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Communiqué from Bernard Seynhaeve

President of the NLS

Towards Ghent 2020

Interpretation: From Truth to Event

This will be the title of the next Congress of the NLS that will take place in Ghent, Belgium on June 27th and 28th, 2020.

This title logically follows the themes of the previous Congresses that treated the unconscious and transference, as well as the theme of our Congress this year entitled, *Urgent!*

I spoke to Éric Laurent in order to reflect upon the follow-up to the next Congress with him. I asked if he would accept to write our next orientation text. He accepted. During the Congress in Tel Aviv, he succinctly pronounced the main lines of his argument.

This text is the compass that will guide us towards the Congress in Ghent. [1] You will read about what interpretation gradually becomes as we progress through Jacques Lacan's teaching. This compass is based on many references from Lacan and Jacques-Alain Miller; we must refer to them as we study this psychoanalytic concept and what it becomes at the end of Lacan's teaching.

Building on this compass myself, I would like to stop and comment on a citation from Lacan that Éric Laurent highlights:

In the Seminar on *The Object of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan repeats the first sentences from his first Seminar on the action of the Zen master: "Everyone knows, though one does not know what it means, that a Zen exercise has something to do with the subjective realization of a void [...] the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and which would be obtained, this singular moment, in an abruptness following a period of waiting, sometimes provoked by a word, a sentence, a jaculation, even a rude remark, a snub, a kick in the ass". [2]

What drives me to point out this citation that Éric Laurent highlights here is the debate we had in Tel Aviv on the use of virtual devices in the analytic cure.

This quote allows us to grasp how an analysis that is brought to its end necessitates the presence of bodies – that of the analysand, but also of the analyst.

The analyst brings his body into play. The analytic interpretation is in itself a **knott**

lalangue and the body of the analyst. This is what I'd like to develop as we go towards the next Congress.

This is supported by what Miller said about interpretation in a text published in *Hurly-Burly*, No. 5.

Miller specifies that, "Everything comes down to the event, to an event that must be **embodied**, which is a body-event – the definition that Lacan gave of the *sinthome*. Let's come out with it, the rest is window dressing. Window dressing that is necessary in most cases. But the kernel, [...] is this instant of embodiment." [3]

"Two phases can be distinguished," says Miller. "There is the phase of the exploration of the unconscious and its formations, the principle of which is that [...] everything that goes to make up the symptom – the slip of the tongue, the bungled action, and the rest – possesses a meaning that can be deciphered. How could one possibly avoid passing through this phase for those who have not cancelled their subscription to the unconscious? [...]"

The orientation towards the singular doesn't mean that the unconscious cannot be deciphered. It means that this exploration necessarily comes up against an end-stop, that interpretation comes to a stop on the outside-meaning of *jouissance*, and that, alongside the unconscious, where *id* speaks – where it speaks to each of us, because the unconscious is always commonplace meaning – there is the singular of the *sinthome*, where it doesn't speak to anyone. This is why Lacan qualified it as a body-event. It is not a thought-event, it's not a language-event [...] it is an event of the substantial body, the body that possesses a consistency of *jouissance*." [4]

I'd like to point out how Miller shows that the decisive place that Lacan gives to presence is precisely the body of the analyst:

"The point of view of the *sinthome* consists in thinking through the unconscious on the basis of *jouissance*. Well, that has consequences on practice, in particular on the practice of interpretation. Interpretation is not merely the deciphering of a knowledge. It is also to show, to shed light on the unconscious's *nature of defense*. Without doubt, where *id* speaks, *id* enjoys, but the orientation towards the *sinthome* lays the accent on: *id* enjoys where *id* doesn't speak, it enjoys where *id* makes no sense. Just as Lacan had invited the analyst to hold the place of the object *a*, in his Seminar on The *Sinthome* he formulates that the analyst is a *sinthome*. He is supported by non-meaning, so one avoids going into his motivations, he won't be made to explain himself. Rather **he will play at the body-event, at the semblance of trauma**. And he will have to sacrifice a great deal in order to deserve to be, or to be taken for, one of the odds and ends of the real." [5]

The analyst puts his own body into play. He makes use of his own body while relying on the *lalangue* of the analysand. It is his body that he puts in the balance. He works hard to embody the semblant of trauma, by incarnating the *sinthome* of the analysand. This is how he makes the defense of the subject vacillate.

