

Translated by Thelma Sowley, Published Lacanian Praxis, May 2005

Available [here http://www.congresoamp.com/en/template.php?file=Textos/Conferencia-de-Jacques-Alain-Miller-en-Comandatuba.html](http://www.congresoamp.com/en/template.php?file=Textos/Conferencia-de-Jacques-Alain-Miller-en-Comandatuba.html)

& https://londonociety-nls.org.uk/The-Laboratory-for-Lacanian-Politics/Some-Research-Resources/Miller_A-Fantasy.pdf

Jacques-Alain Miller

A Fantasy*

Let me begin with a fantasy, an idea that came to me yesterday morning, while listening to our colleagues tell us just about the same thing: contemporary, post-modern, or, why not hypermodern subjects are *desinhibidos*, neo-disinhibited, *desamparados*, disorientated. I was thinking while listening to them: Oh, yes!

Oh, yes, yes, yes! And how much so! How disorientated we are! How true that is! It is rare to see four colleagues, one after the other, so thoroughly in agreement with each other, to find oneself in agreement with them and to have the feeling that everyone agrees with them, that there is a consensus.

The Metaphor of Nature by the Real

I wondered then while listening to them: but how long has it been so, how long have we all been disorientated? And my answer was: probably since civilized morals, as Freud said, were shaken to their roots, probably since they were disintegrated. And psychoanalysis is not for nothing in the disintegration of civilized morals.

All of us here – or at least almost all of us, not the younger ones in the audience – remember what those civilized morals were. We are still aware of what they mean. We are at least sufficiently familiar with them to be able to understand and even to feel that the present state of our civilization is immoral, is moving towards immorality. And in fact, civilized morals, in Freud's sense, were a guide for us. They were a railing for those in distress to lean on, probably because they were inhibiting.

Just the same, we can wonder why these civilized morals, during the *belle époque* – towards the end of the second half of the nineteenth century, during the Victorian period that Lacan evoked for us – why these morals were so cruel? Perhaps this moral cruelty was already a response to a crack, a fault in civilization that was to become wider and wider with time. It might be that these civilized morals, as long as they were alive in people's hearts, had already constituted a reactionary formation, as we say, to a process of disorientation that had been going on for a somewhat longer time.

And so, I was daydreaming. Perhaps we have been going around in circles ever since compasses have existed, I mean since agricultural practice – which is not ours, which is not necessarily in the forefront – has little by little given up its dominant position in our industrial societies. We do not think about agriculture enough. Perhaps that is where all the trouble is coming from: from the metaphor that is replacing agriculture by industry. Ah, agricultural civilization, what a grand thing it was!

Agricultural civilization finds its bearings through nature, through the invariable cycle of seasons. Of course, there is a history of climate that some well-intentioned people are now reconstituting. But this history changes in no way the invariable cycle of seasons that gave its rhythm to agricultural civilization, so that, in fact, it was possible to find one's bearings and one's symbols in the seasons and the skies. The agricultural real is celestial; it is a friend of nature. With industry, with what has been called the industrial revolution, all that was washed away, little by little. The artifices were multiplied. And now we are forced to

* Lecture given at the IVth Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis in Comandatuba-Bahia, Brazil, in August 2004.

Original French text established by Monique Kusnierek and published as "Une fantasie" in *Mental* 15, February 2005. JE adds: Published Lacanian Praxis May 2005

5 Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy

notice that the real is devouring nature, that it is being substituted for it and is proliferating. Here we have a second metaphor: the metaphor that substitutes the real for nature.

I was also thinking that this is the charm of the Seminar *L'angoisse*¹, which I read more than once after having established the text. This Seminar presents, in effect, the object small *a* in the state of nature, so to speak. An object small *a* that is detached from the body, that is a piece of body, whether it be a sensitive piece or an insensitive piece, an object small *a* that is as in a state of nature, that is taken at that level. On the other hand, when what is in question is the industrial production of surplus-jouissance, if we had to describe that, we would, of course, have to put the accent elsewhere.

A New Compass

So, my fantasy continued along these lines, with a question: if we are without a compass, as my friend Jorge said, does that mean we are without a discourse? Does that mean we are chaotic, schizophrenic, as Deleuze and Guattari, who were generously discussed this afternoon, proposed? And to begin with, are we really without any compass at all? Perhaps we have another compass.

There is a phrase of Lacan's, which was cited twice yesterday and which formerly had served as my compass in the course I did with Éric Laurent on "The Other who does not exist and his Committee of Ethics."

