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**Prelude no 2**

**The treatment of the bodies in our times and in psychoanalysis**

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The expression 'treatment of the bodies' implies the hypothesis that the bodies are not simply determined by the living machine of the organism. That is the postulate of Lacanian psychoanalysis: there is a fabrication of the bodies through the path of language, and the unconscious discovered by Freud, a generator of symptoms, is language. Therefore, there is no way of inviting neurobehaviourists to our debates, unless it is as a mental... foil, so as to highlight the contrast.

Now, what is **the question** that the title entails? Ostensibly, that of the change in the individuals subjected to capitalism after more than three centuries of existence. More implicitly, however, that question hides another one, that of the power of the analytic discourse in this context. Indeed, since its inception the Freudian procedure pretends to solve problems of the body, called sexual symptoms of Freud's times—that Lacan related them to the subject of the word does not change anything.

We can then perceive **where the question comes from**: it emerges from the disquiet about the future of psychoanalysis, as the two treatments of the body, one by capitalism and the other by psychoanalysis, confront each other. Besides, psychoanalysis itself has changed since Lacan's teaching. This has not only imposed itself to an increasing number of psychoanalysts, themselves increasingly heterogeneous, but also, as a result of their own movement, have not stopped evolving, and more particularly on the question of their power over the symptoms of the body—we say of jouissance.

**Bodies that have already been treated**

How to answer the question about the treatment of the bodies in our times, if not on the basis of what we receive in the analytic experience in relation to the truth of jouissances? It would be better then to avoid any form of duplication of the discourse of the times on the same question (how many dictionaries about the body have been published over the last few years?), and not forget that what can be observed, what the media reveal (as to the surface, tattoos, dietetic regimes and surgery, and as to the practices, the de-normativity of jouissances, etc.), and what is within anyone's reach, psychoanalysts included, does not have to do with analytic knowledge.

My starting point is this: psychoanalysis receives **bodies that have already been treated** by the discourse of their times and that maintain a link of solidarity with the great ‘clamour’ of humanity. Now, if the *habitus* of the treated bodies change according to the different cultures, observations offer the testimony that the clamour itself remains. Hence the question for the psychoanalyst, beyond the fascination derived from the description of the changes, is that of knowing in the body is the basis of the constant nature of the complaint addressed to him/her at the beginning, and that she/he has ‘the duty to interpret’ to change it.

What does psychoanalysis say about those already treated bodies, that is to say, submitted to the social bond, or let us say, socialized? From Freud to Lacan, psychoanalysis has become **a reader of its times**, and from this a conception of the socialized bodies has evolved.<sup>1</sup> This reading started with Freud and his denunciation of the sexual repression at work in his era; repression that would be at the origins of symptoms and which psychoanalysis would attempt to lift. It continued with Lacan and his structural hypothesis on the negativating effect of language, which he substituted for the first Freudian hypothesis on social repression, and which changes the status of the symptom. Among some people today, fifty years after the death of Lacan, that hypothesis has rather become a denunciation of the reverse: a lack of repression, as sometimes is put, or an excess of jouissance; while Lacan read in it precisely the opposite: the ‘thirst of the lack of enjoying’.<sup>2</sup> Can we establish a balance of these readings more than a century later? That could be one of the fruits of our Rendezvous. The field is vast: what is in it with Lacan, with the law of limitation of jouissance, its origins, its major signifier, the Phallus, its secondary development by discourse with its master signifiers, the function of its symptomatic forms, etc.? I am able to say ‘etcetera’ because the entire analytic theory concerns the impotence of these bodies under the command of social bonds to satisfy the subjects. That was the case in 1900, and is still the case in 2020. This is what does not change. What happens then with the specific effects of capitalism and the reorganization of social bonds that it generates?

### **What capitalism does not treat**

The theme of novelty flourishes, there are new symptomatic forms (perverse oral and *trans*), new images (tattooed or surgical), new ideals of the body and of their relations in networks, and so forth, but what advances can be expected for the beings that define themselves as speaking beings? The growing clamour is not promising, and it imposes upon the psychoanalyst that he/she render an account as to whether he/she wants to become a partner of these subjects, also called new.

I refer to this fact: how does capitalism treat the bodies? In some respects one could think that it takes care of the body more than ever before: freedom of movement, unprecedented means of displacement, medicine always progressing, state-of-the-art surgery, prevention, assistance... But it is the publicist the one who speaks there. In

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, as well as Lacan’s *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Radiophonie’, *Scilicet* 2/3, p. 87.

hearing the clamour, we must rather ask what it is that it does treat and that the other discourses perhaps look after a bit better. Well, it does not treat precisely what psychoanalysis has clearly shown: the fact that the bodies – the bodies as such, and not only those of capitalism – are ‘proletarians’ and do not possess anything with which to make a social bond of their jouissance, according to the thesis of Lacan. They pertain to the One. A social bond of suppletion: this is what the discourses provided to the proletarian bodies; whereas capitalism only provides the networks and multiple connections capable of dislocating the subjects, but as far as the bodies, which have a weight and occupy a space, its great resource appears to be reduced to segregation and its walls.

We are there at the frontier between, on the one hand, that which cannot change, namely ‘the real of what comes to light in language’<sup>3</sup>, which is for all the speaking beings of all times and which ultimately defines the human, and on the other hand that which fluctuates, the effect of discourse, *hystoric* [*hystorique*]. At any rate, it is impossible, given our theme, not to have in the agenda the question of **the definition and the destiny of the social bond within capitalism**, since there is no society – even a capitalist society – without some form of social bond.

