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BULLETIN OF THE **NLS**

Nouvelle Ecole Lacanienne de Psychanalyse
New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis

**THE BODY AND ITS OBJECTS
LACANIAN INTERPRETATION**

BULLETIN OF THE NLS

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regulated use of the same signifiers
a paradox here in psychoanalysis:
it is unique when it arises.

which this issue gives a first solid
to many questions that psychoa-
in our post-modern century in which
solid symbolic architectures have
not disappeared, have passed over

to observe is that there is no tech-
to say, that today psychoanalysis is
out of principles: the short session,
stance, can perfectly well be linked
to whatsoever can be given.
Lacan an interpretation that is op-
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be reduced to the partial object of
Abraham's, and that neverthe-
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the analyst, it is nevertheless pro-
of the analysand who produces
his subject, as Jacques-Alain Miller

of this issue, you can follow the
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intervention, of which Lacan had
that it testifies to an "informed
sufficient to guide the analyst in
knowledge and in the act that can

Éric Laurent

Metamorphosis and Extraction of the Object *a* in the Pragmatics of the Cure

*Talk at the end of the 6th Congress of the NLS in Ghent, March 15 and 16, 2008, on "The Body and its Objects in the Psychoanalytic Clinic"*¹

We have gathered all our European groups in Ghent, as well as those from the United States and Israel, to speak of the body and its objects. There are undoubtedly few places as suitable to examine this subject.

Ghent, the intellectual capital of Flanders, is also the depository of a number of marvels, the traces of the realist tradition of the aesthetics of the countries of the North. This tradition is suspicious of the prestige accorded to the "good form" and aims at proclaiming that the deceitful character of the ideal gains when it is thwarted by some trait recalling the effect of the living on the body.

Erwin Panofsky knew how to speak of this in an inimitable way. One text occupies a particular place in his work with respect to this. It is a lecture he had given special status to, since he declined all offers to publish it.

As always, his text is incredibly erudite and, in addition it had the ambition to address all types of audiences, so that it might respond in any circumstance to the most unexpected invitations. It was finally published after the death of its author under the following title: "The Ideological Antecedents of the Rolls-Royce Radiator"². Panofsky begins with English gardens, with Robert Adams's adaptation of the architecture of Palladio and with the first Anglo-Saxon evangelizers or psalters in the proper sense of the term, and he observes that a whole population of strange characters that do not really obey the laws of text composition, proliferate in the margins of the classical

1 This talk is to be published in French in *La Cause freudienne* (Autumn 2008).

2 Panofsky E., "The Ideological Antecedents of the Rolls-Royce Radiator", in *Three essays on style*, MIT Press, 1997.

ORIENTATION

text. Then, he declines the paradigm of the particularities of the English Gothic to get to what is par excellence the object of luxury, albeit industrial, that the Rolls-Royce radiator is. He finds in it the opposition between the straight classical lines of the front of the grill and the swirling "Art-Deco" form that topped it. In all these so English objects, Panofsky discerns the roots of the taste for what the genius of the English language calls "odd": the bizarre and the uneven (impair). English does not trust the even, the pair.

This addition (this "more realism") can be found within the frame of the picture, or challenge the ideal of the form by its preoccupation with detail. For example, in the altarpiece of the Van Eyck brothers that Ghent was able to conserve in its Saint John's Cathedral, now named Saint Bavo, there are no fewer than 48 perfectly identifiable vegetal species, which remind us that the celestial prairies are studded with the most earthly marvels.

This realism can also be produced on the stage, as is testified to by the movement and the influence of the Flemish theater which we were able to verify yesterday thanks to the performance of the *In Vitro* company, accompanied by the excellent musical ensemble *Hermesensemble* and the organist Marc Maes. This theater proposes to expose bodies whose use has been emancipated of the "correct uses" imposed by civilization, which began to be established during the late Middle Ages beginning with the Court Society, as the historian and sociologist Norbert Elias has so clearly shown. It is a question of recuperating a body such as we found before the Court of Burgundy. Given the disagreement between Ghent and Charles the Fifth, it is a most legitimate enterprise.