In this respect, Miller says that the analyst "keeps tabs on the signifiers that have appeared, he makes correlations, he links them up, he ascertains repetitions. This work of a memorialist, of secretary to the patient, allows him to ascertain the zone his interpretation will be able to bear

on. Sometimes he harbors this knowledge for a long time, until the timely moment arises when he can speak up and surprise the analysand with his own productions [...] by re-representing them unexpectedly.” [6]

Éric Laurent concludes the orientation by citing Miller: “Jacques-Alain Miller has linked the question of interpretation in Lacan’s last teaching to that of the symptom in a decisive way: ‘This definition of the symptom as a body event makes the status of the interpretation that could respond to it much more problematic.’ [7] From this moment on, the symptom becomes linked to the impact of language on the body. ‘This will be picked up in a way that is perhaps too much on the side of the logician in the formula, “the signifier is the cause of jouissance,” but this is pertains to the notion of the fundamental body event which is the incidence of language [la langue].’ [8]” [9]

What I am emphasizing here is that the analyst interprets with his body.

Bernard Seynhaeve
18 June 2019

[1] Cf. Laurent, É., “Interpretation: From Truth to Event”, Argument of the 2020 NLS Congress in Ghent, delivered at the 2019 NLS Congress in Tel Aviv, available on-line: <https://www.nlscongress2019.com/speeches/interpretation-from-truth-to-event-argument-of-the-2020-nls-congress-in-ghent-by-eric-laurent>

[2] Lacan, J., The Seminar XIII, “L’objet de la psychanalyse,” lesson of 1 December 1965, unpublished.

[3] Miller, J.-A., “The Unconscious and the Sinthome”, tr. A. R. Price, Hurly-Burly, Issue 5, NLS, Paris, 2011, p. 45.

[4] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[5] Ibid., p. 49.

[6] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[7] Miller, J.-A., “Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body”, Lacanian Ink, Issue 18, 2001, pp. 6-29.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Laurent, É., “Interpretation: From Truth to Event”, Argument of the 2020 NLS Congress in Ghent, op. cit.

Julia’s notes on the references

[1] See [Interpretation : From Truth to Event : 2nd June 2019 \(Tel Aviv\) : Éric Laurent](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12613](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12613) for information and notes

[2] Footnote xxxviii in Laurent (2nd June 2019) : : See [Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis: 1965-1966 : from December 1st 1965: Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284) or [Science and Truth: 1st December 1965 session of Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739) : Seminar XIII : 15th December 1965 : pIII 18 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : But altogether essential to delimit this sort of trap-door of

exteriority that I am trying to define with regard to the function of the dust-bin in its relationships with writing.

This does not imply the exclusion of all hierarchy. Let us say that among the reviews that we are surrounded by, there are more or less distinguished dust-bins. But in looking carefully at things I have not seen any tangible advantages in the dust bins of the rue de Lille as compared to those of the surrounding area.

So then let us take up our hole again. Everyone known that a Zen exercise has something to do, even though people do not know very well what that means, with the subjective realisation of a void.

(15) And we are not forcing things in admitting that anyone, the average contemplative, will see this figure, will say to himself that there is something like a sort of high point which ought to have some relationship with the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and that this singular high point will be obtained in an abruptness, succeeding a wait which is sometimes realised by a word, a sentence, an ejaculation, even a rudeness, a cocking of the snoot, a kick in the backside. It is quite certain that these kind of pantalooneries or clowning have no sense except with respect to a long subjective preparation.

But again. At the point that we have got to, if the circle, however empty it may be, is to be considered by us as defining its holing value, if finding favour in it to depict what we have approached by all sorts of convergences, about what is involved in the o-object; that the o-object is linked qua fall (chute) to the emergence, to the structuring of the subject as division is what represents, I must say, the whole point of the questioning. What is involved in the subject in our field is this hole, this fall, this ptose, to employ here a Stoic term the quite insoluble difficulty of which for the commentator when it is confronted with the simple categoren seems to me is this with respect to a lecton, another mysterious term, let us translate it (produisons-le) with all sorts of reservations and in the crudest fashion (16) which is certainly inexact by meaning, incomplete meaning, in other words a fragment of thought.

[3] Efforts are being made to scan in this text.

6th session of L'Orientation Lacanienne III, 11, Choses de finesse en psychanalyse : 17th December 2008 : Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price, p44-45 of Hurly-Burly no 5 : The instant of embodiment

When the singular is involved, the “geometrical spirit”, as Pascal had it, falters. The matheme, in Lacan's sense, falters here. To grasp it, it is impossible to start off from definitions and principles, or even structures, to demonstrate the case through order, through that “order of reasons” Descartes spoke of, and which inspired his most eminent commentator, Martial Guérout. -7- When the singular is involved, you have to feel and “judge rightly and justly”. You don't proceed through a succession of reasons. To quote Pascal, “we must see the matter at one glance”.

