



PAPERS

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Without Reference

The first issue of this new series of 'Papers' marks the School One Action Committee's will to revitalise the preparation for the next WAP Congress, barely one year away. The *Scilicet* volume will be available shortly. The articles published in 'Papers' strive to constitute a ferment to facilitate its reading as well as making this reading more complex.

Being a-periodical, for each issue the 'Papers' are entrusted more particularly to an editor, chosen from the Action Committee; for this multi-lingual issue as The School One, it is to Marie-Hélène Blancard. The translations of these articles are already underway in each of the languages present in this issue, some have already been done. They shall soon be available in their entirety. Each of the five texts, by Lizbeth Ahumada Yanet, Marie-Hélène Blancard, Luisella Brusa, Ana Lydia Santiago and Hebe Tizio, develops a precise point on the 'Semblants and Sinthome' binary, whether clinical, theoretical and/or pragmatic.

Each of them has chosen to comment upon a favourite text that appeals to them in a particular way, a current theme or a clinical find. Hebe Tizio brings together 'La Troisième' and *Seminar XXIII*, Ana Lydia Santiago 'L'étourdit' and *Seminar XX*, Luisella Brusa *Seminar XVIII*, while Marie-Hélène Blancard lets us see the place of the neo-semblant in the psychotic invention and Lizbeth Ahumada Yanet questions the place of the semblant in the processes of the Subject's integration and exclusion.

I should like to knot their contributions together by way of the place of the psychoanalyst which runs through each of the texts. The psychoanalyst, in the age of science, is the one who makes use of the discourse that eludes science. Linguistics is the enterprise of turning discourse into science, but the linguist's position does not allow him to act upon the disjunction between semantics and signifier. In contrast to the linguist, the psychoanalyst denounces the mirage of the reference, especially from the perspective of a calculation of the reference in the myth of an artificial, computational mental language. The psychoanalyst denounces the necessity of reference and brings to light the contingency of the cause of desire and of the forms of enjoying substance. There is no other reference besides that which does not quite fit and which produces a break in speech and how it is rigged up to discourse.

In this sense, the approach to the symptom, through psychoanalysis, its reduction to the singularity of the *sinthome*, leads the semblants to vacillate wildly. What is a discourse that would be made up only of nonrelations? It is written: $S_1//S_2$. Each of the articles from this issue of 'Papers' has come closer to this breaking-point in its own way. They will help each of their readers do likewise.

'Papers' thanks Philippe Benichou for his ingenious editing work on this multi-lingual edition.

Éric Laurent
2 March 2009

Translated from the French by Adrian Price

The Ternary: Name-of-the-Father, Object *a*, Sinthome

Luisella Brusa

1. “Semblants and sinthome”

This is the conclusion of a ternary that Jacques-Alain Miller announced in Buenos Aires: a ternary constituted by signifiers that Lacan introduced into psychoanalysis, of which the two first terms are the *Name-of-the-Father* and the *object a*, on which the AWP has worked during its last two Congresses. The originality of this ternary is that it is a question of limit-points of the theoretical elaboration of Lacan, of syntagms of conjunction and disjunction which permit a point of view on the subject still internal to the field in which it is placed, the field of the Other, but equally beyond the limit of this field, which succeeds thus in relativising itself, of “de-consisting”. These are some syntagms which bear the function, in the Lacanian theoretical corpus, of the death’s head, deformed in the anamorphosis of the *Ambassadors* of Holbein, commented upon in *Seminar XI*. These are some semblants which have the particular status of “showing the real.”

2. The-Name-of-the-Father

A systematic analysis of the formula “The-Name-of-the-Father” took place at the Rome Congress: “You can do without it, on the condition of using it.” The privileged signifier, pivot of the well turned-out subjective, and of psychoanalytic work, brings with it its share of belief which makes of each subject a faithful one, disposed to sacrifice himself to a more or less obscure god, even when this god takes the name of Science. The theoretical position elaborated out of this Congress is maintained in the reduction of the *Name-of-the-Father* to its function: the success of a psychoanalysis is the dissolution of the belief in a being who would be at the place of the *Name-of-the-Father*, on the condition of acquiring the usage of the function, of using its insistence. To use becomes an act, which no longer opens onto faith, but onto confidence. The *Name -of-the-Father*, “the operatory semblant” according to the apt formula of J.-A. Miller, marks the hole in the knowledge that the real verifies.

3. The object *a*

The Buenos Aires Congress on “*The objects a* in the psychoanalytic experience” approached the hole of the structure from the other side, the side of the objects which come to saturate this hole under the form of surplus jouissance. Theoretical and clinical research has covered the numerous forms of this strange object, which does not let itself be taken up in the meanings of language, which is neither absent nor present, nor within nor without. One does not encounter the *object a* in the clinic, except under its fantasmatic aspects, consistencies of the jouissance of the body, semblants which fill the logical void called “object *a*,” place of the impossible of the sexual rapport, another name of the real.

4. Towards the real

One sees now that J.-A. Miller’s choice with this ternary is the trajectory of an elaboration which orients us towards Lacan’s real. The third way, concluding the ternary, the theme of the Paris Congress with its explicit reference to the signifiers of the elaboration of the

70s, encircles even more the real, Lacan's *sinthome*, its original contribution to psychoanalysis (*ipse dixit*) and to the history of ideas. "Psychoanalysis (...) will have been a privileged moment during which one will have had an appropriate enough measure (...) of the 'speaking being.'" - "For a small moment, one has been able to perceive what the intrusion of the real was. The analyst remains there under it. He or she is there as a symptom."¹ The hole of the real is a point of stoppage in his teaching, a mark of style in his research, in which we also have the ungraspable trait of its rhetoric, as J.-A. Miller has affirmed it: "The complement that it carries is the following: beyond the theory of the subject-supposed-to-know, one must have a theory "including a lack which must find itself at every level to inscribe here in indetermination, there in certainty, and to form the knot of the uninterpretable. I exert myself there, certainly not without feeling its atopia without precedent."²

5. Discourse is an artifact

If the real is what there is of the most human to be conceived, product, by excellence, of discourse and of castration, the semblants, on the other hand abound in nature. It is one of the beginning observations of Lacan in *Seminar XVIII*. They come to coincide with the signifiers, "the semblant is the signifier, neither more nor less", when they enter into the human *dit-mansion* [the house of the said]. But in order that they enter there, one must make a step, that of the institution of the unconscious. There is a jump, a beginning discontinuity of the sort that they pass to the artifact. Does the possibility arise, then, of an interrogation on the semblant itself: "Is it truth or appearance?" If one establishes a Moebius strip with which the semblant opposes itself to truth, the semblant dissipates into the truth. Truth has a structure of fiction, it is made up of signifiers/semblants.

The disarticulation between truth and effects of truth open a breach in the world of the semblants: the truth is of the semblant but "the true seeming belongs to the word [*parole*], even were it properly speaking senseless" and "the effect of truth is not of the semblant."³ The effect of truth, the effect of the analytic interpretation, is not of the semblant.

The semblant is taken into this artifact which is the discourse ("The discourse is the artifact")⁴, starting from which there exists nothing more that one could call fact except enunciation, discourse, semblant. Entry into the human dimension [*dit-mansion*] carries with itself the unconscious and the repression that one cannot suppress in its originary root, linked to castration: "The signifiers (...) start off again in (...) nature (...). In order that language be born (...) it has been necessary that (...)the unconscious (...) establish itself. The unconscious and its game, which means that (...) there is going to be, in addition, the fragmented body."⁵

Castration imposes the discourse with its effects, the parade of the discourse with its effects of truth. "That is what one calls repression. It is no more than a representation that it represents, it is this following of discourse which characterizes itself as effect of truth."⁶ Discourse is made up of semblants and does not go outside the semblant: "Everything which is of the discourse can only give itself up as a semblant, and nothing edits itself there which does not basically come from what is called the signifier."⁷ It is the radical position of Lacan: there is no metalanguage.

