



BULLETIN OF THE NLS

Nouvelle Ecole Lacanienne de Psychanalyse
New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis

**THE BODY AND ITS OBJECTS
LACANIAN INTERPRETATION**

BULLETIN OF THE NLS

The Bulletin of the NLS is an internal organ of the NLS and its Societies and Groups.

Director of publication: Pierre-Gilles Guéguen

Editor-in-chief: Anne Lysy-Stevens

Editorial board: Pierre-Gilles Guéguen, Roger Litten, Joost Demuyneck, Sophie Marret

Translators for this issue: Vincent Dachy, Lynn Gaillard, Adrian Price, Elly Ragland, Julia Richards, Thelma Sowley, Thomas Svolos, Bogdan Wolf, Victoria Woollard, Natalie Wulfing

Graphics, layout, format: Labelpages (Tournai, Belgium)

Impression: Imprimerie Dumortier (Tournai, Belgium)

Editor: Anne Lysy-Stevens, Square Vergote 51, 1030 Brussels

Manuscripts can be addressed by email to Anne Lysy-Stevens: alysy@newreal.be

ISSN 1784-7621

Table of Contents

Editorial

Pierre-Gilles Guéguen: Lacanian Interpretation 5

Orientation

Eric Laurent: Metamorphosis and Extraction of the Object *a* in the Pragmatics of the Cure 7

The Congress of Ghent (2008):

“The Body and its Objects in the Psychoanalytic Clinic”

Gil Caroz: Body and Objects on Stage 17

Vlassis Skolidis: Bringing the Anal Object into Play 21

Luc Vander Vennet: What Makes a Body Rush 25

Geert Hoornaert: Little Hans and the Construction of the *out-of-Body* Object 28

Christiane Ruffieux-Lambelet: Red Rabbit, White Rabbit: Two Sides of the Object 32

Anne Béraud: Object *a*, Jouissance and Desire 35

Anna Pigou: From the Mouth to be Nourished to the Mouth for Speaking 38

Natalie Wulfing: An “Attachment Disorder” 42

Nathalie Lacey: Leaving the Anonymity of Eternal Agitation 46

Erik Mertens: Body, Identity, Sound and Repetition 51

Sandra Cisternas: What Language Do They Speak? 54

Anne Lysy-Stevens: The Body and its Objects in the Psychoanalytic Clinic. Looking back on the VIth Congress 58

Towards the VIIth Congress (Paris, May 2009): Lacanian Interpretation

Text Presenting the Theme of the VIIth Congress:

Pierre-Gilles Guéguen: Lacanian Interpretation 65

Reference Texts for the Preparation of the Congress:

Jacques-Alain Miller: Interpretation in Reverse 69

Éric Laurent: Interpretation and Truth 76

Éric Laurent: Interpreting Psychosis from Day to Day 83

Announcements and Diary 99

Éric Laurent

Interpretation and Truth¹

It is in a well-defined context, that of the fifties, that Lacan intervened in the analytic movement apropos interpretation. The establishment of technical rules tormented analysts of that period and, in that perspective, they tried to make a distinction between the analyst's interventions – commentary on what the patient said – and true interpretation. They were thus looking for something that would permit defining interpretation as belonging to the register of a metalanguage: they had what the patient said and they had to find a language capable of treating what he said, in order to produce the metalanguage. To this torment, Lacan responded that interpretation is not a metalanguage, and he did so in a peremptory and definitive manner. He even pointed out that for psychoanalysis, this perspective was profoundly sterile.

Lacan's contribution concerning interpretation is the essential part of the text "The Direction of the Cure". He puts forward the idea that interpretation starts from the words of the analysand in order to come back to them, which is exactly the definition of the impossibility of a metalanguage. It is not possible for the patient to escape from his words, which is why interpretation is situated on the same plane.

Metalanguage and truth

Since interpretation is not a metalanguage, this leads us to examine the shift in the relations between interpretation and truth. It seems that in Lacan's first texts there was something like a metalanguage. In the first "Hegelian" phase – as J.-A. Miller named it – given the opposition between full speech and empty speech, full speech seemed to function as a "metaphrase" of empty speech. Consequently, the end of an analysis, in accord with the theme of reconciliation that constituted the horizon of an era, seemed to indicate a possible harmony with a truth made of completeness. The chapters not written of the subject's history

¹ Lecture given in July 1994 at the *Seminario Hispano-Hablante* following the VIIIth International Encounter of the Freudian Field. Transcribed by José Manuel Alvarez, translated by Marie-José Asnoun, Pierre-Gilles Guéguen, Claude Quénardel. Published in *La Lettre Mensuelle*, 137, 1995.

were completed; he could thus include his history within universal reason. Interpreted in the analytic cure, it seemed sufficiently rational for the subject to realize that all his misfortunes could be resolved by reason asserted as universal.