It is the phrase that signals the rise to the social zenith of the object small *a* – the zenith and the nadir are two locatable points in the sky, the zenith the highest point and the nadir the lowest point. This phrase acted as my compass, for me at least, because it signaled that we had touched the sky. We had touched the antique and immobile sky, the immutable agricultural sky that societies that were immobile or slow to change, societies that were cold or lukewarm, had as their reference. What this phrase of Lacan's signaled was that a new star had risen in the social sky, in the *sociel*² – *socielo* in Spanish. And this new *sociel* star, so to say, is, as Lacan had remarked about the object small *a*, always the result of a forcing, of a passage beyond limits, which Freud discovered, in his own terms, precisely in a beyond. It is an intensive element that makes any notion of measure obsolete, that goes in the direction of the always more, that goes towards the measureless, following a cycle that is not the cycle of the seasons, but a cycle of accelerated renewal, of frenetic innovation.

The Hypermodern Discourse of Civilization

And so, right away, I wondered: might the object small *a* not be – how can we put it? – the compass of civilization

today? And why not? Let's try to see what the principle of the hypermodern discourse of civilization is. Let's see if we can construct this discourse.

In this possible discourse of civilization, we will give this object the dominant place. Object is a debatable denomination for Lacan himself. When he named what he was talking about "correlative object of a subject" (and, what's more, placed it within parentheses to be sure it stayed in its place), this designation did not seem totally satisfying to Lacan himself. Anyway, let's use it.

This object – here is our hypothesis – prevails upon the disorientated subject, invites him to get past his inhibitions. I am going to write it, very simply, with the symbol we commonly use, \$ [S barred).

$$a \rightarrow \$$$

1 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre X, L'angoisse*, Seuil, Paris, 2004.

2 [T.N.] The neologism *sociel* in French plays on "social," the Spanish "socielo" and the word for "sky" or "heaven" in French, *ciel*.

6 Jacques-Alain Miller: *A Fantasy*

We recently pinpointed the term evaluation. To say we pinpointed it is going too far. Rather it was imposed on us, we have been pestered by this term, all Europe has been browbeaten by the term of evaluation, which has already passed into current use, I believe, in the United States of America. Now it is taking a tyrannical path in Europe.

Suppose that the disorientated subject is invited to produce evaluation. I write it then as:

$$a \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

What I write as S_1 is the countable One of evaluation, of the evaluation to be produced. It seems to me all the more appropriate because in this place, it is substituted for the S_1 of the master-signifier that is destined to fall. I could find still other significations for this S_1 , for example I could see in it the signifier of what is called, in the United States, “self-help.” I saw that in Spanish they say *autoayuda*. I have no idea how we might say that in French, and I do not have the impression there yet exists a term in current use. We speak of personal development, but we hesitate in French to translate “self-help,” we do not yet dare.

I believe you see what I am getting at in my fantasy: I am getting to where I can write S_2 also in the fourth place. S_2 , knowledge in the place of the truth/lie, does not seem to me to be out of place today in civilization. The notion that knowledge is nothing but a semblant has attracted a great many adepts and puts pressure on us. It is not, properly speaking, a matter of skepticism, nor of nihilism, but let’s say of a sort of relativism or even, as philosophers sometimes say, of a perspectivism – someone from Argentina testified as to how much he had been relieved by adhering to a perspectivist philosophy.

$$a \rightarrow \$$$

$$\frac{\quad}{S_2} \quad \frac{\quad}{S_1}$$

This is the fantasy I propose, as the structure of the hypermodern discourse of civilization! This is where my fantasy has taken me! I cannot do otherwise than follow the direction in which I am headed. And this leads me to conceive that the discourse of hypermodern civilization has the structure of the discourse of the analyst! I am dumbfounded. The result is extremely surprising, for myself to begin with. It is a result that may seem absurd. And, after all, justifying something like that when it arises is, undeniably, a challenge.

Psychoanalysis, Civilization’s Converging Point

To begin with, if we think about it carefully, tranquilly, without emotion, Lacan did not hesitate to propose that the discourse of the master had the same structure as the discourse of the unconscious. But the discourse of the master can be said to be a social discourse, the discourse of a civilization that has prevailed since antiquity. So, it is not inconceivable, *a priori*, that the discourse of the civilization of today might have the same structure as the discourse of the analyst. It is not inconceivable on the more or less desiring grounds from which we work.

