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## The Body and the Symptom

Marking and the Symptom  
with Jacques-Alain Miller

Éric Laurent

# Speaking Through One's Symptom, Speaking Through One's Body

*This text is the presentation for the Sixth Encuentro Americano de Psicoanálisis de la Orientación Lacaniana held in Buenos Aires on 22-23 November 2013. It was published in French in Quarto, Issue 105, September 2013.<sup>1</sup>*

**S**PEAKING through *One's Body*, the title chosen for the ENAPOL VI meeting, indicates a pressing concern and corresponds to a fact. In the modern-day disposition of the Other of civilisation, words and bodies are separate from each other. The subtitle, *The Crisis of Norms and Agitation in the Real*, refers to a dual causal series. On the one hand, norms are finding it harder to make our bodies fit into standard uses by forcibly inscribing them by means of the infernal machine in which the master-signifier installs its disciplines of marking and educating. The upshot of this is that our bodies are being left to their own devices, feverishly stamping themselves with signs that do not manage to give them consistence. On the other hand, agitation on the side of the real can be read as

1 [TN: Apart from the opening and closing sections, this text is taken from a transcription of a lecture delivered on 7 July 2012 as part of the *Lacan lecteur de Freud* series organised by Marlène Belilos and Renato Seidl of ASREEP-NLS. The video may be viewed at: <http://lecturesfreudiennes.wordpress.com/2012/09/02/audio-avec-eric-laurent-et-francois-ansermet-seance-du-07-juillet-2012-du-sinthome-seconde-partie/>]

one of the consequences of the requirement for jouissance. The consequences have to be at the level of the body.

Our bodies seem to be in a state of being snatching hold of themselves, of the body, slicing it up into messes that do not belong to any spoken language. These are bodies, bodies that have been cut. Sooner or later we shall be talking about being 'cosmeticised' by the body. Jacques-Alain Miller underlines this.

Psychoanalysis formed its discourse at a precise angle: that of the symptom. Freud extracted the rebus from the body. That Freud came along at a time when we were interested in anything but the body was not the means, indeed, representative of the body. There remained the symptom, the body of us in that which perturbs the body of oneself, a symptom is a mark of the body, an upsurge of jouissance. Start with the body, recognise the path by which the body performs a new slicing and a new marking.

The axis around which the body turns is the father. This is what keeps the body in place. It is what forms its *handle*. This is the issue at the time, and the body is the basis of belief in the 'father' of psychoanalytic practice. The body is something that touches the body at the angle of the symbolic, and the body is the body.

Our question shall be that of the symptom that presupposes the body.

## The Unconscious and the Body

**S**OMETHING else is at stake in the Freudian unconscious is not the body.

2 Lacan, J., "Radiophonie", *Autour d'un sujet*, pp. 1-10.  
3 Miller, J.-A., "Lacanian Biology", *Autour d'un sujet*, pp. 6-29.

## 's Symptom, 's Body

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one of the consequences of the object a's "rise to the zenith"<sup>2</sup>. Foregrounding the requirement for jouissance makes our bodies conform to an 'iron law' whose consequences have to be strictly observed.

Our bodies seem to look after themselves. If there is one thing that appears to be snatching hold of them, then it is the language of biology. It operates on the body, slicing it up into messages of its own; equivocation-free messages that do not belong to any spoken language. It produces operated bodies, 'therapised' bodies, bodies that have been genetically 'therapised' or genetically modified. Sooner or later we shall all be genetically modified organisms. Our bodies are being 'cosmeticised' by this slicing, resulting in a real whose effectiveness Jacques-Alain Miller underlined in his short treatise on "Lacanian Biology"<sup>3</sup>.

Psychoanalysis formed its grasp of the join between words and bodies from one precise angle: that of the symptom. Starting off from Charcot's clinical spectacle, Freud extracted the rebus from the formation of hysterics' symptoms. Lacan said that Freud came along at a time when he was able to see that people were no longer interested in anything but the symptom. Everything that used to be wisdom, ways and means, indeed, representation under a divine gaze, started to fall by the wayside. There remained the symptom in so far as a symptom questions each and every one of us in that which perturbs our body. As the presence of the signifier of the Other in oneself, a symptom is a marking, a cutting. At this site there occurs a traumatic upsurge of jouissance. Starting with the symptoms of hysterics, Freud came to recognise the path by which the perturbation of the body occurs. Through words, it performs a new slicing and marking out of the paths by which jouissance arises.