However, the perspective of 1953 would be transformed in the text "The Instance of the Letter". Jacques-Alain Miller said it very well in a lesson from his 1988 course, which was published with the title "From Hegel to Jakobson". He shows that in "The Instance of the Letter", there is a cut between the first conception of a reconciliatory interpretation – the analyst as mediator of the Logos – and a conception of the subject defined not by speech, but by writing: between metonymy and metaphor, a subject is constituted who is strictly determined by his relation to writing.

It is, indeed, a complete change of perspective. Where previously the subject, thanks to his full speech was able to reconcile himself with an era, there suddenly appears a subject separated from that perspective, and who is reduced, at the end of the line, to a void, a fundamental cut. This appears explicitly in "The proposition of October 9, 1967", where J. Lacan, to evoke the modes of interpretation to which a psychoanalyst can have recourse, alludes to the technique of interpretation of the Midrach. A perspective is thus opened which is in radical opposition to that of 1953, since the Midrach is an interpretative technique strictly founded on the exercise of writing and not on that of speech.

In a certain sense, one can think that, for Lacan, writing takes on at that point the function of metalanguage; it is a question therefore of a new status of interpretation correlative to an extinction of the spoken word. Interpretation, as a technique of writing, results, in practice, in a new reading, which is related to operations that are compatible with silence. This leads us to investigate the perspective of a certain "decline of interpretation" in as much as it is linked to the spoken word. We must consequently ask ourselves if the path opened by Lacan at that point would be fruitful, or produce a distortion of perspective.

How, taking into account this new consideration, can the subject be reevaluated in his relation to truth? Previously the whole truth could not be told because the relation to speech depended totally on the dialectic between emptiness and fullness, while from this moment on, the whole truth cannot be told because it is told by steps, step-by-step until infinity.

Interpretation and logic:

The subject from nowhere

This is a concept of truth approaching that of intuitionistic logic, introduced in 1930 by Arnold Heyting. Here one refuses the infinite horizon

of an interpretation valid for its entire scope, in order to refocus it on truth that is only revealed step-by-step.

This perspective concerns the psychoanalyst in his practice. Dreams, for example, are interpreted step-by-step. And if, for Freud, the interpretation of dreams is precisely the crux of the matter introducing the recognition that there is no dictionary, it is because the patient himself obtains a dictionary of the dream by his free associations. Freud indicated, moreover, that one must treat the patient's commentaries and judgments about his dream in the same manner as the dream itself. This means taking a position that the commentary is not a metalanguage on the dream, but that commentaries and judgments are on the same level. Consequently, these manifestations of truth can be taken into account without leading to a final totalization.

A book by an American philosopher was recently published whose title is "The View from Nowhere". The author tells us that, if the subject is a cut, there is no subjective point of view possible except step-by-step and that one arrives in the end at a view "from nowhere". There is no universal point of view, and yet there is no private language either. This dialectic is crucial to the development of modern logic. It affirms that there is no universal point of view permitting the definition of a well-founded category of "All".

In a more radical manner, it is a question of knowing how to establish, starting from this non-existence of a subject ONE (in other words, starting from a subject fundamentally defined as coming from "nowhere"), a possible reference in language. This is the starting point of studies establishing a reference from signs and not from the signifier. A sign points to another sign; this is an "intentional" definition of signification. What do signs mean? How many objects of the world can be defined as the signification of a sign? This type of question is more a reference to the extentional point of view.

The most radical manner to define why the whole truth cannot be told consists in saying that there is no way to get out of language, a sign always points to another sign. It is a question of knowing whether or not it is possible to extract oneself from the order of language in order to name something in the real.

Frege, Davidson, Lacan

This is the wager of the linguistic turning point brought about by Frege at the beginning of the last century. He asserted that a language is defined as a system of symbols from which one cannot escape. The only other possibility offered to us is to point to something. That is why Wittgenstein was so insistent on the fact that true interpretation lies outside the reach of language.

In Wittgenstein's philosophy, true interpreters often find themselves much closer to art and to religion than to science, which, if it can reduce language to a certain number of tautologies, nevertheless does not manage to refer to what is really important. At the end of his life's work, Wittgenstein said that the sense of a phrase was equivalent to its use – not use in the intentional sense, but rather by considering what is obtained by its use. He adds (and this is what is crucial) that to know what an expression designates, one must share a life style. This last point is important to note for a psychoanalyst, because it can indicate that the sense of any expression is determined by the fantasy; the fantasy is, in fact, reduced to exactly that – a lifestyle.