But if we accept this, we see where the difficulty lies. The discourse of the analyst was formerly the analyzer of the discourse of the unconscious, which was its other side – what Lacan calls the other side of psychoanalysis is the discourse of the master. The discourse of the analyst could then analyze the discourse of the unconscious. Its interpretative and subversive power was able, in the same stroke, to have affect civilization and the phenomena of society that it has been confronted to, and that we have been confronted to as well, as Lacan tried to show, since the very beginnings of Antiquity

Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy

Today, if this fantasy is true, if this fantasy leads somewhere – that remains to be seen –, the discourse of civilization is no longer the other side of psychoanalysis, it is the accomplishment of psychoanalysis. Bravo! Well done, Papa Freud! But, in that case, it calls into question both the means of psychoanalysis, that is to say, interpretation, and its end, or even its beginning. And we could say – if we consider that the relation between civilization and psychoanalysis is no longer a relation of one side to the other side –, we could say that this concerns rather the relation of convergence, that is to say that each of these four terms remains disjoined from the others within civilization. On the one hand, the surplus-jouissance commands; on the other, the subject works; and on again another, identifications fall and are replaced by the homogenous evaluation of capacities, and this while knowledge of different sorts is actively telling lies and nevertheless progressing. We might say that, in civilization, these different elements are scattered and that it is only in psychoanalysis, in pure psychoanalysis, that these terms are organized into a discourse. That would make of psychoanalysis the point of convergence, the focal point of civilization. In that case, we can only say “poor civilization”!

Freudian Fundamentalists and Nostalgia for the Past

This fantasy has at least the advantage of explaining the retreat of certain analysts into the old school discourse of the master that we used to rely on, their nostalgia for the Name-of-the-father that Nepomiachi rejected yesterday at the end of his paper – none of that for me, he said. It was at least a testimony in the guise of a negation that in effect, there is undoubtedly an appeal to us for a retreat to the discourse of the master. In France at least, there is no lack of psychoanalysts – and those who are preoccupied by that, who dream and are agitated by the idea of putting the order of the discourse of the master back in place are more numerous than we are. Put the master back in place in order to be subversive once more: “People of France, yet another effort to be reactionary, if not you will no longer be revolutionaries!” In a text that appeared two or three months ago, we could see sketched out the notion of a reactionary practice of psychoanalysis, in which psychoanalysis would from now on consist in passing on to the legendary disorientated subjects the master-signifiers of tradition. The author explains that today, the psychoanalyst, who is confronted with these disorientated persons, must really give up his former subversion in order to begin to reestablish the signifiers of tradition for his patient, to put them into his hand, into his head, without which nothing could happen. I am far from having read a great many things in the field of psychoanalysis today, but I have the impression, for the moment in any case, that this has not yet taken on a massive form, but that it is in the beginning stages. And perhaps tomorrow we will have a type of psychoanalysis whose objective will be to reconstitute daddy’s unconscious. Moreover, in its principle, the psychoanalytic reaction is not different from the principle behind the rise of fundamentalisms. The notion is the same. We are going to see psychoanalysts

reconstituting the unconscious, trying to artificially reconstitute daddy’s unconscious, yesterday’s unconscious, just as we see the Zealots of God taking their place on the stage of the world and changing our daily life, our voyages and our leisure activities. There is no difference: Freudian fundamentalists.

..

A second position is appearing in psychoanalysis, a position that could be called nostalgic and which consists in holding that nothing is happening, nothing is taking place. The unconscious is eternal, listen to the eternal, who is your God.

A Neuro-cognitivist Translation of Metapsychology

And, it seems to me, there is a third position, that is just taking form – if the first is turned towards the past and the second resides in an eternal present, we can say of this third that it is progressivist. It is the posi-

8 *Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy*

tion that was presented yesterday by Agnès Aflalo and Eric Laurent, who did not, of course, assume it as their own. This progressivist position consists in bringing or trying to bring psychoanalysis into step with the progress of sciences and false sciences, of regimenting psychoanalysis in accordance with such progress. This attempt is not absurd. Moreover, it was not presented to us as such. It is not unprecedented either. Thus, it could be said that Lacan undertook a logical-linguistic translation of Freud's metapsychology, which towards the middle of the twentieth century was showing signs of weakening. Lacan, himself, recognized that he had to use this means in order to give a new breath to psychoanalysis. So, in effect, it is not absurd, *a priori*, to try to give a neuro-cognitivist translation to metapsychology. We might say that it must be judged by its results – Jorge Forbes finds that I am exaggerating, which is quite possible. I am giving proof then of an open-mindedness that I can only be congratulated for. I mean that we must not insult the future. We, ourselves, took some time to realize that there was an enormous reflexive industry that has been put into place in the last ten, fifteen, or even, as Agnes Aflalo has informed us, twenty years. For twenty years there have been industrious bees producing this honey: translating metapsychology into neurocognitivist terms. And, it must be said, we did not see it coming until it was already in place on the scene and was beginning, here and there, to make a row and cause disorder. I am in favor of having those interested by these issues go out there and bring back news of what is going on. So, these three positions that I have distinguished seem to me to open the door to practices having recourse to suggestion.

