

Beacon

The Interpretation of Psychoanalysis

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JAM returns in this course to his intuition of the preceding course, about liquid speech, in order then to pose questions on the discourse of the analyst as teacher and his responsibility.

So, "the discourse of the analyst who teaches has the function of interpreting psychoanalysis itself". Psychoanalysis can be interpreted because it is a question of fact.

JAM broaches the two moments of the psychoanalytic experience formalized by Lacan: that of the beginning and that of the end. He attributes to the pass, the value of the major interpretation Lacan gave to psychoanalysis. We can read, at the very end of this Course, remarks on the narration of the pass that "Lacan gave us a glimpse of without specifying its coordinates", and whose most salient feature is allusion. A narrative that "translates the bypassing of what, depending on the sense, appears as a void".

(From Ten Line News, n. 386)

You should know that while we are talking about psychoanalysis, there is a pen scribbling on a sheet of paper fixing the status of what psychoanalysis will be in the future. In effect, the French State, like the other European States, is taking an interest in our practice, which has been undergoing an extension in influence that obliges the public powers to consider regulating it. It has been on the agenda for nearly five years now and we made ourselves heard on several occasions with respect to this. The process will soon come to its term, it seems, and given the posture, the engagement that I took, I am obliged to respond and to participate in it. This deducts from my time and my preoccupations a cost for which you unfortunately pay the price. Since this involves negotiations, which are not to be publicized, I cannot, however much I might like to, tell you about it, but it goes without saying that the weight you represent, you whom I address here and elsewhere, counts in the balance. I hope it will be sufficient to prevent the practice that is ours from being confined to the place some would like to give it, a luxurious and private place. I hope it will continue to be present in public institutions and will not disavow the influence it has today in public establishments. But finally all this requires time and requires in particular on my part a mobilization that takes up time that does not always depend on my choice.

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This said, I shall go back to what I was talking about last week, at which time I well realize I took a risk by expressing myself from an intuition, or rather by giving expression to the intuition itself, raw, with as little elucubration of knowledge as possible.

Knowledge is elucubrated. This is a designation we owe to Lacan and which is well chosen to keep knowledge at a distance, to indicate the distance there is between knowledge and fact. It without a doubt includes a certain devalorization of knowledge, which is what Lacan was led to. And so, correlatively, there is a certain value undoubtedly attached to suspending the elucubration of knowledge, or, at least, to introducing it only step by step, by trying to dose it, in such a way that it modifies as little as possible the facts that are presented.

This intuition that I confided to you is that of a liquid psychoanalysis. One week later, it now seems to me that I let myself go when I delivered that to you in an impulse similar to what leads us to free association.

Evoking psychoanalysis as liquid meant — this is clear to me now — flouting the proprieties of what should be said and even of what should be done. This makes me aware that I am generally bridled by a preoccupation with what should be said and what should be done. One way to say this is: I am held back by the spirit of responsibility. Is that the most suitable way to say it?

What does it mean to be responsible for what one says? It means, to say it more simply, being able to answer for what one says. Being able to confront the question of the other as to the foundations of what you say, what authorizes it and what the consequences are. In effect, when you are in the face of the public powers, you must, you are ordered to be responsible, to answer on occasion for the practice of psychoanalysis, what authorizes some and not others to practice it. And you are certainly required to know how to present this in terms that can be admitted by this other, who, in fact, has the power, — the de facto power and also, very likely, the legal power — to demand it.

But finally, here, in the confines of this lecture hall, I do not have to think about this other. It is not this other who is present. He is a slave. The other concerned is you, you that I address as psychoanalysts, which is surely a simplification of the diversity of those present, who perhaps, probably, are not all psychoanalysts, but who, after all, represent that community.

Last week it seems that, at least in the beginning, I freed myself from the censorship; that heavy responsibility that weighs on one in front of the body of analysts. When one speaks in the mode called free association, one suspends responsibility. Within the psychoanalytic enclave, the analysand is invited to be irresponsible. We can say that it is as if he were obeying the following formula: "I say it and I do not repeat it, I say it and I continue to say." It is, within the analytic experience, what allows the other, the analyst, to repeat what you have said, that is to say, to quote it, and return it to you. Repeating, quoting what is said by the analysand is, in some way, the degree zero of interpretation.

