar, the accent is on describing the disruptive irruption of the *objet petit a*, inasmuch as it is not rotatable in the visual field. It appears diversely in the modes of intrusion, of an intrusion posed as anxiogenic. The chapter on a class of phenomena is opened here. Correlatively to this disruption of a non-specularizable anxiogenic object, the visual field is described as especially anxiolytic throughout the Seminar. Of all the fields enumerated in the function of objects, it is, says Lacan, in the visual field that the *objet petit a* is most concealed and normally most unperceived. It is in visual perception that the subject is the most reassured, the most secured in terms of anxiety. An anxiogenic object makes an irruption in special cases, in a field where normally it has no place because the objects are normalized in the specular mode. Thus you are obliged, if you read this Seminar, to relearn the optical schema, which Lacan will then reduce.

The charm of this Seminar is in the fourth part where the optical schema has disappeared. But this Seminar is well-composed. One must pass through the *objet petit a* as anxiogenic in the visual field, following certain of its disruptive apparitions, into a field which is not its own. One must give credence to this *objet petit a* in order to be able to consider its function as such through a certain number of erogenous separations. Through its most profound phase, the Seminar goes thus from anxiogenic apparitions of the object to erogenous separations.

The first movement consists of the first two parts. The second movement takes its force in the fourth part. In the third part Lacan situates anxiety between *jouissance* and desire and shows a certain conjunction of the anxiogenic and the erogenous, especially concerning the affinities of the connections between orgasm and anxiety. There is a totally ordered disposition there: from the anxiogenic to the erogenous, with the balancing scale, the curse of the scale, appearing in the conjunction of the anxiogenic and the erogenous.

This is most evident in the way the Seminar puts into play two different statuses of the body. In the first movement it is the specular body, that of the mirror stage, in its totality, apprehended as a form, a good form, and even the best of forms, since, if we believe its construction, it imposes on the speaking being the perceptive world of its objects. It's a *Gestalt*. The first movement plays on this gestalt, since it shows how it can be disturbed, doubled, depersonalized, made strange by the incongruous irruption of an object structured differently. But one finds the specular object in the second movement having a different structure; somehow, one finds in its place and perfectly informed this *objet petit a*. These *objets petit a* do not stop at five. In their proliferation, you find some kinds that you might have trouble designating, which are certainly not on the order of good form — like the placenta; the coverings of the fetus; the gaze, which cannot be a good form except as falling under the category of the eye; the voice, which is not inscribed in the visual field. We are in a register in which it is not a matter of form, but rather of zone. It is a matter of the body with erogenous zones, which is not the visual body. It is, in the use Lacan makes of it, the body as organism, comprehended completely outside of the mirror, a body at the least a-specular, delivering objects conforming to the topological structure presented through the irruption of the *objet petit a* in the visual field, that is to say the topological structure of the Mobius strip, or more precisely of its minimal surface. It is the body of erogenous zones, that is to say of surface zones, the zones that Freud put into function in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. This is the body which returns. One forgets the form, since the body in question is taken back to its fetal status, and for the best reasons in the world, since the anxiety of birth has been verified in analytic discourse.

## A CORPORAL IMPOSITION

This is a body whose form I would say isn't known; one doesn't know its limit. There is in fact, in this fourth part, something Lacan



accomplishes in his teaching. Until then, following Lacan, one only knew the body as essentially implicated in the formation of the ego. What was implicated in the constitution of the subject? The signifier. And what appeared there was obviously heralded in the relationship of the partial object and desire: the body, and more precisely the object separated from the body, was involved in the constitution of the subject. The body makes its entrance under the category of the *objet petit a*, in the constitution of the subject of the unconscious itself. We only need go to Seminar XI to see that these are the structures that Lacan is going to reveal in the fourth part, which will inspire him to reformulate the very concept of the unconscious.

The concept of the unconscious, as it is presented at first in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, is constructed to conform to the structure of the orifice as it is demonstrated in the fourth part. This is why, throughout Seminar XI, for the best reasons in the world, Lacan states that the drive is organized according to gaps homologous to that of the unconscious, precisely because he constructed his concept of the unconscious in the fourth part of the Seminar on *Anxiety*.

I said: this is a body whose limit is unknown. These are the stakes in the fourth part. Where is the limit of the erogenous body? How far can the body as organism go? As Lacan conceives it, the organism consists of everything which allows the body to be a living being, including what sustains it, nourishes it, and thus the organism is shown as encroaching on the body of the Other. This is indicated in a phrase in "Position de l'inconscient": "The organism whose limits go beyond the body."<sup>26</sup> This is what is demonstrated there. And this is why, in "The Mirror Stage" and its variations, we always have a face-to-face structure, the body itself and its image as image of the other. But, in regard to this erogenous organism, the face-to-face structure is replaced, it cedes its place to the structure of encroachment, of ectopy. Then we see crossing Euler circles emerge for the first time, at the level of this physiology, where one

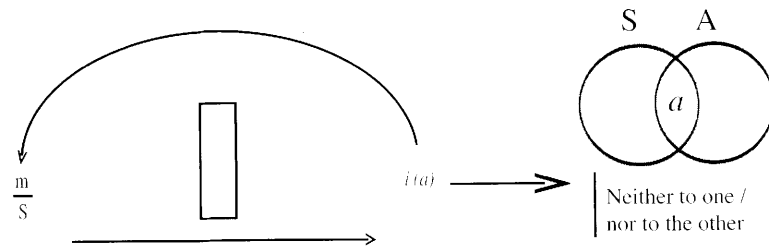
must figure out where what is of the subject and what is of the Other begin and end.