The Principle of "It Works"

The first of these, the reactionary practice of psychoanalysis, proceeds by exalting the symbolic conveyed by tradition. What's more, we are witnessing astounding alliances with all the traditionalisms, which reveal a striking convergence between the Bible and *The Interpretation of Dreams* – unquestionable. The second practice, which I called nostalgic, proceeds by the consolidation of an imaginary refuge. As for the third, which is already probably the most advanced, it is dedicated, devoted to a rallying, it sides with the real of science, or so it thinks.

I have thus distributed the three terms of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real among these three practices. It seems to me that what the three practices have in common is what we abbreviate when we write:

$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, with an arrow between the two terms, that is, the relation between command and execution or between stimulus and response. This means that what these practices aim at, however different they are, might be stated in the following terms: in every case, it works.

And then, there is the Lacanian practice or rather there will be, because this is about inventing it. Of course it is not about inventing it *ex nihilo*. It is about inventing it in the direction that the last Lacan, in particular, opened up. And we can probably have an idea of what this Lacanian practice will be from the direction we are moving in ourselves.

The first thing necessary for this fourth practice, the Lacanian practice of the future, to hold its own, to remain differentiated from the forms I have stigmatized, is to clearly distinguish its principle from the principle of the three other practices, from the principle of "it works." Well, Lacanian practice can only have as its principle, if it is to be distinguished from the others, that "it fails." Lacanian practice fails. You recognize moreover, in this failing, a *leitmotiv* of the last Lacan. He did everything he could to place himself in the position to fail with the knots. Obviously, this failing is not a contingent failing. This failing is the manifestation of the relation to an impossible. In fact, Lacan was brought to this failing by the indication of Freud himself – psychoanalysis, an impossible profession. And in effect, we, his auditors and readers, were invaded by these notions of failing and of the impossible. He inoculated us with these terms, which

9 Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy

very clearly protected us, were like anti-bodies against the discourse of “it works” and against the new practices of psychoanalysis, all of which have this as their principle. Lacanian practice excludes the notion of success. I will go so far as to say that.

The Law of Failing

I see grimaces, discouragement. . . Not at all. The objection, obviously would be: but then Lacanian practice has no value. I do remind you that Lacan did not back off from that. He even ended one of his last lessons in an enigmatic way by saying: “what it’s all about is that psychoanalysis is a worthless practice.” You might moreover notice, at least in France and in Europe, that at all the therapeutic inquiries, psychoanalysis comes in largely last. For the psychoanalysts, that we are just as well as the others, this then engenders a feeling of guilt. But we too, we can say we have our successes. Of course, of course! But we should perhaps not be too proud of these successes either, because they belong to such a contingency that they do not invalidate the law of failing. Rather they are its demonstration. Of course, we have the pass! Some succeed. But, precisely, they are so few that it is obvious it is only to persuade the others that they have failed in their analysis! Obviously this logic is somewhat peculiar, and Lacan once gave us an indication that I took up myself some time ago. It is a logic in which contingency proves, or at least attests to, the impossible. Fundamentally, the fact that contingency exists means that we cannot even say that failing is the law of the real, but, according to Lacan’s enigmatic formula, that the real is lawless. If there were no contingency to belie the impossible, we would have law in the real. We do not even have that.

Let’s come back to our discourse of civilization. How can we understand the first line of the discourse of hypermodern civilization? What sense can we give to this matheme which is so familiar to us, what sense can we give it when, contrary to appearances, what we have is not the discourse of the analyst, but the discourse of civilization?

The surplus-jouissance has risen to the dominant place. But the surplus-jouissance is correlative to what I would call, to speak like A. R. Damasio – I am improving my culture – a state of the body proper, as such, the surplus-jouissance is asexuated. It commands but what does it command? It does not command an “it works,” but an “it fails,” which we write, precisely, S/. When we bar a letter, in general, it is because we made an error. Here, the surplus-jouissance commands an “it fails” and precisely an “it fails” in the sexual order. And I do not see what prevents our considering that this S/ means: there is no sexual relation, and so much the more so as the initial letter, S, is the same as the initial of sex. This would lead us to say that the non-existence of the sexual relation has precisely, today, become obvious to the point that it can be specified, written, from the moment that the object small *a* rose to the *sociel*.

