

The Pass and Reminders of Identification

Éric Laurent

Unlike Botticelli's Venus emerging from the wave, the desire of the psychoanalyst supposes a fall, a prior rupture in the chain of identifications, particularly phallic ones. A fall is necessary and the replacement of one identification by another linked to the analytic discourse: such is the metaphor of the passage from the discourse of the unconscious to the discourse of psychoanalysis.

But this metaphor is not without remains. The elaboration of the matheme of oneself is not the complete transmission of oneself in silence, as in science fiction novels that dream of *teleportation*, or as in those of Michel Houellebecq, where clones embody the myth of an identity separated from the body, connected to a pure living essence, return of the world's soul. If the pass were that, it would be a soteriology for distinguished intellectuals. Living does not transmit itself in its entirety. There is no eternity, there are remains. Like being, the remainder is said in many ways: they are *remainers* [*restres*] or *rebeings* [*rêtres*].¹

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¹ Saint-Simon animated for us this singular term: "the old: *rêtre*, very pampered, very careful of the remains of his being. The French language dictionary Littré also lists the verb *rêtre* as "an old term. *To be again*, which conjugates like to be".

The Remains of the Signifier

The course of a psychoanalysis begins with the establishment of the transference unconscious by the association of two signifiers $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$. It ends on a horizon where the master signifiers of the subject detach themselves from the multiple links they had woven and take on a real dimension. Their return to the identificatory chains is made impossible: S_1 is isolated, cut off from S_2 .

But there will always remain signifiers that will not be alone enough. We do not expect therefore, that all the master-signifiers of a subject will be produced in this way: it is enough that some of them are sufficiently produced. Thus, a subject evokes, during the first sessions, the three generations of desire that have caused the embarrassment in which he finds himself. First, the unsuited marriage of the grandfather whose children encumber the family. Then, a mother who mistreats her own children. Finally, he, the son, who divorces in his forties with the firm intention "not to make his wife suffer", when, of course, precisely the opposite happens! The analysis will have to unravel this tangled ball of yarn.

Master signifiers circulate between generations, beyond individuals – such as the slap whose transmission Lacan evoked.² Producing these S_1 s consists of freeing the subject from his naivety and perplexity and going through the labyrinth of *jouissance* in which repetition, guilt, aggressiveness, depression and frantic agitation are knotted. It will be necessary to isolate the family signifiers which, in their contingency, contribute to the formation and stabilisation of the modes of satisfaction which constitute the fantasy. We thus pass from the unfolding of the signifying chain to the subject's relations with the objects of his *jouissance*: $\$ \diamond a$. This passage is made thanks to the double function of the psychoanalyst, on the one hand, as

the addressee of the subject's demands, and on the other hand, as the object that would hold the key to impossible *jouissance*: $a \rightarrow \$$.

The identification of *a* mode of *jouir* is not identification to *a* mode of *jouir*. This is what we learn at the end of "The Direction of the Treatment..."³ Whereas the psychoanalysis of the time aimed at the identification of the subject with his fantasy, Lacan shows how the subject is sent back, by the drive, to the contingency of love. The fantasy can be "crossed". The identification of a mode of *jouir* modifies what we mean by identification. As the eponymous Seminar indicates, the development of a series in which signifiers and *jouissance* value get interwoven – which can be written $(1 + a)$ – allows us to define a *jouissance* value for the whole series. Lacan thus sheds light on the debates in which psychoanalysis was becoming bogged down, between transference as a repetition of the signifying chain and transference in the present, articulated to the bringing into play of fantasy in the reality of the session. A psychoanalytic treatment is not done without remains.

The Remains of the Passage between the Unconscious and the Mode of *Jouir*

The unconscious is that locus of discourse where the principle of non-contradiction does not reign. It is a zone where one leaves the opposition between yes and no, true and false. These oppositions are lifted like the veil that covered the division of the subject by *jouissance* [$a \rightarrow \$$]. The more the analysis unfolds, the more the meaning of the symptom leads to its beyond. The meaning of the symptom constitutes in fact the first path towards its identification. The cure becomes the place of a nomination of the symptom. But Lacan invoked Lewis Carroll's *The Snark Hunt*, because this hunt for the

² Lacan, J., "Psychoanalysis and its Teaching", 1957, trans. B. Fink, *Écrits*, New York/London, Norton, 2006, p. 374.

³ Lacan, J., "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principle of its Power", 1958, trans. B. Fink, *Écrits*, New York/London, Norton, 2006, pp. 489-542.

signifier that would really name the symptom runs up against the principle of substitution: the Snark was a Boojum.⁴

Will the solution be given to us by one of Lewis Carroll's contemporaries, Oscar Wilde, who described the fox hunt as the *unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible*? The identification of a symptom will give access to the identification with the symptom by the reintroduction of *jouissance*, insofar as the loosening of the identification with a master signifier -S₁- will allow the tightening of a hole.