The judgment of attribution which flows from the negative formulation of the title of *Seminar XVIII* says that “the discourse is of the semblant,” and moreover it leaves empty the place of the object of the demand: semblant of what?⁸

As analysts we are in the position of listening⁹ to a discourse which would not be of the semblant. This is a form of avoidance where castration always presents itself,¹⁰ a fantasmatic waiting for a jouissance not barred by the language which would come to coincide with the “*Beyond the pleasure principle*” of Freud.¹¹ “One must start from this central point of the psychoanalytic discourse, insofar as there is only listening here to this last discourse, the one which would not be the discourse of the semblant (...) which would not be and also, as well, it is not.”¹² “Under what form do we see everything which is evoked as castration; we see it under what form? Under the form, always, of an escape.”¹³ “Of what is it a question there where *this would not be* of the semblant? Of course, the terrain is prepared by a singular step, although timid, which is the one that Freud made in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle...*”¹⁴ There is no discourse which would not be of the semblant, there is no Other of the Other, neither a metalanguage which permits one to say the true about the true, to put a word on the object.¹⁵ “From a discourse which would not be of the semblant, I have spent my year demonstrating that it is a completely excluded discourse. There is no discourse which would not be of the semblant.”¹⁶

It is castration linked to the said-dimension [*dit-mension*] and to the emergence of the unconscious which makes impossible a discourse which would not be of the semblant. But this impossible is precisely the lever that permits one to touch the real by using semblants. It is, in effect, starting from the fact that a discourse is centered on its effect as impossible that it would have some chance of being a discourse which would not be of the semblant: “But the consequence of its emergence ((of the unconscious), that is what must be introduced so that something changes – which cannot change, because it is not possible. It is, on the contrary, inasmuch as a discourse centers itself on its effect as impossible that it would have some chance of being a discourse which would not be of the semblant.”¹⁷

The discourse which centers itself on its effect as impossible is the psychoanalytic discourse. Insofar as discourse, neither can it leave the semblants, it cannot designate an object; what it is a question of is not the object, but of the referent and “the referent is what walks around.”¹⁸ Since it walks around, there is never the last, the good, the true. “It is of the nature of language (that) the referent is never the good [the right one] and it is that which makes a language.”¹⁹ But precisely this, put in the center of the discourse, is the provision for the real of the psychoanalytic discourse: “the referent is always real, because it is impossible to designate.”²⁰

Effects of truth and referent as impossible, these are the two paths by which the analytic discourse introduces the real. On one side, interpretation produces some effects of truth which put a hole in the semblant, on the other hand, the central assumption of the impossible to be designated is marked by the *Bedeutung* of the phallus. This is a signification to which no signified responds, the peak of sense, this “language (...) only connotes (...) the impossibility of symbolizing the sexual rapport for the beings who inhabit it, this language, for the reason that it is due to this habitat that they have got the word [*parole*]”²¹

The discourse-artifact produces access to a real, heterogeneous to the semblant. With its semblants it composes a combinatory algebra which touches the real. "It is a question only that its network (...) make the right [*bons*] holes appear at the right [*bonne*] place."²² Scientific discourse opens onto the "true real," the discourse of the psychoanalyst on "the real at our level of living beings."²³

6. The artifice of the *sinthome*

The concept of the symptom carries us to an actualization of psychoanalytic politics. If the analytic politic is one of the symptom in the measure where it is a politics of interpretation, it implies that everything which articulates itself be liable to interpretation: "The symptom institutes the order from which our politics proves itself (...) implies on the other hand that everything which is articulated from this order be liable to interpretation."²⁴ What demands an actualization in the Joycean epoch in which we live.

What becomes the orientation towards the real? The impossible? The *Bedeutung*? The fullness of sense? The effect of truth?

The tetrahedron of discourse in the first lesson of *Seminar XXIII* is replaced by the four rings of the knot.²⁵ The prospective reverses itself to reach the hole from another side. By managing the knots to reproduce the figures of *Seminar XXIII*, one learns that it is essentially the hole which makes the rings hold together. The knot is maintained if the hole at the center is maintained,²⁶ and it is this operation, the introduction of a straight line which fixes the hole, an operation that Lacan defines as "verification of the hole," which transforms it into the real: "The essence of the Borromean chain rests on the verification of the false-hole, on the fact that this verification transforms it into the real."²⁷

In the perspective of the *sinthome* it is the third ring/straight line, the "Third," which fixes the hole, realizes it as a hole. It is the third to make a link between the three, to make One out of three. The real holes, that is to say, separates, but at the same time, all the while separating, links.²⁸ Thus, the *sinthome*, which is the most particular and the most intimate to the subject, which separates it from the Other, is also what unites, makes a link with the Other.

The artifice, the human operation which leads to the real, is defined, in *Seminar XXIII*, as "a *savoir faire*" with knots. Joyce is the paradigm of it. The artifice is put into value as an artistic act. The artifice is the act which knots and realizes, gives *ex-sistence*, without which it cannot have any notion of the object there. "There is no *fact* except of the artifice."²⁹

Joyce is paradigmatic. From having made of his symptom the ring which knots the three functions of the structure with unconscious subjectivity, he has raised to the level of a central symptom, the one constituted by the default proper to the sexual rapport, all the while in giving to this default a form: "The central symptom, of course, is the symptom made of the default proper to the sexual rapport. But it is indeed necessary that this default take a form. It does not take just any form."³⁰

The rejection of the Name-of-the-Father leaves Joyce faced with the necessity of inventing particular solutions to the vital questions to which the Name-of-the-Father responds. That is to say: the question of meaning in the sliding equivocation into the

lalangue, the question of the proper Name, the question of the assumption of sex, of the rapport with the Other sex and with its progenitor. The last chapters of *Seminar XXIII* reveal the particular solutions that the Joycean *sinthome* brings to such questions, which all turn around the hole of the sexual non-rapport. Thus, it is through his work that Joyce maintains a subjective rapport with the *lalangue* that parasites him (remains ambiguous, Lacan says³¹ if the progress of his art is going in the direction of liberating itself from the parasitical word, or, on the contrary, to let himself be invaded by the polyphony of the word [*parole*]). It is through his work that he makes a Name, through the homage that he wanted to be rendered to his name; he has fixed his proper name starting with the sliding towards the common name to which he was doomed and that Lacan sees sliding into his work.³²

It is through his work that he recuperates a sexed position: Joyce's work is the true respondent of his phallus."³³ It is by means of his work that he constructs a relationship with the Other sex: he succeeds in putting woman at the place of the symptom through a literary character that he imagines and for whom he knows how to open up the choice of *the-one-woman as his woman*.³⁴

The symptomatic dimension touches the relationship of filiations in a revelatory fashion. The *sinthome* is equally mobilized by its phallic function in the dimension of paternal protection that Joyce feels called upon to hold in order to stop his daughter from being hospitalized. The point on which he sustains his defense of his daughter's mental health, as Lacan brings up, is his own *sinthome*, that is to say, the imposed words that he attributes to his daughter in the form of a telepathic sensitivity.³⁵

Perhaps it is this last trait which revealed that the *sinthomatic* solution maintains the knot in a position of *looking like* it makes a knot-in-three – and not of truly making it like one sees it, besides, in the writing of the knot of the Joycean ego [*moi*]. "I permitted myself to define *sinthome* which permits the knot-in-three, no longer to make a knot-in-three, but to conserve it in a position such that it *looks like* making a knot-in-three. There is what I have advanced very gently."³⁶

That does not prohibit the very particular art of Joyce from being able to be the example of an unedited manner of understanding the structure and the function of the *sinthome*. In this, it opens onto the Joycean era, ours, in which the politics of psychoanalysis orients itself on a *savoir-faire*, sustained by science, by the function of the *sinthome*. It is the Lacanian heresy which "from having, indeed, recognized the nature of the *sinthome*, does not deprive itself from logically using it, that is to say, from using it up to the point of attaining the real."³⁷