In the regime of the discourse of the master, on the other hand, the sexual relation was a truth repressed by the master-signifier. But we are well obliged to take notice that today the master-signifier, the master-signifiers no longer manage to give any existence to the sexual relation. That brings on the despair of the religious, except those who keep their distance precisely from the hypermodern civilization and who defend with talent and vigor, a previous, traditional form – today, in effect, a meritorious resistance to the object small *a* is being exercised by the Islamic side of civilization. In hypermodern societies, on the contrary, religion is in despair on this point, sex is a source of despair for it – it is still the sexual question that slows down the rise, the new rise of religion, as a Christian, Catholic sociologist I have read has explained. And if, among hypermodern societies, religion despairs on this point, it is because religion for us depends on a notion of nature that the real has outdated, that the rise of the object small *a* has made obsolete.

Obviously, what can make us burst into laughter or tears is that a great number of psychoanalysts have no better idea than to back this up. They swear in the name of their experience that the education of children

requires them to make their identifications with mommy and daddy. I consider this to be an abuse. An abuse that cannot possibly be established from their experience. It was already ridiculous when they turned themselves into the guardians of collective reality, but it is all the more ridiculous when the collective reality they want to be the guardians of is that of yesterday. To say this implies no enthusiasm whatever for the readjustments under way. As for most of you, I was educated in an old, more traditional way, but I do follow what is written.

Psychoanalysis was invented to respond to the discontent in civilization, a subjective discontent, we might say, of a subject plunged into a civilization that can be stated like this: in order to give existence to the sexual relation, *jouissance* must be hampered, inhibited, repressed. Freudian practice had paved the way to what was to be demonstrated – with all the quotation marks you want – to be a liberation of *jouissance*. Freudian practice anticipated the rise of the object small *a* to the social zenith and this practice contributed to its installation. Besides, this object small *a* is not a star, it is a Sputnik – an artificial product. Lacanian practice has to deal with the consequences of this sensational success. Consequences that are felt to be of the order of a catastrophe. The dictatorship of surplus-*jouissance* is devastating nature, it is fragmenting marriage, dispersing the family and remodeling the body. This remodeling does not only concern plastic surgery or dieting – the anorexic style of life as Dominique Laurent was saying – it can go still further, to more important surgery and other operations on the body. Now that the genome has been deciphered, decrypted, it is really going to be possible to advance towards what some authors have called posthumanity. So, is Lacanian practice playing its part in face of the IPA's practice and its standards? Very probably. But it is above all playing its part in face of the new reals that the discourse of hypermodern civilization gives evidence of. It is playing its part in the dimension of a real that fails, so that the relation between the two sexes is going to become more and more impossible, so that, to put it this way, the one-all-alone will be the posthuman standard, the one-all-alone, all alone to fill out questionnaires in order to receive one's evaluation, and the one-all-alone commanded by a surplus-*jouissance* that is presented under its most anxietygenerating aspect.

The Real as a Hole

Thus, Lacanian practice, which is to be invented, will not operate with reference to the discourse of the unconscious as its other side. It will operate, it is already operating through us – let us try to find our bearings – it is operating in a hole of the real that works, and a hole is not a lack – a lack is always in its place, the lack is the other name of the place. The lack is the principle of all substitutions and it is even what permits us to say at a given moment: *Bingo!*

On the contrary, Lacanian practice operates in the dimension of a failing. We also say *Bingo!* in Lacanian practice. It is a miracle, a grace. But it must be recognized, as Lacan himself did, that it cannot be calculated. The analytic interpretation, to the extent that we know how it proceeds, is not an analytic interpretation. That is how I understand the fact that Lacan took us by the hand, finally in order to reassure us that there is nothing but different ways to fail, some more satisfying than others. We are not simply playing on words here, it is not simply a *Witz*. It is under this condition that we will hold our own in the discourse of hypermodern civilization.

