

# The Seminar of Barcelona

Jacques-Alain Miller

## Part Two<sup>1</sup>

V. *Palomera*: Let's begin the second part of the seminar. Let's proceed in the following way: Roser Casalprim will address two precise points in the text of Lecture XXIII, one of which has already been referred to in the first part of the seminar yesterday. The floor will be then given to Joan Salinas, whom I have asked to comment upon the articulation between Lacan's Seminar of 1977 and Lecture XXIII, and then Jacques-Alain Miller will continue with the seminar.

R. *Casalprim*: Bearing in mind the contextualisation made yesterday of *The Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, I would like to draw your attention to a couple of questions about a point which I located in Lecture XXIII concerning Freud's oscillation between the values of traumatic and psychical phantasmatic reality.

Firstly, since the abandonment of the seduction theory for that of fantasy, fantasies, as Freud postulated, came more and more to the forefront of psychoanalytic exploration, as the psychical representative of the drive and source or matrix of the symptom. Strachey stresses the two main works in which Freud had previously approached the fantasy: *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* and *Hysterical Fantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality*, both from 1908. Until then it seems that the fantasy was considered as an intermediate link between the somatic tension of the drive and the discharge of an adequate action, but also as a memory of a past experience of satisfaction, or a kind of substitute satisfaction of the drive when a more adequate discharge was denied. In Lecture XXIII, Freud postulates the role of day-dreaming as the source of fantasy production, although he will soon approach it in another way in a footnote added in 1920 to the *Three Essays*. He also postulates in this lecture "[t]he libido's retreat to fantasy is an intermediate stage on the path to the formation of symptoms" (SE XVI: 373). This is a literal citation from the text, and the interesting thing is – something I ask myself from the reading I have made – whether the fantasy is now conceived as one of the aspects of psychical activity in its mediation between the drive and reality. As was stressed yesterday, Freud

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himself postulated in several letters to Lou-Andreas Salomé that the *introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* do not introduce any novelty to analysts in terms of content. According to Strachey, Freud himself states in the preface, with reference to Lecture XXIII, that his elucidation of primal fantasies is new material. In his case history of the Wolf Man he will refer to Lecture XXII, “proceeding with this theme,” Freud says, “by way of supplement and rectification” what he has said in Lecture XXIII.

Returning to this lecture, in talking of infantile experiences, Freud will emphasise the question of infantile neurosis and, after a digression, he will come to affirm the following: The fantasies possess *psychical* reality as contrasted with *material* reality, and we gradually learn to understand that *in the world of the neuroses it is psychical reality which is the decisive kind*” (SE XVI: 368). Even though Freud is clear in his postulation, it seems interesting to emphasise it, because of the contemporary nature of the case history of the Wolf Man, and because it is postulated in Lecture XXIII, where Freud himself still seems to be oscillating on this point. At a certain moment in the case, he talks about his doubts in relation to the value given to primal fantasies. That is to say, he seems to oscillate between assigning a value to traumatic reality or assigning a value to phantasmatic reality. It seems that in the case of the Wolf Man, Freud returns – it is a way of putting it – to something he had already abandoned from the analysis of the hysterical subject, in which the traumatic theory is given up in favour of fantasy and the proof of material reality is left aside in favour of the efficacy of psychical reality. It seems to me that in Lecture XXIII, Freud positions himself in this way.

*V. Palomera*: Do you want to add something, Jacques-Alain Miller?

*J.-A. Miller*: This presentation allows me to go more quickly on certain points. Thank you. It seems to me that it was appropriate to point out the reference in the case of the Wolf Man to Lecture XXIII, and especially to the footnote added by Freud in connection with this lecture. Freud oscillates between the traumatic value and the phantasmatic value. At the same time in this oscillation one consistent point finally remains, which is that the traumatic

and the phantasmatic can be considered as two modalities of the same thing; something cannot be discarded, something has been effective in the past. Between the traumatic and the phantasmatic there is supposedly an opposition, but there is also something in common. Freud does not doubt that there was something in the past at the time of infantile experience. Whether this x is traumatic or phantasmatic is something to be discussed. The notes of the Wolf Man case conclude with a *non liquet*, it is not decided, it is not clear. But there is a *liquet*, in as much as something real took place in the real, understood, at least, in the psychical sense.

Now we will listen to Joan Salinas's presentation about the *varité* of the symptom. I do not know if there is a Spanish word to translate this neologism of Lacan's.

### **'Varietat' (Varité) of the symptom**

*J. Salinas:* It has to be a composite word; I have looked for a neologism and it is difficult to find one in Spanish.

*J.-A. Miller:* Spanish is less tolerant than French. It will be a question for discussion, the difference between a language intolerant of neologism in relation to another which tolerates it.

*V. Palomera:* In any case the Catalan language is not intolerant of this neologism of Lacan's, given that it allows a homophony to be struck which is not there in Spanish, between *varietat* (variety) and *veritat* (truth), in a way that we have the Catalan neologism '*varitat*'.

*J.-A. Miller:* It seems to me excellent to introduce a Catalan neologism to Lacan.

*J. Salinas:* It is on account of the symptom that Lacan, in one of the last sessions of the 1977 Seminar *L'insu que sait de l'inconscient s'aile a moure*, creates a neologism: that of *varité* – *la varité du symptôme*. He makes it precisely after asking himself, quoting Freud, "in what is this (the symptom) founded – that which does not function without profiteering and in relation to which truth is supposed?" (*Ornicar?* 17/18, p. 13).

It is precisely to refer here to this so-called supposed dimension of truth, that Lacan, with the neologism *varité*, condenses several significations.

From *varité*, the symptom remains in a certain relation to variety (*varieté*), to variability (*variable*) and to verification (*verifiable*).

What is at stake is to enquire into this status of the Freudian symptom. Lacan refers himself in these sessions – and it is the context I which *varité* appears – to the theme of sense (*sens*), to the question of its relation to deceit and truth, and of the latter in the course of an analysis: with the speech of the analysand and with its produced effects. In this way we can read, I quote: “In analysis one can surely say that the truth lies – (*le vrai ment*). Analysis is a long *camina-miento, chemine ment* (pathway of lies)” (ibid. p.17).

I was going to outline a few remarks in relation to these sessions of the Seminar, applying ‘Lacan to Lacan’, when the reference by Jacques-Alain Miller in this seminar to Freud’s Lecture XXIII, “The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms”, led me to reread this text. I believe I can say that it is a good Freudian reference for locating this *varité* of the symptom that Lacan talks about.