-7- Guérout M., ‘Descartes' philosophy interpreted, according to the order of reasons’, translated by R. Ariew, University of Minnesota Press, 1984

If we adopt the feature that Pascal points out in the passage I gave you at the start of term -8-, the singular requires the *instant of seeing*. It makes the instant of seeing prevail. It models understanding on the instant of seeing. And it invites one to maintain oneself in the instant of seeing in the practice of psychoanalysis. This is what Bion was inviting by promoting permanent forgetting. And if we are to give a meaning to Lacan's late practice of the ultra-short session, the session of encounter, we shall say that it is a matter of keeping psychoanalysis at the level of the instant of seeing. This could go as far as contenting oneself with the phenomenon.

-8- In the opening session [12 November 2008 of L'Orientation Lacanienne III, 11, Choses de finesse en psychanalyse, Jacques-Alain miller quotes from Pascal's *Pensées*, I in the

Brunschvicg Edition, DXII in the Lafurna Edition. C. Pensées, transl. by W. F. Trotter, Dutton Press, New York, 1958

We have a sense of this – even if we run out of breath keeping up with Lacan on his path – in the practice with certain psychoses, which require a regular contact with their point of address, their therapist, but where the exchange can almost make do with a handshake and a “You okay?”, However, in this encounter, an essential function is accomplished by touching, hearing, perceiving, and sensing the other. The guarantee of the world *that you are* for this person, a guarantee that has no need of any chit-chat, simply needs a beating heart and the embodiment of presence.

From the point of view of the singular, the analytic session tends indeed to boil down to an instant. Well, this doesn't conform to the principle of *time is money* it can be charged with imposture by anyone who refuses the truth of it. The truth is that, for the *parlêtre*, the effect of the encounter is instantaneous. everything comes down to the event, to an event that must be embodied, which is a body event – the definition that Lacan gave of the *sinthome*. -9- Let's come out with it, the rest is window dressing. Window dressing that is necessary in most cases. But the kernel, the *Kern* in Freud's sense, the *Kern* of being, is this instant of embodiment.

-9- Lacan J. “Joyce le Symptôme (II)” in *Autres écrits*, op. cit., p569 : See [Joyce the Symptôm \(Sinthôme\) I & II : 16th June 1975 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11952> : p11 of www.Freud2Lacan.com , Translated by Dominick Hecq, ‘Let's leave the symptom at that which it is: an event of the body intertwined with: Heigho! One's got it, seems to have it, sings it, genges and laitymen. One has it. Ladida. Nice song. Joyce obviously enjoys the tune.

[4] 6th session of L'Orientation Lacanienne III, 11, Choses de finesse en psychanalyse : 17th December 2008 : Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price, p48-49 of *Hurly-Burly* no 5 : But Lacan's very late teaching distinguishes between the unconscious and the *sinthome* as two inhomogenous orders. Without doubt he sought out the articulation between them in the shape of the knot. This is what he explored in his twenty-third *seminar*, for which he had set out the programme just before. You can see it in [the first appendix to the *Book* of] this *Seminar*, on page 168, when he says “The unconscious knots itself on to the *sinthome*.” - 13- The question is one of knowing in what way these two orders are present in the practice of analysis.

Two phases can be distinguished in a preliminary stage.

There is the phase of the exploration of the unconscious and its formulations, the principle of which is that the symptom has a meaning, that everything that goes to make up the symptom – the slip of the tongue, the bungled action, and the rest – possess a meaning that can be deciphered. How could one possibly avoid passing through this phase for those who have not cancelled their subscription to the unconscious? Of course, one can make do without it for Joyce, who moreover never lay down on a couch. The question never came up. It couldn't come up. The orientation towards the singular doesn't mean that the unconscious cannot be deciphered. It means that this exploration necessarily comes up against an end-stop. that interpretation comes to a stop on the outside-meaning of *jouissance*, and that, alongside the unconscious, where *id speaks* – where it speaks to each of us, because the unconscious is always commonplace meaning – there is the singular of the *sinthome*, where it doesn't speak to anyone.

This is why Lacan qualified it as a body-event. It's not a thought-event, it's not a language-event. It's a body-event. We still need to find out which body. It's not an event of the specular body, it's not an event that takes place where the deluding form of the body that pulls you in the mirror stage is deployed. It is an event of the substantial body, the body that possesses a

consistency of jouissance. We are not at the level of the unconscious here in as much as Freud's discovery, such as Lacan formulates it, is that the unconscious is entirely reducible to a knowledge. The reduction of the unconscious to a knowledge, i.e. to an articulation of signifiers – which we are led to suppose based on interpretation, based on the interpretable character of what makes for a symptom – this quality of being a knowledge excludes the event.