This movement of returning to a state of the body previous the Court of Burgundy finds here in Ghent its proper name with Jan Fabre. He had his hour of glory when he was invited to Avignon. His movement in fact had taken over the theater itself where the pros and the cons fought it out, while on the stage, bodies and bodily liquids mixed to structure the space in an eminently realist manner.

We were able to perceive here an echo of this movement, but there was no fighting in the amphitheater, perhaps because what we attended yesterday conserved nevertheless a veil, the veil of the correct form. Certainly Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which supported the argument of the play *Milk*, have already lost their Greek serenity. The bodies Ovid speaks of are constantly transformed in order to continue to account for the youth of the world, particularly in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, which has been compared to Genesis. On the site of the Université de Louvain, you can find an edition of a most Louvanist erudition concerning the differences and the possible comparisons

between Genesis and what we saw had for its model IX that Ovid turns into a woman, a seductive child. Zeus enjoyed the Amphitryon, the hero's immortal. But he had this obstacle: Hera, whose breasts at birth he takes several times. The remainder of the Milky Way.

We find a painting of the subject: "The Birth of Hermes, presented by the director of yesterday.

We had the milk of the of the container of Hera, the mother of empty bottles that its containers. The performance of the stars of the Milky Way.

We must salute the emphasized the cry of the scream of the body, was a moment, we saw it.

The representation plunged into the of the butcher of the delicate joints and the knife was always hollow. In yesterday, filmed plunged into *inter fæces et urina*.

These incisive can now see on the series "No Tube" never stop cutting in direct form's very dress which the text for it.

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between Genesis and the Book I of the *Metamorphoses*. The show
we saw had for libretto a mixture of Books I and IX, since it is in Book
IX that Ovid turns to Hercules's childhood. Hercules is the son of Al-
cmene, a seductive mortal, mistress of Zeus and pregnant with his
child. Zeus enjoyed the object of his wishes disguised as her husband,
Amphitryon. Hercules had to suckle on Hera's breast in order to be
immortal. But Hera, of course, is Alcmene's worst enemy. To get by
this obstacle, Hermes eludes the vigilance of Hera, who is asleep, but
whose breast is abundant. Hermes places Hercules on her breast;
he takes several drops of precious milk that will render him to his
fate. The remainder trickles down onto the world and becomes the
Milky Way.

We find a painting of Rubens at the Prado that treats precisely this
subject: "The Birth of the Milky Way". I believe moreover that the
director of yesterday's play has seen this painting in which we find
Hermes, present on the stage in "The Hermes Ensemble".

We had the milk, the liquid milk, but we had milk that was in excess
of the containers for this milk. We had the wedding of Zeus and
Hera, the rather drowsy couple at the end of the table, and then the
empty bottles that showed the discrepancy between the object and
its containers. The bottles brushed off the table at the end of the
performance pointed with their splinters of glass to the twinkling
stars of the Milky Way.

We must salute the contingency of the actress's pregnancy, which
emphasized the ambiguity of the scream that affects the body, the
scream of birth, of death, of giving birth. The representation, centered
on the body, was not limited to images; its aim was the flesh. At one
moment, we saw a butcher preparing his meat from beef offal.

The representation of the operation where the butcher's knife is
plunged into the flesh was very special. It was not at all the knife
of the butcher of Thouang-Tseu, who only passes his knife by the
delicate joints, and throughout his life as a butcher, the blade of his
knife was always immaculate, because it always sliced through the
hollow. In yesterday's performance, the cutting of the meat as it was
filmed plunged straight into the flesh, reminding us that we are born
inter fæces et urinas.

These incisions into the flesh remind us of their contrary, which we
can now see on Youtube, in the announcement for next season of the
series "Nip Tuck", in which the heroes are two plastic surgeons who
never stop cutting into breasts and butts. There the ideal of the cor-
rect form is very present, it is the "dysneyfication" of the body, against
which the text for the presentation of the play protested.

The presentation of the series begins by highlighting the curves of a leg and a breast and just when we are about to get closer, the scar appears, an enormous scar, the condition of possibility for the production of the forms exposed.

During the show, these cuts into the flesh called into question the place of the organs in the body. When the actress proposed a parallel by cutting her hair, a quiver ran through the auditorium. We were anxious. Was it really *her* hair that was cut?