This neologism seems to me to fit well. There is a large part of this lecture in which Freud does not stop turning around the question of the true and the false of the symptom, of the true and the false that the analysand enunciates [*cuenta*]. I would say that if there is an implicit definition, in this lecture of Freud’s, of what an analysis is, then it is in what differentiates between the true and the false. Also, in relation to the symptom itself, we find that Freud refers not only to the dimension of truth or falsehood, but also to its status of variability and thus of verifiability. Freud insists several times upon the status of the supposed truth of what is said to the analyst.

In this way we can read in Freud: “Thus the symptom emerges as a *many-times-distorted* derivative of the unconscious libidinal wish-fulfilment, *an ingeniously chosen piece of ambiguity with two meanings in complete mutual contradiction*” (SE XVI, p. 360, emphasis added). The sexual sense of symptoms, which Freud makes an effort in this lecture to demonstrate, can be located as the navel of every symptom, “the initial material” from which the symptom is nourished. It is what Freud calls the “sexual as traumatic”. In this Seminar, Lacan calls this “the sexual relation which does not exist”

(*Ornicar?* 17/18, p. 8) and qualifies it as a truth. This would be a *verité* (truth) from which a *varité, variable*, will be constructed: that of the symptoms in the radicalness of sexual meaning.

Lacan's further development follows the route of situating a single pathway made from two different tracks, "the refraction of these truths in sense" (*sens*) (ibid. p. 6): in the first place to connote truth as this "imaginary symbolic", and in the second place to include in this category of truth "what has a double sense", as Lacan calls it here, from ambiguity. It is in this respect that he refers to poetry in this Seminar.

A first refraction of these 'truths' is to give the symptom its status of real. I quote: "The symptom is real. It is actually the only truly real thing, that is to say, what preserves a sense in the real" (ibid., p. 9). And he adds: "it is for this reason that the psychoanalyst can, if he is lucky, intervene symbolically to dissolve (the symbolically real, that is, as something that from the real acquires a connotation in the interior of the symbolic", he gives anguish as an example. He clearly differentiates the "symbolically real as truth" from its opposite, of the "really symbolic, that is, of the symbolic included in the real", which would be what he calls the 'lie'.

I believe that in the following quote from Freud we find this dimension of the symptom as real, but with a particular relation to truth, as the cause, which is why, Freud tells us, "it is difficult to find one's way about in this". I quote: "Sometimes, then, symptoms *represent events* which really took place and to which we may attribute an influence on the fixation of the libido, and sometimes they *represent fantasies* of the patient's which are not, of course, suited to laying an aetiological role. *It is difficult to find one's way about in this*". (SE XVI, p. 367, emphasis added).

And a little bit more. If we can also read in Freud that "the childhood experiences constructed or remembered in analysis are sometimes indisputably false and sometime certainly correct, and in the most cases compounded of truth and falsehood" (SE XVI, p. 367), then the correlation in Lacan is patent. He says "What the analysand believes he says to the analyst has nothing to do - Freud realised this - with truth.... The analysand

says what he believes to be true. What the analyst knows is that he speaks on the side of truth, because he is unaware of the truth” (*Ornicar?* p. 12). And he adds, “[truth] which he had described as what does not cease to be written, that is the symptom, is an obstacle. What the analysand says, and attempts to verify, is not the truth but the *varité* of the symptom” (*ibid.* p.14).

Lacan locates here another concept” the one that in the dimension of the *varité* of the symptom the analysand attempts “to prove himself” [*se verifier*]. The analysand attempts to be borne out. In placing the symptom as an obstacle to truth, and consequently locating truth as variable in this context, Lacan puts the emphasis on the analysand’s speech, that is, on what he says to the analyst. All the time, Lacan locates this *varité* of the symptom, not only in its relation to the analytic symptom, but also in what is said to the analyst as Other.

I make this remark because it seems to me important as it reveals a certain double aspect of the symptom: as truth and as lie. When Lacan points out that the symptom is an obstacle to truth, he refers at all times to the analysand. That is, to what the analysand says about his symptoms in his analysis” this will be the reference to the *parlêtre* of the symptom, to the one to whom he speaks.

This dimension had been commented on by J-A Miller (“Reflexions sur l’enveloppe formelle du symptome” in *Actes de l’Ecole de la Cause Freudienne IX*) in pointing out that the symptom, in being vehicle by the speech of the analysand, directed to the analyst, that is, formed in the field of the Other, is a fiction. But at the same time it has its other dimension, more radical, a dimension of truth. I quote: “the *parlêtre* of the symptom is contained in the dimension of truth”. It is what Lacan also stresses when he indicates that the symptom could be considered in terms of truth, as insofar as there is truth, there is the symptom; “it is what is **sustained by** the signifying chain” (*ibid*).

We also find this double aspect in Freud’s text as he also refers in this lecture to the “constructed or remembered in analysis”. That is, to someone in the position of analysand. It is in this sense that I locate Freud’s affirmation that what is produced is a “compound of truth and falsehood” (SE XVI, 367). It seems to me that it is also in this context that Lacan’s

affirmation of analysis as a *chemine ment* should be placed, where “truth lies”, as well as the reference to what “the analysand says waiting to be verified” (*Ornicar?* 17/18, p.14), to verify oneself through a discourse directed to the Other which does not exist.

That the symptom has a sense from which one can obtain *jouissance*, is also something present in Freud’s text, even though this *jouissance* is called “satisfaction”: “[T]he subject... feels the alleged satisfaction as suffering and complains of it” (SE XVI: 365-6). Freud evokes here “the psychical conflict under pressure of which the symptom had to be formed” as a ode of enjoyment. It seems to me that this can be added to one of the definitions of the symptom in Lacan: “the symptom as the way in which each one enjoys his unconscious, in so far as the unconscious determines it” (*R.S.I. Ornicar?* 4, p.106).

Freud’s lecture concludes with a reference to the artist and to creation, in what of the symptom could exist in creation. He tells us: “There is a path that leads back from fantasy to reality – the path, that is, of art” (SE XVI: 375-376). The thesis developed by Freud here is that the artist, “not far removed from neurosis” and wanting to achieve “honour, power, wealth, fame and the love of women”, elaborates from his fantasies and offers a product from which others can obtain *jouissance*.

