

Transmissions of 'Bits of Real' in a Lacanian Criminology Workshop (LRO 312) : 29th September 2021 : René Raggenbass

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LACANIAN REVIEW ONLINE

[Transmissions of “Bits of Real” in a Lacanian Criminology Workshop](#)

By [René Raggenbass](#) | [Martigny, Switzerland](#) | September 29th, 2021 | [LRO 312](#)

A group of people active in the field of justice, education, the police, the magistracy and health care have been organizing a monthly workshop on Lacanian criminology in person since 2004. The workshop consists of a practical presentation of situations drawn from each field of activity supported by a theoretical text. For this year, 2021-2022, the chosen theme “*Jouissance et Droit / Droit et Jouissance*” (*Jouissance and Right / Right and Jouissance*) echoes the title given by Alexandre Stevens to the NLS congress of 2022 (“*Fixation and repetition*”).

This year the participants share experiences that we have all had at one time or another, of an emission of speech that does not impact whoever we are talking to. I mean those people who, notwithstanding our explanations, our support, our arguments, our logical demonstrations, our proofs, our interpretations, remain in their certainty, in their belief, “in a kind of absolutely unbreakable assurance” [1], impermeable to all sayings (whether that of the police, the judge, the prosecutor, the caregiver, the educator, the probation officer, the psychoanalyst, etc...).

In 1974 Lacan questioned his audience: “You listen – yes. But do you catch something that resembles the real?” [2]. This is what occupies the workshop. To transmit bits of real. This is also why this year the participants will produce a short text about their experience in order to contribute to the text’s support.

In the workshop we examine what each one does to continue to function in their field of activity and especially how each contributes to the inscription–by another use of the traumatic jouissance– of a criminalized person in a social bond against which they defend themselves, sometimes by the violence of a passage to the act.

To inscribe them in a social bond by means of a “historization of the real” implies, like Éric Laurent writes, a certain “forcing” of the real of jouissance in the field of language [3.] This

forcing is not done by simple listening, but by the use of interpretation which is neither about being moral, nor about *making the other reasonable*, nor a prohibition or other meaning enunciations. Interpretation is first and foremost a “*I’m telling you that you said something other than what you wanted to say*” addressed to the other [4].

With *Lituraterre* [5], Lacan frees himself from the primacy and dependence on the signifier. The letter of which he speaks does not have as etymology “*Littera*” (literature) but “*Lino*” (the coating, the erasure, the correction, the stain or the waste, the *ordure* in Joyce – Litter). What there is to grasp is that the letter makes a hole in the symbolic; it does not name, it does not speak, it is silence like a mathematical formula. Here, there is a double disarticulation in the field of language. A separation between the signifier and the signified, but also a separation in the signifying chain between S1-S2 to obtain traces of S1 all by themselves. It is from this break between S1 and S2 that the effect of jouissance of the letter can be produced, which is “*the material support that concrete discourse borrows from language*”. The material support is not the sound, it is a place (in the sense of *topos*) where the signifier is inscribed. It is the notion of erasure (*raiture* in French) that Lacan will use to make us understand what is at stake with the letter. This is difficult because it is totally contrary to the common sense of erasure which implies that there is something before it comes to be crossed out. Well, forget that! Lacan breaks with what precedes. The erasure of which he speaks is that “of any trace that was there before, this is what makes a land of the littoral” [6].

From the erasure on the body, a signifier-trace emerges (before, there is nothing but surface). Language is used for that! And it is these traces on the erasure, these disturbances in the syntax of the language, that we have to read in what the patient tells us and presents to us. The trace—that is to say the subject—as such is only constituted in the après-coup of what is erased. This is essential to hear. The trace comes after the fixation of the erasure of any trace that was there before and the subject is established in the satisfaction sought in the signifying repetition (in the iteration of the erasure), which is the treatment of this traumatic erasure of the jouissance effect linked to the breaking of the signifying chain. The subject therefore emerges in the après-coup !

Finally, the human condition that we can deduce in Lacan is that of a significant addition to a surface without traces: “The vision of the flow of the One according to Lacan is that of the letter which comes to be added to the world, disturbing it. In this vision, the erasure dominates, which can equally well take the form of isobars, or highways which are like gliders from the sky, like a violation of natural laws. In all things of the world and of language Lacan sees the irregularity, the equivocation” [7].

These extracts point to something fundamental in order to grasp what is at the basis of the practice of interpretation. They testify that things are not already there but that they are added (to a surface, to the body, to Others) to the world by disturbing it. It is these tiny disturbances that Lacan’s latest teaching encourages us to know how to read! It is these disturbances, these bits of real that are the object of transmission in the Lacanian criminology workshop. They are the ones that workshop participants are invited to spot and discuss in this year’s presentations.

Translated by *Dominique Rudaz*

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1. Francesca Biagi Chai, « Le cas Landru à la lumière de la psychanalyse », Imago, Paris, 2007, p. 222.
 2. Jacques Lacan, « *Conférence de presse du Docteur Lacan* », Rome, VIIème Congrès de l’Ecole freudienne de Paris (1974), *Lettres de l’école freudienne*, n°16, novembre 1975, p. 15. ».
 3. Éric Laurent, « *Une vision du ruissellement de l’Un* », *La Cause du Désir* n° 107, Mars 2021, p. 62-69. [A vision of the streaming (trickle-down) of the One]

4. Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan Web TV, broadcast of 15.5.2021, « *L'écoute avec et sans interprétation* ».
 5. Jacques Lacan, « Seminar XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* », Paris, Seuil, 2006, Chapter VII, lesson of the 12 mai 1971, p. 113.
 6. Jacques Lacan, « Séminaire XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* », Paris, Seuil, 2006, lesson of the 12 mai 1971, p. 121.
 7. Éric Laurent, « *Une vision du ruissellement de l'Un* », La Cause du Désir n° 107, Mars 2021, p. 68-69.
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