This is moreover what we can, on occasion, turn into a comedy. How do you play at being an analyst? You just repeat what your interlocutor has said with a question mark, you do not show your cards, and then the unfortunate person takes it up from there.

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This is a way to play the analyst, I do not advise you do it, it can be very badly taken outside the analytic situation.

The quotation, which produces the same, introduces, a difference as well. It is constitutive of the enunciation — there is properly speaking an enunciation only when there is a quotation. The quotation, I would say, crystallizes liquid speech, solidifies it into a signifying unit, and, when it is used within an exchange between speakers, it re-launches what we call the enunciation, that is to say liquid speech.

So, does the psychoanalyst, a psychoanalyst, have the right to be irresponsible when he is teaching? It is certain that the question weighs heavily on those who are in that position and often leads them, often leads us, to hide behind the statements of psychoanalysts that have preceded us: it leads us to willingly take refuge precisely in quotations. But quoting is not teaching, it is not teaching in the sense that Lacan brought to this term. To the question I evoke concerning the possible irresponsibility of the psychoanalyst when he teaches, Lacan brought an answer — not one, but one among others — which is found on page 836 of the *Écrits*, I give an approximate quotation: The discourse of the teacher, he says, when he is addressing psychoanalysts, does not have the right to consider itself as irresponsible. The word carries its weight. I can say that, since I began to have access to this position, this phrase, this word, has remained present to me.

How did I gain access to this position? Not institutionally. The institution — the institution in which I consented and still consent to be inscribed — authorized me to teach on the subject of psychoanalysis. I found myself teaching to psychoanalysts because psychoanalysts came to my classes. I remember very clearly my surprise some time ago in remarking the presence of one, two, three ... of a greater number coming to follow the deciphering of Freud and Lacan in which I was myself engaged. This gave an even greater weight and presence to the notion of responsibility whose nature was specified by Lacan when he said — these are the terms he then employed — that the subject of desire must know he is an effect of speech, that is to say, he must know that he is the desire of the Other, and that the discourse of the analyst who teaches must be responsible for this effect of speech. There is a contrast between the strong stress put on the word irresponsible and the complexity of what it refers to.

I have already commented and attempted to define the precise point that this responsibility bears on. Today I see it like this. Normally, when you teach, you occupy the place of the Other by function. You are supposed to know, and, in certain respects, by function, you cannot fail to. You end up moreover by becoming accustomed to the unbelievable docility of those who listen, a docility that is only rarely broken. We are pervaded these days by the nostalgia of May '68, when this docility was reversed into contestation, until we realized that contestation was only the symmetrical of docility. There could only be contestation because the words of teachers, in those times, carried a really remarkable weight. Today it is not worth rising up against. Essentially, teachers are asked to teach how things must be done.

This is present in the space where psychoanalysis is taught. There was a time when the ardent question was what the foundations of psychoanalysis were, what could its truth value, its merit be. While today it is solicited much more at the level of comment faire, of

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what I had made fun of some time ago as the American question of How to? – How to do it? (Comment on fait?). I just observed that the shelves in bookstores were filled by works whose titles, in all disciplines, begin with How to: handbooks. Those who teach psychoanalysis testify to the same phenomenon. The demand addressed to them today is of this order. It is expressed as a demand for clinical knowledge, but the clinic concerned, the clinic they ask for is a clinic of savoir-faire. I will not embark here on satirizing this demand, which would be useless. It is an element we must work with, that we must know how to handle and that we can take from an angle that is not depreciative: this is what I am probably trying to do moreover. It is a demand for know-how that is intolerant or impatient with elucubrations of knowledge and that requires going to the heart of the experience itself.

For this, the teacher occupies, by hypothesis, the place of the Other. He can only, through his discourse, convey a desire, and, through this desire he determines the place of the subject who is listening. This responsibility also holds for the analyst when he teaches the rule of “free association” to his patient: in doing so he determines his place. And throughout the analytic experience, he has the responsibility of determining the place from which the analysand is going to satisfy him.