Translated by Ellie Ragland

1 Lacan, J., *Le triomphe de la religion*, Paris, Seuil, 2005, pp. 82 and 87-88.

2 Miller, J.-A., *De la nature des semblants*, lesson of Dec. 4th, 1991, unedited.

3 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, Livre XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, Paris, Seuil, 2006, p. 14.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

6 *Ibid.* p. 14.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 166.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 16 Lacan, J., "Du discours psychanalytique," *Lacan en Italie 1953-1978*, Milan, La Salamandra, 1978, pp. 41 and 192.
- 17 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, Livre XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, Paris, Seuil, 2006, p. 21.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 23 Lacan, J., *Le triomphe de la religion*, Paris, Seuil, 2005, p. 93.
- 24 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, Livre XVIII, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
- 25 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, Livre XXIII. *Le sinthome*, Paris, Seuil, 2005, p. 22.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- 28 Miller, J.-A., "L'orientation lacanienne. L'inconscient réel," lesson of Dec. 13th, 2006, unedited.
- 29 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, Livre XXIII, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The Analyst and the Semblants

Hebe Tizio

The question of semblants in the psychoanalytic discourse seems complex to me and I will reveal here my first questioning on this subject. To begin with, my question will be about the position of the analyst, as Lacan brought this difficulty to our attention. There is the risk of a certain oscillation between the identificatory tendency that leads to confusing oneself with the subject supposed to know, for example, and the one that consists of thinking that everything is semblant, forgetting the real behind the sense.

I am not claiming this by referring solely to the clinic, but equally by taking account of the discourse of the master present in various institutions. Indeed, depending on the function of the semblants at play, a certain modality of the treatment of the real ensues. In other words, the use of semblants is not without consequences.

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In the analytic discourse the question of the semblant depends on the antinomy between sense and real. The semblant is dependent on sense, and Lacan first situates it between the symbolic and the real. Then, he defines it in opposition to the real in so far as the latter excludes sense. Without a doubt, this poses questions for analytic practice. Indeed, if we say that the real excludes sense, this claim seems to contradict the fact that analysis is underpinned by the idea that words have an impact, which is verified in the practice.

J.-A. Miller, in his course of the 21st of March 2007 takes this question up and opens it up in order to address it in two ways. He points out the hiatus between psychoanalysis as practice and psychoanalysis as perspective. As a perspective, psychoanalysis has on the horizon the real separated from sense; as practice, psychoanalysis operates by way of the connection of sense and semblant.

Although the sense varies, the symptom remains, which would allow its assimilation into the real, which is what psychoanalysis works with. There would then be the real that harbours the symptom on which one cannot have any direct impact. Psychoanalysis thus offers a mechanism where something can be reached with the semblant...if we consider that 'it' has a sense. This takes us to the theme of interpretation and the effect that Lacan always preserved: its resonance. How does the semblant operate? Is the resonance the form that has an impact on a point in the real? Lacan talks about the poetic effect, and we must indicate the equivocal that would be a resonance that makes a hole. Is this kind of interpretation closer to the object *a*?

As psychoanalysis treats the real through this way, it would be of the order of semblant and we can add that there is no other way. Psychoanalysis differentiates itself from the treatment of postmodernity, which considers that everything is semblant – excluding, in this way, the real. If everything is semblant, this opens onto the cynical perspective, which is that of freefloating jouissance, with the difficulties that result from this, namely of symptomatising it. Semblants cannot be approached separately from the orientation towards the real.

Thus, in psychoanalysis, we cannot directly reach the jouissance that is contained in the symptom, because that will generate negative transference. In other words, we cannot approach jouissance with just any semblant; this is the teaching of the four discourses.

One has to keep in mind that the semblant takes a place in the discourses, it takes the empty place that allows the element that is found there to take the place of the agent. The discourse is founded in place of the semblant¹, because it is the agent that specifies the way jouissance is treated. In every discourse, the semblants are supported in different ways and each has its foundation. The S1 appears as the semblant of command; the S2 as the semblant of knowledge; the (*a*) as semblant of jouissance... Each one has a status as important as that of the other, nevertheless it is not the same thing, because, depending on the semblant with which we treat jouissance, the effects change. They can express themselves through the different forms of rejection or other diverse declensions, as Lacan shows when he says that jouissance “is not challenged, is not evoked, is not tracked down, is not elaborated, other than through a semblant.”²

That is, no doubt, a paradoxical formulation, because this place of the agent is in all cases marked by the impossibility to act on what escapes. We must not forget that discourse is a mechanism that finds its main application on jouissance, which is to say that it has a civilising function, but that it cannot render this kernel into reason, which, although foreclosed, agitates it. We are dealing with the other ambivalent of discourse, the one Freud discovered in the dream as resistant to an ultimate interpretation that would reach it.

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The semblant is thus for psychoanalysis an instrument of which one can make use, on condition of not sliding into other discourses. This is not easy to achieve, of course. The last teaching of Lacan starts from this point to underline the uncomfortable position of the analyst.

Why is it uncomfortable? Lacan was looking to make the way in which the analyst situates himself in discourse bearable, because it is not easy to raise this function to the position of semblant of the object, which is the key of discourse³ that would allow him to be ‘worthy’ of maintaining the transference.

The analytic discourse puts the object *a* in the place of agent, a semblant suited to treating jouissance. This is because this object constitutes the kernel that allows us to elaborate jouissance in relation to the existence of the knot. The analyst deals with this ‘emission’ that is the *a*. To this effect he has to “make of his body and his existence as analyst a representation” and he has to take account of that.⁴ When Lacan speaks of representation, he situates this imaginary function in the body⁵ – which gives it consistency and allows the necessary cycles in the cure. The analyst ‘in body’ (again) (*en corps*’/encore) installs object *a*. One has to go through the object *a* to find the real. It is a matter of finding it again, in a certain way, which shows that there is no linear progress, other than towards death – since we are dealing with cycles starting from the structure defined as tauric.⁶

The position of the analyst involves knowing how to maintain the void and to not identify with the semblant but to make it function. Indeed, the semblant and identification are not one and the same thing. In one of the declensions Lacan gives to the term semblant, he plays with to ‘s-eem’ (*s’embler*) and ‘s-embling’ (*s’emblant*)⁷, which situates it on the side of ‘to precipitate’, and what precipitates is something in relation to being.⁸ This makes it propitious for identification, which crystallises in an identity.⁹ This is why it is a matter of keeping to the difference between one and the other, to be able to support the place of semblant of the object in discourse. Knowing how to deal with this object without being it, is the adequate way of treating jouissance.

Although the semblant of the object should be in the position of command in the analytic discourse, one should not for all that understand, as the IPA does, that it is ‘a semblant more semblant than nature, openly displayed’, and it is starting from this difficulty that Lacan gives an orientation.¹⁰ “But remember, that the semblant of who speaks as such is always there in all kinds of discourse that it employs; it is even a second nature. So be more relaxed, more natural when you receive someone who comes to you to ask for an analysis. Don’t feel so obliged to stick your neck out. Even as buffoon, you are justified to be one. You only need to watch my television. I am a clown. Take that as an example and don’t imitate me!”

The body introduces itself by logical necessity. Lacan points out¹¹ that the real is outside of sense and this ‘blanc sense’ or ‘sen – blan’ [*sens blanc*’ homophone with ‘*semblant*’] means that the body necessarily makes believe (*fasse semblant*). Lacan later¹² takes this point up again in order to say that he tried to establish the analytic discourse as the most plausible semblant, the most adequate for treating jouissance, a sort of short-circuit of language by the body. This means that the semblant is kept up in presence, which is where the resistance of the analyst serves this function. One must remember that Lacan situates resistance on the side of the analyst. In “La Troisième” he underlines this fact: “in order to make believe (*faire semblant*)”— he refers to the object *a* – “one must be gifted.”¹³ This ‘being gifted’ involves the analyst consenting to occupy the position of object. We could think that responding to the demand were one way of putting this difficulty into action. Elsewhere, Lacan spoke of women being better analysts from this point of view; he pointed out, however, that there exists a real difficulty in occupying this place of object.

