



The Lacanian Review

Hurly-Burly

Oh
my
god(s)!!

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LET'S GO! WAP/NLS

This section presents very precious texts preparing the work of our Congresses. The first is an interview with Éric Laurent, carried out in July 2015 after his seminar on the speaking body at the ECF. It delineates the many aspects of the research programme that awaits us if we are to reorient our clinical practice on the second Lacanian clinic of the speaking body – work that is at the heart of the 2016 WAP Congress. The second text is Yves Vanderveken's precise orientation for the work of the NLS Congress in Dublin, on Discreet Signs in Ordinary Psychoses: Clinic and Treatment.

THE UNCONSCIOUS AND THE BODY EVENT

An Interview with Éric Laurent

The Unconscious: Real, Symbolic, or Imaginary?

The Lacanian Review – In one of his seminars, Lacan says: "You think the unconscious is symbolic. Well no, you're wrong. It is imaginary or real." How do you understand this?

Éric Laurent – It is a fundamental turning point in Lacan's teaching. He stressed the dimensions and consistencies of this ternary many times, and underlined it at the start of his seminar, *RSI*. First he explored the imaginary in depth, before even isolating these three categories, then the symbolic. But even when prioritising one particular consistency, he never lost sight of the ternary. For example, when he developed the function of negation and its symbolic significance for the creationist aspect of the symbolic, linked to a fundamental 'no' that allows the void to exist, Lacan still maintained a reference to the real.² We also have what Jean Hyppolite said about the difficulties he faced, who, as a Hegelian, was sensible to the work of

1. Cf. Lacan, J. *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, text established by Jacques-Alain Miller, Seuil, Paris, 2005, pp. 101-102: "How can we know if the unconscious is real or imaginary? That is the question. It presents characteristics that equivocate between the two."
2. Lacan, J., "Introduction to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's 'Verneinung'", in *Écrits*, transl. B. Fink, Norton, London 2006, pp. 308-317.

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3. Cf. Jean Hyppolite, *Le Séminaire de Lacan*, transl. J. Forster, Seuil, Paris, 1968, pp. 132-133.
4. Miller, J.-A., *Le Séminaire de Lacan*, Seuil, Paris, 1997, pp. 132-133.
5. Lacan, J., *RSI*, Seuil, Paris, 1975, pp. 132-133.
6. Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire de Lacan*, Seuil, Paris, 1975, pp. 132-133.
7. Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire de Lacan*, Seuil, Paris, 1975, pp. 132-133.
8. Lecture given on 22 May 2011.

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 interview with *Éric Laurent*, carried
 out in the speaking body at the ECF.
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 on the second Lacanian clinic
 that is at the heart
 of the text is Yves Vanderveken's
 presentation of the NLS Congress in Dublin,
 2016. Psychoses: Clinic and Treatment.

UNCONSCIOUS THE SPEAKING BODY EVENT

interview with *Éric Laurent*

Symbolic, or Imaginary?

In his seminars, Lacan says: "You think the unconscious is imaginary or real."¹ How

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 question between the two."

commentary on Freud's "Verneinung", in *Écrits*, transl.

the negative, to the mechanism of the *Aufhebung*, but had difficulty with
 the way the three consistencies were put together in the schema of two
 mirrors.³ Lacan was already holding this articulation in place.

After having explored the paths and detours of the symbolic, at the
 moment of crisis in French thought, the break that separated structura-
 lism from post-structuralism, Lacan used his ternary to situate the
 impasses of Levi-Strauss's conception of structure. From Seminar XI on,
 he showed that his subject was no longer only to be approached through
 the tropes of signification: metaphor and metonymy. He gave more and
 more prominence to the logic of alienation and separation, which puts
 the object *a* in play, a mixture between the imaginary and real. As Jacques-
 Alain Miller said in his presentation,⁴ this was pushed to its ultimate
 consequence with the declaration of the equality between consistencies.
 Lacan rethought everything as of Seminar XXII, in which none of the
 consistencies dominated the others.⁵ This equality between the consis-
 tencies adds considerable weight to the tipping-point that occurred in *La
 logique du fantasme*, where Lacan said that the site of the symbolic is not
 the mind, as some believed, but the body.⁶ From that moment, a process
 of reworking was initiated.

Clinical Consequences

Could you give some examples?