What Lacan proposes is that any discourse can consider itself as irresponsible for this effect of speech, which determines the place, and we might say, the worth of the subject, — what you do with what I say is your business — except for the psychoanalyst who teaches. The psychoanalyst who teaches must take into consideration, must know and must handle the effect of speech, the effect of subjective worth, that his discourse bears. This is a tremendous exigency, which is difficult to satisfy, and I realize to what extent it had — I used the term that came to me — bridled me.

Perhaps I might try to elucubrate minimally by saying with respect to this — in the optic for which I use this quotation of Lacan — that the discourse of the analyst teaching functions as an interpretation. What does it interpret? Well, it interprets psychoanalysis itself.

There's a statement of the kind to make us think. If psychoanalysis can be interpreted, this is first of all because it is for us today — now that it has been practiced for a century — a matter of fact. There is psychoanalysis: there is the history of psychoanalysis, there are analytic institutions, there are psychoanalysts, there are persons who think of beginning an analysis, who begin an analysis — this is a question of fact. And that leaves open the space for interpreting psychoanalysis as a fact. We know it can be interpreted, for example, in the register of sociology — this was attempted —, in the register of collective psychology, the question here is of the psychoanalytic interpretation of psychoanalysis, which is not forcibly unaware of the other determinants of psychoanalysis.

I said: Psychoanalysis is a question of fact. Can we describe this fact?

We would need a method that would resemble, for example, the method of what some time ago was called the New Novel: to try to designate as nearly as possible the surrounding world as being made up of objects placed next to each other, by giving as nearly as possible their coordinates, by playing at purging the description of any

adventitious signification, as if we were articulating the procedure for an experiment. How might we describe psychoanalysis as the New Novel was described? I would say that it is a matter of opening the door, welcoming, installing on a support, a seat, a piece of furniture, an individual — if we suppose that Aristotle is congruent with the New Novel —, and forcing this individual to be reduced to being the one who speaks for an other who listens, and who speaks from time to time. Probably, at the level of fact, we would be led to already distinguish two modes of speech, liquid speech — speech at a pure loss — and interpretation, which is rather solid speech, speech that is brief and dense. Of course, we would have to describe the fact that one directs and receives the individual, receives the payment — but finally, I leave this factual description to your style, your imagination, I am aiming at a certain degree zero, that I am not trying to produce.

And then, over and above this, all the rest is of the order of the interpretation of psychoanalysis. What takes place in what conventionally is called a situation, a setting or an experience, all this belong to the interpretation of psychoanalysis. Freud's work and Lacan's teaching are of the order of the interpretation of psychoanalysis.

It is notable if we refer to one or the other, it is a massive, obvious fact, that for the one as for the other, this interpretation is transformed over the course of time. And if we relate the one to the other, it is because once they are involved in this affair, they do not stop. Freud did not stop producing articles, books and lectures, in a continuous movement. And it is even more flagrant with Lacan who obliged himself to interpret psychoanalysis every week for thirty years, never putting his burden down, never saying, "That's it" or saying it only to immediately open up the way to complements, corrections and transformations. This is quite singular, if we think about it, if we rid ourselves of this habit.

With Freud it is classical to distinguish between, for example, the epoch of the first topic and that of the second, in which the coordinates of the interpretation of psychoanalysis are modified. For Lacan too, his teaching lends itself to being cut into periods. I was, I believe, the first to do this, or at least I was the most stubborn: the first Lacan, the classic Lacan, the last teaching, the very last teaching and this has been validated at least by the fact that it is taken up by his readers.

This of course opens onto the question as to what contemporary interpretation can be given to psychoanalysis, since everything shows that the interpretation of psychoanalysis depends on the time that passes. To be more precise, we might even say that the interpretation of psychoanalysis depends on the effects and consequences of the practice of psychoanalysis on psychoanalysis.