The axis around which hysterical symptoms revolve is formed by love for the father. This is what keeps the hysteric's body always on the brink of coming apart. It is what forms its *handle*, to use Lacan's expression. This is precisely what was at issue at the time, and this is why we have to conceive of the symptom not on the basis of belief in the Name-of-the-Father, but on the basis of the efficacy of psychoanalytic practice. Through its handling of truth, this practice obtains something that touches on the real. Something resonates in the body from the angle of the symbolic, and this compels the symptom to respond.

Our question shall be: 'how do our bodies speak beyond the hysterical symptom that presupposes love for the father as its horizon?'

### The Unconscious and the Hysterical Symptom

SOMETHING else is at stake in the unconscious besides unconsciousness. The Freudian unconscious is not automatic unconsciousness. It does not fall under

<sup>2</sup> Lacan, J., "Radiophonie", *Autres écrits*, Seuil, Paris, 2001, p. 414.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, J.-A., "Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body", transl. B. P. Fulks, *Lacanian Ink*, Issue 18, Spring 2001, pp. 6-29.

the heading of the pre-inscribed automatic behaviour of which one has no conscious awareness in the cognitive sense. What is at stake in the unconscious? We get a better idea of it from what Lacan calls "the astounding picture of amnesia that is termed identity amnesia."<sup>4</sup> In identity amnesia, the subject does not know who he is. He is completely unable to respond to anything that concerns his identity, his memories, his family, where he comes from, and so on. On the other hand, he can enjoy full access to the different knowledge he has acquired: foreign languages, how to use complicated machinery, and so forth. This contrast between the subject of enunciation and everything that belongs to the realm of the statement – the possible statements – poses a major problem.

During those years, Lacan put forward the hypothesis that the Freudian unconscious entails a certain relationship between speech and writing, and that it can be ascertained by means of a new form of writing: the knots. He says this explicitly in the first lesson of *Seminar XXIV*: "I'm trying to introduce something that goes further than the unconscious."<sup>5</sup> This is not the Lacan of the return to Freud, it is the Lacan of the farewell to Freud. It was high time. He had been waiting for a long while, and his time was very short. He was saying this in 1977, when he was only to live another four years. So, in proposing something that "goes further than the unconscious", he is first and foremost proposing a spatial metaphor.

He immediately complements this spatial metaphor with a question about time: "For the analysis of a dream, do we really have to say that one should restrict oneself to what happened the day before?"<sup>6</sup> To explain the dream, one surely has to draw on things that reach right back to "the very fabric of the unconscious".<sup>7</sup> Situating the unconscious as a fabric also means introducing that which forms a hole, namely the question of trauma.

During those years, Lacan was putting forward a series of new propositions in psychoanalysis, and among these new propositions the reformulation of the question of hysteria was critical. After the Seminar on Joyce,<sup>8</sup> Lacan offered a series of re-readings of the *Studies on Hysteria*, but they approached it from the opposite angle. This path can be followed over a yearlong sequence of punctuations between 9 March 1976 and 26 February 1977 (the date of his Brussels lecture on hysteria<sup>9</sup>). We are going to begin this yearlong sequence with a deciphering of what he puts forward on hysteria in *Seminar XXIII*.

To the best of my knowledge, there is just one direct reference to hysteria in *Seminar XXIII*. It is a friendly acknowledgment, a little nudge for a friend of his,

Hélène Cixous. You can see that bears the surprise of an equally provocative text. The word, like *sinthome*, which remained in modern-day *fallace* corresponds to the semblant that vouches for the phallus is represented in "Die Bedeutung des Phallus" as a signification, and even though we meet it again as a text.

This new position enables Lacan to take Hélène Cixous, who allowed Lacan to say, put together. It is put together in a real fact reality, the reality, dominated the actors, dominated the actors to get away from the actors. Here, it is rather

Lacan accentuates the actress who plays to show the virtues of an actor who plays Freud, and you can hear that

We are facing that hysteria anyway. Here state.

This strange quality fully right after:

4 Lacan, J., "La méprise du sujet supposé savoir", *Autres écrits*, op. cit., p. 334.

5 Lacan, J., 16 November 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV, L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*, in *Ornicar ?*, Issue 12/13, December 1977, p. 5.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 Lacan, J., *Le séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, Seuil, Paris, 2005.