Psychoses

EL – Let's begin with the approach that Jacques-Alain Miller has been advoca-
 ting since 2005, the year he published the seminar, *Le Sinthome*,⁷ namely,
 that Lacan's whole teaching should be re-approached on the basis of this
 seminar. The different stages were: the seminar's publication with its accom-
 panying commentary; then Montpellier 2011,⁸ where Jacques-Alain Miller
 commented upon a certain number of phrases extracted from the Seminar,
Le Sinthome, that reveal a transformation of the clinic on the basis of that
 Seminar; then, in 2014, we have the presentation preparing the way to the
 WAP Congress of 2016. In each of these moments, Jacques-Alain Miller

3. Cf. Jean Hyppolite's question in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I, Freud's Paper's on Technique*,
 transl. J. Forester, Norton, London, 1988, pp. 144-146.
4. Miller, J.-A., "The Unconscious and the Speaking Body", *Hurly-Burly*, Issue 12, 2015, pp. 119-
 132.
5. Lacan, J., *RSI*, unpublished, 1974-1975.
6. Lacan, J., *La logique du fantasme*, unpublished, lesson of 10 May 1967.
7. Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, op. cit.
8. Lecture given by Jacques-Alain Miller, at UFORCA's second parliament, Montpellier, 21 and
 22 May 2011. The theme of the Parliament was "Around Seminar XXIII".

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explores successive reworkings of the clinic. This year, as part of *les Études lacaniennes*, I tried to follow these paths.⁹

In Montpellier, the fruitfulness of making all the consistencies equal, of the non-domination by the symbolic, was a surprise. The first clinical developments bore upon the psychoses, in particular the psychoses that Joyce helps to clarify. Joyce-the-sinthome revealed the huge diversity of “untriggered” psychoses, and introduced a new mode of foreclosure, *‘de facto’* foreclosure [*forclusion ‘de fait’*]. Here we can distinguish between the form of paternal failure at stake for Joyce and the foreclosure at work in the case of Lucia, Joyce’s daughter. Her split with Beckett provoked an actual triggering. Moreover, Lacan found a particular phenomenon, which could be grasped on the basis of his knot, the famous “body ready to slip away”¹⁰, which is held in place by a supplementary consistency, the Ego, as the means with which the whole holds together. The term ‘Ego’ is being used here in a new sense, *a sort of body separated from its form*, a mixture of consistencies. Thus, on the basis of this Seminar, in the field of psychoses, this clinical approach makes it possible to get away from the overly mechanical opposition between foreclosure and non-foreclosure. Here a continent opens up to be explored that goes well beyond ‘ordinary psychosis’. In each case, it is a question of finding a way of assembling knots that account for a subject, without putting him in a little box or clinical class.

Neuroses

As for neuroses, the presentation in Montpellier showed that the declaration of equality between consistencies makes it possible to consider hysteria and obsessional neurosis with an equally renewed approach. Hysteria is broached on the basis of the ‘symptom’s symptom’, no longer on the basis of the first impact of language on the body, which was the hysterical symptom for Freud, but as mediation by the imaginary. The symptom’s symptom is the symptom in the second degree, borrowed from another body. The hysteric is included in a series in which it is no longer the hysteric symptom that constitutes the first cut on the body. First there is the feminine position, which is defined by reducing one’s being to ‘being another body’s sinthome’. In this way the clinic of hysteria is profoundly modified in a way that is compatible with the contemporary clinic of hysteria, which has little to do with the Freudian clinic. One has to deal with a range of phenomena that is much larger, and cannot simply be seen as eponymous with Dora.

9. Laurent, É., “Parler Lalangue du corps”, a seminar held at the *École de la Cause freudienne* as part of the *Études lacaniennes*, 2014-2015. Cf. Laurent, É., *L’Envers de la biopolitique, Une écriture pour la jouissance*, Paris, Navarin/Le Champ freudien, 2016.

10. Cf. Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, op. cit. p. 148.

As for obsessional neurosis, it is considered the opposite of the gaze. It is the refusal of not having a form under the gaze is a neurosis on the field of obsession of the body, as it is difficult to undo. In the event, a reworking to think of subject and the real.

Hysteria and the

In the Freudian position as a phenomenon deciphered solely in the act of speaking, what becomes

EL – Lacan distinguishes between what he called “somatic” and “psychic” refusal, based on the refusal of the body. It was received through the body of a woman, the function of the body to exist. Simply put, she has something to show to another woman to a man. Why Lacan said, at the end of the seminar, who, from the feminine position, who exists, who exists in the feminine position as subject, her singularity exists, deciphered for another woman. This type of being is the phallus for the hysteric to the feminine. The dialectic of being is the symptom of the hysteric on a particular fantasm.