In this text, Freud puts artistic production on the side of *jouissance*, which “makes it possible for other people once more to derive consolation and alleviation from their own sources of pleasure in their unconscious which have become inaccessible to them” (SE XVI: 376). The definition of artistic creation as a transaction is, I think, clearly stated. But a transaction can be symptomatic or not.

J-A Miller, in the text mentioned before [“The Formal Envelope of the Symptom”], refers to artistic creation in relation to the symptom. He distinguishes the poem from the poet. Why not admit, he asks, that if the symptom, at the level of creation, is a creation of sense, then the subject, the subject with symptoms, is like a poem? Yes, certainly. However, to be a creator beyond the symptom is something else: it would be to be a poet. In what is properly called creation, this requires that the symptom be operative

in it, but separated from the *jouissance* in which such a symptom had given its formal envelope to it. It is not because of this that the creation stops being a symptom – Freud *dixit* – but a symptom *prêt-à-porter* as J-A Miller points out; that is to say, a symptom ready to capture our *jouissance*, the *jouissance* of the spectator of the work; or as Freud points out: the others extract consolation and relief from their own unconscious.

J-A Miller clarifies it: “The symptom is *jouissance* as sense enjoyed by the subject, while a piece of work offers a sense to be enjoyed by whoever wants to enjoy it, according to the encounters”. Creation would be to produce something which is not in the Other when the subject no longer sustains the belief that the Other gets enjoyment from his symptom. That is to say that “the condition of creation is that the subject realises that the Other does not exist” (*ibid.*), or in other words, when the crossing of the fantasy allows that the formal envelope of the symptom no longer conceals a *jouissance*, and the produced material is *prêt-à-jouir* (ready-to-enjoy) offered to others.

To conclude, in these sections of the seminar on which I am commenting, Lacan also refers to creation and, concretely, to poetry, but in a particular way. In my understanding he gives two basic references:

- a) The double sense: poetry – basically in reference to the Chinese woman (*‘los chinos canturrean’, ‘chantonnent’*) – sustained by a double sense, is imaginarily symbolic. And that ‘imaginary symbolic’ he calls truth, given that it can only be *midite*, half-said.
- b) The effort to make sense eliminates double sense. Along this line, Lacan says, an analysis could become “an autism *à deux*”.

These two aspects which have been pointed out are condensed in this phrase, which I quote: “It is in so far as a correct interpretation extinguishes the symptom, that truth is specified as being poetic” (*Ornicar? 17/18 p.16*).

In the Seminars of this period Lacan had differentiated sense and equivocation. In *R.S.I.*, for example, he locates sense between the imaginary



and the symbolic and stresses that if in our practice we operate with sense, it is with the aim of reducing it.

He locates equivocation in the symbolic as a differentiated support of sense: "Equivocation is not sense", he says, "Equivocation is fundamentally symbolic, it is in that that the unconscious is sustained such as I structure it... [whereas] sense is that by which something answers which is something other than the symbolic and that is the imaginary" (*Ornicar?* 2, p.91).

Perhaps because of this, by distinguishing sense and the effect of sense, he points out that the latter does not suffice in being imaginary or symbolic, but it has to be real. What is at stake is the production of the real as an effect of sense.

But in this seminar he locates analytic interpretation on the side of what he calls "poetic writing", that is, in a double sense, *sens double*, which will allow a signification to remain empty, *un mot vide*. The reference is then to poetry, to that Chinese woman in particular, differentiating in the changing the tone of the modulation, which seems to me to allow the distinction between sound and sense.

Is to make seem to make true? *Faire semblant faire vrai*? It is one of the questions I ask from what Lacan states in the end, that is, if analysis is to make true, it is so from the point of view of a "bolt of sense", *coup de sens*, as a *sens-blant*, *faire vrai*, *de semblant...* (*Ornicar*> 17/18, p.18). Is there not a reference to the object, in as much as *a* is only ever a semblant which produces effects of truth?

## **Acknowledgements**

J-A Miller: I would like to thank you for the two presentations that, together with the presentation of yesterday, have given to this seminar a certain character of collective work, a bit difficult to secure due to the geographical distance; a collective work which could continue in another way, in Madrid, in the *Journées on Symptoms and Transference*.

The attention brought by Joan Salinas to my old presentation, *The Formal Envelope of the Symptom*, touches me and I thank him for this kindness. I do believe this to be in continuity with this effort of mine.

The connection with Lacan's seminar on the *varité* allows us to take a step forward on this question. I will return to the themes of the two presentations today.

### **The - now - famous lecture**

We enter in the text itself of the - now- famous Lecture XXIII entitled by Freud "The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms". I proposed to call it "*Die Bedeutung der Symptom*" in regard to "*Der Sinn der Symptom*" which is the title of Lecture XVII.

The title I proposed yesterday is even more justified, as Freud himself indicates in Lecture XXIV that he had presented prior to it with *Der Sinn* and *Die Bedeutung* of the *Symptome*, in the plural. As Lecture XVII presents *Der Sinn*, it does not seem excessive to deduce that it is essentially Lecture XXIII which complements Lecture XVII with the *Bedeutung*. I looked yesterday and could not reread all of the text prior to Lecture XXIII to verify that he does not use the expression *Bedeutung der Symptom* before. Lecture XXIII complements the semantic dimension of the symptomatic message, if we accept this expression with its referential dimension. This is the question of the relation between speech and reality, and to the real, which is precisely the theme touched upon by Lacan in the various formulations stressed by Joan Salinas. One can organise what concerns the semantic aspect in speech, where what is at stake are the effects of signification, in a form independent of the reference to reality. It concerns whether or not speech corresponds to reality and this is the theme which Freud touches upon in Lecture XXIII.

### **From the *Holzwege* to Freud's *Unwege***

In order to proceed step by step and yet quickly in the reading, I would like to comment on the original title of the lecture and also give you the plan, the sections of this text. It is important to be meticulous. There are no sections in the German edition, but there are division by a blank line in the Spanish Standard Edition. I don't know if this was introduced at a certain time by Freud himself or if it is a contribution from Strachey. The division into

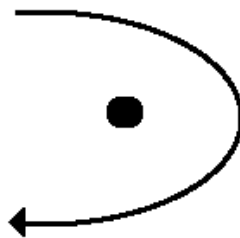
sections by a blank line, with no title or number, seems to me very well designed and I will not propose a variation on it given that they correspond to the path of Freud's thought. I will though propose title for each one of these sections. When one is dealing with an author such as Freud, as well as Lacan, attention to the path of thought and to the overall architecture of the text is imperative. The text's architecture is essential to give value to each sentence.