9 Lacan, J., "On Hysteria", transl. N. Wülfling, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, Issue 21, 2010.

10 Lacan, J., "The Signifier", London, pp. 281-91.

11 Lacan, J., *Le séminaire*, p. 106.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

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Hélène Cixous. You can find it in the seventh chapter, which opens the section that bears the surprising heading: "L'invention du réel". The chapter carries the equally provocative title, "D'une fallace témoignant du réel". *Fallace* is an old word, like *sinthome*, which is seldom used in modern French. The word that has remained in modern-day French is the adjective *fallacieux*. The old feminine noun *fallace* corresponds to the place that Lacan gives to the phallus: the phallus is a semblant that vouches for the real. This is quite different from the way that the phallus is represented in the *Écrits*. In the text that sets out the classical position, "Die Bedeutung des Phallus", the phallus exists as a way of vouching for signification, and even for all the effects of signification.<sup>10</sup> Here in *Seminar XXIII* we meet it again as a *fallace* that vouches for the real.

This new position of the phallus that lies outside the paternal metaphor enables Lacan to take up the question of hysteria. The play *Le Portrait de Dora* by Hélène Cixous, which was running at the time in a small Parisian theatre, allowed Lacan to say, "it might interest a few of you to go and see how it has been put together. It is put together in a real fashion."<sup>11</sup> This question of being "put together in a real fashion" is rather odd. Lacan explains himself: "I mean that reality, the reality of the rehearsals, for instance, is ultimately what has dominated the actors." It was realised in such a way that it was not the text that dominated the actors, but the very pragmatics of the fact of saying. This helps us to get away from the idea that the signifier organises a text that organises the actors. Here, it is rather the case that the actors 'realise' the text.

Lacan accentuates the fact that the show "is about hysteria".<sup>12</sup> He notes that the actress who plays Dora is somewhat in a bind, since Freud's Dora "does not show the virtues of a hysteric at all."<sup>13</sup> This term "virtues" is worthy of note. The actor who plays Freud is in even more of a bind, "he really looks rather bothered, and you can hear it in his delivery." The upshot of this is that,

We are faced with a hysteria [...] that I could call *incomplete*. I mean that hysteria has always been in twos, or has been since Freud, anyway. Here we can see it reduced to what I might call a material state.<sup>14</sup>

This strange qualification of the "material state" of hysteria is spelt out more fully right after:

10 Lacan, J., "The Signification of the Phallus", transl. A. Sheridan, *Écrits, A Selection*, 1977, Tavistock, London, pp. 281-91.

11 Lacan, J., *Le séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, op. cit., p. 105.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

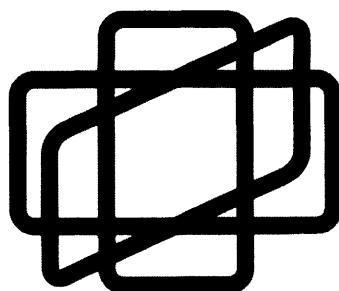
13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

This is why this is going to sit rather well with what I'm about to explain to you. The play lacks the element that was added some time ago – before Freud, when all is said and done – namely, the way in which hysteria has to be *understood*.<sup>15</sup>

With this reference to understanding we find our traditional bearings for hysteria. The hysterical symptom is a symptom that speaks *par excellence*, a symptom that is addressed. It carries a meaning. In the end, the material is the symptom as such, separate from meaning. What Lacan finds tremendously interesting in the Dora that Cixous puts on the stage is that she presents the hysteria without the meaning, which means that one can't understand it anymore. This is what he considers to be important. Lacan puts this in a very surprising way: "This produces something very striking and very instructive. It's a kind of rigid hysteria." Cixous's hysteria presents a Dora who hasn't been kitted out with meaning. It is hysteria without a partner. When Lacan says that since Freud, "hysteria has always been in twos", he is designating the fact that the hysteric is accompanied by her interpretand. This began "before Freud", with Josef Breuer, and even before that, with hypnosis therapies. In Ellenberger's *The Discovery of the Unconscious*,<sup>16</sup> you can read the catalogue of everything that had started at the end of the eighteen-seventies to resonate with the interpretand.

To understand what Lacan means by the term "rigid hysteria" we have to keep reading *Seminar XXII*. There he presents a "rigid" Borromean chain.<sup>17</sup> Why is it rigid, apart from the fact that it is depicted using rectangular squares instead of rings?



"Rigid" Borromean chain

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Ellenberger, H. F., *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, Basic Books, New York, 1970.

<sup>17</sup> Lacan, J., *Le séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, *op cit.*, pp. 106-7.