11. Lacan, J., *Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, op. cit. p. 148. trans. by Russell Grigg.

12. Cf. Lacan, J., “The Sinthome”.

This year, as part of *les Études*

ing all the consistencies equal, of surprise. The first clinical development is the psychoses that Joyce and the huge diversity of "untrigged" mode of foreclosure, 'de facto' foreclosure distinguish between the form of foreclosure at work in the case of Lacan. Lacan provoked an actual triggering phenomenon, which could be seen as "body ready to slip away"¹⁰, by consistency, the Ego, as the subject. The term 'Ego' is being used to refer to its form, a mixture of consistency. In the field of psychoses, this is a way from the overly mechanical mode of foreclosure. Here a continent of "ordinary psychosis". In each of these knots that account for the box or clinical class.

Montpellier showed that the declaration makes it possible to consider an equally renewed approach. The symptom's symptom', no longer a being on the body, which was the mediation by the imaginary. The second degree, borrowed from a series in which it is no longer a first cut on the body. First there is a reducing one's being to 'being in the clinic of hysteria is profoundly different from the contemporary clinic of Freudian clinic. One has to deal with it, and cannot simply be seen

at the *École de la Cause freudienne* as part of *Envers de la biopolitique, Une écriture pour*... cit. p. 148.

As for obsessional neurosis, Jacques-Alain Miller stressed that Lacan considered the obsessional to be *someone who cannot detach themselves from the gaze*. It is thus the body, taken under the gaze, and as either having or not having a form in relation to the gaze that dominates it. The real body under the gaze is what makes it possible to approach the field of obsessional neurosis on the basis of the body and the body event as well. A priori, the field of obsessional neurosis seemed to be furthest from questions of the body, as it is focused on thought. Yet, by situating the conjunction, so difficult to undo, between the gaze and the real formless body, we have a body event, a reworking of what obsessional neurosis is. This makes it possible to think of subjective division as a division on the basis of the imaginary and the real.

Hysteria and Femininity

In the Freudian point of view on hysteria, there was the key role played by somatisation as a phenomenon of the same order as the symbolic, since it let itself be deciphered solely by signifiers, it was made and unmade by them. With this reworking, what becomes of the somatic phenomenon in hysteria?

EL – Lacan distanced himself from that several times. He reformulated so-called "somatic compliance" as a refusal of bodily femininity.¹¹ In this refusal, based on the idea of a body that does not exist, the hysterical body was received through identification with another body, that of 'the other woman', the function of which was to supplement the body that does not exist. Simply put, the other woman's body is the other woman in so far as she has something to do with The Woman. People often try to reduce the other woman to an equal, the rival. But Frau K. is The Woman, which is why Lacan said, after a long chain of reasoning, that the hysteric is someone who, from the feminine point of view, wants to make the universal of woman exist, who fights to make this universal exist. By contrast, the feminine position as such is to undo the universal feminine in order to make her singularity exist. This consists in making oneself the symptom to be deciphered for another body; especially that of a man, but it can be that of a woman. This type of determination is not simply the incarnation of a "to be the phallus for".¹² At one time, Lacan argued that the passage from the hysterical to the feminine position was via the traversal of phallic being, in the dialectic of being the phallus and having it. Beyond this, what is constituted is the symptom to be deciphered of a particular body, which depends on a particular fantasy. If Lacan can say that God constantly intervenes in

11. Lacan, J., *Seminar, Book XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, text established by J.-A. Miller, transl. by Russell Grigg, Norton, London, 2007, p. 94.

12. Cf. Lacan, J., "The Signification of the Phallus", *Écrits*, transl. B. Fink, Norton, London, 2006, p. 583.

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human affairs, the proof being that each time a woman intervenes in a man's life,¹³ it is not on the basis of the universal. The Gods belong to the order of the real, not the symbolic. In this respect, to believe is not a symbolic function, it is a real function, a body event. This touches the fundamental point that precedes any symbolic development. All this shifts how we approach the facts of hysteria.

What would you say of the passage where Lacan says: "I am a perfect hysteric", because there is no rod of the Name-of-the-Father?