So, we shall allow ourselves a return to the history of psychoanalysis, precisely on what appeared during the 20th century as a censorship, after twenty years of the practice of psychoanalysis, around the year 1920. Everyone agrees to see in this date a turning point of psychoanalytic technique, a turn towards what was called the analysis of resistances.

Lacan relates this turn to what analysts had to observe at this date of what he calls a diminution of the results of analysis. I refer you to the *Écrits*, page 332, a page that

figures in the Écrit entitled “Variations on the Standard Treatment” in which Lacan tries to inscribe at its place in the historic course of psychoanalysis the attempt he had just inaugurated with his “Discours de Rome”, the year before, in 1953. He rewrites this history then in accordance with the attempt he inaugurates himself. And he recalls, with humor, that Freud recommends, before the 1920s, that haste be made to achieve the inventory of the unconscious before it closes up again. Freud had the intuition that the operation he was implementing would not leave the object of his investigation inert, but that, for having been solicited by psychoanalysis, his object, called the unconscious, would render itself unseizable to his grip. We can say, at least by approximation, that practicing analysts, around the year 1920, experienced something like a moment of closure of the unconscious, that it was no longer as it had been before. This impression, that we have touched the unconscious in a way that does not permit us to interpret psychoanalysis quite as before, does not date from today. It is what had already been experienced by the analytic community around 1920.

Up until then, the key word, the major form of practice was the deciphering of the formations of the unconscious. To analyze was to decipher: dreams, bungled acts, slips of the tongue, Lacan adds to these the disorders of recollection, the caprices of association and he says etc. — the symptom must be added.

What analysts experienced then was the gap between the success of the deciphering and the failure of the truth. The deciphering did not ipso facto have as a consequence the curing of the illness. Since it was still in this guise that the analysand appeared in the analytic cure. The fact that we commonly speak of an analysand rather than of a sick person was already the result of a reinterpretation of psychoanalysis by Lacan, and the fact that we spoke of the analytic experience rather than of the cure was also a reinterpretation. At that time, the analysts painfully felt that deciphering was not, in itself, transformational and they attempted to account for this gap by the concept of resistance. The patient, they thought, resisted recognizing the sense of his symptoms. And because of this, they undertook, they defined psychoanalysis, they interpreted psychoanalysis, over and beyond the deciphering of the unconscious, as the analysis of resistances.

Lacan’s position, at the beginning of his attempt, was that the analysis of resistances, in which all the analysts except Freud were engaged according to him, translated, I quote him, a movement of abdication with respect to the use of speech. In parentheses, there is probably reason to question the relation that exists between this supposed abdication with respect to the use of speech and the explicit devalorization that the use of speech undergoes in the very last teaching of Lacan: is what he designated as abdication that which returns as a devalorization of the use of speech at the end of his own trajectory?

The analysis of resistance promotes two categories, that of the ego, taken from the second topic, which would be the agent of the resistance (while in his second topic, Freud gives a place to the resistance of the id and the superego) and the category of defense. These two categories converge in the concept produced by Anna Freud of the mechanisms of defense of the ego, which will become the major doctrine of the analytic community until the emergence of the category of counter-transference.

Lacan inaugurated his teaching by the critique of the analysis of resistance, that is to say, by a renewed faith in the powers of speech and its effectiveness on the drive. He

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called this a new alliance with Freud's discovery. A new alliance renewed by the support found in linguistics, but let's say a new alliance that reunited with the faith of its origins and gave to his "Discours de Rome" the enthusiasm of laying bare the spirit of psychoanalysis.

This also supposed substituting to the ego what Lacan called at that time the subject-point of interpretation. The subject-point of interpretation is his first definition of the subject: what he called the subject is what is docile to interpretation; what he called subject is a variable to which an interpretation can give its value. That places outside its field what is inert with respect to the action of speech — considering that this inertia is only secondary. And so, it is, in a way, a transparent interpretation of psychoanalysis.

Effacement of the ego, substitution of the subject to the ego, and thirdly, this supposed the supremacy of desire. Desire, while being in a relation of derivation with respect to the demand, is subjected to interpretation, or is even identical to interpretation. We have Lacan's famous statement: Desire is its interpretation. And the supremacy of desire is particularly the supremacy of desire over the drive. We can say that the essential thesis by which Lacan outclasses the difficulties that had given birth to the analysis of resistance is: desire structures the drives. Which means: the incentive is in every case, an incentive of speech.

