

# XIème Rendez-vous de l'Internationale des Forums VIIème Rencontre Internationale de l'École de Psychanalyse des Forums du Champ Lacanien

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## **XI International Rendezvous of the Forums, SPFL Buenos Aires, 9-12 July 2020**

### **Prelude 4 by Chantal Degril**

#### **Of the Body, of its treatment in psychoanalysis through speech and writing**

LOM, LOM de base, LOM cahun corps et nan-na Kun [LOM, the basic LOM, LOM who has a body and has only one]. One has to say it like that: he has one...and not: he is one...It is having it and not being it that characterises him.<sup>1</sup>

In the contemporary discourse symptoms are being treated increasingly on the basis of the biological body, be it by neuropsychiatry, medication, cognitivism and techniques of behaviour modification, or genetics. The body is considered as a machine to be regulated through its hormonal, neuronal or genetic circuits. This discourse promotes a flourishing industry of the 'wellbeing' where each one is supposed to know how to master one's body'. For psychoanalysis, on the other hand, the 'ill-being' (or *malebeing* [*malêtre*] in Lacan), dissatisfaction, are structural.

The psychoanalytic treatment founded upon free association, proposes a treatment of the body through speech. The body in psychoanalysis is the living body with its *jouissance*, whose apparatus is the libido - that is desire - desire that cannot be said but at the same time that can find its orientation while the signifiers are being unfolded in analysis. Speech in the treatment has the effect of relieving symptoms. One can observe a reduction of the latter at the end of an analysis. But how does it work?

The analytic discourse presents the particularity to include *jouissance*, contrary to all other discourses. Psychoanalysis makes of it the substance of its discourse and even its field, since Lacan.

The body is the locus of *jouissance*, says Lacan. The body is the locus of the Other in that it incorporates the signifiers coming from the Other, signifiers that mortify the flesh. The body is a surface of inscription where the signifiers of the subject come to hook themselves on it. Lacan says language is a kind of parasite, speech is imposed and leaves marks that are indelible. The deciphering of the psychical traces inscribed as such, knotted to the signifiers with their sounds and their sense, in particular that of the mother who names the child's affects and body states, has made the heyday of Freudian analysis and more so of the post-Freudian.

In his late teaching, Lacan abandoned past references to the phoneme to mark the detachment of sense and phonation. In his elaboration of the concept of letter, he did not differentiate the latter from the signifier at the start, but he later distinguished it from it. Lacan linked it to the real and made of it the edge of it, 'the edge of the hole in knowledge'. In his later teaching the letter acquires some autonomy from the signifier and this development towards writing is accentuated with the borromean writing: the letter is what makes a hole, the rupture of a semblance and this rupture produces a *jouissance*. 'The letter is the erasure of no trace from before'<sup>2</sup> so the letter is an erasure [*rature*] and paradoxically, it proceeds from no trace from before, that is, it is impossible to be represented. Writing is writing of what cannot be thought. It is not a transcription. It circumscribes some emptiness, a hole. The writing of the real is in fact the real that writes itself. In that way, the real does not cease to write itself and it is through writing that a forcing is being produced, that of a new writing. The unconscious is a knowledge that is articulated from *lalangue* and the body that speaks is knotted to it only by the real from which it enjoys itself: from the symptom-metaphor, the reference is now displaced on to what makes a limit to substitution, that is what is not substitutable.

In Seminar *Encore*, Lacan defines the function of writing in the psychoanalytic discourse as what is 'not to be understood' (p.46). And further: 'All which is written comes from the fact that it will always be impossible to write the sexual relationship as such. It is from there that there is a certain effect of discourse which is called writing.' (p. 47). In taking a distance from the deciphering of the symptom and the reading of it, Lacan invents a real of the unconscious, not to be read, but to be written in a borromean knotting which produces a writing that constitutes a fourth ring, the *sinthome*, which is a suppleance of the register of the symbolic. A *jouissance* that is no longer embroiled in the logic of the signifier and that has a link with the mark can be envisaged as a name, which cannot be said but can be written, on this side of the image, the sense and the sound. 'The invention is the writing' says Lacan in which the writing becomes an experienced knowledge [*savoir-éprouvé*], necessarily not without the body, a knowledge supposed subject.

Lacan asks himself in *L'Insu...* 'How does the poet succeed in the *tour de force* that consists in making a sense absent?'<sup>5</sup>. The poet Yves Bonnefoy, in his text 'The red scarf'<sup>6</sup> recounts his experience of being exiled from the letter, after having re-discovered one of his writings, a poem in free verse, written by himself 45 years prior, a text that appeared totally enigmatic to him and marked by the uncanny. All attempts on his part to continue writing this text or to rework it failed. 'In that primary version, the one that appeared as an imposed one, all in one go, I could not add anything else ... This poem...was not the beginning of a thought...but a text which existed as such, down to each single comma and which I did not have the right to touch as if it had been somebody else's work... like a production by someone I did not know was in me'. Thus a symptom-poem. In his unsuccessful attempts to decipher the idea of this story, the author came to notice, from the outset, 'this perception of the colour red there where nothing, absolutely nothing, would have made it possible... : something thus supernatural,

the signifier of a transcendence'. The author gives this signifier the value of a cipher, and isn't it the letter? Only later on the author will associate the signifier 'red' to paternity and filiation, to the blood line, to his father therefore, of whom the author recalls the red traces left on his skin by the leeches applied to his sick body at the end of his life. From that initial writing, obscure and uncanny, that the author did not understand, he embarked on tracing back his origins and in particular his father, a taciturn and mute man, always in poor health. In his recalling and his attempt to produce some sense, a particularly moving scene emerged, in a moment when his father was about to leave, the child looked for a four-leaf clover to give to him to wish him good luck. But he could not find one and pressed by time, he picked a three-leaf clover and glued a fourth petal with a bit of saliva on it. This was perhaps his way of writing his first poem, as an attempt to make himself a name.

This brief digression through poetic and literary writing is to show that, in psychoanalysis, it is about producing a category of writing that proceeds from a certain position of the unconscious that maintains a gap in relation to speech and, to attain that, it would be important to elucidate the link between writing and the impossible to say. Lacan, in considering Joyce's writing as a subjective experience where the body is articulated with *jouissance* outside sense – Joyce for whom the imaginary body did not function – asks himself: how does it nonetheless hold together? Speaking about Joyce's writing, Lacan said: 'Not only it abounds [*foisonne*], but we can say that Joyce played with this abundance [*foisonnement*], knowing very well that there would be Joycean scholars around for another 2 or 300 years. These are people who only occupy themselves with resolving enigma.' This is not about psychoanalysts playing with abundance, but if they are ready to pick up the challenge of writing the impossible, and for what concerns this XI International Rendezvous, the place occupied by the body in this, psychoanalysis has a good future ahead!

1. Lacan, J. Joyce le Symptôme, *Autres Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 565
2. Lacan, J. Lituraterre, *Autres Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 16
3. Lacan, J. Le Séminaire Livre XXI, Les non dupes errent, inédit, séance du 9-4-1974
4. Lacan, J. *Le Séminaire Livre XX, Encore*, Paris, Seuil, 1975, p. 37
5. Lacan, Le Séminaire Livre XXIV, L'insu que sait de l'une bévue s'aile à mourre, inédit, séance du 15-3-1977
6. Bonnefoy, Y. *L'écharpe rouge*, Mercure de France, Paris, 2016