EL – Is a perfect hysteric still a hysteric? Does a perfect hysteria become the feminine position? Is it a way of saying 'I am trying to reconstruct the whole of psychoanalysis from the feminine position, without believing in The Woman'?

The example that Lacan gives is curious, it comes down to saying that he is in a constant relation with the unconscious, all the time in the Mobius circuit.

EL – He is on the side of the unconscious all the time, in other words he says: *I no longer want to have any "ego"*. In as much as, for the obsessional, there is a resistance of the ego, the hysteric is marked, as our friends the post-Freudians say, by a weakness of her ego. Lacan tries his best not to have an ego any more. In his way of life he strives to be both drive and absence of ego, and in constant contact with his unconscious, understood as *parlêtre*. Here, it is no longer a question of "I, truth, speak", but "I, *parlêtre*, speak". Lacan made his ethic of living out of something like this.

The Speaking Body is the Body of Civilisation

We have a question that is a little more political. Recently in Lacan Quotidien, you said "the speaking body is the body of civilisation"¹⁴, and at PIPOL 7, "radicalisation is the radicalisation of jouissance"¹⁵. Could you elaborate a little on these two propositions?

EL – At PIPOL 7 the polysemy of the term radicalisation was brought out, as it has come to supplant a series of other terms. I tried to grasp this not in terms of ideals, as one of our colleagues highlighted – the fall of ideals, trauma relating to the ideal, humiliation – but rather as radicalisation of a

13. Cf. the account of an interview with students at Yale University, 24 November 1974, published as part of the "Conférences et entretiens dans des universités nord-américaines", in *Scilicet* 6/7, p. 32.

14. Laurent, É., "L'inconscient, c'est la politique", in *Lacan Quotidien* n° 518, June, 2015.

15. Intervention by Éric Laurent at PIPOL 7, *Victime!* 3rd European congress of psychoanalysis, Brussels, 4 and 5 July 2015.

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push-to-enjoy [*pousse-à-jouir*]: radicalisation as one of the names of jouissance, and in this sense, it is what blows up the body. In the process called civilisation, which has its lies, its limits and its inconsistencies, the body submitted to a certain kind of regulation is subjected to a remainder, a superegoic discontent, but it can hold. In radicalisation, from drug addiction to fatal bacchanalia, in this way of blowing oneself up with a bomb, one passes beyond civilisation, in a disconnection, a fact of jouissance.

Beyond the social bond, beyond discourse.

EL – It is a matter of marking a place of impossible in discourse, and identifying with this point.

In Lacan Quotidien, you took up the expression that Jacques-Alain Miller explores in his "Intuitions Milanaises", "the unconscious is politics"; so, all the same, do you think that the psychoanalyst's unconscious represents a limit to radicalisation?

EL – "The unconscious is politics" means that the unconscious inscribes itself within an irreducible fault. Politics reveals a fault and what one calls democracy is nothing but the name of the signifier for the lost unity. The Mobius band, the unconscious, grafts itself into this fault and introduces into this point, something which is not the ideal, something which is not reducible to the polarisation: ego ideal/ideal ego.

This expression "the speaking body",¹⁶ which Jacques-Alain Miller has brought out for us all as an object of research, takes a step away from the idea of a decipherable body, of bodily symptoms coming in place of messages from the unconscious.

EL – For a long time the speaking body was the hysterical body. It was a body that spoke the language of dreams perfectly, and thus gave meaning to everything. Here, what is at stake is the speaking body in so far as it is centred on a beyond of meaning, in so far as it is the limit to the "giving meaning", to the deciphering. On occasion, Jacques-Alain Miller said that the body event is also what one calls the immediate data of consciousness in phenomenology,¹⁷ in other words what is prior to all possible consciousness, including consciousness as "self-consciousness" [*la conscience "conscience d'elle-même"*], or the objects of consciousness. Consciousness is

...ersity, 24 November 1974, published as
...s nord-américaines", in *Scilicet* 6/7, p. 32.
...quidien n° 518. June, 2015.
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16. Miller, J.-A., "The Unconscious and the Speaking Body", in *Hurly-Burly*, Issue 12, 2015, pp. 119-132.
17. [TN: Cf. Henri Bergson's doctoral thesis: "Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience", PUF, Paris, 2013. The central phrase here can be translated either as the immediate *data* or the immediate *givens* of consciousness.]

of the hole that must then come the first sack is founded on Lacan, and which is, in fact, a new poetics, poses another question, which overturns and which is still linked to Aristotle, the cognitive faculties, the formulations of Aristotle shows that one thing is in which one finds. What Lacan wanted and the reworking of the developed by Kant.