To comment upon each term of the title, there are the *Wege* and there is the *Bildung*. First the *Wege*, the paths.

We can think about Heidegger's *Holzwege* ('forest pathways'), which are pathways which lead to nowhere. These are the woodcutters' paths in the forest; they go to do their job and return, they do not go from one point to another. What does it mean to go from one point to another? This is an action of which one can ask whether it was successful or not. how can one gain in time? Once one arrives at the foreseen destination one can forget the point of departure. In another context we could look at the relation of the *Holzwege* to the dimension of the unconscious itself" to go from one point to another already implies a certain force although it is our usual codification. Perhaps with his knots Lacan changes something in it A little bit more of the *Holzwege* in psychoanalysis.

Let's return to Freud's *Wege*. That which follows a path, there is no doubt about this, is the libido. The libido is characterised by its capacity for motion, and it is because of this that it makes sense to talk about fixation. This takes its value in relation to the vocation of motion, the errant vocation of the libido, which accounts for the plasticity of the partial drives, as we in Lecture XXII (SE XVI, p. 345), of its capacity for changing its aim, of permutation into another, as Freud said, of its proclivity to displacement, of its disposition to adopt substitutes. A possible pathway is to arrive at the symptom; another pathway is to arrive at the work of art. The clinical investigation of the formulation of the symptom leads to a consideration of art. In summary: the libido can be sublimated or symptomatized. In this lecture Freud studies the symptomatisation of the libido, but it is not the only destiny of the libido – two destinies for the libido that are,

in a way, opposed to each other, but can also be in continuity or in articulation. This is the Freudian base of what Lacan said in his *Écrits* text, “*On My Antecedents*” – it is the sentence that I based my presentation on the formal envelope of the symptom on: “faithfulness to the symptoms formal envelope... led me to the limit at which it swings back in creative effects” [*Écrits*, p.66]. The expression itself, “the symptom’s formal envelope”, refers to the *Sinn* of the symptom, it points to the signifying mechanism, from which there are effects of sense, which in a certain way is no different in the symptom and in the work of art, but in the work of art there is a reversion, or as Lacan says, *rebroussement*. It is this:



It arrives at a limit from which there is a return, which is very well illustrated in this text of Freud’s. There is a reversal in as much as the creator takes the wanting to say of the symptom, which remains unconscious, under his charge, under the charge, let’s say, of his decided desire, of his will. In this perspective the production of a work would be something like the creation of an artificial symptom.

This is the perspective that Lacan takes in the example of his thesis in psychiatry, Aimée’s case, and will take him many years later to Joyce’s case. “*Le Sinthome*” has its roots already in his psychiatric thesis following this comment in 1966 regarding the formal envelope of the symptom.

### **The *Wege* and the *Umwege***

Freud’s *Wege* are in one way the paths of return of the libido. The libido in Freud’s conception develops itself in time and Freud grasps the thing in one dialectic, between development and regression, and the paths are inscribed in this dialectic.

In another way, Freud's *Wege* are *Unwege*, detours, as he says, which he had cited in Lecture XXII, (SE XVI, p. 350): "the roundabout paths are those taken by the construction of symptoms". The word *Unwege* appears frequently in Freud's work and is also present in the title of one of his texts. Firstly, there are *Unwege* because there are deformations and adjustments of the libido in the symptom. Yesterday I spoke briefly about this: in sum, these detours are the metaphors and metonymies of the libido. One cannot forget the Lacanian schema of the detour of the drive in *Seminar XI*, around the object *a*. As I have sketched on the board one type of detour, it is possible to write "object *a*" in the centre. This schema has its roots in the Freudian concept of the *Unweg*, at least it translates it. For Lacan there is some connection between the real and drawing, up to the point at which, in the seminar commented on by Salinas, Lacan says that "the real is drawn".

The detours of the drive are correlative to the constancy of the libidinal aim. Detours, metaphors, metonymies, its plasticity is enhanced the more the libidinal aim is constant. The libido always remains the same. Its detours point towards satisfaction.

In relation to this it is necessary to be careful. It is a simple point, but at the same time essential.

All Freudian theory of the symptom, as it is developed in these lectures, supposes that one satisfaction can be substituted by another. For instance, the satisfaction of the breast can be replaced by the satisfaction of the dummy, etc.; and afterwards, says Freud, there is an extraordinary connection that seems to be established between the jouissance of the drive and the love for the mother. In parenthesis, this is precisely what Lacan puts into question in the first sentence of *Seminar XX*, when he says that one cannot pass in this way from jouissance to love, as Freud does in two sentences.

The whole of Freudian theory supposes the possibility of the substitution of satisfactions. We could write it in this way:

S2  
S1

An initial satisfaction, S1, is substituted for by a second satisfaction, S2. It would be amusing to call this "libidinal metaphor", to comment on the

relation between paternal metaphor and libidinal metaphor. This new S2 is what Freud calls a new or substitutive satisfaction, an *Ersatz* of satisfaction. But the word *Ersatz* or substitute leads us to think that the substitute does not have the same value as the original – if we cannot buy real wild pearls we buy a few cultivated ones, but these are not so much appreciated because we see them as secondary.

This does not happen with the substitutive satisfaction. It is as good as the original satisfaction. The object is not important, the libidinal aim is obtained at all costs and as such it is the same. This is the simple and essential point which I have remarked on. *Jouissance* is *jouissance*. The drive does not know the “semblance of *jouissance*”. The drive satisfaction is real. The *Unwege* are better placed in the register of semblance.

What we find in Freud as the *Symptombildung* points towards another expression of Lacan’s: unconscious formations. The term “formations” derives directly from the Freudian concept of *Bildung*. But Lacan uses the word more on the side of *Sinn* than that of *Bedeutung* when we are dealing with formations deriving from the unconscious. They are not products but formations, that cannot be separated – as can happen with a product from the unconscious. In this the accent is put on the formal envelope of unconscious formations, once there is no escape from the fact that the key to the formation of symptoms is the drive. In *Seminar II*, he makes of the super-ego the key to the symptoms, while at the other times he makes castration the key to the formation of symptoms: these are two ways of point towards the drive. Freud talks about formations that derive from the libido.

### **The sections of Lecture XXIII**

Let us proceed to the sections of the text, which I will give title to. There are eight:

1. *The flight of the libido*. The libido makes its first step and finds itself locked by the *Versagung*, the veto. The symptomatic path starts with a blockage. The libido is blocked in its search for satisfaction. This is a first moment, its flight from actuality towards the past. There is an escape and a

passage from actuality to the past, be it a phantasmatic past or the past of an earlier stage of the libido.