The resistance of the analyst to serve his function is due to this non-consent. Indeed, in the analytic discourse, the place of semblant is not sustained by the S1 or the S2, but by a way that involves the analyst and his body. This evokes the reading of the syntagma ‘the presence of the analyst’ even if it opens the risks of such a position. “That the analyst makes believe (*fasse semblant*), as if he was there for things to work on the sexual plane” is “wholly admissible”, but it is “annoying if he ends up believing it and then this freezes him completely.”¹⁴ In other words, it is a presence that sustains itself through the lack of the sexual relation, in order to allow the analysand, by maintaining this hole, to put in play his mode of jouissance. The psychoanalyst has to practise in always new ways, in order to maintain a void that allows the analysand to lodge his particularity there. He works with the necessary veil over this opening, without filling it. Lacan points out that, to the extent that the historical time of the installation of the analytic discourse is recent, there is no tradition that would guarantee it. Let us add that in any case, tradition wants that the analyst’s particular jouissance must be treated in an analysis, to be able to produce this discourse as such.

This point is at the centre of the formation of the analyst, where the difference between authorising and ‘auto-r(itual)ising’ is pointed out by Lacan in his “Italian Note”. This ‘auto-r(itual)ising’ is a way of trying to plug the hole by making a regulated, bureaucratic Other exist. It gives an account of a radical difficulty of working this “shady waste” that manifests as a “not wanting to know anything about all that”. It is the attempt to reduce the effects of analytic discourse that makes semblants vacillate, which are those of the analyst.

“A theory including a lack that has to be found across all the levels, being inscribed here in indeterminacy, there in certainty, and shaping the knot of the uninterpretable, I get down to this not admittedly without experiencing its unprecedented atopy.”¹⁵ It is in the practice that the analyst has to be equal to the structure that determines him. This is why the psychologising semblants of the discourse of the master, the subject of representation, of

communication, of ‘good feelings’, the ‘good of the other’, create a problem in the practice because one loses the compass of the analytic discourse.

This means that to the extent that these semblants are the product of the discourse of the master, the practitioner in his analysis has to submit to the egoic and symptomatic formatting in order to know how to do differently, starting from what constitutes his place. Lacan separates thus the position of the analyst from the profession, as what completes through giving a ‘professional identity’, an identificatory foundation.¹⁶ In this way the analyst in his position can know how to deal with his body, welcoming what he hears of the analysand’s interpretation. He will also be able to know how to deal with the master discourse to the extent that the analytic discourse is part of the communal discourse, that is beginning to be more and more permeable and which becomes “the armour of good feelings”¹⁷, which means that it is infiltrated with the master discourse.

¹ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) *Le Séminaire « L’insu... »*, 8.3.77, *Ornicar ?*, p. 16.

² Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore*, transl. Grigg, R., Norton, London 2000. (*Le Séminaire, Livre XX, Encore*, Paris, Seuil, 1975, p. 85).

³ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) 14.6.72. Unpublished.

⁴ Lacan, J., *idem*.

⁵ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “La Troisième”, *Intervenciones y textos II*, Manantial, Buenos Aires, 1988, p. 82.

⁶ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2006, p.122.

⁷ TN: ‘s’emblem’ does not exist, but it is put in the reflexive verb form and phonetically evokes the verb ‘sembler’ ‘to seem’; it also alludes to ‘emblem’, which means ‘right away/directly’. Likewise, ‘s’emblant’ does not exist, the ending ‘-ant’ indicates ‘-ing’ in English, thus we have a contraction of ‘seeming’, ‘semblant’ and ‘directly’. The idea is to connect this word game with the word in the next sentence, ‘precipitate’.

⁸ Lacan, J., 8. 3.77, *op.cit.*

⁹ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) 18.11.76, *Ornicar? 12/13*.

¹⁰ Lacan, J., “La Troisième”, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹¹ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “RSI”, 11-3-75, *Ornicar ?* p. 5.

¹² Lacan, J., *Seminario El sinthome*, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

¹³ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “La Troisième”, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁴ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “Lacan en Italie”, Milán, 12 mai 1972.

¹⁵ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “La méprise du sujet supposé savoir”, *Autres écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 338.

¹⁶ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) “Segunda carta al Foro”, 11.3.81, *Escansión. Nueva serie 1*, Buenos Aires, 1989.

¹⁷ Lacan, J., (not in English translation) 14.6.72. Unpublished.

Translated by Natalie Wulfging

The Semblant and the Postiche Object

Ana Lydia Santiago

As Jacques-Alain Miller points out in his Seminar “*De la nature des semblants*”¹, it is his daughter’s difficulties in distinguishing truth from semblant that constituted a source of inspiration for Lacan for the conception of the semblant as a category having its own use in psychoanalysis. “*Is it real or not?*” This question, often formulated by young children, above all when confronted by people in disguise or puppets, seems appropriate for questioning the value of the semblant in its relation to status of the object in the analytic experience. It is in this way that we can take the example of the object named ‘postiche’, since its function is non other than of make believe [*faire semblant*]². More precisely, the postiche object is always artificial, in so far as it can occupy any place to make us believe something, that in truth it is not. From here, we can also ask whether the distinction between the postiche object and the semblant is not a way of interrogating the title Lacan gave to his Seminar XVII “*D’un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant ?*”³

Objective Genitive

To clarify the statement of this title, we can assert that it is not a question of the semblant of something else. “*Du semblant*” [‘of semblant’] must be taken as the objective genitive. It is a question of the semblant as the object from which the economy of jouissance of a discourse is regulated. In linguistics, the use of the genitive consists of the interpretation given to the preposition “*de*” [‘of’] present in the relation between two nominal syntagmes ; depending on whether it is a question of the subject or of the object expressed by the genitive, we have the subjective genitive, or the objective genitive. As such, in the sentence, “*The quotation of Camões of the professor*” [*la citation de Camões du professeur*], the professor is the subjective genitive and Camões is the objective genitive – the one that determines the quotation⁴. Another example of the objective genitive is : “*A book of mathematics*”, where ‘mathematics’ determines the book. Lacan maintains that the semblant cannot be a subjective genitive, in so far as the subject is nothing but the product of the signifying articulation; the subject does not determine it, on the contrary, he is determined by the chain. And, according to Lacan’s terms, in the circuit of the genitive objective and the signifying articulation, “*it is precisely as an object of what is only produced in the said discourse that the semblant is posed*”⁵.

Let us return to the clarification provided by linguistics as a means of explaining how the use of the semblant in psychoanalysis, as a concept, is situated beyond the signifier, since it is a matter of a name that determines something essential for another name. It is this that allows it to be described as an essential factor in the definition of discourse, particularly as what has a relation with the economy of jouissance. I am proposing to take as my field of research the clinical implications of the different possible relations with object *a* and the semblant in the analytic experience.

Concerning the articulation between object *a* and semblant in the analytic discourse, I will isolate, first of all, two references by Lacan which are from the same year but which, in a certain way, oppose each other. The first is in “*Etourdit*” (1/1/73)⁶, where Lacan formulates that object *a* refutes the semblant. The second is in the *Seminar, book XX* (10/4/73), where Lacan affirms the equivalence of this object with the semblant. In putting object *a* in the place of the semblant, the analyst is in the most convenient position to interrogate in what way truth

is concerned⁸. What is more, I will make the hypotheses that this second reference does not cancel out the first, in so far as he opts for an equation between object *a* and the semblant⁹. It must also be noted here that other than object *a*, psychoanalysis is enriched with at least two other primordial semblants in its approach to the clinic of the real of jouissance.

Firstly, the semblant of the Name-of-the-Father, which inscribes jouissance in so far as it names the obscurity of the desire of the mother and promotes something of the order of a transmission.