You can amuse yourself trying to follow the different solutions Lacan proposes, which are all good, or perhaps they're not. Sometimes one sees the *petit a* on the side of the subject, sometimes one sees it on the side of the big O, sometimes one sees it as amboceptor (belonging to the subject and to the Other), accomplishing a conjunction of the two. One sees it also as ectopic, or rather in the forms of fetal parasitism, or even as the intrusion of the Other in the corporal space of the subject. There is, in particular at the end, a sensational presentation of the anxiety of birth due to intrusion. It is supported by Ferenczi's lucubrations: the natal milieu of the human species is aquatic — which is not in contradiction with the fetal state — and its irruption into the air leads to an intrusion from the Other space, to the interior, and to the formation of the pulmonary organ. Lacan hesitates to put it in writing.

One can enumerate these different forms. Lacan also has the voice function as more or less the voice of the Other. This is why he brings the superego, in its most profound phase, to this *objet petit a*, and he also saves the testing of it for the following Seminar, the one he didn't give, the "Names of the Father."<sup>27</sup> It is the voice of the Other, a voice presented as embodied. You have, in a hundred or so pages, all the modes of conjunction enumerated, and then you have the separation, either on the side of the subject, or on the side of the Other, or amboceptor, or ectopic, on the mode of parasitism, of intrusion, of embodiment.

This can't be formalized. I tried. Lacan presents it as an attempt to use Euler's circles functioning for different objects. He doesn't return to it. This only explains one relatively small part of the details which show the charm of his exploration. Lacan delivers the solution to us in his "Position sur l'inconscient," where he justifies what has come to us here in the biological plan by putting Euler's circles in place, distinguishing especially, concerning the *objet petit a*, the zone of intersection, that is to say what belongs

to one and to the other. He modifies it dialectically by giving it the value of "neither to one, nor to the other."



After reading the Seminar on *Anxiety*, one can say that this is certainly the most elegant solution: not to be fascinated by the topic of this object, but on the contrary to understand it as functionally separated. One topic—there is one, that of the imaginary, so designated in Seminar I—obviously put us in a space where the efforts are not conclusive.

This is the charm of the fourth part of the Seminar on *Anxiety*. It shows what we have lost: a certain realism of the *objet petit a* and even a certain materialism of the object, which is powerfully incarnated there in the organs; and even a certain naturalism of the *objet petit a*, since we see Lacan leading through works on physiology and biology.

We have presented the object at first with the aspect of an object of anxiety, triumphant in its strangeness, and then we took you to the topological form of the reduced Mobius strip. And you find it identified there with organs, with parts of the organism of the subject and also parts of the organism of the Other.

This Seminar could be read, if we leave to the side some important points, as substantialist. The *objet petit a* appears identified with a substance. I saw some charm there. The charm that I found there is that one comprehends the *objet petit a* in its emergence, before it emerges and is imposed on us in its sophisticated

form as pure logical consistency.<sup>28</sup> In the Seminar on *Anxiety*, the *objet petit a* is elaborated as a pure and simple corporal imposition. At least this is what is most insistent in the fourth part. But even there one cannot forget that the physiology of the *objet petit a* is developed under the signifier of topology, that is to say that the *objet petit a* has a topological consistency.

If I were to remember a law of discourse of Lacan's on the *objet a*, even if it is more fugitive and if the patterns of what is developed at the organic level make us forget, it is that only examples and illustrations are given. One cannot give what Lacan calls episodic substances, representations of it.

#### THE *OBJET A*, FAILURE OF THE NAME-OF-THE-FATHER

Since then the *objet petit a* has become much more sophisticated. One is so substantialist that, once a voice speaking of Lacan's *objet petit a* has entered your ear, one cannot help but ask: what is my *objet petit a*? One must first believe that, if it is designated as *objet petit a*, it is because it has no name. *Petit a*—one cannot designate an index any more reduced. This is because the *objet petit a*, with its little Lacanian letter, has no name to question the Name-of-the-Father, and so I could title the last lesson "From *petit a* to Names-of-the-Father." The father is, on the contrary, par excellence, he who has a name, who gives the name, who establishes the symbolic filiation. For that matter, we see these days a whole population, with psychoanalysts at the top of the ladder, excited about defending the Name-of-the-Father. Because of some advances in science and also some dynamics of the right to *jouir* in their own way, they feel the need to shore up the Name-of-the-Father, and a certain number of thinkers have added some Freudian ideas formalized by Lacan to reinforce themselves. This is a population of philosophers and of theologians. Thus we see what Lacan predicted in his Seminar: a sensational conjunction of psychoanalysts and theologians in defense of the Name-of-the-Father. This Seminar is like manna from heaven for them. One must still manage to decipher this theme

which shakes the eternity of the Name-of-the-Father, to decipher that this Seminar shows that the Father, his power, stumbles over the *objet petit a*.

It stumbles especially, obviously, because the maternal Other is much more present in the illustrations which are given at the level of birth, at the level of the oral object. There is, all the same, the question of the breast, an imagined oral object, and also the maternal Other comes on the scene there in regard to the anal object. No doubt it is at the level of object that Lacan saves for later the vocal object, the object supported or separated from the commandments; this is where the figure of the paternal Other comes into play. The fact remains that the paternal Other, its power, stumbles over the *objet petit a*, inasmuch as it is an object that is not nameable. I refer you to page 177 of *L'envers de la psychanalyse*. To say that this *objet a* is not nameable is to repeat in another way how Lacan deals with it in this Seminar, namely that the *objet petit a* is irreducible to symbolization. In other words, the *objet petit a* functions as the check on the Name-of-the-Father, inasmuch as the Name-of-the-Father is the major operator of symbolization.

The paternal metaphor functions perfectly well with the Bible. It is even a sensational formalization, which is fitting, and which proves the justice of Lacan's diagnostic concerning Freud, that is that he had treated religion as an illusion without a future. What Freud did in psychoanalysis was to save the Father, and thus give religion a new foundation for new times: the Father whom Freud dreamed, the all-powerful Father, the one invoked in this Seminar. The capital word here is power, the power revealed in its characteristic of lure. This is what is in question in this Seminar, in which Lacan already announced that he was putting Freud's desire in question and which will become more explicit in Seminar XI.