### **The *corpo-rection***

I will now address the instruments. Undoubtedly, the bodies become socialized by everything that is called education, which starts with the family but which does not stop there. Lacan speaks of *édupation* [condensation of *education* and *dupes*] in order to point out that it is a question of producing dupes of discourse. That is uses words and images would lead us to conceive of three bodies that would correspond to the three consistencies of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, except that because of their being knotted the three make only one, to which *édupation* intends to impose an order by means of its words of authority operating as commandments. It is the discourse of the master. That is the difference with psychoanalysis, which does not operate with the norm, but which uses the same instrument, words, to aim with the interpretation at the jouissance-symptom of the subject.

In both cases at stake is what Lacan called in relation to literature and in his conference *Joyce le Symptôme II* the *corpo-rection*, the *rection du corps*, ‘the rection of the body’.

This has nothing to do with correction, but rather with the orientation of libido. The complete elucidation of this notion took me a long time, until I realized that the word *rection* does not appear in any dictionary of the XVIIIth or XIXth centuries. The term is recent; it derives from the linguistics of the middle of the XXth century (1969), and it designates the way in which a term of language relates to other terms, and in particular the verb to its complement. In this sense, then, one speaks of ‘a relation of rection’ [*un rapport de rection*].<sup>4</sup> All Lacanians prick up their ears when they hear the word *rapport*. It is difficult to think that Lacan did not have that definition in mind –

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<sup>3</sup> ‘L’*étourdit*’, *Scilicet* 4, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> [The word *rection* is used in English-language linguistics. T.]

he, for whom the signifying chain of speech provides a suppletion to the absent sexual relation so as to ensure a bond between the bodies; he who, more specifically, made of the verb a *notasstupid* [*passibête*] signifier.<sup>5</sup> The signifier is stupid because it does not have sense, but the verb, however, ensures the sliding of sense and its equivocations in the grammatical relation of rection between words – and without the rection of words, there is no rection of the body. In other words: the proletarian body of ‘there is something of the one’ does not get knotted to the others, does not become a socialized body, not even one desirous of an erotic partner, unless there is a relation of rection between the words. The chain of words makes the chain of the bodies – even a Borromean chain.

The body – not the organism, but the body – is therefore made by... grammar, syntax, which implies the lexicon that comes from *lalangue*. With the intuition of a genius before the advent of linguistics, Freud spoke of ‘the grammar of the drive’, and early in the piece Lacan spoke of the drive as ‘the treasure of signifiers’, before finally introducing in his seminar *Encore* the notion of ‘the speaking body’. Every speaking body that arrives at the psychoanalyst’s consulting room is already treated by the discourse of the times via the *e-dupation* [*é-dupation*] – and this is why psychoanalysis is the optical glasses of the epoch. That speaking body already has his words and his grammar. Now, there are words and words: those of the discourse that commands everybody, and those of the multiple unconscious, which are never collective. Put it in another way: the corpo-rection is not One, but divided. The words of the subject are not only those of his e-dupation, since the inevitable failure of this e-dupation – something that Freud noticed very well – leaves in each speaking being the gap of his truth, the one that is written with the words of his unconscious, which also speaks – but with the body. To mots and grammar we must add logic ‘without which the interpretation would be imbecile’, says ‘L’étourdit’.<sup>6</sup> This is the logic of the impossible to attain by means of the rection of words, which certainly promises a social and/or erotic partner (in grammar this is called an object complement), but never a ‘sexual relation’.

### **The analytic operation**

Psychoanalysis operates on the corpo-rection. This is made by the word, and in analysis this is treated by the interpreted word. It therefore restitutes for the analysand what in him/her has resisted e-dupation, the de-maternalization of his/her language [*langue*] and grammar, and it recognizes the weight of his/her truth of jouissance in delivering a certain knowledge [*savoir*] about what burdens him/her as a symptom of *his/her* unconscious, of the unconscious that with its *lalangue* affects *his/her* body. This insight into his/her own corpo-rection is not a promise of a rosy future or a reconciliatory union. It does not work towards the lures of hope: it rather denounces them, keeping a distance of ethical dissidence in relation to its era. Freud did not consider it less impossible than education. It is necessary, then, to produce a balance sheet of what it obtains regarding

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<sup>5</sup> Lacan, J. (1998). *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. New York & London, Norton, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> *Scilicet* 4, p. 49.

the symptoms of *jouissance*, beyond the therapeutic tempering of their inconvenience. Freud laid the mark of a subjective abutment in the refusal of castration. For his part, Lacan established the mark in the incurable of the wall of language, with its impossibilities applicable to all, and particularly, in analysis, that of arriving at the end of the unconscious-*lalangue* and its effects. This is undoubtedly an abutment, but a real one, which opens the possible space of the variety, *varité* [condensation of *variété* and *vérité*] as he called it, of subjective responses regarding the real proper to the unconscious.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in re-treating the bodies already treated by discourse and by the unconscious, it also treats the subjects – the subjects that have those bodies. In other words, it gives a chance to the efficacy of their saying [*dire*] – to be evaluated case by case.

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*Translated by Leonardo S. Rodríguez*

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Introduction à l’édition allemande d’un premier volume des *Écrits*. *Scilicet* 5, p. 17.