Then there is the phallus. The phallus is a signifier, a representation, which allows for the formulation and articulation of sexual jouissance. Its use surpasses the level of the image, without, however, losing its connection with it. For all those who inhabit language, it is necessary that something artificial is installed so as to erase the lack inscribed in the speaking being. It is necessary for something to be elaborated that can come to fill, beyond castration, the point of the real of human reproduction. The inscription of castration has the privilege of treating this real as being impossible to divide or fragment. Castration is defined as “*a composition between jouissance and the semblant*”. The phallus, as semblant, borders the veiled truth of castration. As for what concerns sexual identity, it is not just a simple matter of believing oneself a man or woman, but rather of accounting for the fact that “*(...) for men, a girl is the phallus and it is that which castrates them. For woman, the boy is the same thing, the phallus, and it's that which castrates them as well, because they only acquire a penis, and it's a failure*”¹⁰. To summarise, anything that attempts to write the real of sexual jouissance can be put in the category of semblant. As such, object *a* is included in the list of semblants proper to psychoanalysis. The following question remains: Is object *a*, as a semblant, of the same nature as the semblants of the Name-of-the-Father and the phallus?

“Faire semblant” [‘Make believe’]

“*Is it real or not ?*” In clinical practice with children, the child’s game stages the dimension of the semblant, of what make believe is, cancelling out the opposition between the false and the true. In the analytic session, for example, when a child suggests he will pretend that he is the mother and the analyst the little girl who is ill, what is staged evokes a point of the subject’s truth which concerns her position of object for the Other. The game has nothing to do with reality and, in so far as it is fiction, it is vowed to half-say the truth about the castrating effect of the incidence of language for the speaking being.

A clinical fragment illustrates the dimension of the object present in discourse. A little boy spends his week end play fighting with his father. The father, who works in another town, spends only one week end a month with his family. This time, the fights with his father provoke real injuries and eventually, the father allows his son to win. During the father’s absences, the argument is displaced onto the elder brother, attracting the attention of the mother. With regards to the wrestling with the father, the signifying articulation reveals the unconscious game: the veritable object of the dispute is the mother. The result of this game is the subject’s idea of being a loser. The object itself determines the subject through a signifier which renders the connection between the apparatus of the symptom and a position of jouissance viable. The initial symptom motivating the demand for treatment was a failure at school. From the first sessions, the child managed to obtain some benefit from the pedagogical support he had been undertaking for sometime without success. The therapeutic effect had allowed him to abandon the position of failure at school. He then became preoccupied by his future, and was wandering if he would succeed in not being a loser. “*The dimension of semblant furnishes a support for truth in what is vehicled by discourse*”¹¹. The

unconscious statement carries the mark of *a*, where knowledge [*savoir*] is lacking, since there is no knowledge on the absolute that is the real, which always returns to the same place.

Fantasy and the postiche object

The psychoanalytic act is a source of semblant and leads to the limit of discourse, towards the encounter with the real. For the analysand, there is an encounter on this trajectory that constitutes a veritable obstacle for the treatment. It is a question of the moment when object *a* takes the form of the postiche object. Lacan explains this phenomenon in his *Seminar X*. Firstly, he considers it is not castration properly speaking that constitutes an impasse for the speaking being, but rather imaginary castration, that is to say, making something positive from castration. There is no other means of accepting that there is *jouissance* somewhere, than via the lacking signifier. At this place of lack, the subject is summoned to pay the price with the sign of his own castration. It is at this point that he stops, so as not to make use of his castration as a guarantee of the Other. It is, thus, at the precise moment where the analytic discourse pushes him to interpret his castration in this way, by means of a fiction from where the function of the fantasy is extracted, that the subject stops.

The fantasy of the neurotic subject is located in the field of the Other. The subjects leaning upon the fantasy of what he is for the Other presents itself as a perversion. The fact that the neurotic has perverse fantasies does not mean that he is a pervert. The principle function of this perverse element of the neurotic's fantasy, there where he comes to a stop, is to protect him from anxiety. The subject makes use of the fantasy, using it to cover anxiety. He doesn't go far in making himself the object *a* of his fantasy. At this precise point, the object of the fantasy "succeeds in defending him against anxiety only in so far as it is a postiche object *a*"¹².

At the point where the postiche object takes on the place of object *a* in the function of desire and as a defence against anxiety, another obstacle to the analytic treatment can be situated, which has an incidence on the transference. With reference to the optical schema, Lacan insists on the fact that not only is the phallus (- ϕ) not represented at the imaginary level, but it is also cut off from the specular image. An image of lack does not exist, he says. As such, the image of the subject reflected in the field of the Other is characterised by a lack, since what is called on to appear does not appear. Marked by lack, this image orients desire, which rises up in a veiled manner and is, above all, associated with an absence. This absence thus consists of the possibility of a presence - that of object *a* according to the function it exercises in the fantasy.

At this place of lack, a place that cannot be reduced to the specular image, Lacan shows that there is a libidinal reserve that remains invested in the body. Here, castration anxiety is manifested in its relation with the Other. It is from this investment, also called autoeroticism or autistic *jouissance*, that the image of the body is nourished in order to exercise the seductive function for the sexual partner. In its postiche object form, object *a* functions in the fantasy to deceive the Other¹³: "*Object a, functioning in their fantasy, and serving as a defence against anxiety, is also, contrary to appearances, the bate with which they hold the Other*". This phenomenon is also the product of analytic discourse. Lacan has recourse to Anna O in order to show how Breuer and Freud were grasped by the little bit of nothing of the object *a* of the fantasy, which their patient was offering, in a hysterical movement of seduction, testing, in this way, the desire of the analyst.

Is the possibility of overcoming this obstacle – where object *a* takes the form of the postiche object – or rather is a possible crossing over of this obstacle with regards to the construction of the fantasy, conditioned by the promotion of object *a* as a semblant in analytic discourse? Our work proposal takes its bearings from this question by following Lacan’s trajectory around the object and its fictions, to attempt to re-establish object *a* in the position of semblant.

Conclusion

In the structure of discourse, object *a* is the residue of the operation of the evacuation of jouissance from the field of the Other, where it functions as a place for the capturing of jouissance; an eximate place in the relation, installed by the institution of the subject as an effect of the signifier. The object *a* semblant, is not an object *a* of structure. Object *a* fills the place of surplus jouissance, by means of the objects said to be “*episodic substances*”¹⁴: the breast, excrement, the look and the voice. The object *a* semblant is not an episodic substance, even if it is a question of a category characterised by its positivity – surplus jouissance. Lacan writes it in a metaphorical relation with lack ($a / -\phi$)¹⁵, which indicates its solidarity with castration. It is a surplus jouissance that buffers lack and covers the prohibition of jouissance. Object *a* semblant is not restricted only to the signifier of the being of the subject – that is to say, to the elective value of object *a* in the fundamental fantasy, which rises up at the moment the subject realises himself as desire, and when desire then ceases to be a metonymy. When this happens, when something passes into the real, the subject discovers himself as a particular object *a*, what he was for the Other in his constitution as a living being¹⁶.

1 Miller, J.-A., *L’Orientation lacanienne*, ‘*De la nature des semblants*’, lesson of 20/11/91, unpublished.

2 [TN : This text was originally written in Portuguese] In Portuguese, the signification of the term ‘semblant’ does not cover the totality of the semantic value of its equivalent in French. The terms “figure”, “face”, “visage”, “appearance”, “physionomie” are far from containing the sense of this substantive in French, as they only designate what is illusory, appearance or false. As the Lacanian concept shows, the category of ‘semblant’ refers to what, despite presenting itself as appearance, always carries something of truth, and what is more, it takes on, with certain conditions, the structuring function in the process of the constitution of the subject of the unconscious.

Cf. Santiago, Jesus, *La drogue du toxicomane*, Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 2001, note 50, p. 200.

3 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, livre XVIII, D’un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, (1971), Paris, Seuil, 2006, p. 18. [T.N.: This could be translated as ‘*Of a discourse that would not be of semblant?*’]

4 Houaiss, *Dictionnaire de la langue portugaise*, Rio de Janeiro, Editoria objectiva, 2001.

5[T.N.: In English, the ambiguity introduced by the preposition ‘of’ is often removed by the use of the marker: ‘-’s’. For example: “The professor’s quotation of Camões”]

6 Lacan, J., quoted by J.-A. Miller in *De la naturaleza de los semblantes*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2002, p. 18.