Its rigidity lies in the fact that, to say, this knot is the Name-of-the-Father presents for us a simulation of an

As a re-writing of a minimal point of the symptom as a In the appendix that Jacques-Alain

If the knot is the need of the not hold the psychoanalytic jouissance

This is what Lacan's Father allows for the instrument, the Name-of-the-Father everything that gets

Name-of-the-Father  
Mother's Desire

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

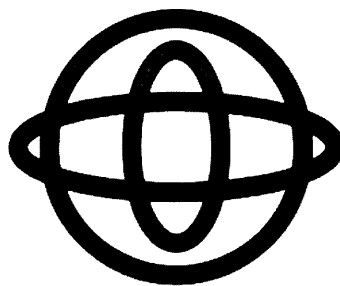


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Its rigidity lies in nothing else but the fact that it holds together all by itself. That is to say, this knot is a mode of the subject that has no need of an extra ring: the Name-of-the-Father. The whole question lies here. The hysteria that Cixous presents for us is hysteria without the interpretand of the Name-of-the-Father. It is a hysteria that holds together on its own. Lacan presents the "rigid" status of the chain not only in this rectangular form but also in the form of his modified simulation of an armillary sphere.<sup>18</sup>



Borromean chain simulating an armillary sphere

As a re-writing of the *Studies on Hysteria* from the starting point of Joyce, this is a minimal point, but an essential one. We move from the "talking" system to the symptom as a piece of writing.

In the appendix to the book of *Seminar XXIII*, in the "Notice de fil en aiguille" that Jacques-Alain Miller drafted, we can read the following:

If the knot holds together as a support for the subject, there is no need of the Name-of-the-Father: it is superfluous. If the knot does not hold together, the Name serves as a *sinthome*. In psychoanalysis, the Name is an instrument for resolving jouissance through meaning.<sup>19</sup>

This is what Lacan initially wrote with the paternal metaphor. The Name-of-the-Father allows for a phallic value to be given to the Mother's Desire. The instrument, the Name, would then allow for a phallic value to be given to everything that gets said.

Name-of-the-Father	Mother's Desire	→	Name-of-the-Father	$\left[ \begin{array}{c} A \\ \text{Phallus} \end{array} \right]$
Mother's Desire	Signified to the Subject			

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

Lacan was later to generalise this metaphor, inscribing *jouissance* underneath the bar, in language [*langue*], at the locus of the Other, so as to be metaphorised:

$$\frac{A}{J}$$

The Name is an instrument for resolving *jouissance* through meaning in the same way that, in the paternal metaphor, the Name resolves the signified of the Mother's Desire by giving it the signification of the phallus.

This is what is being reformulated in the writing of the "rigid" chain, the chain that holds together by itself. It is a chain such that *jouissance* and meaning are held together without needing to go via the Name-of-the-Father, love for the father or identification with the father.

In the first lesson of the following seminar, *L'insu que sait de l'une bévue s'aile à mourre*, Lacan pursues his search for a 'beyond of the unconscious'. He dares to translate the Freudian *Unbewusste* by *l'Une-bévue*, "the unary blunder", which in French is a homophony rather than a translation, but an exceedingly well-founded one because the title, *L'insu que sait...*, is an astounding play on words: the unconscious as an *insu*, an "unknown", but which *se sait*, which is known somewhere.

Among the various new expressions in French, an expression used by a professional cyclist caught using performance-enhancing drugs has become famous: *à l'insu de mon plein gré*, "unbeknownst to my full willingness". This is very instructive on the question of knowing. What does it mean to know what one knows? *L'insu que sait de l'une bévue s'aile à mourre* inquires into this.

## Symptom and Identification

In the first lesson of *Seminar XXIV*, Lacan poses questions that link up directly with the seventh chapter of *Seminar XXIII*. In the transcription published in *Ornicar ?*, we read the following:

Identification is what crystallises in an identity. [...] Though I realised I had forgotten my seminar on Freud's *Identifizierung*, I remember very well that for Freud there are three modes of identification. [...] The form of identification that he qualifies, without us really seeing why, as love, is identification with the father.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Lacan, J., 16 November 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *op. cit.*

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<sup>21</sup> Freud, S., "Group Psychology and the Ego", *Psychological Works*, pp. 106-7.

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Having provided a logical version of the paternal metaphor, Lacan is now saying that we do not really know why this is so. There is all manner of fantasising in what Freud calls the Father: totem and taboo, the Darwinian stories, the prehistory of anything and everything, and his fundamental belief in the father.

Next, Lacan extracts:

An identification constituted by *participation*. Freud pinpoints this as hysterical identification. And then there is a third identification, which he makes with a trait, a trait that I once translated as the *unary trait*.

