

## The Psychoanalyst's Anxiety

At 6500 words to deal with the anxiety of the psychoanalyst, I hope you'll forgive me for a slightly terse style.

First, as President of EPFCL-France, I'd like to thank those who have organized this rendez-vous; we know that you've given your all under the leadership of Patrick Barillot and Nadine Cordova. Thank you also for giving me the floor. Last but not least, thanks to our Romanian colleagues, with whom I was able to begin my interrogations on the anxiety of the psychoanalyst.

The sign counter is counting down, inexorably so:

1/ It's not impertinent to talk about the psychoanalyst's anxiety. Lacan himself did it.

2/ What did he say?

Obviously, contradictory things.

On the one hand, in 1974: "Woe betide the analyst who has not crossed the plane of anxiety!"

On the other, happy is the young psychiatrist who is still made anxious by the mad man. And anxiety should suffocate the psychoanalyst, in the first lesson of the seminar L'angoisse in 1962.

But above all, between 1970, the part added to the speech to the EFP, and January 1980, his letter to Le Monde on dissolution, he said again and again that the analyst abhorred his act. In 1974, the letter to the Italians, the horror of knowing was posed.

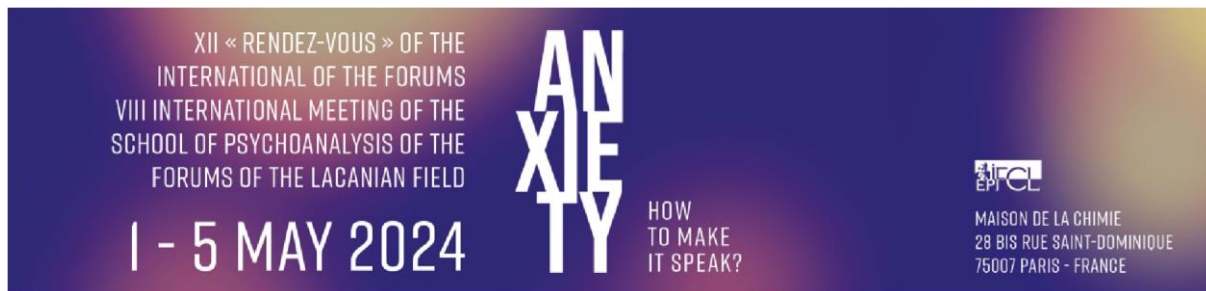
3/ The anxiety and horror of the act are not unrelated: anxiety is a signal that warns of imminent danger; horror is the tipping point into immediacy, with no escape possible. There is no escape, no turning back. Beyond the plane of anxiety lies horror—it is horror.

4/ Let's move on to the anxiety of not being up to the task, which ranges from fear for one's clients to a feeling of imposture. This anxiety applies to all skills, and is accentuated by our system where no master provides any guarantee.

5/ The horror of the act that Lacan imputes to the psychoanalyst is not the mark of the incompetent analyst; this horror is inherent in the analytic act itself. Indeed, it is an act without subject, which responds to, or rather echoes, the knowledge without a subject that constitutes the analysand's unconscious. An act without a subject that forbids the analyst from giving the patient their anxiety. This is the price to pay so that knowledge can make itself heard and reveal its infinite stupidity.

6/ The fact that this act is subject-free does not mean that it occurs spontaneously or naturally. The psychoanalyst must have formed an idea of it, having encountered its effects in crucial moments of his treatment, and he must have drawn consequences from it - in other words, he must have moved. And we can distinguish one particular shift that radically changes the situation for the subject: from the couch to the armchair.

7/ Why should an act without a subject arouse horror in the person who assumes its scope? Is it because it's not enough for him to be the agent, that he'd like to be the actor, while he becomes the agent of his own ejection, reducing himself to a trivial cause, to the point of becoming useless? This is explicitly what Lacan says in *Compte rendu des problèmes cruciaux*, 1966 (no time to quote it).



8/ But then again, why the horror in the face of this fate of waste, identified in advance as inherent in the structure of the speaker attached to his symptom? Of course we know this, but it has an effect nonetheless: as with any cut, we find ourselves alone, which doesn't mean the only one - a diabolical temptation for analysts. In the silence of this solitude, the analyst still has to detach himself from the palpable nothingness on which the whole affair has rested, and, why not, grant himself the satisfaction of having prevented nothing.

9/ In fact, analysts don't seem to be petrified by the horror of what they're doing. Lacan flushes it out in their theoretical deviations, which show that they don't follow through on what their practice teaches them: that their power lies in their self-effacement. There's always a moment when they resist, when, to justify what's happened, they spout off with their ideological a priori. In this way, they fail in their act, leaving the analysand trapped in their impasse. Lacan therefore had not only to psychoanalyze, but to teach what the Freudian novelty was all about.

10/ We can agree with Lacan that a psychoanalyst who persists in crossing the plane of anxiety is preserved from it.

11/ At 4,000 words, we begin our descent with Lacan who, well after 1970, mentions his own anxiety.

It's in the second part of an undated manuscript (estimated to date from 1977 and made public in 2006). We know the first sentence: "As I was born a poem and not a poet, etc.". Lacan points out that this is what he would have put forward in the *passé*, had he ventured to do so. He adds that he's too old for it to be of any use, but precisely because of his age, he can testify to what he's learned: **"I've learned in this profession the urgency of serving not another, but the others - if only to show them that I'm not the only one serving them."**

12/ The wordcount I have left forbids me from commenting on this marvellous passage, because it's what follows that's important here: **"It's the dumbest salad I know, to the point that I have listeners. Silly because they're probably rocked into a sleep of a seeming truth."**

As a result of his teaching, analysts are joined by listeners, whether analysts or not, and it's not out of the question for them to rock. Rocking leads to sweet dreams, but more likely to nausea, which is what makes Lacan anxious. See the text, with all its repetitions and corrections: ***"It gives me anxiety, like everyone else, when the real-lies slip into your mind sentimentally."***

A real that not only babbles, as he first wrote, but also lies, is already formidable; lying is no longer reserved for the chain of meaning, it supports signifying copulation itself, as his poem indicates. And this real can lie enough, not only to make itself natural, but to make itself felt mentally and to push the subject to delude himself, to see, for example, a flower in a salad and even a message in the flower. On March 15, 1977, with the flat knot, Lacan dwelt on this effect of the real on the symbolic when their circles intersect; he called it really symbolic and recognized anxiety in it.

Psychoanalysis shows us why metonymy, the path of meaning, is a dead end; it is incapable of translating the urgency of what needs to be said into truth, and only serves to maintain the subject's anxiety. After the horror of the act, we return to the anxiety that stems from the fact that we, both analysts and analysands, can never be sure that we're not fooling ourselves.

Who, then, can call themselves a psychoanalyst and how? It's a question that never ceased to haunt Lacan... to the point of provoking an allergy in him. This is the last line of his testimony: "Phobia in this case, as we know: me 'allergic' to my audience".

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AN  
XIETY

HOW  
TO MAKE  
IT SPEAK?

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Allergy is certainly a brutal rejection, but usually in fits and starts. This did not stop Lacan from relentlessly pursuing his confrontation with the unbearable question that psychoanalysis never ceases to pose to the psychoanalyst.

Between rocking and allergy, my account is largely exhausted, thank you.