#### THE PATH OF ANALYSIS

Lacan touched on Oedipus essentially through the paternal metaphor, that is to say through a linguistic reduction, a formalization

of the myth. This formalization was well made to show what it contained of *semblants*. Now, the *semblants* are strong, the *semblants* are out there in the world. This signifying artifice has so occupied the scene, returning to a theme of the Seminar on *Anxiety*, Chapter III, that it has infiltrated the world, and one might say that, as a precaution, it's better not to deal with it. But this is only a precaution, for there is an innovation to be found there. And when the innovation is already there and it has a social dynamic based on logic and law, couldn't one think that it must be followed? Must one dismiss the demand that a signifier, coming from tradition, comes to baptize the *jouissance* of everyone. Isn't this a transcendent demand? A religious philosopher with whom Lacan associated formerly in 1966 uttered a sentence that might make the theologian raise an eyebrow: "No man is son of a man or of a woman, he is son of God."

The paternal metaphor, as Lacan presents it classically, takes its departure from an opaque term, that of the Desire of the Mother, conceived at first as a signifier whose signification is unknown. The operation of the paternal metaphor manages to symbolize it by producing the phallic signification. The paternal metaphor makes it work, which can be understood, in effect, as an example of integral symbolization.

The Seminar on *Anxiety* is developed outside of the paternal metaphor and also takes its departure from an initial term, opaque and mythical, which is not the Desire of the Mother, but *jouissance*. The point of departure that Lacan proposes, when he speaks of an irreducible remainder, is that no metaphor is capable of symbolizing it integrally. *Petit a* designates in this respect the failure of the metaphor.

The libidinal, what the libido reveals, resists integral symbolization in its structure, and this is what *petit a* designates. Suddenly the phallus as emblem of power, and of symbolic power, is only narcissistic. There is, in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, a restoration of desire as desire for power. On the contrary, it is argued there that

it is the insistence of lack of power, the “not able to” determined by the detumescence of the organ, which is sublimated in the category of power.

Power does not belong to the libidinal field, but to the narcissistic field. It delivers an Ideal, the Ideal of the ego, as Ideal of all power, on the horizon of which is God himself. There is a thesis in the Seminar on *Anxiety* which is that the idea of God is rooted in the sexuality of the male, in the inability to *jouir*. This is something of a hapax for Lacan, while the critique of power as illusion is a constant.

In *L'envers de la psychanalyse*, you have, beginning with hysteria, a reconstruction of the figure of the father, in which Lacan formulates clearly that the father figures as castrated in this structure. It is his lack of power which is dressed up in the emblems of power. In the same way you have a constant in Lacan's teaching, in the same vein, which is the critique, the reconstruction of the position of the master. From the beginning of his teaching, psychoanalysis appears as another path which passes through a renouncement of the illusions of power. Let us understand it at the level of the voice: interpretation rather than commandment.

In all the final insights of the Seminar on *Anxiety*, when Lacan announces the Seminar of the Names-of-the-Father, he designs a new figure of the father, the one who knows that the *objet a* is irreducible to symbol. A father who would not be the dupe of the paternal metaphor, who would not believe that it could accomplish an integral symbolization, and who would know on the contrary how to relate desire to the *objet petit a* as its cause. We do not have the final developments that Lacan might have given, but perhaps it is already evident to you that he designed a father who would be none other than the analyst. It is this figure who appears, since it is the *objet petit a* playing its part all alone between the subject and the Other which is there at the center of the attention of the Seminar itself.

## VI. ARIADNE'S THREAD

### 1. THE *TRIEBREGUNG*

#### A SMALL MATRIX

I would like to leave Ariadne's thread in your hands so that you can unwind it and take a Roman route to orient yourselves in the labyrinth of the Seminar on *Anxiety*. I could leave you this memento to thwart the glitter and the lures which are multiplied by Lacan, who doesn't say all he knows here, and of which we have the trace in his contemporary writing, in particular the end of “The subversion of the subject,” which is simply how the function of the *objet petit a* relates to what is presented of its substance, its nature, its identity.

I've created a small instrument which the schematic that Lacan used in his “The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud”<sup>29</sup> inspired in me, and whose purpose is to oppose metaphor and metonymy. Lacan redirects or modifies the symbols of addition and subtraction: the plus and minus, enclosed on this occasion in parentheses which indicate that we must take them with the special value which is explained there.

(+) (-)

This is a typically Lacanian method of imposing mathematical operations and of modifying them in order to make them function in analytical discourse. It is no different from Lacan's borrowing the theory of the set of operations of joining and intersection in the Seminar of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* in order to modify them, letting them function as operators, transformed to inscribe alienation and separation.

I've borrowed this plus and minus in parentheses to orient myself in the Seminar on *Anxiety*. I give this plus the value of going beyond a limit, a limit which is a barrier inasmuch as it offers a

resistance. This value of the bar which separates the signifier from the signified in "The agency of the letter," in the extent to which the signifier is something material, at least materializable, would be sensitive, in the form of the written trace, to the sonority which can be measured, while the signified is on the contrary immaterial, incomprehensible, except as an intrusion on the upper level.

$$S/s \quad (+) \quad (-)$$

The minus is there to indicate that the element which figures in the lower part remains there. Lacan writes the formula of metaphor and metonymy with the aid of this symbol.

$$\begin{array}{l} S (+) /s \\ S (-) /s \end{array}$$

The plus indicates the breaching of the bar which separates the signifier and the signified and thus symbolizes the effect of succession, the emergence of the signification such that it is crystallized in a metaphor. The formula of metonymy indicates that the effect is not produced, that the signification is elided, that the bar is maintained, and that the signified slides, remains incomprehensible, supposed, posed below. I am going to use this plus in parentheses as the symbol of an addition, which is also a breaching, and the symbol of the minus in parentheses to indicate a non-breaching, a supposition, which is, in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, also a subtraction.