Of course, hair is a fetishist organ. Maupassant's "The Tress of Hair"³ was written at about the same time as psychiatry described the perversion of braid cutters — they were frequently *serial* cutters — who acted at the time when ladies were exploiting their superb braids in order to attract the gaze of gentlemen⁴.

We also saw how difficult it is for the body to articulate to organs that never cease separating from it; arms fall down too soon, and the transformation of the actress's body into Daphne, into a branch of laurel hooked onto her brooms was most striking. It was in keeping with the choice of the director who connected these transformations of the *Metamorphoses* to the Christian crucifixion by hanging a sign with the inscription "Judas" on the feminine body thus represented almost as a victim of torture.

The performance ended on the impressive figure of a sort of Minotaur. The staggering steps of this animal-man, a frozen metamorphosis, seemed to be situated between Picasso's bulls and Masson's engraving. It was a kind of mad parade and made us wonder where they were taking the victim, for whom no Ariane would interrupt the immobile and weighty wandering through the labyrinth, supported by the music of Philip Glass and Arvo Pärt played on the organ in gasping breaths.

The play we saw is connected, in certain ways, to the installation that our Israeli colleague Shirley Sharon-Zisser talked about in the morning. In this installation, we saw an artist transform *papiers mâchés* into comestible objects, kebabs, etc., passing by a reference to John Donne and his "rags of time". She displayed quite an invention presenting a connection between the *jouissance* that affects the body (the devouring of paper) and the objects we are offered *in fine*, in the cultural objects of the kitchen.

3 G. de Maupassant, a short story written in 1884, which has the form of the personal journal of a mentally deranged man.

4 Voisin, Souquet, Motet, "Les coupeurs de nattes", *Annales d'hygiène*, April 1890. Quoted in Kraft-Ebbing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

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1893: 9.

Lieve Billiet's case, that you will hear after my paper, will touch on
this particularly interesting point since it brings out how, in the analy-
tic practice, the secret of the actor is connected to the extraction of
the object *a* from his body, since the subject in analysis she speaks
about is an actor.

We see thanks to her presentation how the two secrets, that of the
theater and that of the analytic operation echo each other. The ques-
tion in effect can be posed: did we come to Ghent in order to receive
our message in an inverted form? Is the practice of psychoanalysis
not the other side, the shadow of the realistic practice of the theater
or of the installation or of the work of art? Coming to Ghent to receive
a message in inverted form would be quite welcome since we find in
the "altarpiece of the mystical lamb" a celebrated annunciation, in
which the response of the Virgin to the angel Gabriel presents the
particularity of being inverted, so that it can only be read by a prophet
who, situated above the frame can see it from the right angle.

In fact, the last sequence of the morning, in which Luc Vander Venet
and Vlassis Skolidis presented their work, allowed us to see how the
psychoanalytic operation is this other side of the realist artistic opera-
tion. As Jacques-Alain Miller noted in his presentation, the substance
of the objects of the body, in these instances the anal substance of the
object, knows a strange fate in the experience of the cure. It passes
by its evaporation, its sublimation, its "allusivisation". In the traces
of the circuit of the drive, there is something like a movement of "dis-
substantification". If the two practices respond to each other, they
are not the same, even though they converge at one point, that of the
dysfunction of the subject and the ego. The Dutch poet Leo Vroman,
quoted by Anne Lysy, said very appropriately:

*The longer I live, the more I recognize I am
an incomprehensible system
of which I am apparently the chauffeur
but I make incomprehensible decisions.*

Much more than the author of the poem, he feels he is the inhabitant
of a text, of an incomprehensible series of decisions.

We can see how, between these two operations that coincide, respond,
and articulate to each other, the metamorphoses and extractions of
the object *a* slip in to mark the pragmatics of the cure in the different
cases which have been presented.

Take the case of the rabbit, the rabbit of the little child Christiane
Ruffieux was following. This case enchanted us because we could
follow in detail the diverse metamorphoses of the stuffed rabbit, given
to this little boy after an operation of cutting off his foreskin. The red

rabbit becomes an imaginary substitute for this. To the red rabbit, named red measles, is soon added a white rabbit named white measles. The two rabbits are then like two signifiers each pointing to the other. One rabbit then leaves a place empty by going into the trashcan. The child then surrounds the other with a metonymic chain of other stuffed animals going from the rabbit to the penguin, from White Measles to White Beak and then Pingu and Igloo, establishing the reign of the signifying connection within which we were caught. The object seemed then to be perfectly articulated to the quotation of the Seminar IV that Geert Hoornaert cited.