So, this Lacanian practice would be the form, the deformation, the transformation, in the topological sense, that might permit psychoanalysis to overcome the real consequences that are produced from a century of its exercise, from its introduction into a civilization that, now, is converging on the structure of analytic discourse. And these consequences bring psychoanalysis to reconsider psychoanalysis itself. The conse-

quences of psychoanalysis bring psychoanalysis to return to its foundations and, on this journey, we can even say that what had been its condition of possibility has become a condition of impossibility. I say possibility, but it is rather a matter of the contingency of the event that Freud represents and it might be that the impossibility, which had already been pronounced by Freud and which was articulated by Lacan, be the condition of the very exercise of psychoanalysis. In any case, this is what has become clear for us, not intellectually,

but in practice: psychoanalysis *ex-sists* with an impossible as its basis. Moreover, we must note that we have lost the taste for telling each other our therapeutic successes. It is rather when we testify to an obstacle that we have the impression that what we say is true – which Mauricio Mazzotti, for example, understood very well yesterday when he related an interpretation that missed its mark, a failing in his practice that was much more appreciated than would have been the euphoric narration of a presentation such as “I pushed the button; I got this result and the mask fell.” This is precisely because we do not understand how interpretation functions, because success is not obtained by pushing buttons, whatever the perfection of the diagnosis or of the clinical experience. It is precisely for this reason that we spend time explaining to each other, trying to explain to each other what happened.

Psychoanalysis, which, I would say, is a Socratism with a strain of cynicism, has shaken all the semblants on which discourses and practices reposed. It thus brought to light what Lacan called the economy of *jouissance*. Well, now, derision and cynicism have passed into the *sociel*, with just the amount of the humanitarian necessary to conceal what it is about. And this propagation of derision has not spared psychoanalysis itself. Psychoanalysis concludes today that it is the victim of psychoanalysis. And psychoanalysts, even themselves sometimes, are victims of psychoanalysis, victims of the suspicion that psychoanalysis instills and distills when they do not manage to believe in the unconscious. The semblants by which psychoanalysis itself was produced – the father, Oedipus, castration, the drive, etc. – have also begun to tremble.

That is why, for twenty years, we have been witness to a return to the discourse of science, which we hope will give us the real that is in question and which we hope will be able to give us some surplus-*jouissance*, and that this will get us past the barrier that separates S_2 from small a in the discourse of hysteria.

An Intention of Sense in the Real

I need now to recall the condition of contingency under which psychoanalysis appeared, specifically Freud’s discovery of the hysterical symptom, which was made in the context of the discourse of science, of the psycho-physiological materialism of the end of the nineteenth century, in the context of a real in the scientific sense, of a real of the Galilean type, of a real One, lodging, including, knowledge. It is in this context that Freud discovered there was sense in the real. This, we know, caused a scandal and psychoanalysis appeared to be a corruption of scientific knowledge, because scientific knowledge can be in the real, but it must have nothing to say.

That there be sense in the real implies that the real means something, that it has an intention. And that was, for psychoanalysis, its condition of possibility. The sense in the real is what supports the being of the symptom, in the analytic sense. And yet, what Freud was doing was tolerated. We might wonder why. What Freud and his disciples, who began to proliferate, were doing was tolerated. They were allowed to tamper with the symptom, the mental symptom, they were allowed to contaminate it with sense. It was even tolerated that psychiatry be won over to it. Probably because they did not have the knowledge in the real that could give a response to symptoms of this kind, except for the radical response: they had lobotomy or the sleeping cure. So, the intention of sense that Freud attributed to the real was tolerated. The treatment of the symptom was left to the manipulation of sense. Moreover, at least since Pinel, the imperative sense, the S_1 , had already been in use for the treatment of the symptom, it was traditional.

12 Jacques-Alain Miller: *A Fantasy*

A Scission Between the Sense and the Real

The Freudian S2 was thus accepted, that is to say the associative sense, in addition to the imperative sense. And this up to the present day, when, in order to add, so to speak, to the discontent in psychoanalysis, a scission between being and the symptom has been introduced, or more exactly a scission between the real and sense. But this scission was expected, logically expected. It is the result of the pulverization of the symptom, which is testified to by the successive editions of the DSM, after the first edition, which was psychodynamic.

What permitted the symptom to hold together was what it was saying. The symptom had something to say. It was, in the end, the unconscious intentionality that held the symptom together. Well! in the word symptom, the “sym” has gone away and all that is left is the “ptom”! The symptom is from now on reduced to the trouble. And English says that better when it speaks of “disorder,” a word that takes its reference from the order of the real.

For science, the real is what works. And that is what the knowledge in the real is for. That is why we can say that science has affinities with the discourse of the master – which Lacan pointed out a thousand times. But in hypermodern civilization, no one believes this any more. On the contrary, the idea is maintained that scientific knowledge, in the real, fails, is going to fail. The genetically modified organisms, nuclear technology, none of this any longer generates confidence in the correct functioning of knowledge in the real – and this was so of course from the moment we had begun to tamper with it.