Let us take the example of a subject marked by the scene where he overheard the parental lovemaking. He keeps the memory of an enigmatic sentence of the mother: "You will come back when the sky is purple" [*Tu reviendras lorsque que le ciel sera violet*]. The equivocal resources of the phrase have long left him wandering from the enamoration of androgynous girls to the fascinated contemplation of sexes unveiled in a pornographic fashion. How long will the scopic fixation of the symptom keep him safe from the realisation that he has never come back from this assignation by the forbidden, inaccessible woman? From the master-signifier to the hole in language, the passage is not made without remains.

The Remains of the Passage Through the Hole

As the identifications that have woven the history of the subject unfold, it is revealed not only that identification is manifold, but, above all, that it is impossible. No one can identify with his own unconscious. The subject can dream of isolating its formula, but we know the limits of this enterprise – witness the attempt of Serge Leclair,⁵ who tried to reduce his unconscious to its "Poordjeli" root and to get out of alienation by this means.⁶

4 "In the midst of the word he was trying to say/In the midst of his laughter and glee/He had softly and suddenly vanished away/For the Snark was a Boojum, you see", The Hunting of the Snark, Lewis Carroll. Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43909/the-hunting-of-the-snark>

5 Cf. Leclair, S., "Le rêve à la licorne", *Psychanalyser*, Paris, Seuil, 1968, p. 117.

6 Cf. Lacan, J., "Position of the Unconscious", 1960, *Écrits*, op.cit., p. 714.

The separation from the Other does not lodge in the signifying chain, even when reduced to its core. It remains impossible for the subject to signify itself. There will be *no final word*, as Sonia Chiriaco tells us.⁷ There is no univocity so absolute that a literal universality can be reached. On the other hand, the separation occurs on the side of the object *a*, hole of the letter in the mediocrity of meaning, as evoked by Lacan in "Television"⁸. It is on the side of the cure as a logical experience that the hole in the language [*langue*] of the subject is produced. Lacan thus isolates the logical function of the letter as the argument, a function, F(x), that of a hole in language. He evokes the "blowing" power [*soufflage*] of the written word: "All animals are mortal, you blow away animals and you blow away mortals and you put in their place the acme of the written, that is to say, a simple letter".⁹

This conception of writing is not that of writing as impression, nor that of a homology between the two dimensions that are speech and language. For the hole to be opened *via* repetition, it is necessary to begin by saying and not by writing, in the literary sense. Lacan argues: "The self-analysis of Freud was a *writing-cure* and I believe that is why it failed. Writing is different from speaking. Reading is different from hearing".¹⁰

The hole thus opened in the subject's statements is not enough; it is still necessary for the subject to dive into the hole opened in and by the unconscious, which Lacan compares to the hole of the prompter's box [*trou du souffleur*]. After

7 Cf. Her testimony at the Journées of the ECF in Rennes, June 2010, "Birth of the Desire of the Psychoanalyst in the 21st Century", published in the *La Cause freudienne* No 76, *Le désir du psychanalyste*, Navarin, 2010.

8 Cf. Lacan, J., The Founding Act, 1964, trans J. Mehlman, D. Hollier, R. Krauss, A. Michelson, Television, Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment, ed. J. Copjec, New York/London, Norton, 1990, pp 97-106.

9 Lacan, J., The Seminar, Book XVIII, On a Discourse that might not be a Semblance, 1973, unpublished.

10 Lacan, J., "Conferences and Conversations at North American Universities", 24 November 1975, trans. J. Stone, *Yale University, Kanzer Seminar*, available at <https://freud2lacan.b-cdn.net/YaleNov24-bilingual.pdf>

having evoked the analytic act, he specifies: "There is only a passage to the act as a plunge into the hole of the prompter's box, the prompter being of course the unconscious of the subject". The analyst marks the place of this hole at the same time as he veils it [a → \$]. The logical operation in the cure cannot, however, be reduced to the writing of functions of *jouissance* as in a kind of psychoanalytic *Begriffsschrift*.¹¹ If this writing makes the hole appear in the statements - like the one produced by the argument of the function - the subject can nevertheless remain on the edge.

In the series of twenty lectures, he gave in 2005 on *France Culture*, Jacques-Alain Miller explored precisely what happens "when cures last a long time", but the subject does not "dive" into the hole of the prompter's box; this point indexes an obstacle on which the testimonies of the pass can stumble. For example, the one who was a mummy's boy, now a ladies' man, continues to want to seduce the school via the procedure. She who was "daddy's girl" and rejected her mother, had loved the male passer and hated the female one. The man marked by the family secret carries with him an atmosphere of clandestinity which attests itself in the apparatus of the pass. The one who was marked by solitude in her childhood wants to be adopted by the school and find her new family there.¹² This declension of the remains shows the underlying presence, *en abîme*, of the fantasy.

How then can the said plunge occur? Lacan gives a very precise indication: The subject must decomplete the symptom of the Other. "One must be trained [*formé*] as an analyst. It is only when he is trained that, from time to time, it escapes him; trained, which is to say, having seen how the symptom completes itself".¹³ It is *via* incompleteness that the leap

into the hole can occur. This supposes that the remains of fantasmatic identification and the remains of identification with the analyst are crossed.