We were dealing with the face of the object *a* that can be connected to the grammar as such.

But at the same time, Geert Hoornaert's and Christiane Ruffieux's papers complemented each other in that they also isolated precisely what it is in the object that resists connection and grammar. Geert Hoornaert was able to find correspondences in the *Seminars IV* and *XVI* that show the two aspects of the object *a*, on the one hand metonymic, on the other corporal consistency. Christiane Ruffieux emphasized that the rabbit had, from the beginning, a contra phobic value, as complex at the outset as the multiform complex phobia. It included the creams that might touch the body, the smells and any demand made by the parents. This "all-purpose" signifier of the phobia then reveals its other side, that is to say the dimension of the object inasmuch as it is not subjected to the law of the signifier and to its logical empire. We have thus passed from the object extracted from the body, the cream and the smell, to the object of exchange, to something that will be able to detach itself and return while remaining articulated to the body, to everything which is separated from the body and can be instrumentalized in the circulation of demands and the economy of exchange.

What the civilization of the object proposes is fake fetishes, (Lacan has said that cars are fake women), those objects proposed pretend to transport into the fetishism of merchandise the same libido that was extracted from it by the work necessary to produce or buy them. The lie concerning jouissance consists in making us forget that the particular circumstances of the extraction can never be found again in these objects that will come accompany the subject in place of the rabbit or the penguin. Just as the worker, according to Marx, never finds the value extracted from his work in the remuneration he is proposed. The lie of civilization can be situated in this exchange between the singularity of the extraction and what is proposed industrially.

substitute for this. To the red rabbit, I added a white rabbit named white. These two signifiers each pointing to a place empty by going into the circuit of the other with a metonymic chain from the rabbit to the penguin, from the penguin to Pingu and Igloo, establishing a circuit within which we were caught. This is perfectly articulated to the quotation by Derrida cited.

of the object *a* that can be connected

Derrida's and Christiane Ruffieux's analysis is that they also isolated precisely the connection and grammar. Geert's correspondences in the *Seminars IV* are effects of the object *a*, on the one hand and the consistency. Christiane Ruffieux is from the beginning, a contra phobic as the multiform complex phobia. She cannot touch the body, the smells and the objects. This "all-purpose" signifier of the body, that is to say the dimension of the body subjected to the law of the signifier, have thus passed from the object of the body and the smell, to the object of the body, to everything which is separated and instrumentalized in the circulation of exchange.

Geert proposes is fake fetishes, (Lacan says) those objects proposed pretend to merchandise the same libido that is necessary to produce or buy. The pleasure consists in making us forget the pleasures of the extraction can never be satisfied. What will accompany the subject is the penguin. Just as the worker, accordingly, is extracted from his work in the process of civilization can be situated in the regularity of the extraction and what

We also heard what happens when the object does not enter into the exchange. Natalie Wulfing presented the case of a subject who suffered from an "attachment disorder". It was the inseparable attachment of a mother to her child as an autistic object *a*. The child, in this case, enters into no circuit of exchange. The quasi hallucinatory intensity of the demand for a child in the subject she talks about, reminds us of Meynert and Griesinger's cases of *Amentia*, of hallucinatory psychosis, which Freud talks of in 1894⁵. "The mother who, having fallen ill from the loss of her child, unceasingly rocks a piece of wood in her arms". Freud sees in this the absolute dimension of the object that separates neurosis from psychosis.

Jennifer, who Natalie Wulfing spoke of, is incapable of taking care of her children but she absolutely wants to have them. There is nothing else she wants. They are in no way distinguished from her, which means she can in no case take care of them as she could of something that was separated and related to her. She cannot even enter into the state qualified as *post-partum* depression. The child is found in the field Lacan calls the zone of malaise in the *Seminar IV*⁶.