7 Lacan, J., « L’Etourdit », *Autres Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 475.

8 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XX, Encore*, 1973, Paris, Seuil, p. 88.

9 Miller, J.-A., *op. cit.*, p. 86.

10 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XVIII, op.cit.*, p. 34.

11 Idem, p. 32.

12 Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre X, L’Angoisse*, Paris, Seuil, 2004, p. 63.

13 Ibid., p. 63.

14 Miller, J.-A., *op. cit.*

15 Ibid., p. 85.

16 Idem, pp. 115 et 116.

Translated from the French by Victoria Woollard

Social Bond: Semblant and Symptom

Lizbeth Ahumada Yanet

Symptom, semblant and social bond are a triad of signifiers that for a while now, have constituted vectors of the theoretical and clinical work of the Freudian Field, and that summon us to the next encounters in America, as well as in Europe¹. The relation of opposition between symptom and semblant shows that even if the symptom is a modality of the semblant, there is a possibility that it can circumscribe a real, that it can somehow be tied beyond the impotence of the symbolic and the traps of the imaginary.

As for the social bond, it enters into this triad in a natural way, since the bond is a privileged form of knotting (or an attempt to be such), at a time when, with Miller, we can say that the Other tends to be reduced to the social Other.

Hence the interest in discourses that talk about the social bond, from a double perspective: on the one hand, those that suggest the possibility of some kind of bond, as making up for the Other that does not exist, and of the knotting of the real of the jouissance. These kinds of discourses, which frequently appeal to the category of community, make a semblant of its existence (of the link itself). On the other hand, there are those discourses that suggest there is an impossibility related to the link, that it does not exist, they point out the non-existence of the social Other whose mission was to somehow make the Other exist.

Between the two of them, it is a matter of setting out what is symptomatic to the bond, its ways of making it exist and its failures.

Recently, some signifiers that are placed precisely in the intersection between the bond as something possible and its forms of failure, have taken on a special relevance in the social field. Deep down, they are names of new symptoms defined precisely in relation to functioning or malfunctioning, support or breaking-off, establishing or re-establishing the bond. These new symptoms are frequently considered in reference to social situations that are not new, but take on new relevance in times when society as such seems to take its role as Other 'reflexively' (Giddens, Beck). Thus, when society itself takes the place of the Other, the symptom tends to be defined in social terms.

Faced with these new forms of defining the symptom, which accentuate the impasse with respect to the social bond, how are we to distinguish certain deceptive semblants from a restitution of the true dimension of the symptom insofar the real is implicated in it?

In this context, our interest lies in the ways of talking about the bond when referred to contingent situations in which some of its possibility is compromised. This is the case of what has been called social exclusion within the frame of the contemporary political-administrative scene, which has given the name to the programme proposed by Jacques-Alain Miller, in relation to the psychoanalytical interest in such problematic: *Clinic and Pragmatics of Exclusion in Psychoanalysis*. Now, we must understand that exclusion makes sense within the framework of a broader dialectic which orients us to make a revision of what we can consider, without pretending to be schematic, its reverse side: reintegration. In fact, we can ask ourselves about

the situation of someone who returns after crossing the frontiers of social exile, of exclusion from the bond with the other who constitutes his reality; giving rise to many efforts, in different fields, oriented to create reintegration programmes for individuals or large populations excluded from a certain context, which start to group under a new social category. The ternary at play: integration-exclusion-reintegration, reveals the temporary value of what appears as a continuum, as it is actually about deep marks of the discontinuity of the semblant of the social bond. That is, the prevailing master discourse promotes the fictional need of an integrated society, by introducing a terminology based on functional categories which indicate a direction, a treatment of the dysfunction of the bond of the subject with the Other.

We can say that Psychology constitutes itself as the guardian of this result, since with its more or less sophisticated techniques at the service of learning, it seeks to consolidate the mooring of the individual to objective reality, through the use of what is considered to be an advanced or progressive scale in the human being, its capacity for socialisation. As it happens with the child, it suffices to accompany this process that will appear as if by magic. One only has to wait for the right development stage and push forward. In other words, the culminating point of the cycle described above is re-socialisation. A re-attachment with that which was given to the subject in its invariable, immediate environment, and which was lost with de-socialisation, if you will. An ever complex process, which translates a deeply symbolic operation regarding the dwelling of a subject in the world.

With the recent case of the liberation of three American citizens from the vile clutches of Colombian terrorism, we observed an artificially produced reintegration program, that is to say, the application of a scheme conceived as a preliminary encounter with the 'natural environment' of these three persons. This indicates the level of sophistication Psychology has reached, by establishing just how scarcely therapeutic a return to the 'same' could be. For cognitive Psychology, of course, it is only about a progressive approach, steps that slowly bring reality closer in order to welcome back the prodigal son, who, in this sense, is an anonymous son as this is about Pedagogy, a programme for universal application: for any person that could be exposed to lying on the frontiers of the Other, on the fringes of the Other, there is a pre-established scheme that allows for a good re-encounter.

Psychoanalysis has a different conception. With Lacan, we acknowledge that the ideal of a return to a previous state, a primary state, defines the therapeutic pretension, and we have to say that we have been warned about the destiny of such a pretension, since this eagerness silences what is concealed and truly tied with the Other, which was nothing but the symptom, and its return is always traumatic. This led us to consider that to find and value the non-therapeutic point, the point of no return of reintegration, is the road to circumscribe that which with separation became apparent to the subject, but was dumped on the Other's shoulders.

The symptom is that which locates what is impossible to bond in the social; it is the hindrance the social chain yields to. But it is also what makes the link possible. That is to say, the bond is always symptomatic, since the only thing that can introduce this element of the real into the bond is the symptom, because despite it being a semblant, it is the vehicle through which the real is included in the bond with the Other. In this sense, the symptom shows in its formation the bond's side of semblant, the ruse which it is, and at the same time what is most real about it in the relation to the Other.

Two ways of separation that imply the destiny of reintegration appreciated from different perspectives can show us what is at stake beyond the typology Psychology intends. Separations that do not leave the function of the fantasy unscathed because they directly attack its consistency. It is

about the ripping of its skin, of the abrupt breaking of its screen, due to it being savagely crossed or its effective temporary 'suspension'. Two subjective situations of exclusion that express and radicalize the social bond's semblant nature are abduction and immigration.

Abduction

To be abducted, untimely and violently taken from the hands of the Other, leaves the mark of the existential void upon which the bond is founded. We talk about the '*ravissement*'² of the subject, not with the singular charm presented by M. Duras, but with the characteristic ferocity of the imperative. The brutal abduction, the kidnapping, can be considered as an imposed discontinuity of the social bond to which the individual who suffers it is subjected; in this sense, a void between the Other and the subject is produced, abruptly breaking the possibility to subjectivise the event; therefore, it is a vicious and massive crossing of the fantasy, which is the frame of the world in which the subject dwells. Thus, the reinsertion of an individual who has gone through such a heartrending experience cannot be understood except from the point of view of that which from that abduction remains as a mark in the subject, in terms of what is most intimate, that is, the unveiling of the hole (which was always there) in the relation with the Other; that is to say, the leftover of the abrupt crossing of the fantasmatic barrier opens up the question: how to bond again starting from the most radical void and distress? What partner might now be possible, starting from which name? Now, testimonies that give an account of an experience of absolute loss of time, identity, meaning, are correlative to the need to become accustomed to the Other, and there, each subject has a margin for choice, that is his dignity in the encounter with liberty.