2. *Constitution and experiences*: We have found this before. Freud evaluates what is due to constitutional factors and what is due to actual experiences in relation to the formations of symptoms.

3. *Infantile sexual experiences*” The regressive pathway leads to the first experiences. I will comment on this later.

4. *The satisfaction in the symptom*: Freud makes an opposition between the phenomenology of the symptom and the truth of the symptom, insofar as the first imposes the presence of suffering, whereas the second resides in the libidinal satisfaction given to the subject. In this chapter the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* is justified, given that Freud speaks about a satisfaction which is not to be confused with pleasure. The hysterical symptom presents itself in the dimension of displeasure, albeit satisfying, which justifies the introduction of a different word to point out the conjunction of satisfaction and displeasure: this is what Lacan calls *jouissance*. It seems a mysterious concept. I recall my past visits to the United States and the insistent question of the President of the American Psychoanalytic Association: “Mr Miller will now explain what *jouissance* is in Lacan”. I recall having said to him: “No, I will not explain to you” – because this occurred after a period of time in which they had annoyed me in several ways. I could have said: “You can read the two pages of the fourth section of Lecture XXIII”.

The following sections deal with the fantasy.

5. *Fantasy and reality*.

6. *Primal fantasies*.

7. *The Bedeutung of the symptom, the fixation*.

The last section, section 8, deals with *Creation, with art as an inversion along the symptomatic pathway*.

Sections 5, 6, and 7 deal with the past. The libido returns to the past in the constitutive pathway of the symptoms. The true status of this past is phantasmatic, which leads Freud to propose the existence of psychical reality. Here, section 4 takes its meaning from what Freud said: “the satisfaction is real”. It may be that the past is phantasmatic, but the satisfaction is real. I can

see here that the opposition between the real of satisfaction and the phantasmatic of the past has been delineated. It does not seem to me to be forcing the point.

In section 8, there is a return to reality, insofar as the artist produces art which takes its place in such a reality. The last pathway goes from psychical reality to external reality. It is almost a movement from the symptom to the fantasy – also a beyond the fantasy – and the return to external reality.

### **Modes of jouissance and its cost**

Lecture XXIII is a study of modes of jouissance. Freud's definition of the symptom, besides its phenomenology of suffering, is a modality of libidinal satisfaction. It is at the same level towards which Lacan points in *Television*, when he says that the subject is always happy. Freud attempts to show in which sense the subject is always happy and that this happiness can be a happiness in suffering, a parody of the title of Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Happiness in Crime*. It is the inhuman perspective in psychoanalysis; the subject presents himself as suffering, the analyst fundamentally answers: "everything is all right". Of course, this is not the only perspective. What is at stake is not the praising of the suffering: "You are happy in your suffering". The only meaning that the treatment can have is to reduce the price of the suffering that has to be paid in order to accede to drive satisfaction, which will cost less. In this way a certain humanity is re-established to the psychoanalytic position.

The essential thing is that at this level there is no conflict. There is suffering, but no conflict properly speaking. The conflict, an important concept in Freud, is a theoretical elaboration which implies that the libidinal satisfaction comes into conflict with another element, with another agency which obliges the libido to change its direction. Freud attempts to locate this agency in various ways. In the first sense, it is external reality. Nonetheless, in these lectures, he says that it is the ego, its laws and its drives – as he needs an element of the drive to go against the drive. Later Freud changes the theory – here there is already something of a *varité*, a truth that varies. He will say that it is not the ego, but the super-ego and the death drive. However, this elaboration seems to be reduced to



semblance when one refers it to the real of satisfaction. There is no doubt about the real of satisfaction, but one can doubt the theoretical construction of the conflict.

It is here that the word “mode” or “modality” takes its value, when we speak of modes of jouissance or the modality of satisfaction, or when Freud speaks of *eine neue Art der Libido Befriedegung* – a new modality of libidinal satisfaction. The idea of the means, of method, of regulation – as a device which is more or less artificial in comparison with the real of the satisfaction – is introduced. The artificiality of the mode appears clearly in perversions, for example, when there is an externalisation of the mode’s artificiality in reality. In perversion it is as if there is a staging of the symptom, where the artificial element is part of the device itself. Lacan points out, apropos of Jean Genet, that when the different perversions are staged one must note the artificial character of the device that functions in relation to jouissance. This is clear in the masochistic device where the supposed complete power of the Other over the subject is finally an artifice of the subject himself. In this way the relation of the pair, semblant-jouissance is essential. It is also the principle of the affinity between perversion and art: that is its artificial trait.

One must see the consequences of this.

### **A clinic without conflict**

For Freud, conflict is essential, up to the point of defining the symptom as a compromise formation between opposing forces. This opposition between pleasure and reality can be understood as an opposition between pleasure and external reality; which led to the conception of analysis as education or pedagogy. If Lacan had to spend so much time attacking the concept of pedagogy, in order to take pedagogy out of psychoanalysis, it is because in many ways pedagogy was inside the analytic discourse.

It seems to me that for Lacan what is at stake in a certain moment of his teaching – which inspires the poster for these *Journées* – is to learn to think of the symptom without the conflict. This is to subtract the perspective of

the conflict, despite the suffering, in order to privilege the real of satisfaction. The clinic of knots is a clinic without conflict.

The only conflict is that we do not succeed in making the knots we want, with the suffering that this causes us and which Lacan sometimes points out; but the invisible novelty of this clinic – which I now try to make patent – is that it is a clinic without conflict. It is a clinic of knotting and not of opposition, a clinic of arrangements which permits satisfaction and leads to *jouissance*. There is difficulty, but there is no conflict. The structure of the knots by itself does not allow the dimension of conflict to emerge.

Of course, Lacan had several clinics with conflict. He started opposing the symbolic and the imaginary, and that was a clinic of conflict. Later he privileged a clinic of opposition between the symbolic and the real. Think about the concept of the object *a*, an object which resists the symbolic, which does not fit well with the symbolic. There is a tension between the symbolic and the object *a*, which is a clinic of conflict.