The child for her has not really been extracted. He remains in her body as an object of total strangeness. Her children must then be taken away from her, which had been done with a certain brutality, since one of them had been put up for adoption. Once this withdrawal has been made, Jennifer can only think of recuperating them. She is admitted to the hospital and it is there that Natalie Wulfing meets her. She is able to leave the hospital soon, but a miscarriage will then provoke a breakdown. Her husband offers her a rabbit. But the rabbit does not function like the rabbit of the little boy, it takes part in no process of substitution, here the rabbit is the child. Since she is incapable of taking care of it, the rabbit is devoured by the dog of the house. This is just about what would have happened to her children if she had not taken care of them. We see what happens when the body does not manage to fabricate organs that can take on the value of signifiers.

In his presentation of the theme of the Study Days of the École de la Cause freudienne, Jacques-Alain Miller noted that it is through

5 S. Freud, "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence", Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Freud, vol. III, London, Hogarth Press, pp. 58-59.

6 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre IV, La relation d'objet*, p. 395 : "C'est un objet qui est à un stade fondateur et formateur des objets. Très différent des objets réels puisqu'il est extrait du malaise." ("It is an object that is at a founding and forming stage of the objects. Very different from the real objects since it is extracted from the malaise").

the signifier, and more precisely by "the practice of a language" that organs come to light. Signifiers and pragmatics must be distinguished from what the functioning of a language is for a subject⁷. Jennifer is capable of using the signifiers of the language such as child and rabbit, but in no case the children or the rabbit are for her signifiers that can enter into a chain of substitution that would separate them from her body. She finds herself in face of them without the support of any established discourse. The functioning of the signifier does not engender an ideal machine, without a remainder, it always implies a hold on the body that contains the entire speech-being. "It is not man's rags, but his very being that takes up its position among the scraps in which his first frolics found their cortege, inasmuch as the law of symbolization, in which his desire must become engaged, catches him in its net by the position of part-object in which he offers himself on coming into the world...⁸."

Lacan takes this point up again in the *Seminar X* and specifies: "We always find in the body because of this engagement in the dialectic of the signifier, something separated, something sacrificed, something inert, which is the pound of flesh⁹."

The extraction of the objects of the body supposes passages between the inside and the outside of the body, admirably illustrated by the choice of Escher's engraving for the cover of this Seminar. These relations between the inside and the outside are questioned by the clinic, by art and by science. Gil Caroz, in his introductory paper evoked how the body as science conceives and apprehends it comes to be "detailed for exchange" and supplemented by pieces. This is also the case when science is realized in an object as complex as medicine. Medicine, François Dagognet noted, is something inside the body that passes outside. "It is body substance functioning of the body. It places it outside in something that can be returned to it. It is the reintegration within the body of an object that feigns to function as a living thing. The body will look for it outside in order to make of it an instrument with which it can find *jouissance in itself* (*se jouir*). In this sense, the

7 J.-A. Miller, "L'avenir de *Mycoplasma laboratorium*", *Lettre Mensuelle*, 267, p. 14 : "Chez le parlêtre, le rapport sexuel est constitué par le langage, ou, plus précisément, par la pratique de *lalangue*. Il s'ensuit qu'il distingue, dans son corps, des organes qui prennent valeur de signifiant. [...] Ces objets ont valeur de signifiants imaginaires." ("For the speech-being, the sexual relation is constituted by language, or more precisely by the practice of *lalangue*. It follows from this that he distinguishes, within his body, organs that take on the value of signifiers. [...] These objects have the value of imaginary signifiers.")

8 J. Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis", *Écrits*, Seuil, 1966, p.582n. Translation Bruce Fink, Norton, 1999, p. 488, note 35.

9 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre X, L'Angoisse*, Seuil, 2004, p. 254.

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... n *itself* (*se jouir*). In this sense, the

... "laboratorium", *Lettre Mensuelle*, 267, p. 14 :
... que par le langage, ou, plus précisément,
... distingue, dans son corps, des organes qui
... ont valeur de signifiants imaginaires."
... constituted by language, or more
... follows from this that he distinguishes, within
... the signifiers. (...) These objects have the value

... "Possible Treatment of Psychosis", *Écrits*, Seuil,
... 1999, p. 488, note 35.
... Seuil, 2004, p. 254.

