

Echoes

Guy Poblome

In the final dream of my analysis, *I see myself on a bed, lying on my back, trying to free myself from a corpse that was suffocating me. I know that it is me who killed him. A clear, blood-stained plastic sheet falls from between our two bodies, and so I also know that it will be known that it was I who killed the man.* I say to the analyst that this dream sends me back to what made the thread of my existence and of my analysis, in this in-between of life and death. Lacan's myth of the lamella comes to me, a representation of the object *a*, of "the part of a living being that is lost when that being is produced through the straits of sex,"¹ but which could make a return of anxiety "dripping down your face, noiselessly while you sleep, in order to seal it".² This corpse is this part of myself from which I separate myself, "a phantom [which] takes flight",³ Lacan says again. Then the formula of the fantasy comes to me: "A child is killed/you are [*Un un enfant est tué/tu es*]", which makes the first equivocation resound, the one that strikes the body. The analysis is over.

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1 Lacan, J., "Position of the Unconscious", 1960, *Écrits*, trans B. Fink, Norton, London/New York, 2006, p.719.

2 Ibid, p.734.

3 Ibid.

The theme of this congress made me return to this sentence, written in my first testimony, to question it: the formula of the fantasy contains an equivocation, which has to do with writing, and makes the first equivocation resonate, the one that impacts the body. The equivocation of the formula of the fantasy thus echoes a primordial equivocation, and the percussion of the signifier on the body, the body event, would be due to this primordial equivocation. Is it not, however, an S_1 all alone that strikes the body, bringing the real unconscious into play rather than the transference unconscious? What equivocal link does S_1 all alone have?

Last of a very large family, I had come into the world five years after the death of my elder brother at seventeen years old, which had plunged my mother into a depression that would not give way. Thus, the thread of my life was immediately attached to a dead man and to the mother who had to be saved from sadness. Mission impossible because the dead remained quite present, under the figure of a giant portrait, the undefeatable dead phallus of the mother, that I had instituted as an ideal.

When I asked her why she had had so many children, my mother replied: "It's true, I could have used a knitting needle to get rid of the infant above the toilet." In the analysis, the fantasy began to take shape: I was reduced to the rejected object of the Other, an *offspring* [*rejeton*], a *turd* [*éton*], the only possible destiny with regard to the icon that was enthroned over the fireplace. This fantasy, isolating the object *a*, thus came to testify to the fixation of drive *jouissance*, confirming what Lacan says: "The drives are the echo in the body of a fact of saying."⁴

The phallic interpretation of the murderous needle made the sexual link unbearable, which ended in a short-circuit. Through the fantasy of piercing a woman, I was killing the

⁴ Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XXIII, The Sinthome, 1975-1976*, trans. A. R. Price, Polity Press, London, 2018, p. 9.

child in her womb, which was none other than myself. This is what the final formula of the fantasy echoed: I am this child killed, dead. I slipped into the clothes of my brother's ghost, reinforcing the effects of mortification.

If this memory made it possible to clarify the symptom by tying the question of sex to that of death, its resolution came only late in the analysis, thanks to the meeting with the woman who was to become my companion. At the time of this meeting, the word "*aiguille*" (needle) came to mind. I heard the word "Guy" for the first time, and it began to resound: "*Hey-guylle*", "Hey Guy", "Hello Guy, welcome to the world of the living", a reversal effect transforming the mortal needle into a sting of desire.

During the Question of the School of the ECF on the theme of the *Fake*, I presented this symptom as an "advent of unconscious significations" in which "the body is involved as a signifying function". I situated it as a metaphor-symptom resolved by the way of deciphering, and I added, taking up J.-A. Miller's words, that this differentiates it "from the symptom as a body event",⁵ which Lacan writes as *sinthome*.

But do symptom and *sinthome* maintain a relation of exclusion, of the type that either we are dealing with one or the other? Isn't the iteration of the One of *jouissance* implied from the start in the truth-symptom? J.-A. Miller tells us that the analytic operation forces the opaque *jouissance* of the symptom into meaning that is always phallic.⁶ This implies on the one hand that the *jouissance* that is opaque to meaning is primary, and meaning always secondary, and on the other hand that the symptom, in its modality of fixation of *jouissance*, cannot be touched by meaning, something else is needed.

⁵ Miller J.-A., "*L'orientation lacanienne. Tout le monde est fou*", lecture at the Department of Psychoanalysis of the University of Paris 8, lesson of 14 May 2008, unpublished.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Analysis, says Lacan, “consists in playing on the equivocal that might free up something of the sinthome. Indeed, interpretation operates solely through equivokes.”⁷ Here we find the question of equivocation that characterizes the formula I gave to the fantasy. I would say that it is the equivocation of the “Hey-Guy” that has allowed the resolution of the symptom, not by revealing meaning or truth, but on the contrary by undoing meaning, by debunking the fixation of *jouissance* and the iteration that accompanies it. In this equivocation, it is not a question of signifier, but it is a question of “something in the signifier that resonates”,⁸ which is of the order of the letter.

This equivocation of “Hey-Guy” is the second echo of the phrase in the fantasy “A child is killed/you are [*Un enfant est tué/tu es*]”. The first refers to the mortification of the fixation to the alter ego, as proposed by Éric Laurent, “fixation to the alter ego that finds itself the depositary of the lost part of *jouissance* that belongs to it.”⁹ This is a subtraction of *jouissance*. The second echo refers, on the contrary, to the percussion of S_1 alone on the body, which iterates as a letter of *jouissance*. It refers to it insofar as the equivocation allows the passage from the necessary of what does not cease to be written in the symptom to a “possible, [...] which stops, comma” Lacan specifies, “being written.”¹⁰

I end on this surprising point. Lacan says that the flaw - which refers to the *jouissance* that it is not - of the necessary, of the symptom, is equivalent to the phallus. This fault is “always growing, unless it should undergo the stop of castration as possible”¹¹. We find again the reference to the phallus and to castration. But then, what about meaning? Well, “what Lacan calls castration here,” says J.- A. Miller,

7 Lacan, J., Book XXIII, The Sinthome, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Laurent, É., “*Le temps de se faire à l'être*”, *La Cause freudienne* No 26, 1994, p. 42.

10 Lacan, J., Book XXIII, The Sinthome, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

11 *Ibid.*

“would be what makes the sinthome cease, [...] what makes the confusion of meaning cease.”¹² It is therefore a question of a new value of castration.

Translated by Alasdair Duncan

12 Miller J.-A., “*L'orientation Lacanienne, L'Un tout seul*”, teaching delivered at the Department of Psychoanalysis of the University of Paris 8, lesson of May 25, 2011, unpublished.

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