With the knots, there is no opposition – on the contrary, there is a solidarity among the dimensions. There is a *mitsein*, a moving together of the circles. Because of this we find an aesthetic satisfaction in the Borromean knot, given that Lacan found it not in mathematics but in an emblem of the Borromean family. It is a charming figure which is sometimes used with aesthetic pleasure as a type of decoration in Islamic art, which is without the representation of the human figure. From this we find enjoyment. These drawings, made to capture the symptom, are easily transformed into a sort of work of art. Because of this, this poster has all its justification, and is something to be thought about.

Thus in this clinic what is at stake is not the resolution of the conflict as in Freud, but rather to obtain a new arrangement of a more or less costly functioning for the subject. I do not say that it is the only worthwhile clinical perspective, but that it is an effort of *Bildung* on Lacan's part, of the *Bildung* of the analyst, the formation, in this perspective, of the symptom.

### **A new form of drive satisfaction**

Let's return to Freud, when he speaks of the *Neue Art*, of a new modality.

The word “new” is subject to discussion – Freud himself had said “new or substitutive” – because the symptom is not something new, it is not an invention but more of a return. There is always something old in the Freudian symptom, because it is a matter of repetition. In this text Freud studies the transferences of libido. The theme chosen for the *Journées* of the ESP-Spain, *Symptom and Transference*, is justified in as much as the libido has a transferential capacity and that the analyst offers himself as an object to capture it in order to allow for the new arrangements.

The analysis itself may appear as a new modality of libidinal satisfaction, *eine neue Art der Libdiobefriedigung*. The problematic of the end of analysis, for Lacan, has to do with understanding the analysis as a new modality of satisfaction and with a way of going beyond this dimension. There is something in analysis of an artificial symptom, which corresponds to the Freudian invention. At this point, the question of the hope of Lacan is placed: Why could psychoanalysis not invent a new perversion? This famous and amusing question gives testimony to the perspective of analysis as a modality of artificial satisfaction that has a relationship with the symptom as Freud described it.

### **The symptom and time**

I will now tackle the point approached by Roser Casalprim.

Freud elaborates the symptom in the temporal dimension in terms of development and regression. For him, the libido has a past and almost has a memory. But in this lecture, one can see how one cannot only rely on the temporal dimension, but that one also has to refer to the historical dimension. All the questions of which Mrs. Casalprim reminded us show how Freud was taken up by the paradoxes of the historical dimension, beyond the temporal. Lacan has sketched this in *The Function and Field*, with the opposition between exactitude-truth and the effects of deferred-action [*après-coup*], discovered thanks to the case of the Wolf Man.

In this way, in section three the question of infantile experiences are important; were they important at the very moment of the child’s life or did they acquire their importance through regression in a sort of *après-coup*?

(Freud does not use this word.) His solution is evident: these infantile experiences have their importance at the very time. The proof he offers is the existence of childhood neurosis and sometimes one can see the continuity between childhood and adult neurosis. At times he varies his emphasis: for some of the neuroses the infantile experiences are more important, for others the later conflicts are more important; there is a more or less. In support of this, one can cite the continuity of the perversions, when a given childhood experience can be verified, an accidental experience seems to be the trigger of the adult perversion in a total continuity. Fundamentally, he said that if the libido regresses it is because there is something that exercises an attraction. This is what he calls "fixation".

Here he does not waver. If there is regression of the libido, one must suppose that there is something attractive there: a surplus-enjoyment is hidden. This opens up a second moment, the question of whether this attractive thing is traumatic or phantasmatic and whether it could be one or the other is not put into question.

In section four, we touched on this yesterday, the *jouissance* of the symptom is presented, a *jouissance* which is hidden as something strange which has *Befremdung*, something which is not familiar nor recognisable. There is no acknowledgement of this *jouissance*. Here he speaks of the amplified auto-erotism of the symptom which constitutes a modification of the subject's being, eventually of his own body. I will approach this afterwards because this was one of the reasons why Vicente Palomera chose this theme for the seminar. At the end of section four, Freud stresses the particular compression of the libido which can be observed, the highlighted function of the little detail, so important as to arouse the libido. I saw in Lucia's notes which could not be read yesterday that, in this section of the text, she had found an outline of object *a*. You can verify this for yourselves.

Let's move on to the fantasy, apropos of which, as Mrs. Casalprim pointed out, the question of truth, which Lacan also touches upon in his seminar, is postulated. He sustains what was already said, that something happened in the past, be it in the form of event or fantasy. In consequence of this I do not think that there is a contradiction between sections three and

five. For Freud what counts is in childhood. The experiences or fantasies had their importance at the time. Finally, what changes is the sense of reality in itself. Reality has several modalities, and alongside external reality Freud introduces psychical reality. He changes the sense of reality itself, in a way that the difference between event and fantasy loses its importance.

This is what leads Lacan to say: "One always enjoys the fantasy". Freud says that psychical reality is decisive. But Lacan goes one step further, by privileging the psychical reality over external reality, up to the point in which it counts as phantasmatic in the analytic discourse.

This perspective obliges us to rethink the difference between the pleasure principle and the reality principle. In common sense the conflict is between the internal and the external" the autonomous, automatic pleasure of the psychical apparatus versus the demands of external reality. On the contrary, if one privileges psychical reality, the difference between the two principles is internal. In the second half of the '60s, Lacan says that the analytic discourse takes reality in a univocal way – which is something incredible given that, according to Freud, external reality should at least be opposed to internal reality – while other discourses make reality float in different modalities. As such as 'internal' reality is not only decisive but the only one; one obtains more *jouissance* from the fantasy than from external others.

From this perspective, there is a weakness in Freud, insofar as he passionately questions exactitude. His debility is to vacillate between external reality and psychical reality, and this is his symptom.

### **Lacan's symptom**

I have announced that Lacan had his own symptom, which he himself had located. It has to do with the previous point. The emphasis placed on the univocal aspect of reality takes him to a real without sense. Lacan had announced to the world the instance of a real without sense. It consists of a radical separation between the real and sense. It is such a strange idea, it produces such *Befremdung*, that he said: "perhaps this idea of the real is my symptom". In a certain way one cannot say anything truly about it. The world "real" is already a paradox in itself: it's difficult to say "the real" because

this sentence has already a sense. Perhaps Lacan's symptom is very interesting because it implies that when one says something about this, one necessarily lies. It makes the element of fiction, which exists in every history, understandable.