The Remains of the Identification to the Analyst

The principle of the failure of the analytic act resides in the last instance in the identification with the analyst, which is given in two distinct forms. On one hand, there is the identification with the analyst as adherence to the psychoanalyst who has been the instrument of the analytic operation: the subject becomes an analyst as his analyst wants or like his analyst. Angelina Harari has perfectly shown the consequences of these deceptive authorisations.¹⁴ Identification with the analyst takes place in the shadow of these narcissistic games where one is an image of the other. Fantasmatic and narcissistic identifications overlap as in the "interplay of bank and waters that [...] delighted [...] mannerism,"¹⁵ says Lacan. This identification can also occur when the subject nominated as passer by the analyst does not present himself to the pass afterwards, thus remaining attached to the satisfaction of the analyst.

On the other hand, there is the identification with the analyst as adherence to an ideal or a norm of what the analyst would be: it prevents this idealising and normative perspective from being abandoned. The effort of the Commission of the Pass is to stop viewing the existence of an analyst in terms of an exception to a rule, and instead to decipher from the exception a facet of what an analyst is. The starting

11 Cf. Lacan, J., The Seminar, Book XV, The Psychoanalytic Act, 1967-1968, unpublished.

12 Cf. Miller, J.-A., "Histoires de ... psychanalyse", 2005, Audio Lecture, France Culture, available at : <https://www.lacan.com/millerlecture.htm>

13 Lacan, J., "Conferences and Conversations at North American Universities", 24th November 1975, trans. J. Stone, Yale University, Kanzer Seminar, available at <https://freud2lacan.b-cdn.net/YaleNov24-bilingual.pdf>.

14 Cf. Harari, A., Journées of the ECF in Rennes, June 2010, "Birth of the Desire of the Psychoanalyst in the 21st Century", published in the *La Cause freudienne* No 76, *Le désir du psychanalyste*, Navarin, 2010.

15 Lacan, J., "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure", 1960, *Écrits*, trans. B. Fink, London/New York, Norton, p. 570. Let us take the following example where we see that rushes and dreams are mirrored. "The shadow of this crimson flower/And of those being reeds/Seem the depths to be/The dreams of sleeping water, François Tristan L'Hermite, "The two lovers walk (*Promenoir des deux amants*) in *Les Amours* (1638), trans. R. Stokes, available at: oxfordlied.co.uk/song/2860.

point is not the common or usual, but rather the unusual. It is according to this perspective that “Cromwell was the most typical Englishman of his time precisely in that he was the oddest [...]”¹⁶ This logic of singularity is the one in which emptiness and *jouissance* come into play, beyond the master-signifiers that make the law for everyone.

A Topology of What Remains to be Produced

To conclude, I propose that we confront once again the drawing attributed to Rembrandt and which is exhibited in the Musée des Beaux-Anges in Rennes. Lacan uses it to contrast the construction of the sinthome with the embroilments of the “compulsory order of residence” in the body image. “It is only to the extent that beings are inert, that is to say, supported by a body, that one is able to say to someone, as was done at the initiative of Popilius – *I have drawn a ring around thee, and thou shalt not step beyond it until thou pledgest me this.*”¹⁷

It is the sinthome that allows singularity not to be reduced to individuality or to the inertia of the body. It presupposes the bringing into play of the overlapping of the drive orifices of the body and the holes of the unconscious. In his *Notice de fil en aiguille*, J.-A. Miller invites us to recognise “in the Popillian circle, the empty circle [...]. Popilius only forms a pair with the overweening eastern monarch by separating him from his organs, his advisory and military organs, and by deflating [his bubble] until [he] is reduced to an empty bladder.”¹⁸ Let us continue in this direction and imagine that the circle surrounding Antiochus and the crowd that forms a circle around the pair formed by Popilius and Antiochus trace the edge of a hole. In place of the sumptuously clothed

Antiochus, let us put Venus sumptuously unclothed. Let us open her mouth, as Freud does in his dream of Irma’s injection. This open abyss introduces the question of the singularity of the mode of *jouir*, which holds on to the body without being reduced to it. In responding to the anguish that seizes us, we have the chance to respond to Democritus’ invitation, according to the reading that Lacan offers us in *Encore* and in *L’Étourdit*. Democritus’ atom, like Lacan’s sinthome, is both body and “flying element of significance”. The *jouissance* of the body is both body and void, “no more body than void”.¹⁹ This is not the final word, but the articulation of a topology to be produced, that of the place of “no one anymore”.

Translated by Joanne Conway

16 Cf. Geertz, C., “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man”, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York, Basic Books Inc. Publishers, 1973, p. 43.

17 Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XXIII, The Sinthome, 1975-1976*, trans. A. R. Price, Polity Press, London, 2018, p. 91.

18 Miller J.-A., “*Notice De Fil En Aiguille*”, in *The Seminar, Book XXIII*, pp. 196-200.

19 Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*, trans. B. Fink, Norton, London/New York, 1999, p. 71 and Lacan, J., *L’Étourdit, Autres Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 494. One could also read Barbara Cassin’s commentary concerning Lacan’s reference to Democritus in Badiou, A. & Cassin, B., *Il n’y a pas de rapport sexuel, Deux leçons sur l’Étourdit de Lacan*, Fayard, Paris, 2010.

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