I will begin by introducing you to my small matrix, a small lamp to guide you in the darkness of this Seminar, which does not lack clarity, but it also has some obscurity. I will place it then in the imaginary, in the symbolic and in the real. I will begin with what I dare to say is a word which is lacking in this book, whose presence will render it more readable.

#### A DE-SYMMETRIZED MIRROR STAGE

Lacan displays a reticence in this Seminar. An emerging signification is reserved, a metaphor is not completely developed, a metonymy is suspended.

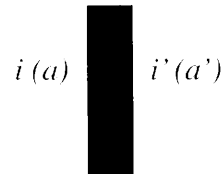
One can dream about it. This is a Seminar dedicated to an audience of not such good will as the present one. Lacan gave the Seminar at a time when a separation was about to happen, a scission of the analytic group will take place shortly after the conclusion of his Seminar. Various hints, potential lines indicate that he knew quite well he would have to face what he doesn't name, which I would place in parentheses. So I tell myself that he holds them in suspense and he doesn't tell them everything.

I feel justified in saying that there is a missing word in this book which is spoken nevertheless, but as an aside. A blank space in what I myself spoke to you about as the appearance of the anxiogenic object in the visual field: the cause of the appearance. It is, moreover, this cause, if one names it, which allows for the joining together with the second movement of the Seminar, and that is the separation of the object.

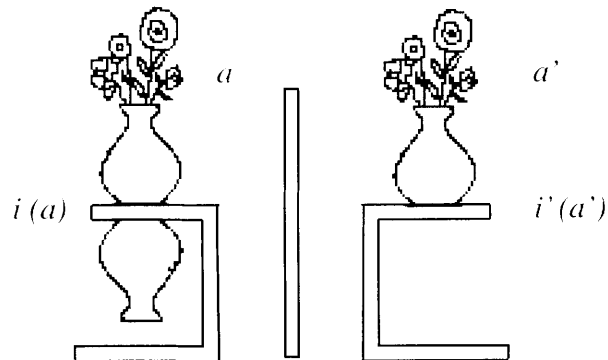
"The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I" obeys a principle of symmetry. Lacan explains it only to introduce the symbolic function: this principle of symmetry may be enough to be symbolized by the relationship a-a'. It figures thus, for example, in "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis."<sup>30</sup> In this form, obviously symmetrical and reciprocal, he indicates the transfusion and the commutations of the narcissistic libido for the object and vice-versa. It is a lamp for reading Freud. The libido circulates from the narcissism of the ego to the object; it is distributed to the object or taken away from it. There are decantings, and the circuit of the libido happens in the imaginary plane so that *jouissance*, in Lacan's early teaching, has an imaginary status. It is *jouissance* of the body and of the object as imaginary.

Lacan's optical schema, the one he presented in his Seminar I and published in his "Remarque sur le rapport de Daniel Lagache,"

obeys this principle of symmetry rather well, in the form  $i(a)$ ,  $i(a)$ . Writing it close together in this way, it is homologous; it transfers the previous  $a-a'$  and indicates the similitude of these two elements.

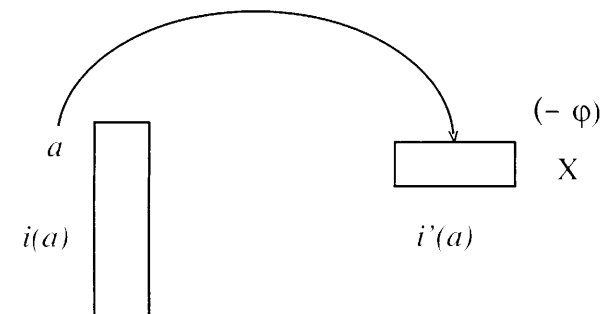


The first differential element that the optical schema introduces that you find again in the Seminar on *Anxiety* is located elsewhere. It is a scission which operates between *petit a* and  $i$  of  $a$ —let us give these symbols a value—which operates between the partial object and the image of the form of the body itself. But it operates in a special way, since it is through the intermediary of another mirror which operates on two material elements: the partial object represented in the form of a visible bouquet and, hidden in a box, a vase which this convex mirror allows to emerge as an image, as fitting tightly against the bouquet. In the other mirror one sees a completed image of the vase and the flowers inscribed.



The essential difference with the mirror stage pure and simple is the valorizing of the two elements, the *petit a* of the partial object and the hidden vase, often forgotten. It is there in order to display the invisible reality of the body as a type of vase, a vase which contains, a vase with its orifice, emblematic of the orifices of the erogenous zones—the subject having little access to this reality of the body, with which it has, according to Lacan, only an “obscure intimacy.”<sup>31</sup> This is the body which tries to bring to light what is deployed in the fourth part of the Seminar on *Anxiety*. You have the visible vase, the one described as the  $i$  of  $a$ , which is the imaginary body surrounding the reality of the partial object. You also have some considerations about what takes place when this operation of imaginary unification is not produced. It is there in particular that Lacan tries to design the position of the schizophrenic.

I'm giving you this brief detour to emphasize the essential modification that the Seminar on *Anxiety* introduces in the optical schema, which is introduced beforehand in order to put the functions of the ideal ego and the Ideal of the ego in place. There is nothing of the like here, where a very precise modification is introduced in this schema. Lacan begins by de-symmetrizing the mirror stage in order to exploit what is then constructed in a topological way—that the *petit a* properly speaking is not specular, that it does not appear in the mirror, that it is not found on the right.