### **The real lies**

One should not forget that one is dealing with the paths to the formation of hysterical symptoms. In the obsessional symptoms the element of fiction in the history is more veiled by the phenomenology of satisfaction that the symptom carries. One can say that the real makes the subject lie, and finally, in a passage to the limit, the real lies. Thus, for Lacan the status of the symptom finally ends up being problematic. Joan Salinas recalled that Lacan said that the symptom is of the order of the real. This is a paradox because the symptom has *Sinn*, it has a sense according to Freud in Lecture XVII. How can one say that it is real when the real does not have sense? It would be the only thing of the real with a *Sinn*.

Here we find a vacillation of Lacan's; or, to put it better, a certain turning in circles, as he himself points out" not only does he make circles and knots, but he makes turns. On the one hand he proposes an equation in which *jouissance* equals truth or sense; this is the *jouissance* of enjoyment or enjoyed sense, to which Miquel Bassols referred in his presentation. However, sometimes Lacan totally separates *jouissance* as the real from sense and speaks about the opaque *jouissance* of the symptom, outside all sense. Here there isn't a Lacanian solution, but a *varité* of the symptom – the variable truths of Lacan in entering this zone. Lacan does not leave us a finished, dogmatic doctrine, but rather a problematic field of investigation where there are places for discussion and elaboration:

1. Analysis operates on the real of the symptom from the symbolic, insofar as the symptom is sense.
2. If the real and sense are totally separated and excluded from each other psychoanalysis is nothing but a fraud.

3. How to intervene from the effects of *Sinn* towards a jouissance without sense?
4. Perhaps there exists a real effect of sense.

With his knots, Lacan deals with all sorts of arrangements to resolve the theme. I don't think he finished with the question. Perhaps the solution is in these variations themselves, in a demonstration which Lacan made on the blackboard, manipulating, each time more silent, a real without sense. The knots are surely the paradigmatic example of a real without sense, up to a point in which Lacan, each time he named one circle or another, point out that it was as if it was a forcing.

### **The structural solution**

Returning to Freud, in section three he gives us a schema. I will point out the need for modification only from section six: in the place of "infantile experiences" one should write "primal fantasy".

Freud reduced the number of fantasies to locate three essential ones" the observation of coitus, the seduction by an adult, and castration. He also presents this in the notes of the Wolf Man case. Finally, in the note of 1920 in the "Three Essays", he stresses that all phantasmagoria can be included in the Oedipus complex, pointing out the necessary character of fantasies – he says *notwendig*, which I privilege over the term *das Befürdnis*, necessity in the sense of *besoin*. His phylogenetic solution of the existence of these fantasies is that of the pre-historical. I will allow myself to read it: the child who fantasises has done nothing more than fill the gaps of individual truth with a pre-historical truth". He himself experiences the necessity of getting out of the historical dimension, as he did in "Totem and Taboo".

The Lacanian solution of the same point (the pre-historical in Freud) is the structural solution. When Freud points to pre-history, to a crystallization of experiences which we cannot know directly, Lacan offers a wonderful solution, the structural reference: it is a matter of structure.

This is also articulated through the difference established by Lacan between the Oedipus complex and the castration complex: the Oedipus

complex is like an imaginary envelope of the castration complex. Freud says that the font of all this is the drive. This is what Lacan writes in the upper part of the graph of desire, the link between jouissance and castration. He allows the return of castration ( $-\phi$ ), the return upon jouissance itself.

Finally, the implication is to have to think the relation between language and the body. This is translated in Lacan as the capture of the body in the structure, with its double result: on one side, ( $-\phi$ ), the structure takes castration to jouissance, the emptying of jouissance, on the other side, the supplement, little *a*.

### **The problem of auto-erotism**

To conclude, we arrive at the question of auto-erotism.

It is the only point on which Lacan stresses his disagreement with Freud, which is very funny because it implies that all the rest, with its elaborations, that he was able to locate – with some forcing – in Lecture XXIII, he considers to be in line with Freud. To pass from the pre-historical to the structural is in line with Freud. To go from the decisive role of psychical reality to its imperialism is also Freud's path. The disagreement is located in the question of auto-erotism.

Freud refers to it on p. 314, where he point out that the libido searches and finds its objects in the body itself; on p. 355, he said that the sexual drives are satisfied in an auto-erotic way in the body itself; he proposes, in pp. 328-9, a history of the oral drive:

[T]he first objet of the oral components of the sexual drive is the mother's breast... The erotic component, which is satisfied simultaneously during the [nutritive] sucking, makes itself independent with the act of sensual sucking; it gives up the outside object and replaces it by an area of the subject's own body. The oral drive becomes auto-erotic as are the anal and other erotogenic drives from the first. Further development.... has two aims: firstly, the abandonment of auto-erotism, the replacement of the subject's own body once more by an outside object, and secondly, the unification of the various objects of the separate drives and their replacement by a single object (SE XVI, p.328).



Afterwards, the mother is taken as the first love object. I have already pointed out that the passage from the libidinal drive to love in Freud takes place at a single stroke.

However, there are in Freud all the elements to conclude that the unification does not take place and that the partial remains. This points out and underlines the fundamental perverse trait of sexuality. Lacan says in *Seminar XX* that in itself *jouissance* is not sexual, insofar as 'sexual' refers to the other sex. One could say in this sense that Lacan is referring to an auto-erotic *jouissance*, but he prefers to call it autistic insofar as it does not refer to the other sex. He starts this Seminar saying: "The *jouissance* of the body of the Other is not a sign of love". What does this signify if not that the *jouissance* of the body of the Other is always perverse, partial, it is always the *jouissance* of parts. The *jouissance* of the other's body does not allow one access to the Other, only love gains access to the Other. This is the opposite of Freud: there is a barrier between *jouissance* and love; there is no continuity.

Why does Lacan reject the word 'auto-erotic'? precisely by supporting himself in Freud, because the libido is concentrated in the lost object. Very time there is a presence of *jouissance*, it is in a position we call *extimité*, as object *a*. *Jouissance* has always something of the *unheimlich*. The fundamental *Unheimlichkeit* of *jouissance* is perceived in the case of Little Hans, which Vicente Palomera points out following Lacan. The masturbatory relation to the genital object seems to be the model of auto-erotism, but it is not like this: on the contrary, the penis as the support of *jouissance* is extraneous, 'outside the body'.

With the word 'extimacy', we have the two sides. The emergence of *jouissance* is always traumatic. Here is resolved, in part, the mystery of this traumatic permanence that I have pointed out in Freud's text.