Lacan translates this dominance of speech into the constant promotion of the symbolic, so far as replacing the defense mechanisms of the aging Anna Freud by the signifying mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. He uses for this purpose the word "mechanism", which, in the framework of analytic discourse, inevitably evokes the Anna Freudian term.

So, resistance. Why had they interpreted psychoanalysis during the 1920s in terms of resistance? Because they believed they could conclude that liquid speech had no effect, did not have a sufficient effect beyond a certain point, that it only had limited effects. And finally resistance was the name of this limit. So that, in certain respects, resistance might be what Lacan had rediscovered under the form of jouissance.

For a long time, during more than ten or twelve, thirteen years, Lacan had left his doctrine of the end of analysis in some suspense. It remained in his Seminars, in his *Écrits*, as a horizon, as if a certain difficulty was attached to specifying the end of analysis when it is conceived, to say it very simply, with reference to speech.

It was at the time that he proposed, that he interpreted psychoanalysis by the pass that he thought he had overcome this obstacle. The pass is probably the major interpretation of psychoanalysis that Lacan produced. He interpreted psychoanalysis in the sense that it had to have an end, and that this end translated this passage. In the text in which he presented this — since he put it into writing before turning it into a course — called "Proposition sur le psychanalyste de l'École", written on October 9, 1967, while he had begun his teaching in 1953, so fourteen years later, it must be noted that he focuses in effect on the beginning and the end of analysis. This is well known, except that it must be added that he had reserved, as it were, his doctrine on the course of analysis. The third term is the course of analysis, what we have between the beginning and the end.

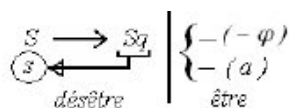
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What is notable in this? It is in quite different terms that he articulates the beginning and the end. To say things very simply, he articulates the beginning in terms of signifiers and the end in terms of jouissance — he essentially uses the term fantasy, but we know that he will forge the concept of fantasy in the direction of bringing out the jouissance that is retained, produced or hidden in it. We have then a terminological gap between the beginning and the end, and it is this gap itself that will motivate him, in his Seminars, to look for the articulation of these two moments.

For the beginning, what is involved? It involves essentially the installation of the transference, which is then interpreted by the subject supposed to know. Interpreting the beginning of psychoanalysis by the subject supposed to know requires the reduction of the unconscious to signifiers that are supposed. This supposes we interpret the unconscious in terms of signifiers and since these are signifiers that are only supposed, we interpret the unconscious in terms of significations of knowledge. The initial situation for Lacan is a situation he calls conventional, that is to say articulated by a convention, which comes in place of the term which it rejects, but which it transmits in another way, by a contract. This marks in fact a certain agreement.

In this interpretation, what is above all remarkable is that, reducing the analysand to one signifier and the analyst to another: $S \rightarrow Sq$, he does not place this signification of knowledge: s as appended to the analyst [JAM first places s underneath Sq], he places it as appended to the analysand [JAM erases the s from underneath the Sq and places it under S]. But we must understand that this is like the delayed effect of the connection with the analyst, that it is the articulation of the signifier “analysand” to the signifier “analyst”, which is supposed to give birth to the signification of unconscious knowledge. This affectation of the unconscious knowledge on the side of the analysand permits him in fact to emphasize that the analyst himself [JAM underlines Sq] knows nothing of the signifiers that are supposed for the unconscious of the analysand [JAM encircles s]. It places stress on his ignorance, and so justifies the Freudian recommendation to approach each new case as if nothing had yet been acquired from the deciphering of other cases. In any case, to simplify, the beginning here is articulated in terms of signifier and signified. And if there is a desire implied, the only one that can be distinguished is a desire to know.