Participative identification implies a partner: in twos. He says as much: hysteria went two by two. This 'two' is not only the bond between the hysteric and her interpretand; it also designates the fact that she takes a symptom from the other whom she loves. The example that Freud gives in the seventh chapter of *Massenpsychologie* is that of Dora's aphonia, which was an identification with what she took to be the jouissance of her father performing cunnilingus on Frau K.<sup>21</sup> The aphonia brings her mouth into play, in this "participation" in her father's jouissance. The father is the love object, but this love implies participating in jouissance.

Lastly, there is the third form of identification, which before Lacan, psychoanalysis left entirely by the wayside, considering it to be the most banal form of identification. The example Freud gives is the girls' boarding school. One of the girls receives a letter from the boy she loves, and the letter causes her pain. That night in the dormitory, all the girls start crying; they are all stirred in the same way. It is an hysterical epidemic. They do not know the boy, they do not even know who he is, but their classmate's pain stirs the whole dormitory. Lacan sees this last form of identification, the foundation of the hysterical epidemic, as a key.

Freud says that, in the second form, the identification "only borrows a single trait" from the father. Lacan reads this as the fundamental Freudian intuition of the reduction of identification to a trait, to which he ascribes the fundamental value of a written trait. The trait that appeared in *Seminar IX* takes on an altogether special weight. Starting off from this second form of identification, Lacan takes up the first and the third. Furthermore, it is on the basis of the third form of identification that he starts to examine the second, saying that Dora's participation in the jouissance with which she identifies is itself a trait. Next, he will call into question the first identification with the father in order to refer it back to a trait of the father, rather than the father of the horde and the whole Lamarcko-Darwinian mishmash that for a while so fascinated Freud.

21 Freud, S., "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVIII, transl. J. Strachey, Hogarth Press, London, 1955, pp. 106-7.

The question that Lacan wants to tackle so as to shed light on the question of hysteria is that of identification. He tackles it not from the angle of myth, but from the angle of the experience of psychoanalysis. He asks, "with what, then, does one identify at the end of analysis? Does one identify with one's unconscious? I don't believe so."<sup>22</sup> He says, "the unconscious remains the Other", and "I don't see how one can give meaning to the unconscious". You can see that *identification* and *giving meaning* are related. The end of analysis produces an impossibility of identifying with one's unconscious. In this sense, identification with the symptom is the flipside of hysterical identification. Hysterical identification is identification with the other's symptom, through participation. Lacan contrasts this form of identification with identification conceived of on the basis of the phenomena of the Pass and the end of analysis.

### The Real of the Analytic Symptom

ON the basis of this *identifying with one's symptom*, Lacan will examine the tension between the hysterical symptom and the analytic symptom. He complicates the opposition between hysterical identification and identification with one's symptom by saying: "I have stated that the symptom can be the sexual partner."<sup>23</sup> This is a second phase in relation to the critique of hysterical identification. It is not a participation in the other's symptom, it is one's own symptom, but this symptom can be the other party. One's symptom, the thing that is most 'oneself', is in fact one's sexual partner.

Lacan then asks what it means to "be acquainted" with one's symptom. What is the difference between *being acquainted* and *knowing*? To say that one's sexual partner is a symptom is to say that one's sexual partner is the one with whom one is unacquainted, because there is no possible way of being acquainted with the sexual partner. We need to keep in mind this opposition between *being acquainted* and *knowing*, and remember that the symptom is on the side of knowledge, which precisely implies not being acquainted:

I have stated that the symptom can be the sexual partner, [...] the symptom taken in the sense that, to use the term of acquaintance, it is what we're best acquainted with, though this doesn't go very far. *Connaître* has just this strict sense. It is the only form of acquaintance, taken in the sense that it has been stated that a man has only to sleep with a woman for it to be said that he knows her, or vice-versa.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Lacan, J., 16 November 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

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This is Biblical *knowing*. In the Bible, *to know* a woman means to have sex with her. Lacan continues:

As – despite making an effort – it is a fact that I am not a woman, I do not know about what a woman can know of a man. It is quite possible that this is something that goes very far, but all the same it cannot go so far as for the woman to believe the man.<sup>25</sup>

These are complex developments with respect to a nether side of the metaphor of divine creation. Next, he says:

Even when children are involved, children remain a parasite for a woman. They are a parasite, a parasitism. In a woman's uterus, the child is a parasite. Everything points in this direction, up to and including the fact that things can go very wrong between the parasite and the belly.<sup>26</sup>