The Analyst is I

What becomes of the unconscious from the

EL – It is quite clear that it rates it both in the *Tel* system of the unconscious part of it, it is an act of to the question: "what *des biens*]"²¹ The and this point so that the in other words so that his Seminar, *L'Éternel*. Catholic mysticism is situated beyond any

Lacan always had the

EL – Yes, but you can
to conceive of desire.

19. Lacan, J., "Of Religion."

20. Lacan, J., "Television": *Establishment*, Norton.

21. [TN: This expression is not in English – it is not only not in English, etc. Cf. “The Function

22. Lacan, J., *L'Identification*:

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Écrits, op. cit., p. 215.

of the hole that includes both the hole and a rim. First there is the sack and then comes the form, which inflates it. And what form hides is that the sack is founded on a hole. There, the whole construction proposed by Lacan, and which is designed to reorganise Kantian transcendental aesthetics, poses another status of the subject, another topology of the subject, which overturns intuition. It is also a clear abandonment of everything that is still linked to Aristotle in psychology: the soul is the form of the body, the cognitive faculties, etc. A lot of the things said in neuroscience are reformulations of Aristotle, reworked in set metaphors such as: "experience shows that one ultimately finds inscriptions of such systems in the body", in which one finds the old Aristotelian faculties that have been recoded. What Lacan wanted was to break with both Aristotelian representation, and the reworking of Aristotle linked to the new conception of the symbolic developed by Kant.

The Analyst is Part of the Speaking Body

What becomes of Lacan's position on the analyst being part of the concept of the unconscious from the perspective of the speaking body?

EL – It is quite clear that he maintains his position in this respect. He reiterates it both in *Television*²⁰ and in his work on Joyce. Being part of the system of the unconscious is not, if I can put it like this, to be passively part of it, it is an active practice of *trashitas* [*déchariter*], returning the subject to the question: "what is your desire, outside the system of goods [*système des biens*]"²¹ The analyst practices *trashitas* by situating himself just beyond this point so that the subject can make of his position the cause of his desire, in other words so that he can consider the question of his own desire. In his Seminar, *L'identification*,²² Lacan aligns Sufi Muslim mysticism with Catholic mysticism in order to pose the question of desire in so far as it is situated beyond any system of goods.

Lacan always had the idea that desire was beyond the system of goods.

EL – Yes, but you can take this quite far when you take mysticism as a way to conceive of desire. Having said that, Lacan did not recommend turning

19. Lacan, J., "Of Religions and the Real", this issue.

20. Lacan, J., "Television", transl. by Denis Hollier et al., in *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, Norton, London, 1990, p. 15.

21. [TN: This expression carries multiple senses of the word 'good' that are difficult to get across in English – it is not only a question of material goods, but also the morally good, the good for you, etc. Cf. "The Function of the Good" in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, transl. by D. Porter, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 218-230.]

22. Lacan, J., *L'identification*, unpublished seminar, 1961-1962.

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analysands into mystics. Desire as beyond the system of goods can be embodied outside of a relation with God. This is incarnated in Lacan's version of psychoanalysis as a discourse. Psychoanalysis as a way of life, or the question of psychoanalysis beyond therapeutics, or as a reorganisation of therapeutics while aiming at a beyond: psychoanalysis is situated in this double movement.

Its position must be sufficiently strange in the system of the distribution of goods. The therapist's position as such consists in a willingness to reduce oneself to an "I want your good". This is uttered in a system of clients and service providers: "We are at your service, we have a technique at our service, you define the objective, the good as you yourself conceive it, and we have a technique for everything: CBT, etc." Today's cognitivism is different from that of twenty years ago, it has been reshaped by democratic individualism, by this "we are at your service and can deliver your good" All this can be very worrying, and in England this has been made quite clear. A program of public health has been set up in which – for their own good – the unemployed, who are depressive, will be treated in a few sessions of psychotherapy so they can get on the road back to work. It's amazing; it's a form of *care*! Yet now people are taking to the streets, protesting at how unethical it is to seek to reduce unemployment to mental illness.