That is why a liberty paradoxically experienced as traumatic, contradicts any idea of searching for a therapeutic recovery of what was left, since it is rather about what to do starting from what has been found. If there is a return, it is to come back to the bit of liberty located in the subjective dimension, which allows a new comeback in the relationship with the Other, a reinvention. There is liberty if there are conditions to locate it in each act of choosing. In this sense, there is no other liberty than that of the act of choosing, to consent to it or not, and that demands a subject willing to sustain the act and to take responsibility for the consequences that follow from it. It is the liberty to bond again (but from what is new), to institute, starting from the leftover of knowing what is at stake in the relation to the Other, a new bond, or at least a new way to dwell in the field of the Other, with the truth on one's back. Paradoxically, to do so, the subject cannot completely leave the abduction down to the Other. He has to be able to take some responsibility from the separation at stake, even if he did not want it, it is something whose consequences he has to endure, that is his participation. The more or less pathological modalities of return also have to do with the possibility of assuming responsibility for that participation, the ways of dealing with it. Some can be more or less savage ways of implementing the previously endured separation; others are the insistence of the purely passive condition of victim.

Immigration

This entails a rupture with the established bond so as to settle in a new one, there where all the identity parameters are lost, putting to the test the tools the one who migrates has. Sometimes, given the violence that this experience can carry, it is the subject who 'abducts' himself. What is put to the test is the possible insertion of the fantasy and the symptom as ways of bonding with the Other, in this sense, it would be about a readjustment of the fantasy in the bet for its functionality; in the same way, the compass of the symptom will guide the path through the new link, and for that, the subject will have to separate the real of the symptom in its ever new form from the imaginary vital conditions he is dealing with.

The now transferred relation with the Other allows one to think that the void to which the subject is confronted in a new reality is the void of references to place and environment. Nevertheless, what is unveiled is that the void is precisely a void of structure, upon which the semblant of the bond has to be assembled. What is at stake is a *savoir faire* with the same old thing but in the dimension of the new. Nevertheless, the situation is not essential in itself: what is mobilized is the subjective plot, and the attempt of breaking up with the Other simply attains its reinstallation in more or less dramatic ways. Let's see an example that illustrates these coordinates:

It is the case of a young foreigner who requests a consultation in the setting of a CPCT. He left his country a year and a half ago to finish his studies, which he did not finish back in his country. He consults because of several anxiety attacks that make him believe his project might fail, which is at both to complete what he has left unfinished, and to insert himself into a new society. All of a sudden, the hiatus, represented by the ocean behind him, opens up as a hole that makes him feel he has no place, incapable of adapting to the country that is welcoming him.

The analytic work allows him to situate that in fact, that void had opened many years before. To start with, he refers to his father's old age, which always made him feel there was a lack in his bond with him, something that was not transmitted to him. A much older brother had somehow covered that void, but when this brother took distance, at the time of his marriage, the patient fell into a profound apathy, left without place and project.

Many years later, the idea of emigrating becomes an attempt, therefore, to realise what had felt in that parenthesis of apathy and disconcertment, with permanent consequences in his academic and professional results, fixing him in the position of a loser. Thus, by abruptly confronting him with uprootedness, immigration allowed him to subjectivise a previous exclusion, the one that refers to the relation with the father.

The symptomatic appearance of the anxiety attacks gives him the chance to go to analysis, which allows him, in a short time, to sustain his desire faced with the sudden anxiety attacks. His desire, in effect, passes up to the culmination of his migratory project. Going back would be to ignore that this void, which now seems capable of swallowing him up, was there from the start, causing in him the desire to leave. Going back would be, in fact, to fall in that which, without him noticing it, he had to escape: the apathy and disorientation that had seized him when confronting the paternal lack.

Thus, the discontinuity that emigration entails has allowed him to subjectivise a void of a different nature. The symptom as such is the means that has allowed him to do so. The young man in question managed to finish his studies and is starting to promote himself professionally. On the other hand, he has decided to end a relation with a woman from his country of origin that had been chosen by him for a series of social characteristics (an upper class woman), that put him in the place of the loser.

Finally, we can say that we are talking about certain forms of metaphor that pass unnoticed to the modern subject, exiled from his Other. Metaphor that makes believe, sometimes deceptively, that this exile is contingent and unnecessary. It is at this point that psychoanalysis has to reintroduce the dimension of symptom in the considerations of that modality of semblant that the social bond is.

Translated from the Spanish by Silvia Artasánchez

1 The 2009 American Encounter is called: *Symptom and Social Bond*. PIPOL 4 2009 in Europe: *Clinic and Pragmatics of Exclusion in Psychoanalysis*. WAP 2010 Congress: *Symptom and Semblant*.
2 [T.N. In Spanish the word for abduction is “*rapto*”, which also has the sense of ‘rapture’ or ‘ravisement’, the word referenced by the author, in the sense presented by Marguerite Duras.]

The Invention of a Writing

Marie-Hélène Blancard

Whatever his relation to the phallus, the neurotic subject encounters a limit to *jouissance*. The impossible relation emphasises the inexistence of the signifier of *The* woman, but also the importance of the fantasy which, by the interposition of object *a*, serves as a framework for the encounter with the partner.

As for the psychotic subject, he is obliged to invent an original solution to make up for the absence of phallic signification. An encounter with a woman can precipitate him towards the dereliction of his being, if she comes to incarnate *The* woman that does not exist as the “supreme-Being-of nastiness”; a figure of limitless *jouissance* that would make the sexual relation exist, albeit for the worst. As such, psychosis shows itself to be “the failure of semblants”: “We see in the most crudest of lights, A-father as real, this real A-father that the veil of the semblant of the Name-of-the-Father avoids encountering”¹.

Henri and Lucas are two men for whom a love relation precipitated them into a position of *detritus*. This fatal encounter obliges them to circumscribe a mortifying *jouissance* from which they must detach themselves, a *jouissance* they will then strive to counter or to limit despite the absence of phallic signification. To say ‘no’ to the unbridling of *jouissance* is a necessity that pushes them to encounter an analyst in order to find an original solution which would hold as a *sinthome*, as a “writing that remains for private, singular, use only”².

At the place of phallic signification that fails them, the invention of a writing is required as that which could correct the error, “the lapsus of the knot”³, and allow them to establish a new relation with the world.

Henri, an upright man

Henri had just been dumped by the companion he had devoted fifteen years of a life to, a life without any particular story. She was the woman of his life, the mother of his children and he had never envisaged losing her. One St Valentine’s evening, she made a revelation: she did not love or desire him any more, he was a loser, ridiculously selfish, he was nothing for her. She went about maltreating him, humiliating him as a man and as a father, accusing him of having wasted her youth. He broke down and was overcome by a ferocious sense of jealousy, persuaded that she was in love with another, with a seductive bachelor. He made himself the object of the *jouissance* of this inhumane Other who wanted his downfall. He envisaged doing away with himself. Being a father no longer counted for him, only this woman counted for him. Believing he was fulfilling her, he had given her the children she wanted, and this was what she was reproaching him for today.

Henri is a modern and pragmatic subject, who wagers on efficiency. He multiplied his treatments to overcome his distress and his suicidal ideas. There is no relation to the unconscious, he evoked very few memories. Sometimes there was a dream which he treated like a message coming to him from elsewhere or like a simple transposition from daily reality rather than from psychical reality.

Nevertheless, he evoked, not without reticence, a memory from when he was eleven years old marking a veritable break off point in his life: during a fight in the school playground, he

broke a tooth and went home sheepishly without saying anything. He confessed what happened to his mother, hoping that she would keep it a secret, but she made reference to it to his father who, that very evening, went into a fury and punished him with a great slap. This was the insult for him, an unbearable betrayal. He cut himself off from the Other, maintaining only a few links of complicity with his older sister. Henceforth, he experienced himself as alone in the world, that is, until the encounter with the woman of his life.

Henri worked hard to keep up appearances, keeping up a smiling mask whatever the circumstances. What was important for him was the image he gave to others, of a dynamic and well connected man who had made a success of his life: an advertising image, an exemplary family ; he was normal and didn't question anything. Two years beforehand, when he had had some difficulties in his professional life – a kind of harassment, which let a touch of persecution show through, which he did not insist upon – he had allowed himself a few excesses ; he had smoked dope, drunk more than a reasonable amount and put on weight. What disturbed him, above all, was the idea that his malaise might be visible, this was until the day his partner violently expressed the contempt and rejection that he inspired in her.