## A LIBIDINAL REMAINDER

What justifies this astonishing de-symmetry, which is a sensational correction of the classical mirror stage, is explained in all its details in the Seminar on *Le transfert*.<sup>32</sup> Lacan bases it on a passage from Karl Abraham, the inventor of the function of the partial object, using in particular the dream of an hysteric patient who sees the image of the father censured at the phallic level by the absence of pubic hair. Lacan gives to this the sense that everything that is narcissistic libidinal investment of the subject is not decanted, transferred to the object; that there is a part which remains on the side of the subject, which does not enter into the imaginary. This means that everything which can attract the desire of the subject in the fine figure of the object, to the right, depends on what remains on the left side, what is not represented. This contradicts the substitutions of the libido. An element remains strange in the libidinal dialectic where, in these reciprocal transfusions of the subject to the object, one poses the question of how we know to which object the libido is distributed, onto what other object it is displaced, if it goes back to the side of the subject.

There is a libidinal remainder there, which already figured in the Seminar on *Le transfert*, which is designated by one word, the *Triebregung*.<sup>33</sup> that fundamental *Triebregung* about which Lacan says: "What constitutes the *Triebregung* functioning in desire is seated in the remainder." The Seminar on *Anxiety* makes us understand what is happening in that "functioning in desire": it is as cause. It is this Freudian word which has to be added on pages 50-53 of the Seminar on *Anxiety*. In *Le transfert*, the *Triebregung* appears as the privilege of the phallus; in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, this privilege is understood as *objet petit a*. One goes from a limited theory to a generalized theory. To the left, we have the supposed reality of the organism, and to the right, its imaginary representation, which is also the field of objectivity and the field of the Other.

This word figures in the Seminar on *Anxiety* from Chapter I, but only as an incident regarding its translation,<sup>34</sup> at the moment

when, constructing his first signifying grid, Lacan stresses the word "agitation" (*émoi*), saying: "The translation of *Triebregung* by drive agitation is completely wrong." Agitation means "fallen power," while *Regung* is "stimulation, appeal to disorder, meaning to riot." And that is all. He only uses it there as an aside. If he had put this word in its place, that is to say if one perceived that what constitutes the *Triebregung* functioning in desire in place in the *objet petit a*, precisely what is not said—that would make the whole of the Seminar on *Anxiety* much more understandable. I would add that the word *Trieb*, the drive, only intervenes in an intermittent and discreet way in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, while it is obviously a function that if put into play would simplify a great deal of what Lacan presents to us. He clearly was saving the elaboration of the drive for the Seminar on *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, I mean after the other side of the scission is accomplished.

## 2. UNCANNY OBJECT

## NOT WITHOUT OBJECT

This de-symmetrized mise-en-place lets us give, following in Lacan's steps, a theory of the uncanny in the imaginary. When does the uncanny as anxiogenic emerge? I really love the formula which comes to Lacan, because it is an interrogative formulation which demonstrates the structure of its construction. Is it not this remainder, *petit a*, "which comes, through some detour, to manifest itself in the place where lack is anticipated"?<sup>35</sup> Here is the hypothesis that it is the irruption of the object which crystallizes or condenses the *Triebregung*, the drive stimulation; that the paradox of the appearance of an uncanny object is created precisely because it doesn't conform to the laws of the visual field. It doesn't conform to Lacan's construction because it can't be rotated; it has the same structure as the Moebius strip. Its very presence introduces a flawed mark which is the function of anxiety.

This thesis, fundamental in this Seminar, figures also in an assertive form: "Anxiety emerges when a mechanism makes something appear in the place (- $\Phi$ ), which corresponds, on the right side, to the place occupied on the left side by the *a* of the object of desire."<sup>36</sup> It is through this function of a libidinal remainder cut from the imaginary that Lacan makes sense of the *Unheimlich*. Here is the principle of the uncanny object in the imaginary: it is the appearance of *petit a* in *x*, correlative to perceptible perturbations.

In brief, I am explaining how Lacan can say that anxiety is framed. The anxiogenic object doesn't appear just anywhere, it appears in the place where the *objet petit a* is normally subtracted, extracted, in order to allow for the normality of the visual field. This appearance is anxiogenic because it is manifested as an infraction to the laws of perception. This supposes that there is an element which, structurally, does not respond to what the imaginary requires, but nevertheless forces the entry of the imaginary field. Thus the theory that there is anxiety when a supplementary quantum of libido, of *Triebregung*, appears in the imaginary field, and it appears there as an uncanny object.

We understand why Lacan takes the detour of the imaginary in order to introduce anxiety, because, via the imaginary, the Freudian *Triebregung* becomes, right in front of your eyes, an uncanny object: it becomes an object. This is how Lacan formulates that anxiety is not without object, and this formula, bypassed, "not without," indicates that the object in question is not a normal object, an object which belongs to the world of common objects, that it is not homologous to them, but it is an object of another type. Its most disturbing manifestation, the most anxiogenic, happens in personal experience, autobiographical, which Maupassant reports in his novel, *Le Horla*, where the de-personalization goes so far as to make the character appear to himself as seen from behind. This is the extreme point. The disturbance of *petit a* as un-rotatable is manifested: the inside is in continuity with the outside, where the subject finds himself confronted in some way with himself in the

form of an inside-out glove, an image which returns in various reprises in this Seminar and in Lacan's teaching.

#### THE SCENE AND THE WORLD

Eventually, the emergence in the visual field of the dimension of the gaze, as it brings a feeling of strangeness, is posed as the door opened to anxiety. But one sees also through what other mechanism this intrusion of *petit a* can have an erogenous, not anxiogenic, value. These are the well-known examples that Lacan gives of the coquette's black beauty spot, the adorable speck of beauty, which is a stain, but at the same time eroticizes the image of the Other by presenting a value, this time positive, of the *objet petit a*.