This type of interpretation depreciates considerably the truth taken in its intentional sense. If we reject the universal extension of the concept, if we designate the subject as a cut, as a point from "nowhere", then truths appear, reduced, however, to "lifestyles". This allows us to console ourselves for the fact that, if neither a universal point of view nor private language exists, nevertheless something remains that can be shared by subjects.

The principle of charity and the construction of the fantasy

In an entertaining manner, D. Davidson, for example, when he speaks of interpretation, leans in favor of the dimension of sense; this is the reason for which Jacques-Alain Miller in his presentation of an interview realized for "l'Ane" points out that Davidson was the one who reintroduced inter-subjectivity into Anglo-Saxon philosophy. Davidson thinks, in effect, that what the other says has a meaning and that this meaning can be reached even beyond the designation by language of a point of reference. It is not by a cognitive process that we can succeed in capturing meaning, but through a search carried out together by the protagonists of the analytic situation, for a meaning that can be considered as resulting from a shared elaboration. It is precisely for this reason that cognitive science has no interest for the philosopher from Harvard. Unlike Quine, Davidson thinks that we can learn nothing from cognitive science concerning operations of designation and reference... This is interesting because it goes against all the new perspectives – fundamentally so naive – which consider that the psychoanalyst has something to learn from cognitive science.

According to Davidson's own terms, operations of designation and reference aim less at manifestations of truth than that of a "principle of charity". This terminology, probably typically North-American, refers to the protestant ethic. Nonetheless, it remains that when Quine and Davidson attribute the principle of charity to the other,

they are, in reality, referring precisely to what we call the principle of rationality.

The principle of charity is really nothing other than a new form of the principle of rationality. Charity consists, on the one hand, in attributing to the other a rational means of research, but on the other hand of verifying the system of beliefs, attitudes and propositions of the interlocutor. It is therefore a question of accepting the interpretation, while assuming that it refers to a meaning beyond truth, which can be conceived as universal. This is to say that Davidson recognizes not a hermeneutic truth, but a truth that cannot be entirely said. We are, in fact, dealing with a system of hypotheses on the rationality in question, that of the grammar of beliefs and propositional attitudes of the subject. This somewhat renews the perspective of what we call the construction of the fantasy: what we construct in a cure is nothing other than a system of interpretation of beliefs and propositional attitudes as to the *jouissance* of the subject.

Meaning and enciphering

Let's take it further. If, in his texts from 1958, Lacan refused to make of interpretation a metalanguage, and if he renewed this proposition until and including in the texts of 1967 where he defined interpretation as what is articulated between writing and reading, the "Introduction to the German Edition of the *Écrits*" renews the subject in a decisive way. Lacan begins, effectively, by presenting the articulation between the sense and the sign, which is why I gave the contemporary references of Davidson, Wittgenstein and Quine: these references are implicated in this text in which he starts opposing the meaning of meaning, and the sign of the sign.

Lacan presents here what he has observed in his practice: that the sense is always getting lost, that something gets lost. This is what appears, for example, in "Radiophonie", a text in which sense is defined not as that which runs or slips away, which is a definition of metonymy, but as something which gets lost. This presentation is already an effect of the construction of his theory of the object *a*: it is no longer on the side of metonymy, but on the side of separation.

At this epoch, Lacan articulates intervention via sense with the extentional aspect of interpretation. He notes that the point of view of sense culminates in the enigma, whereas the extentional point of view culminates in the fact that there is no object, that there is a gap. The sense is, in fact, sexual, but sexual sense opens, over and beyond sexual circuits, including those of the drive, onto a horizon where there is no point of extension possible between man and woman: the sexual relation does not exist. This is a zone where sense is articulated to enciphering as a new perspective on interpretation, at the same time as it separates from it.

Lacan takes into account the fact that interpretation by sense leads us to a double impasse: first, it confronts us with a sense that can never be grasped, which can only be included in an infinite perspective; then, and at the same time, it requires that we come up with a conception of interpretation that leads to a finite perspective of analysis.

I find this idea again in Freud's text "Construction in psychoanalysis". In this text he gave to interpretation the scope of an exhaustive reconstruction of the memories and of the fate of a subject, for example, the case of the "Wolf Man", in which he reconstructs very precisely the first six months of the patient's life. He defines it, however, not in terms of the equivalence between the construction and a *completude*, but as the means of obtaining the consent of the patient. Thus, although incompletely resolved, the problem can be reduced to that posed by the consent: choose the consistency obtained by the consent of the patient, rather than the *completude* of the chain of memories.