The collapse of his body indicates his position of detritus. Above all else, he was preoccupied with this “dephallicised” body, which he worked at modelling, getting it to hold together, finding support in the transference so as to be able to take some distance from this woman who was driving him down, humiliating him and no doubt cheating on him.

Refinding his dignity as a man implied refinding a virile body that he could expose to others without shame, and even with pride. Then he would be able to confront his imaginary rival, the man who his wife desired in his place.

His obsessive jealousy became progressively weakened. Soon he was no longer certain that she had a lover, and still less that she wanted to leave him. He saw her differently: fragile and vulnerable, aggressive because she was distressed, unemployed and thus dependant on her husband. He didn't allow himself to be mistreated by her, and kept her at bay with his sharp sense of irony, thus refinding a fragile equilibrium.

With a certain satisfaction, he confided his discovery, a formula of stabilisation that allows him to limit his jouissance whilst giving discipline to his body : “PYAF ! P70”. He commented on this formula specifying that the exclamation mark inscribes the verticality of his body, as it does for the positive state of his mood. He was no longer detritus, henceforth he was an upright man. The formula is composed as following:

Piscine [swimming pool] *Yoga* *Amour* [love] *Forme* [fitness] *Psy 70* (= 70 kg, his “ideal weight”)

This surprising writing gives an account of the subject's effort to counter mortifying jouissance, to reconstruct himself a phallic body and recover his dignity as a man. He no longer expected a hypothetical recognition of his virility from his partner, he kept her at a distance whilst maintaining the appearance of a smooth running family life without any rough patches.

Recently, he rediscovered a foreign young woman with whom he had had a love affair when they had both been students. After, they had lost sight of each other because she had emigrated to the USA to get married, but she had always remained nostalgic about their

encounter, contacting him from time to time. She came to stay in Paris for a few weeks, and made it clear to him that she was entirely at his disposal. He got closer to her, allowed himself to be tamed, and made of this illegal love interval a verification of the virile position that he had corrected ; a position that he would defend so as to resist a demand that he found all the more insatiable the day their separation approached : above all, not to allow himself to be sucked up by the voracity of the other, and to get himself respected for what he had become, a man who knows his limits even if he does not have the phallic measure at his disposal.

Lucas, a man of the world

Lucas consulted in order to get a grasp of what had happened to him since the fatal encounter that had devastated his life within a few months. First of all, he admitted that if he had not shot himself in the head, it was because he had the impression of already being dead and that he was unable to step back into the land of the living without the help of an analyst. I got him to suspend any work projects or plans to go away as the only thing that counted was the analytic work that he wished to undertake to reconstruct himself and reorganise his life, and he would have to hold steady.

His response was a dream, his consent to a work transference. He was driving on a road that was more and more chaotic and was then brutally interrupted : there had been a cataclysm which had sunk the bridge he was to cross ; it was absolutely necessary that he construct with his hands a diversion that would allow him to refind the traces of the main road, circumventing the gaping precipice. Rolling up his sleeves, he got down to work straight away.

Lucas outlined the circumstances of the fatal encounter, the discrete triggering, then the hatching of delusional ideas, and eventually the unfurling of certain signifiers in the real from his family history. This had the effect of putting some order in the disorder of his world, extracting him from the place of detritus where he found himself enjoying from his own downfall, and reducing, one by one, his delusional certitudes.

In fact, he had seduced a brilliant young woman from his class. She was called Céline, was from a rich family in exile and her father was an international businessman. Their romance had had to remain a secret because of her father; no promises, no engagement between them, even their friends were not to know. Lucas accepted this distance as he believed she was in love with him. Besides, they were made for each other ; nothing and nobody could separate them ; their destinies were linked, whether the others wanted it or not. The idea came to him that God wanted it. It would suffice to get the father to accept in order to make the daughter as his own, which he possessed already, but that he wanted all to himself, his own.

Céline still refused to introduce him to her father, but he showed her it was unavoidable: who would dare to oppose himself to the intentions of God and go unpunished? They had been confided a mission : through their union, it was a matter of reuniting her country of origin, and to work on a new constitution for this torn apart country ; as such, Céline would regain her homeland and could give birth to a son who would incarnate the reunification of the country.

Céline gave way and got him to meet her father, who didn't take him seriously. His projects for marriage made him smile, he was haughty and wanted to put Lucas to the test. He made his daughter promise to finish with him in order to concentrate herself on her studies. It was at

this moment that a hallucination was produced, announcing the unfurling of the real that was to follow. He heard a strange noise, a rustling that seemed to rip through the blue of the sky : “It was a kind of boomerang, in the form of a swastika, that cut through the air and threatened me directly...”.

Céline left him. He went adrift, holding onto his delusional certitudes and carrying out complex calculations. He had to know the date when she would give him a son : it was written, thus it would suffice to know how to decipher the signs of divine will. As she was his princess, he would have to count a thousand and one nights from their first night of love to obtain the fateful date, and from there he could define his love strategy.

When she returned, she was cold and evasive. Sometimes he managed to reconnect with her, sometimes she rejected him with contempt and would humiliate him in public. He would insult her and then follow behind her, making himself, as he said himself, “Céline’s dog”.

He was haunted by the idea that she was being unfaithful to him with a boy that she had made her knight in shining armour. He saw them together: from the shock of this evidence, he was thrown to the ground, “as if struck by lightning”. He had been evicted, tricked, scoffed at. Ideas of murder assailed him, followed by ideas of suicide. His state got worse and he took refuge at his mother’s home. For three months, he remained prostrate with the idea of his supreme fault : he had betrayed the love that was at the heart of his mission and which founded his being, thus he had to pay.

Progressively, he renounced his attachment to Céline, considering he had gone too far in the madness of love and had put himself in danger. He met a woman who was a nurse and who loved him. He was going to leave to settle down in the provinces with her so as to obtain a solid training in accountancy. He confessed, however, to having kept a dream: to work for a radio station which broadcasts from the high seas called... “Radio Céline”.

Just before leaving, he left a calling card on the analysts desk that he had just got printed : “Lucas, man of the world”. He seems to have found a durable support for himself with this semblant. This shows us how the act operates on the subject’s *jouissance* so as to separate him from the worst, to get him to produce an invention that anchors him to the semblant, a writing that objects to the sexual relation and the unfurling of the death drive. “To get a human world to hold together, a pinning down is necessary” emphasises Jacques-Alain Miller. “One cannot hold oneself together without, between the signifier and signified, there being a pin [*épingle*] somewhere”⁴.

The interest of these two cases resides in the way love, deprived of a phallic limit, can nevertheless go through a range of different modes until a writing is produced which makes up for the absence of phallic signification, whilst revealing a “singular mode of *jouissance*”⁵. A fatal encounter drove them to the edge of an abyss, but the analytic act is what operates on the unfurling of mortifying *jouissance* in the real. This allows them to produce a singular invention, and eventually have access to a possible relation with a woman who is not an exceptional woman, but an ordinary woman.

1. Miller, J.-A., « *L’orientation lacanienne. De la nature des semblants* », a course given at the Department of psychoanalysis of Paris VIII, the lesson of 27 November 1991, unpublished.

2. Lecœur, B., « *Le type idéal* », *La Lettre mensuelle*, 269, July 2008, p.14.
3. Lacan J., *Le Séminaire*, livre XXIII, *Le sinthome*, Paris, Seuil, 2005, p. 97.
4. Miller, J.-A., *op. cit.*, lesson of 26 February 1992, unpublished.
5. Miller, J.-A., « *L'orientation lacanienne. Choses de finesse en psychanalyse* », a teaching given at the Department of psychoanalysis of Paris VIII, lesson of 3 December 2008, unpublished.

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