So we have the opposition which structures this Seminar between two types of objects: those of the specular type, objects common to one and the other, which are not necessarily peaceful, objects of concurrence but also of exchange, recognizable and normal, specular and symbolizable at the same time; and objects of another type, anterior to this imaginary community, which are not regulated but are filled with *Triebregung*, having a the weight of a drive. This is what will become, much later in Lacan's teaching, the surplus-*jouir*. If Lacan had made the Freudian term *Triebregung* function in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, he would have had this surplus-*jouir* on the table.

We have here some imaginary objects and some non-*i* objects, some objects which have the structure of *i* of *a* and some objects structurally un-rotatable. The mirror of this optical schema functions as a veil, which keeps the subject, in normal conditions, from seeing the *objet petit a*. If we make the mirror pivot, it is presented as a barrier which separates the *objet petit a* from the normal object. There are then two possible states according to which this barrier is maintained: the *objet petit a* remains in its place—*petit i*, minus in parentheses, *petit a*—no disorder, no rioting; or there is a breaching—*petit i*, plus in parentheses, *petit a*—and then, there is perturbation, disorder, rioting.



$$i(a) \left\{ \begin{array}{l} i(-) a \\ a \end{array} \right. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} i(+) a \end{array} \right.$$

This is a preliminary application in the imaginary of the matrix which I told you about. It allows you to, for example, understand why Lacan presents, at a particular moment and in a symmetrical fashion, masochism and sadism, and why he takes care to show a difference, in regard to Lévi-Strauss, between the scene and the world. The scene—above the bar in what is shown to the right of this schema—is what is shown, what appears. The world, in the optical schema, figures as the reality of the organism, it is hidden. Thus there is a dialectic between the shown and the hidden that Lacan uses in regard to masochism and sadism. We can use it as the clinical characteristics concerning these two positions, but keeping in mind that Lacan did not really use it elsewhere like that. It was mainly useful for this matrix.

### 3. GRIEF AND MELANCHOLY

#### ACT AND UNCONSCIOUS

When Lacan introduces masochism and sadism in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, it is in a game that he calls concealment in which what is shown is there in order to hide the other dimension. Regarding the masochist, who parades as a failure and who, far from reducing concealment, presents himself as submissive to any mistreatment that can come to him from the Other, one says: voilà, this is the *objet petit a*. Not at all. It is a matter of a demonstration: a figuration of *i* of *a* is on the stage. It is on the stage that the masochist at that point makes a *semblant*, in reality of the *objet petit a*, which he exhibits as failed, and which he flaunts in an effort to assure the *jouissance* of the Other. Lacan indicates that the masochist is trying, under the bar, to produce the anxiety of the Other. While, inversely, the sadist

on the scene shows himself killing himself to produce the anxiety of the Other, while he is trying in fact to obtain the *jouissance* of the Other, and even to find in the Other the *petit a*, the most intimate of his *jouissance*, which is, as Lacan is compelled to state following in the steps of the Marquis de Sade: "I had the skin of the cunt." This is an application of the matrix that I have shown to you—the word "matrix" not appearing inappropriate here. You understand that what Lacan developed in the opposition of "acting out" and of passing to the act, as the opposition of grief and melancholy derived from Freud, responds strictly to this disposition. The concept of scene—an imaginary scene but also the scene of the Other, since, in relationship to the real, the imaginary and the symbolic are on the same side—is essential here.

Acting out is the emergence of the *objet petit a* on the scene, with its unsituable effects of perturbations and disorder. We must infer here a subjective dynamic, which makes the subject bring this *objet petit a* on the scene, while, in the passage to the act, it is the subject rejoining under the bar, outside of the scene, the *objet petit a*. The passage to the act does not deceive; it is an exiting the stage which leaves no place for interpretation, which leaves no place for the play of the signifier.

$$\begin{array}{c|c} + a & - a \\ \hline acting & passage \grave{a} l'acte \end{array}$$

This is why it occurred to me to disconnect the function of the act and that of the unconscious. There is in the passage to the act a "wanting to know nothing more." One exits the deception of the scene because of the certainty that one rejoins it in an identification in a by-pass to the *objet petit a*, an identification that Lacan calls an absolute identification with the *objet petit a* as outside the scene.

In the passage to the act, there is a rejection of the scene and rejection of any appeal to the Other, while acting out, which is

a mounting on the stage, is an appeal to the Other. *Petit a* mounts the stage and the subject shows it. *Petit a* not being specularizable as such, the subject shows it by acting out, always to the side. The subject must lie. When the object comes on the stage acting out, as when it comes in masochism, it is always a fallacy. The subject shows the pound of flesh, the fresh brains, but it is only ever a grimace, to use one of Lacan's expressions in *Télévision*, a grimace in which the real escapes. Once it mounts the stage, it is taken up with the deceptions of the demonstration, the deceptions of the signifier, of the truth, and the real remains elsewhere.

#### THE REAL AGAINST THE TRUTH

The only interpretation of acting out is: what you say is true, but does not deal with what the problem is. We're dealing with the proposition that we can state with its general value: when one wishes to make the real pass to the signifier, one only finds a lie. One cannot make it pass except through the lie, a mise-en-scène or a staging of the lie, which expresses — what Lacan will develop afterward in his teaching — the disjunction of the true and the real. This bar that I've used below reflects the disjunction of the true and the real, and in the disjunction, correlatively, desire and *jouissance*.