... medicine is presented as an object par excellence, that is to say an
object that has the structure of an instrument of jouissance, which is
that of the object a. "There is a knowledge of psychoanalysis. It really
did discover something, something mythic which is the formula...of
means of production... of a satisfaction...of mountains...an instrument
functioning, an transferred outside and that we then use to help a
disturbed inside¹⁰." The functioning of medicine mimes the organic...
some organs of the body, in fact diversely ambiguous and difficult to
grasp, since it is too clear that some are only scraps, find themselves
placed in a function of instrumental support¹¹."

In this perspective of ambiguous body organs that are difficult to
grasp in their function of instruments of jouissance, the two cases
presented by Lieven Jonckheere and Despina Andropoulou are ex-
emplary. These two subjects have a special use for drug addiction.
As soon as they came into the world and were inscribed in the Other,
there was a leftover. This leftover is called for one of them "the taste
in the mouth", for the other a sensation in the body, a "gut feeling".
One and the other then try to recuperate it outside of their bodies,
by different stagings, for which in both cases they have recourse to
toxic substances.

For one of these subjects, placing himself in danger by the abuse of
alcohol provokes a constant recourse to hospital emergency rooms
where the subject never stops having the body that escapes him sewed
up. He never stops sewing himself up. For the other, his recourse
to heroin and cocaine provoke interminable nights during which the
subject writes. This writing is addressed to no one. It is written. It is a
writing that has become "autistic", detached from any communication,
writing like the thread a spider spins that would not stop spinning
outside itself. Analysis manages to bring it back not into the system
of communication, but at least into a mechanism of address. It made
it possible to find a function for the organ stemming from the body,
just as well for the subject who kept being sewn up under anesthesia
in order to find the lost organ, as for the other, who found a function
for language through endless writing. It was their manner to invent,
between body and organs, a montage.

All along these two days, our Congress really took us "From an Other
to the other", so far as touching the point of Lacan's last teaching
where the logical consistency of the object a is questioned. This is a

10 *Mental* n°19, Mai 2007, Revue Internationale de Santé Mentale et Psychanalyse
Appliquée, Entretien avec François Dagognet, un philosophe du médicament, p.24.
(Interview with François Dagognet, a philosopher of medicine.)

11 J.Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre XVI, D'un Autre à l'autre*, Seuil, 2006, p. 206.

point that was underlined by Anne Lysy at the beginning of this Congress and that I would like to take up again. She gave all its weight to Lacan's formula such as it was commented by Jacques-Alain Miller, according to which "The speech-being adores his body, because he believes he has it. In reality, he does not have it, but his body is the only consistence — mental consistence, of course, because his body is constantly falling apart."

The equivalence between logical consistence and bodily organon rocks towards the side of the consistence of the body under two species: that of the rags, of the form and that of the object. Confronted by the body that eludes him, like the sense, the speech-being turns into an idolizer of form, he tries to lodge the lost object within it. We find this adoration or according to Lacan, this "adorption" (adoration and adoption) of the body on the one hand and on the other Joyce's system in which there is no adoration of his body since he has lost it, which is manifested during the famous beating he received. The loss of rags gave him another relation to his body, the body as an idea of self¹². The situation of the "speech-being" (*parl'être*) results in his having no other path but to install a relation with the body that eludes him. There is the neurotic path, which makes of the body a trap of desire for the hysterical subject, or an instrument of response to the demand for the obsessional subjection; there is the more narcissistic "adorption" and there is the Joycean path. We could say that the discourse of analysis aims at obtaining a relation to the body that is new. It is neither that of idolatry, nor that of Joyce. It passes by the designation of the place of the object as being an obstacle to the law of the signifier. This is why in the experience of analysis, what is important, as Pierre-Gilles Guéguen pointed out, is that the analyst, in his act, make the distinction between the unconscious and his place as an object. "Act in such a way that the maxim of your act is not to position yourself in the place of the unconscious." That is how he will be able to incarnate the adequate instrument for the different modes of extraction of the object a.

Translated from the French by Thelma Sowley

¹² J.-A. Miller, course of January 17, 2007.

G. Caroz

Body and Ol

The body, an