Lacan adopts this perspective in his "Introduction to the German Edition of the *Écrits*" – one of the classic texts of this stage of his work. He asks how it might be possible to unite the universal and truth, and the means by which the peculiar sense of the fantasy – which is revealed for each one, one by one, in an analysis – can be modified in the course of a cure.

This text of Lacan's refers us to a concept of interpretation that is situated in the tradition of the most current works in the field of logic, which we should read with care and attention. For example, the book by Hourya Sinaceur, "Corps et modèles" ("Bodies and models"), which talks of real bodies. This author draws conclusions from the works of Alfred Tarski. She shows that the most vigorous field of logic at the moment can be deduced from the works of Tarski on truth. They assert that a formal system can be interpreted as a concrete realization of a language (the concrete realization of a formal system – for example, a logical theory – is a mathematical theory as such).

This perspective defines logic not as a language, but as a calculation; and interpretation not as having for reference a universal truth, but rather as the coded realizations of the formal system. Thus, we are freed from the universal reference, replacing it with the universal of discourse as a theory of calculation. This way of seeing things has the advantage of allowing us to think of truth and interpretation uniquely in semantic terms, and also of introducing us to the semantics of the universes of possible discourses.

Lacan's text "Introduction to the German Edition..." is inscribed precisely in this line of thought.

Lacan's step

The deconstruction of the universal with the theory of enciphering is the step that Lacan takes in this text. He makes use of Freudian interpretation to pursue his fight against the empire of the universal, as he had done since the beginning of his work: interpretation is defined first as a non-metalanguage, then as that which points to a truth as non-all, and then, further again, as that which refers to the universes of encipherable discourse (which also has as a consequence that they are interchangeable).

In this way we see as we go through this text, the deconstruction of the empire of the universal. That is precisely the reason that it ends with a questioning concerning the types of symptoms. I propose to make a connection between the types of symptoms and the function of type in Bertrand Russell's logic. It was for him a way of negotiating or deconstructing the problems linked to the impossibility of the validity of a universal proposition.

To conclude

These different stages define our relation to the universal, at this moment, which is contemporary with the disconnection of the universal from the philosophy of science. Interpretation corresponds to a type of process that allows us to fight efficaciously against the impasses of a conception that is presented as valid for everyone. In this sense, the perspective maintained by Lacan throughout these very precise stages, always indicates the analyst interpreter as the one who can pursue this Heraclitean task in the scientific era, to sustain the power of interpretation. Through interpretation, the analytic act is apt to operate in such a way as to modify the universe of discourse over and beyond sense. In this way, it might even have an impact on the sexual relation. This is the perspective developed by Jacques-Alain Miller in his course – I highly recommend it. It is the horizon of our preoccupation with interpretation.

Translated from the French by Lynn Gaillard

Éric Laurent

Interpreting Psychosis from Day to Day

In the Lacanian orientation, interpretation is situated in the tension between two poles of its practice. On the one hand, interpretation is the freest activity of the psychoanalyst. "As an interpreter of what is presented to me in words or deeds, I choose my own oracle and articulate it as I please, sole master of my ship after God; and while, of course, I am far from able to weigh the whole effect of my words, I am well aware of the fact and strive to attend to it. In other words, I am always free in the timing and frequency, as well as in the choice of my interventions, so much so that it seems that the rule has been entirely designed so as not to interfere in any way with my activity as an executor..."¹. On the other hand, interpretation is directed by strict rules. "I will spare myself the task of giving the rules of interpretation. It is not that they cannot be formulated, but their formulations presuppose developments that I cannot presume to be known..."². These two aspects of the relation of interpretation and norms can be knotted together in a proposition whose formulation would be that interpretation is without standards, but not without principles. The principle is stated thus: there is no metalanguage. This principle is especially of value for psychosis on a daily basis.

There is not one level that would be the object language – the material – and the level of interpretation that would be a distinct level to be applied to the segment of "material". We can conceive of all kinds of forms of this application. It could be a long segment of "material" and a short interpretation, or else an interpretation as extensive as the "material". Whichever, in a conception of this type, the two levels are neatly distinguished. This conception of interpretation applied to an object language is the most widespread in the psychoanalytic orientations.

1 J. Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power" in *Écrits*, transl. B. Fink, 2006, p. 491.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 497.