<u>Truth</u>	<u>Desire</u>
Real	<i>Jouissance</i>

Lacan's teaching afterwards will explore precisely what disgusted Freud, as the Seminar on *Anxiety* indicated: that desire lies, that the real can only lie to the partner, that one cannot speak truth to the real, the pass being the attempt to define it as closely as possible. Thus a critique of desire as defined by Freud as desire for truth emerges in this Seminar: "Freud refuses to see in the truth, which is his passion, the structure of fiction at its origin."<sup>37</sup> Here we must differentiate the Freudian passion for truth, which leads him to

endorse mythology in spite of himself, and on the other hand the Lacanian orientation toward the real, which should not be confused with exactitude. Because Freud — as Lacan presents him — does not allow for the inseparable truth of the lie; he torments his fiancée, his wife, who hasn't told him everything. This is also why femininity remains opaque to him, precisely because it is less embarrassed by the truth and it has a more direct rapport with *jouissance*.

You also find on this matrix the opposition between grief and melancholy which figures at the end of the Seminar. A question which was already tormenting Lacan at the end of *Le transfert*. Grief is essentially related to *i* of *a*, with the image, with the object of love in its narcissistic structure. The work of grief is the enumeration of imaginary details in order to make them pass to the symbolic, but it is a work which is done essentially at the scopic level, leaving *petit a* under the bar, even if the *petit a* is delimited there by the imaginary. Grief responds to the loss of the *objet petit a* through an imaginary and narcissistic carnival, while Lacan tries to show melancholy as having a relationship to *petit a*. In the passage to the melancholic act, the subject breaches the barrier which separates it from *petit a*, while this barrier is maintained in grief. Thus the melancholy subject passes through his own image in order to attain the *objet petit a*. Lacan says that he transcends it, that is to say that it is behind. I'm passing over the definition of mania, as non-function of *petit a*, suppression of the ballast of *objet petit a*, which shows how *petit a* is the secret of the anchoring point.

+ <i>a</i>	- <i>a</i> ✓
acting	passage à l'acte
grief	melancholy

## 4. OPERATOR OF SEPARATION

## BETWEEN FAILURE AND ENCOUNTER

I have tried to show you the strange object in the imaginary by referring to the stage/scene. Let us take the strange object in the symbolic where the same schematism is operative.

$$A (-) a \quad | \quad A (+) a$$

Two positions of the strange object are left to be found in the Seminar. Since the *objet petit a* does not appear in the symbolic, one has what we know classically from Lacan, that is the circuits of the symbolic determination, which are formulated as the laws of symbolic determination. This is how *Écrits* begin. We have an Other which is presented by a necessary design of logical formulas which issues the laws. At the point at which the subject appears essentially determined by these laws, I will write in the form Big O with an arrow to barred S. This expresses the dominance of the signifier on the subject and makes a subject without any rapport with the real emerge.

$$A \longrightarrow \bar{S}$$

What was exciting in the emergence of Lacan's full structuralist discourse was this entrance of a subject which appears conditioned and ordered purely by the signifying order without any relationship with the real. But a different function is revealed in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, that of the cause, opposed to the law, and which, when it emerges, has a disruptive effect.

What you find, in an evident way, in the visual field, in the form of the strange, with phantoms which haunt, doubles which assail you, persons who are yourself and whom you do not recognize in the symbolic, is this place which the function of the cause as barely conceptualizable occupies, and that the philosophers have

never succeeded in putting in their place, and that Jung had the audacity to eliminate as an illusion — for him the cause is the future of an illusion. What is developed in the Seminar on *Anxiety* about the cause is the correlation in the symbolic of what you have seen emerge in perception in the form of the strange object.

This strange object is the object misrecognized in the classic analysis of Freud's *Fort-Da* reworked by Lacan, in which the bobbin is reduced to being only a signifier taken as the movement of going and returning. In the Seminar on *Anxiety*, the bobbin as object appears on the contrary as a paradigm of what the subject separates from himself as a going and returning which goes from acting out to a *passage à l'acte*. This shows that the bobbin is used as an object and not only as signifier.

You have another famous example of this strange object in the symbolic: it is the purloined letter. Thus the change of meaning given in the cure to repetition. On the side of the big O minus *petit a*, when the cause does not appear, repetition is essentially symbolic repetition, that is to say a circuit of signifiers in which one can find constancy, intermittence, articulation. After the Seminar on *Anxiety*, in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, you find another figure of repetition. It appears there, in regard to the object, as always marked by a fundamental failure, that is as not reaching what is under the bar. Repetition, far from being only the monotonous repetition of the symbolic, appears held between failure and encounter, except for what Lacan could find in his own constructions of pluses and minuses, what he proposed as the causal contour which signalled as pending the design of the cause.

The Seminar on *Anxiety* is led to the necessity of inserting the object between the Other and the subject, that is to say in the relation which seemed so fundamental, the relationship of signifying determination which was the glory of psychoanalysis. This insertion does not stand alone. One sees the cuts in the Seminar, where Lacan forces the entrance of this *objet petit a* which now becomes the support of what he calls a commandment. We know the signi-

fying commandment, but there is a libidinal commandment of the subject which takes him to the example of the obsessive, which he tries to demonstrate. He tries to show the desire of the obsessive ordered by an object, in the form of a desire to retain which, in fact, leaves him with indefinite repetitions, which he may be obsessed with, but it indicates that the object in question is on this side.

$$A \longrightarrow \S \qquad A \longrightarrow a \longrightarrow \S$$

#### MECHANICAL OBJECT

To give you an idea of the strange object in the real, its most profound status as connected to *jouissance*, here is the formula which shows us two approaches to anxiety.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} (J (+) a) & \longrightarrow & \text{anxiety} & \longrightarrow & (J (-) a) \\ \downarrow & & & & \downarrow \\ \text{excess} & & & & \text{loss} \end{array}$$

What we see as the key to the Seminar on *Anxiety*, anxiety emerging when lack does not lack, obviously implies what we have seen at the imaginary level constitute itself as anxiogenic, the *objet petit a* inscribing itself in the place on the blank space. Under the rubric J (+) a, we will inscribe what, for example, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, figures as the surplus libido, the exigence of the drive, the stimulation of the drive marked by excess, engendering anxiety. Lacan goes so far as to say that anxiety brings in itself an element of infinity, which entails a function to interrupt it. One finds, in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, numerous references using this rubric. We have here on the other hand the register of anxiety producing a separated object, and thus producing the loss of the object. When *petit a* passes to the imaginary, it is heterogenous. It is an element of drive which inscribes itself in a space which does not have the

same structure, and it introduces perturbations. When *petit a* inscribes itself in the symbolic, it is also heterogenous, and one does not locate it in its category as having to do with the cause. But *petit a* in the real is of a conforming structure and its irruption is marked by the separation, that is to say that the subject incarnated in the body must lose something. This is Lacan's point, when he writes in his text "Du *Trieb* de Freud," and contemporarily in his Seminar XI, when he speaks of the auto-mutilation of the subject.