The paradox of the system of goods is that in wanting the good, one defines it and thus one finally hears the cry: "it is not ethical to want to be limited to this objective, which falls within global utilitarianism". The psychoanalyst, as one who practices *trashitas*, attempts to exit the system of goods such as it is defined at a given moment in a civilisation. It is not an absolute, it amounts to practising judo with established discourses. Trying to play this game in the 21st century is not the same as it was in 1950. It is played differently now. Those who believe they can still do it the way it was done in 1950 or 1970 are wrong. It is necessary to be resolutely contemporary, if not it cannot be done. We must continue to do judo with the system of goods such as it introduces its discourse into the world in which we find ourselves, and thus allow something like desire to arise, in so far as it escapes the grasp of established discourses.

This would be the transition from the axiom of The Ethics of Psychoanalysis "do not give up on your desire", in the manner of Antigone and possibly the Sufis, to the position of "being the dupe of the real".

EL – The psychoanalytic discourse consists in proposing this solution: the psychoanalyst is part of the system of the unconscious, which introduces a more liveable system. The position is not a transgression beyond a limit, to be Antigone or a mystic. The debate between Antigone and Creon is something

one should be familiar with. Analyses of the 21st century

If Antigone were a woman, she would be in a heroic position.

EL – It is Gérard Genette who says that Régault he extra-terrestrial martyr, and that the end of civilisation. It is after a long reflection that he recalled that Christ

Exactly, it even means

EL – Christianity has written some very good of discourse that of conflagration, and to that of being the the age of martyrdom

For there to be a martyr is no martyr. With

EL – Well, what was They are still a little attacks, between 198

There are also the m

EL – They are more Burmese immolation

But in all cases, there

EL – There is always the question posed

23. Lacan, J., *The Seminar*

24. Brown, P., *Le culte de*

the system of goods can be embodied in Lacan's version of analysis as a way of life, or the question as a reorganisation of therapy. Analysis is situated in this double

the system of the distribution consists in a willingness to reduce entered in a system of clients and we have a technique at our disposal as you yourself conceive it, and "Today's cognitivism is different, reshaped by democratic individualism and can deliver your good" All this has been made quite clear. In which – for their own good – be treated in a few sessions of psychoanalysis and back to work. It's amazing; it's a return to the streets, protesting at how close to mental illness.

that in wanting the good, one must accept "it is not ethical to want to be happy in global utilitarianism". The analyst attempts to exit the system of the subject in a civilisation. It is not in line with established discourses. The subject is not the same as it was in the past, who believe they can still do it on their own. It is necessary to be resolute. We must continue to do so. The analyst introduces its discourse into the system to allow something like desire to be articulated within established discourses.

of The Ethics of Psychoanalysis
Antigone and possibly the
real".

in proposing this solution: the unconscious, which introduces a transgression beyond a limit, to be Antigone and Creon is something

one should be familiar with, but things get played out differently in the analyses of the 21st century.

If Antigone were to choose the modern position of the survivor type instead of the heroic position, which is also a sacrificial position, what would come of that?

EL – It is Gérard Wajcman's question. From a conversation with François Régault he extracted a passage where Lacan says that Antigone was a martyr, and that the time of martyrs was a conflagration in the discourse of civilisation.²³ It is a conflagration, an epidemic. And in fact, this comes after a long reflexion on the epidemics of the martyrs of Islam, and it also recalled that Christianity has known this kind of epidemic too.

Exactly, it even invented it.

EL – Christianity has had its epidemics of martyrdom. Peter Brown has written some very interesting things on the way it occurred, about the type of discourse that fuelled this fascination for martyrdom.²⁴ It was really a conflagration, and the Church had to pass from the status of the persecuted to that of being the agent of the State over three centuries, to get away from the age of martyrdom and the desert hermits.

For there to be a martyr there must be a stage. If there is no Roman circus, there is no martyr. Without the Internet circus, there would be no martyrs either.

EL – Well, what was the stage for the Tamil Tigers? It was not the Internet. They are still a little ahead of Hezbollah, in 10 years they made 80 suicide attacks, between 1987 and 2009-10. Yet, the Tigers were Hindu and Catholic.

There are also the immolations in Tibet.

EL – They are more rare, but still present. There are also Buddhist and Burmese immolations.

But in all cases, there has to be someone who watches.

EL – There is always someone looking. How can this be undone? That is the question posed for us by Seminar XXIII.

Translated by Philip Dravers

23. Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., p. 267.

24. Brown, P., *Le culte des saints : son essor et sa fonction dans la chrétienté latine*, CNRS, Paris, 2012.