What used to be the symptom, and which is now nothing but a trouble, is from now on divided into two, doubled. On the side of the real, it is treated as devoid of sense, by biochemistry, by medication that is more and more precisely targeted. And as for its sense, it continues to exist as a residue. It is the object of a sidetreatment,

which can take two forms, it seems to me. On the one hand, a practice of listening that is pure semblance – “come here so I can listen to you” –, which has a value of accompaniment and often even a value of control over the operation that is accomplished in the real by the use of medication – and, in effect, the biochemists are the first to say: “but not at all, our patients also need to be listened to.” On the other hand, we have the authoritarian, protocolary use of speech in the cognitive-behaviorist therapies.

The symptom finds itself then divided into two. On the side of the real, the aim is to more or less suppress the trouble; and on the side of sense, we find a reception of sense, a trickling of sense and, at the same time, a leveling of sense. It is especially on the side of the cognitive-behaviorist therapies that we find a refusal, a refutation of the symptom, while in psychoanalysis, the symptom had a value of truth, represented the truth, always presented it behind a mask, and so as a lie, and it was necessary to take the time to verify the symptom, “verify” in the sense of rendering it true. Today, we see that in France, this time that must be taken is no longer a matter of course.

How can we respond to that?

Firstly, we have a psychoanalytic protest that is appealing, but vain, and which consists in impugning the knowledge in the real. Secondly, we have what I called a rallying of knowledge in the real. Thirdly, we have the attempt to renovate the sense of the symptom, which Lacan set out to do. This is what he introduced by modifying the spelling of the word itself, as *sinthome*.

Here we must go back to Freud and his discontent in civilization, which was not simply a diagnosis, but a support for psychoanalysis, its promise for success. Today, I will take as a reference, rather, the outline he gave in 1908, under the title “Die ‘kulturelle’ Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität” (“Civilized” Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness). It is a text that is amusing to reread and it is not very long. Freud cites in it all the observers of the times, who at the turn of the century, between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, took note of the new symptoms that were marking this turn – the most celebrated,

13 *Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy*

which has remained with us, being Beard's neurasthenia. All the observers noted one social phenomenon: the growth and propagation of nervous illness. This passage is very amusing, well-chosen, it gives a description of modern life, of the fatigue involved in it, of the over-stimulation. We could really believe it was talking about today. What is striking is that Freud quotes all that at the beginning of his text, only to put it aside and insist, on the contrary, on one unique factor, one essential determination: monogamy, the monogamous exigency. This is how he puts together a theory of sexual jouissance in civilization. First step: free access to jouissance – that is as Jean-Jacques Rousseau says : “Let us get rid of the facts.” Second step: the restriction of jouissance which is only permitted for reproduction. Thirdly, jouissance today, is only permitted within monogamous marriage. It is amusing to follow this text in detail. Freud establishes what causes neurosis by considering the effort to make the sexual relation exist and the sacrifice of jouissance it entails. We find there the finger pointing to what Lacan's contribution will be.

The Symptoms of the Sexual Non-relation

Lacan's contribution does not at all consist in impugning the scientific real and knowledge in the real. Impugning the discourse of science is a path of perdition, which opens the way to all the finagling of the psy – finagling is not an insulting term. It is not a question of impugning this knowledge, but of admitting that there is knowledge in the real and, at the same time, posing that in this knowledge there is a hole, that sexuality makes a hole in this knowledge. This is a transformation of Freud, probably, and it means making a new alliance between science and psychoanalysis that reposes on the non-relation.

“There is no sexual relation” gives us then the site of Lacanian practice, because it must be heard in light of the statement that asserts “there is knowledge in the real.” “There is no sexual relation” is the counterweight of “there is knowledge in the real.” It is the sexual relation that objects to the all-powerfulness of the discourse of science – moreover, for the moment, matrimonial agencies are left in the hands of a certain number of matrons with experience. The evaluators have not yet taken over matrimonial agencies, but they will not be long in coming! So, for the moment, and this is what is, despite all, striking, the sexual relation makes a hole in the real and in the knowledge in the real.

That the sexual relation makes a hole in the real can be expressed simply like this: there is a lack of software at this point. This is the principle of a practice or of a clinic in which the symptoms are not troubles or disorders, because at that point there is no order. That means that the knowledge in the real does not dictate its law and we cannot intervene at that point from a consideration of the knowledge in the real. This is a negative statement that calls for positive statements, and I will have to make a choice, because I am at the end of my talk.