This separation of the real object bears on the body, which is not the imaginary body, but the libidinal body, which goes farther than the limits of the imaginary body, which implies that of the Other, and all the forms. It gives rise to what I called the naturalist charm of the Seminar, which one must revisit in the details concerning each of the five forms that Lacan distinguishes, and that I kept as titles of the last part. But it is an illusion; there is no naturalism of the *objet petit a* with Lacan. On the contrary, the most surprising thing is perhaps the culturalism of this object. It can be replaced. As he says: "The natural object can be replaced by a mechanical object." In the case of the breast, it can be replaced by the bottle, and even this object can be replaced "by some other object."

This is how the Seminar, which stresses the corporal roots of the *objet petit a*, at the same time stresses that artificial objects can be the equivalents of these natural objects. Thus the mention which is made, already in 1962, of organ transplants, or of removal of the image in the form of the photograph, or the voice which can be recorded and stored. And one well knows that we are today in a frenetic, breathless economy in which objects of substitution of the natural object themselves are everywhere. But this is eminently cultural also, since the example that Lacan gives of the *objet petit a* and of its separation is the foreskin of circumcision, that is to say an eminently cultural practice. And everything which is on the order of the production of the object is inscribed in the rubric of separation. Thus when one hastily hands over the copy of the examination, at the moment when anxiety and *jouissance* have the

potential to come together, it functions as *objet petit a*. One also finds the work, the act, in this function.<sup>38</sup> So that Lacan challenges the idea of a subjective realization, pure and simple, as only being a personal myth, which he demonstrated in “The function and field of speech and language of psychoanalysis.”

#### MAJOR EFFECT OF LANGUAGE ON *JOUISSANCE*

The subjective realization, if one admits that *petit a* is inscribed between the Big A (the Other) and  $\mathcal{S}$ , passes through the production of objects which are, Lacan says, in the same series as *petit a*. This is because this realization passes through works, acts and the surmounting of anxiety which it implies; that is to say that it passes through the passage under the bar, the breaching of the barrier. One must then denaturalize the *objet petit a* and desubstantiate it, otherwise one will not understand how the analyst herself, in Lacan’s subsequent teaching, can be inscribed in the same series as the *objet petit a*. I will concentrate on the retrospective gaze that Lacan proposes in his construction in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, when he improvises, while on the promenade of Le Panthéon: “At that moment,” he says, “in returning to the Seminar on *Anxiety*, I had not designated it this *objet petit a* as the term of surplus-*jouir*, which proves that there was something to construct before I could name it that way.”<sup>39</sup> Here one sees that, having eluded the *Triebregung*, the *jouissance* of the drive, he had to wait for the emergence of what resolved a certain number of problems of the Seminar, namely the locating of the *objet petit a* as surplus-*jouir*. What counts here is not the substance of the object, but its function.

Lacan makes anxiety the operator of separation only in his summary. In reading Seminar XI we perceive that this operator is the pleasure principle, the principle of homeostasis above the bar, which rejects the surplus-*jouir* below; and, beyond, this pleasure principle is conditioned by language, so the *objet petit a* is the main effect of language, so that the name of anxiety in the Seminar on *Anxiety* recovers the mortifying operation of the signifier.

Even if Lacan left behind some of the views expressed in the Seminar on *Anxiety* and they do not occupy a major place in his later teaching, he reaffirms, nevertheless, in *L’envers de la psychanalyse*, the central characteristic of the affect of anxiety, the characteristic of an affect around which everything is ordered—a unique affect. This is the affect par excellence, the unique affect inasmuch as it connotes the production of the *objet a*, that is to say, the major effect of language on *jouissance*. This is why he says: “there is only one affect, correlated to the product of the speaking being in a discourse.” If there were but one page to refer to in the Seminar on *Anxiety*, I would indicate to you page 164 of Seminar XI, which disconnects the function of the object from its substance. Lacan give us there the structure of surplus-*jouir* in the form of the object whose drive turns around and indicates that this *objet petit a* is only the presence of a hole, of a void, occupiable by any old object, and it doesn’t matter what object comes, in an intermittent fashion, to label the Seminar on *Anxiety*. This is why Lacan could later make of the *objet petit a* a simple logical consistency, a topological form, that is to say a substance. Whatever the charm of the representations of the *objet petit a* and its forms, one must disconnect the function. This is what Lacan announced at the end of *Le transfert*, the lesson I titled “The Analyst and his Grief.”

Grief is expressed thus: there is no one object which has a greater price than another. It means grief of love and of its glamour, grief of the unique object and also agreement with the inexorable law of the drive and of the surplus-*jouir*. This is how the position of the analyst pretends to have access to the other side of love.

If what is aimed for is accomplished, which is a grief of love in order to move toward the law of the drive, so that the subject is always happy, it indicates something concerning the direction of the cure: the analyst is effective only on condition of responding himself to the structure of the strange. He must give experience the feeling of the strange. If not, everything will show that, failing to make himself subject to the strange, he cannot disrupt the defense.

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