This is a very useful observation for child psychiatrists and adult psychiatrists alike, on the fact that any pregnancy can possess a slight aspect of pregnancy denial. There is no *connaissance* of pregnancy. There is always a point at which a woman doesn't know that she is pregnant. There are not only the serious cases of radical pregnancy denial that have been hitting the headlines. There are also very precise and delicate details that only appear in an analysis, but when one takes them into account, one can say that there is something that cannot be known, in the sense of a transparency of one's cognisance. Knowledge can be unknown, but not cognisance. Lacan says as much in this text:

So, what then does it mean to be acquainted with something? To be acquainted with one's symptom means to know how to get along with it, to have a way with it, to know how to handle it.<sup>27</sup>

This is what happens with one's sexual partner. One just about manages to get along with one's partner, to handle one's partner.

What man knows how to do with his image corresponds to this in some respects, and it allows us "to entertain the way in which people get by with their symptom".<sup>28</sup> So, Lacan is asserting that this is not about knowledge as a symbolic writing. One gets along with one's sexual partner in the same way that one gets along with one's image. There is always some aspect of narcissism in one's

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*

choice of partner, not at the level of the image but at the level of one's handling of it. The role of the imaginary takes on a very important value here. We are no longer in the era when the imaginary was depreciated in relation to the symbolic. This is an imaginary that furnishes us with fundamental coordinates for living in this world. Getting along with the image is what allows us, just about, to get along with our sexual partner. Here the imaginary is placed in continuity with the real.

This is true in science as well. Science needs the dimension of the imaginary. The proof, as Lacan tells us, is the detour that it takes via the theory of models:

Lord Kelvin considered that science was something in which a model functioned, and which, with the help of this model, enabled one to predict results of how the real functions.<sup>29</sup>

So, in science, "one turns to the imaginary in order to form an idea of the real."<sup>30</sup>

Lacan advances in his reasoning by enduing the imaginary with a consistence, by enduing the symbolic with a consistence, and then asking what the consistence of the real might be.

I realised that *to consist* meant that the body needed to be spoken about, that there is a body of the imaginary, a body of the symbolic – which is *lalangue* – and a body of the real, and we don't know how the latter emerges.<sup>31</sup>

The body of the symbolic is *lalangue*, the full range of equivocations of the spoken tongue. The imaginary is what allows us to get along, it is the model. But what might the real of the body be? For Lord Kelvin, this is what science refuses to admit. We have a model, but we do not know what the body of the real is. There are no hypotheses about this.

## Sameness and the Body of the Real

LACAN strives to define the body of the real from the angle of psychoanalysis. He introduces his development from the starting point of the same question of how to designate in a homologous way the three forms of identification singled out by Freud:

[...] hysterical father, and the one that trait [...]

Any old trait "that should be the same that it founds same. We now understand presenting a "material sameness that repeats is not joined to it.

On the other hand between sameness others, units, "between meanwhile, is the repeats. At the level which one can make that there are equivalent "unary blunders".

In "Die Bedeutung Frege's distinction between the "morning star" and two descriptions, the planet out there in the "star" or "evening star" very much on the sliding effects of sign always stays the same through which one is

The consequence of living being, without and meaning. The because hysterical clipped body is the its leg or its voice.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Lacan, J., 14 December

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Lacan, J., "Televising the Psychoanalytic Estate" ["shearing"].

[...] hysterical identification, then the loving identification with the father, and then the form of identification that I shall call *neutral*, the one that is neither one nor the other, the identification with a trait [...] that I called *any old trait*.<sup>32</sup>

Any old trait "that is simply the same". For the real, the important thing is that it should be the *same* in material terms: "the notion of matter is fundamental in that it founds sameness."<sup>33</sup>

We now understand why Lacan was so glad to say that Hélène Cixous was presenting a "material" hysteria. She was presenting something on the side of a sameness that repeats outside meaning, which has no need of meaning, which is not joined to it.

On the other hand, says Lacan, the signifier forms a series, in the opposition between sameness and otherness, between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . There are a series of others, units, "between which a blunder is always possible".<sup>34</sup> The real, meanwhile, is the material repetition of the same inasmuch as *jouissance* repeats. At the level of the symbolic, there are *ones* which form a series and in which one can make a mistake. To say that there are *blunders* amounts to saying that there are equivocations. Lacan's unconscious is made up of *une-bévues*, "unary blunders", which are unary signifiers that always give rise to equivocation.