First, symptoms are symptoms of the sexual non-relation. This means they are probably articulated into signifiers, but that is secondary, it is their chitter-chatter. Symptoms are not essentially messages. They are above all signs of the sexual non-relation, possible punctuation marks. Lacan spoke of symptoms as question marks in the sexual non-relation. Yesterday, I heard a patient say that what anxiety remained for her was linked to her body like a comma, like a pause in respiration. So, symptoms are signs. That is another approach than treating them as messages.

Symptoms Are Real

On the other hand, symptoms are necessary. They do not cease to be written and this is what founds their equivalence with the etcetera. This means they are real to such an extent that they can be very easily confused with the real that works. There lies the paradox. This is why, at the same time that Lacan says the

symptom is real, he can also say: we must believe in it. Precisely, they are so real, these symptoms, that it is arbitrary to detach them as such, there must be someone who really wants to. Would you like an example? Take homosexuality. It was posed as a trouble within the natural order. When you impute to a trouble it's being of the natural order today, there is only one thing to be done: you must form a lobby. And if you form a lobby, the outcome is that you no longer have a trouble of the natural order. As you know, it was the result of pressure, of a political balance of forces that homosexuality came to no longer being considered as a disorder, or classified as a disorder. We can see to what extent this is in accordance with the results of psychoanalysis, of a particular psychoanalysis, for which perverse jouissance is permitted. The question is what one does with it.

A third positive assertion: symptoms are jouissance-symptoms, so to speak. What they say is that jouissance is not at the place where we thought it should be, that is to say in the sexual relation that Freud gives us a caricature of in the guise of monogamy. We never have the right jouissance, the one that there should be. And from there, we accede to a certain number of quilting points of this clinic, which I am not going to tell you about today and which are found in questions such as these:

The incorporation of the unconscious, is the unconscious corporal? Lacanian practice and Lacan's oh, so troubling question on practice: does the effect of interpretation come from the use of words or their jaculation? Which means that for an interpretation, you have to find the tone – moreover those who have the chance to be able to relate some of Lacan's interpretations always repeat them using Lacan's tone. The poetics of interpretation is not there for its aesthetics, it is not there to be kitsch. The poetics of interpretation is the materialism of interpretation.

Someone who has been following a patient for nine years told me yesterday, or the day before yesterday, during her supervision, that she had obtained an effect unlike any other she had obtained during the nine previous years simply by saying: Basta!, in a tone whose virulence contrasted drastically with the usual soft tone of her voice. One must, then, bring one's body into play in order for the interpretation to be raised to the power of the symptom.

I am looking for a point of suspension, not of conclusion.

Love, Which Makes the Unconscious Exist

With the last Lacan, we find ourselves with rather three unconsciouss, three different modalities of the unconscious, but we need some time to explain that.

We can say that the Freudian unconscious works to satiety. What's more, Marco Focchi brought a list of references in which we see the Freudian unconscious exhaust itself at work, while the Lacanian *parlêtre* (speech-being) is never exhausted at work. Rather, it rumbles, boils, reeks, its style is parasitic. Lacan wanted the Lacanian *parlêtre* to replace the Freudian unconscious. He wanted it to bring a response to the problem that I posed on the blackboard, precisely that psychoanalysis must go into fourth gear.

The considerations that I had to leave aside would lead us to invert what we say traditionally: the subject supposed to know is the pivot of transference. It seems to me that the last Lacan says something else, he says rather, if I may put it this way: transference is the pivot of the subject supposed to know. In other words, he says that what makes the unconscious *ex-sist* as knowledge, is love. Moreover, the question of love, starting with the Seminar *Encore*, has provoked special interest, because love is what could effect a mediation between the Ones-all-alone — and with that in mind, saying that love is imaginary presents some difficulty. This means that the unconscious does not exist. The primary unconscious does not exist as

knowledge. For it to become knowledge, to make it exist as knowledge, love is necessary. And that is why Lacan could say at the end of his Seminar *Les non-dupes errent*: a psychoanalysis requires that one love one's unconscious. It is the only way to make the relation, to establish a relation between S1 and S2, because in the primary state, we have disjoined Ones, we have scattered Ones. So, a psychoanalysis requires that one love one's unconscious in order to make, not the sexual relation, but the symbolic relation, exist. But a psychoanalyst is not required to love the unconscious. A psychoanalyst is not required to love the effects of truth from the unconscious. And that is difficult, because an analyst is also an analysand or a former analysand. And yet, in the name of what Lacanian practice could be, we must not love the true any more than the beautiful or the good.

Translated by Thelma Sowley

16 *Jacques-Alain Miller: A Fantasy*