While, if we consider the end of the analysis, what is remarkable is that a new term appears, that of the object little a : (a), which is brought into function with the term of the castration complex, written minus phi: $(-\phi)$, like two solutions that can be brought to the question of the being of the psychoanalysand. The terms, the object, castration, being were all absent from the initial presentation. We can even say, correlatively, that, in the register of the beginning, it seems we were only in the order of dis-being; the desire to know has no hold except on a dis-being [JAM writes *désêtre* underneath the schema of the beginning], and here, on the contrary, we are supposed to have access to being [JAM writes *être* underneath the schema of the end].

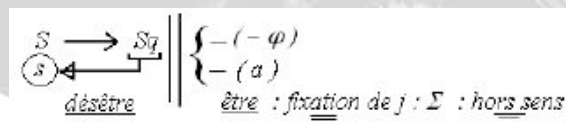


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We have here a cleavage, the terms are posed, but the passage remains problematic, and this is what inspired Lacan's research in his subsequent Seminars.

It is simply said that the exit from analysis implies that the analyst partner must vanish; that in this relation only the vain knowledge was elucubrated of a being that steps aside, and does not reveal itself, in the examples that Lacan himself showed; that in what we can call a fixation of jouissance [JAM writes on the board: fixation of j.], which is quite distinct from what had been designated as the signification of unconscious knowledge. Lacan names this fixation of jouissance, for which he gives two examples drawn from his practice, naïveté. This term is well chosen in opposition to the sophistication of the relations of the signifier and the signified: the labyrinthine research inaugurated by the subject supposed to know gives rise to a naïve solution, which he formulates in just one sentence. His successive attempts were to invent a logic that would lead from the knowledge supposed to the discovery of a fixed jouissance. He approached this fixed jouissance by means of the fantasy, then by an enlarged concept of the symptom.

Obviously, there is a difference between approaching it through the fantasy or through the symptom or the sinthome. The difference is the one he reveals in his text on "Joyce the Symptom", that the jouissance proper to the symptom is opaque, that is to say, it excludes the sense. This could not be better phrased, the fixation of the jouissance essential to the subject, when we call it "symptom", is outside sense [JAM writes on the board: S: outside sense], that is to say, it is outside the hold of the matrix that was posed initially.



Having recourse to sense to resolve jouissance, this is for Lacan a flattening, it implies giving to analysis only a flat end, and he congratulates Joyce, for example, for having avoided it.

Analysis uses the paternal metaphor to solve the question of jouissance, it uses the paternal metaphor and, let's say, its usual conceptual caboodle to buffer the enigma of jouissance and bring it to turn towards the sense, but this is only — and Lacan's very last teaching is engaged in this — this is nothing but a dupery. Having recourse to the paternal metaphor is only a dupery with respect to the enigma of a jouissance that excludes the sense.

This is why Lacan could only say this about the end of the analysis, — in fact, he did not say it, I'm following the direction he indicates — that the end of the analysis is a construction of the analysand. It is the sense of his question: what pushes anyone to historicize himself, especially after an analysis? What pushes an analysand to narrate his analysis, to make a narration out of it that has sense, especially after an analysis? Which means that the analysis must have taught him what excludes the sense from jouissance. So why weave a tale that would account, in the sense, for the fixity of jouissance?

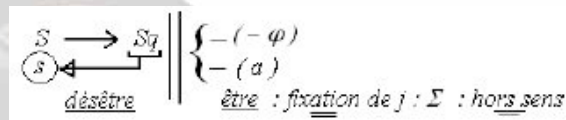
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And he gives an indication. He indicates, in his last reflections, the cleavage there is between the lying truth, which is elaborated in the initial dimension [JAM points to the schema of the beginning], and what is obtained at the end and which, authentically, is not coherent with the system. This leaves open an order of narration that is nevertheless conceivable on condition that its own incompleteness is preserved.

The account of the pass, such as Lacan suggests without giving its coordinates, is a narrative that must include essentially the character of the allusion, of what is neither said fully, nor directly, but a narrative that translates the circumscription of what, depending on the sense, appears as a void.

I shall have to stop there, first because it is time, and above all because it is not fitting to give the key of the allusion.

Until next week. (Audience applause)



[Recapitulation of what JAM wrote on the board.]