In "Die Bedeutung des Phallus", Lacan situated equivocation on the basis of Frege's distinction between meaning and reference. You can say that Venus is the "morning star" or the "evening star", but it refers to the same Venus. These two descriptions, these two significations, are both signs of Venus. Venus is a planet out there in the solar system, whilst in language one can say "morning star" or "evening star". In *Seminar XXIII*, "the *fallace* that vouches for the real" is very much on the side of the sign. The phallus is no longer being situated in the sliding effects of signification. This sliding marks out a pattern of *jouissance* that always stays the *same*, and which can be named in language by unary signifiers through which one can always make a mistake.

The consequence of this is a presentation of the body of the *parlêtre*, of the living being, without bringing in hysterical identification which blends symptom and meaning. The body of the hysteric subject is "clipped"<sup>35</sup> by the signifier, because hysterical symptoms present themselves as patterns of loss. The clipped body is the body that loses its arm through hysterical paralysis, that loses its leg or its voice. In contrast to this clipped body, there is the toric body with a

32 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

33 Lacan, J., 14 December 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

34 *Ibid.*

35 Lacan, J., "Television", transl. D. Hollier, R. Krauss, A. Michelson, *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, Norton, New York/London, 1990, p. 6 [where *cisaille* is translated as "shearing"].

hole in it. The body presents itself as an organisation of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, around one or two holes, and it holds together by itself. The toric body is a representation of the body of the living being beyond the hysterical body. From this perspective, one can distinguish between the symptom as an "event of the body"<sup>36</sup> and the hysterical symptom.

Lacan puts this as follows:

The difference between hysterics and me [...] is that hysterics are supported in their rod-like form by an armature. This armature is distinct from their consciousness. It is their love for their father.<sup>37</sup>

To make the hysteric subject hold together, one has to add a Name-of-the-Father. But this is what is no longer necessary in the aforementioned "rigid hysteria" in the Cixous style.

Freud only had a few ideas about what the unconscious is, but when you read him it seems that one can infer that he thought it was made up of effects of the signifier. [...] He was not at ease, and he did not have a way with knowledge. That is what we call feeble-mindedness, to which I must say I am no exception, because I have to cope with the same material as everyone else, and because this material is what inhabits us.<sup>38</sup>

And here, "material" is again taken as the real of jouissance. Lacan proposes an unconscious that is no longer made up of effects of the signifier. He is proposing another version of an unconscious, one that is no longer made up of the signifier's effects on an imaginary body, but an unconscious made up of this knot of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. He includes the instance of the real which is the pure repetition of sameness: what Jacques-Alain Miller isolated in his most recent course in the dimension of the One-all-alone that repeats.<sup>39</sup>

### Three Forms of Consistence and the Body-Event

In view of this, Lacan was able to write the following in "Joyce le Symptôme (III)":

36 Lacan, J., "Joyce le Symptôme (III)", *Autres écrits*, op. cit., p. 569.

37 Lacan, J., 14 December 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, op. cit., p. 13.

38 Lacan, J., 11 January 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*, in *Ornicar ?*, Issue 14, Spring 1978, p. 5.

39 Miller, J.-A., *Lacanian Orientation. L'être et l'un*, teaching delivered within the setting of the Department of Psychoanalysis, University of Paris 8, 2010-2011, to appear in French under the new title *L'Un-tout-seul*.

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40 Lacan, J., "Joyce le Symptôme (III)", op. cit., p. 569.

41 Ibid.

42 Lacan, J., "On Hysteria", op. cit., p. 13.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.



the real, the symbolic and  
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## -Event

Joyce le Symptôme (II)":

une-bévue s'aile à mourre,  
ered within the setting of the  
appear in French under the new

Let's leave the symptom to what it is: an event of the body, linked  
to the fact that: one has it [...].

So it is that individuals, which Aristotle takes for bodies, may  
themselves be nothing but symptoms relative to other bodies. A  
woman, for instance, is another body's symptom.<sup>40</sup>

This sentence defines the womanly position as an anti-hysterical symptom. This  
definition of the womanly position enables it to be distinguished from hysteria.  
Should this not be the case, "she remains the so-called hysteric symptom [...].  
Which means, paradoxically, that she is only interested in some other  
symptom."<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this was the case for Dora, who was only interested in  
another symptom: her father's. She identified with her father, with her father's  
impotence, through her aphonia.

Lacan continues to refine the opposition: the hysterical symptom comes  
before the question of the symptom as such. The symptom comes to inscribe  
itself upon the body while still remaining exterior to the body. The symptom is not  
in the body. It is not endopsychical. It is on the outside.