-13- Lacan J., “Joyce le Symptôme [I]”, in *Le séminaire livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, Seuil, Paris, 2005, p168 : See [Joyce the Symptôm \(Sinthôme\) I & II : 16th June 1975 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11952](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11952) : p5 of Aaron Benanav's translation : But there is another way to name it, and that is where I will stop today, in order to show you what all this has to do with the Name-of-the- Father to which Joyce testifies, what we can call the sinthome. It is insofar as the unconscious knots itself into a sinthome, which is what there is singularly in each individual, that one can say that Joyce, as it is written somewhere, identifies with the individual.

[5] 6th session of L'Orientation Lacanienne III, 11, *Choses de finesse en psychanalyse* : 17th December 2008 : Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price, p49 of Hurly-Burly no 5 : Well, that has consequences on practice, in particular on the practice of interpretation. Interpretation is not merely the deciphering of a knowledge. It is also to show, to shed light on the unconscious's *nature of defence*.

Without doubt, where id speaks, id enjoys, but the orientation towards the symptom lays the accent on : id enjoys where id doesn't speak, id enjoys where id makes no sense. Just as Lacan had invited the analyst to hold the place of the object *a*, in his *Seminar on Le sinthome* he formulates that the analyst is a *sinthome*. -14- He is supported by non-meaning, so one avoids his motivations, he won't be made to explain himself. Rather he will play at the body-event, at the semblance of trauma. And he will have to sacrifice a great deal in order to deserve to be, or to be taken for, one of the odds and ends of the real.

-14- See [Seminar XXIII: The Sinthome or Joyce and the Sinthome: 1975-1976: beginning on November 18th 1975 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=971](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=971) Possibly Seminar XXIII : 13th January 1976 : (p58 of Adrian Price's translation) Cormac Gallagher's translation gives 'Yes. We must indeed make the knot somewhere. The knot between the Imaginary and unconscious knowledge, that we make here, somewhere, a splice (3). All that to obtain a meaning; which is the object of the analyst's response to the presentation by the analysand all along of his symptom.'

[6] 6th session of L'Orientation Lacanienne III, 11, *Choses de finesse en psychanalyse* : 17th December 2008 : Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price, p41-42 of Hurly-Burly no 5 : The analyst is not a memory, he doesn't carry out any benchmarking, he doesn't compare. He gathers up the emergence of the singular. At any rate, this is what the orientation towards the singular entails.

This isn't all there is to the practice of psychoanalysis. Seen from another the analyst is indeed a memory. He keeps tabs on the signifiers that have appeared, he makes correlations, he links them up, he ascertains repetitions. This work of a memorialist, of secretary to the patient, allows him to ascertain the zone his interpretation will be able to bear on. Sometimes he harbours this knowledge for a long time, until the timely moment arises when he can speak up and surprise the analysand with his own productions – I mean with the analysand's own productions – by re-representing them unexpectedly.

But all this work of memory, of spotting the repetitions, and of interpreting does not come under the same register as the register I'm designating as the orientation towards the singular.

[7] See [Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body : 12th & 19th May 1999 \(Paris VIII\) : Jacques-Alain Miller](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12423](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12423) : 'This definition of the symptom as a body event makes the status of the interpretation that could respond to it much more problematic.' [7] : This quote has not been found. p23 is the nearest. : 'At the end of it there is a clinic that revolves on a definition I believe has been neglected from the symptom. thus fundamental. that must be addressed. It is the one of the symptom as event of the body, which appears at least once in Lacan. If it has been neglected, it's for sure that it looks partial. The symptom as event of the body seems to neglect evidence. as in the case of the obsessional symptom excelling as symptom of the mind, even though the obsessional symptom of the mind is always accompanied by corporal symptom-. And then, the definition of the symptom as event of the body stands for an impasse on every other symptom that, in the different clinical structures, affect par excellence the mind. the uttered. language It is thus a logical definition of the symptom, of which we are not prone to escape much as we apprehend the symptom as *jouissance*, even when we apprehend it in the Freudian terms of *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*, as drive satisfaction. If the symptom is drive satisfaction, if it is *jouissance* as conditioned by life under the form of the body, that implies that the living body prevails in every symptom
This is the horizon of what I call Lacanian biology: the recapture of the symptomatology from the body events. However. this will demand some redefinitions, certain precisions that seemingly prevent the definition to be considered as operative.

[8] p23 as above : I can at once mention a second condition that adds to the condition of body so that something like the sufficient condition be attained. It is the signifier condition, if we settle for Lacan's formula that the signifier is cause of *jouissance* Thus the perspective – life as condition of *jouissance*, the condition of body, the condition of signifier – I will explore in this Lacanian biology.

[9] See [Interpretation : From Truth to Event : 2nd June 2019 \(Tel Aviv\) : Éric Laurent](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12613](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12613) for information and notes

Further

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