### **The reference to the symptom**

Section seven, *Die Bedeutung der Symptom*. In summary, Freud points towards the *jouissance* of the symptom, beyond the account of seduction, castration and coitus. For Freud there is a core of the real in the fantasy. Through reference to the pleasure principle and the reality principle, he points

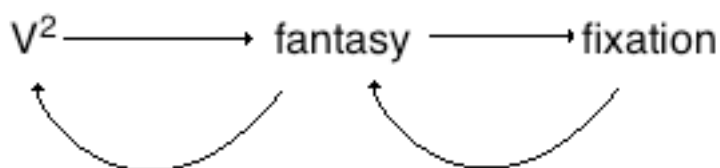
towards the fact that there is always a left-over of jouissance, which he names “fixation”, which does not obey the demands of reality, still less the pleasure principle, the demand of which is for reduction in tension. In this way Freud finally distinguishes a real inside the psychical itself, which is hidden inside the fantasy.

He says that there is something reserved which remains and which does not respond to the demands of external reality, nor to those of internal reality given that it does not respond to the annulment of the tensions implied by the pleasure principle. This remains as the memory of the trauma of jouissance. Freud compares it in a very surprising way with nature reserves:

The creation of the mental realm of fantasy finds a perfect parallel in the establishment of ‘reservations’ or ‘nature reserves’ in places where the requirements of agriculture, communications and industry threaten to bring about changes in the original face of the earth which will make it unrecognisable. A nature reserve preserves its original state which everywhere else has to our regret been sacrificed to necessity” (SE XVI, p. 372)

One could say that in this dramatic description of the ‘enclave’, we already have the place for which Lacan used the word *extimité*.

Freud gives as evidence the *Lustgewin*, the gain of pleasure distinguishing two regressions: the regression to the fantasy and, beyond that, the regression to fixation. One can draw the following schema:



First  $V^2$ , *Verdrängung* and veto. From there regression to the fantasy. Beyond that, regression to fixation. When Lacan spoke about the fantasy as the fundamental screen of the real, he was referring to this path. The notion of a ‘crossing of the fantasy’ translates the idea that it is possible analytically to go through this path to extract from the fantasy its real. Furthermore, I would point out that Freud calls the first regression ‘introversion’, and only

the second 'neurosis' proper. I noticed that in this text he speaks of repressed fixation, uses the word *Verdrängt*, that is to say, that at this point he links the unconscious with the drive, but without thematising it.

### **Extroverting the fantasy**

In the last part he insists on the capacity of the artist to regress to the fantasy. This is an introvert who succeeds in becoming extrovert, giving form – he does not use the word *Bilden*, but *Formen* – to his fantasy. Freud says that the artist gives a faithful copy of the representation of his fantasy. He connects with such a big *Lustgewin* that for a while repressions are suppressed.

I have no time to comment any further but only to give a sort of short problematic conclusion to the point stressed by Joan Salinas.

### **Between anguish and deceit**

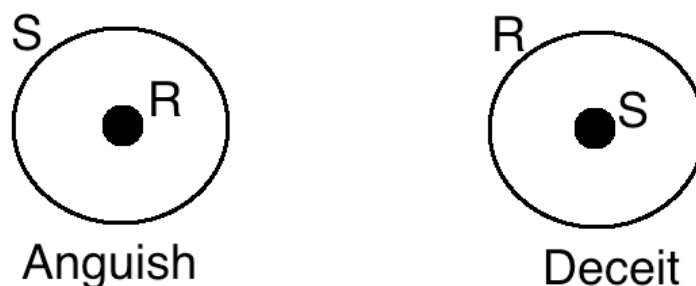
1. The symptoms as *varité*. This is not about what is said about the symptom but about the symptom itself. We can say that at times what is at stake is the symptom and what is said about it, insofar as in psychoanalysis the difference disappears. In this way the symptom can appear as a repetitive statement about the real and as such the symptom itself is a lie. Not only speaking about this is a deceit, but the symptom itself is a lie. Of course, a lie while attempting to tell the truth. It is a structural lie. The subject cannot answer to the real unless by symptomatizing it. The symptom is the subject's answer to the trauma of the real. This is distinct from the 'true deceit' of the writer Aragon, which refers to the work of art. While the subject suffers with the symptom, the artist is capable of producing a game with the symptomatic answer to the real.

2. The variety of truth is very well understood through S1-S2 and the effects of sense. It is the schema of *après-coup*. But the variable character of truth implies a symbolic status of the symptom. To locate the symptom as real implies taking the world 'symptom' for 'fantasy' and 'fixation'. One could say that the word *sinthome* refers to the connection of fantasy with fixation.

3. The symptom as real. When Lacan formulates this he does so in a context in which he distinguishes in a very defined way two incidences of

the real: the symbolically real and the really symbolic. I do not say this to make it comprehensible but to leave something open for us in Madrid.

The symbolically real is the presence of the real in the symbolic. When Lacan says, "This is anguish", it is the real insofar as it appears in the symbolic. In opposition to this, the really symbolic is the symbolic present inside the real. With "this is a lie" one understands that it is a lie if the real is totally separated from sense.



When Lacan says the symptom is real, exactly which schema are we dealing with? That of anguish or deceit? In a certain way there is something of the symptom that is located between anguish and deceit; that is to say, something lies and something cannot deceive, which is an old definition Lacan made of anguish [anxiety]. Something circulates between what always lies and what never lies. But Lacan proposes the symptom as the only thing that is truly real, which is to say, that it maintains a sense in the real, which he locates more on the side of deceit. The symptom lies, anguish does not.

I do not consider this to be the last word, but it complicates the notion of the real, in order to carry on with the *Journées* of the ESP-Spain.

### **The Freudian forest**

*V. Palomera*: In the Freudian forest there are paths, more or less hidden by the undergrowth, which suddenly stop under foot. Jacques-Alain Miller has given us a good example of how not to stop on the paths of the forest, paths that are lost in the forest. He has seen the depths with his eyes. He has followed in each of the open paths a different route, but always in the same forest, the rich Freudian forest. Several times it looked as if they were the same, but it was so only in appearance. Jacques-Alain Miller, like the

woodcutters, knows the paths of the forest and has taught us what it signifies to find oneself on a lost pathway in such a forest. To conclude, I would like to thank him for this lesson on behalf of the Catalonia section of the ESP and to all of you who have participated in these *Journées*.

Translated by Roseane Barros

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Spanish text established by V. Palomera, with the collaboration of Rosa Alba Zaidel, Luis Miguel Carrion and Eugenio Diaz. (Revised and correct by Jacques-Alain Miller) December 1996.

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