In Brussels, Lacan comments on this as follows:

Where have they gone, those hysterics of yesteryear, those  
marvellous women, the likes of Anna O. and Emmy von N.? Not  
only did they play a certain role, they played a certain social role. [...]   
What has replaced these bygone hysterical symptoms today? Is it  
not the case that hysterics have shifted place in the social field?<sup>42</sup>

And there he asks: "Might it not be the case that psychoanalytic zaniness has  
replaced hysteria?" By bringing the symbolic to the fore, psychoanalysis has  
dismantled the artifices of the hysterical symptom, but it has also come to occupy  
the place of the bond it formed.

Lacan further notes that:

The unconscious traces its origins back to the fact that the hysteric  
doesn't know what she is saying, when truly and verily she is saying  
something through the words that fail her. The unconscious is a  
sediment of language.<sup>43</sup>

Lacan sets out a horizon for psychoanalysis which is not a hysterical horizon  
but the real as a "borderline idea",<sup>44</sup> the idea of that which holds no meaning. This

40 Lacan, J., "Joyce le Symptôme (II)", *op. cit.*, p. 569.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Lacan, J., "On Hysteria", *op. cit.* [Translation modified].

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

is what led Jacques-Alain Miller to qualify this real as Lacan's dream, something like a borderline idea, but one that is necessary to counterbalance a slippery slope in psychoanalysis, a delusional slope in psychoanalysis: the slope that leads to "a preference given aside from all else to the unconscious."<sup>45</sup> In those years, Lacan was touching on something of a real that, for him, was not a scientific real, but the real of "enjoying substance",<sup>46</sup> and this led him to deem it that much more urgent to protect psychoanalysis from its delusional slope and from this "preference given aside from all else to the unconscious".

Here, in *Seminar XXIV*, he cites an example of this tendency: the book *Le Verbier de l'Homme aux loups* authored by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.<sup>47</sup> These neo-Ferenczian analysts, if you will, from France, set about following the Wolf Man down his delusional path by tracing all the echoes of the signifiers that marked him, through all the homophonies and equivocations in all the languages that the Wolf Man spoke: Russian, German, the Viennese dialect, and so on. These are the resonances that they call a *Verbier*, which is a compound of *verbiage*, "verbosity", and *herbier*, "herbarium". This is the object that Lacan finds, strictly speaking, delusional:

Despite my having got things going down this path, I think that neither the Preface nor the book is really in the right tone. In the delusional genre [...] this is an extreme case, and I'm terrified at the feeling that I might be more or less responsible for having opened the floodgates.<sup>48</sup>

Faced with the opening of the floodgates of the signifier, Lacan considered that the only thing that could stop psychoanalysis from turning delusional was to have, if not a science to it, then at least its idea of a real. He observes that he is able to touch on a kind of real. He circumscribes a dimension that lies outside meaning, which would guarantee a stop in the chain and which would allow one to avoid getting sucked in by the unconscious.

"Material" is not a representation, it is not "word-presentations", but words in their materiality. These are words in their fundamental equivocations, the equivocation of the *Une-bévue* which alone offers an inroad to the real. In following Lacan, we stand a chance of preventing psychoanalysis from becoming delusional, on the condition that we do not give preference to any one of these forms of consistence over the others. It is a matter of holding the three together,

45 Lacan, J., 14 December 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

46 Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, transl. B. Fink, Norton, New York/London, 1998, pp. 23-4.

47 [TN: Translated into English by N. Rand as *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005.]

48 Lacan, J., 14 December 1976 lesson of *Le séminaire XXIV*, *op. cit.* p. 8 [TN: the Preface in question was written by Jacques Derrida].

of not preferring one of them.

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of not preferring one "aside from all else", of not forming a whole from any one  
of them.

ENAPOL VI will offer us the opportunity to develop the consequences of the  
new status of the symptom and identification across the breadth of our field.  
Leonardo Gorostiza has provided a list of these aspects: besides the dimension  
of pure psychoanalysis, the most pressing themes in the Americas today are  
violence and aggressiveness; the widespread consumption of drugs; the so-  
called eating disorders; sex change at the level of both bodies and procreation,  
along with its effect on the norms; the crisis in the norms of the family and in the  
civil codes that account for it; and the controversy as to the pertinence of  
psychoanalysis in the field of autism. With Ricardo Seldes, the organising  
committee is already at work highlighting the responses that we shall give to  
these different questions through the texts of the participants.

**Translated from the French by A. R. Price**