

The Seminars of Jacques Lacan

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1953 – 1954, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1988

The first seminar, open to the public, takes place at Sainte-Anne Hospital just after the creation of the S.F.P (*Société Française de Psychanalyse*). Lacan cuts in the study of Freud by dint of his theory on the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. The focal point of the discussion is the direction of the cure. Participants are allowed to make presentations, comments and objections. Through the case histories of Freud, Klein, Kris and Balint, the debate elucidates on the convergence of psychoanalysis, philosophy, theology, linguistics and game theory. In keeping with this heterogeneous approach, Lacan will further appeal to the science of optics to systematize his analyses of the specular relation. After his schema of the inverted bouquet the mirror stage becomes part of the topography of the Imaginary. As to the *méconnaissance* that characterizes the ego, it is associated with *Verneinung* (*dénégation*): "...everyday speech runs against failure of recognition, *méconnaissance*, which is the source of *Verneinung*." He closes the seminar pondering on the role of the analyst: "...if the subject commits himself to searching after truth as such, it is because he places himself in the dimension of ignorance, what analysts call readiness to the transference. The analyst's ignorance is also worth of consideration. He doesn't have to guide the subject to knowledge, but on to the paths by which access to this knowledge is gained. Psychoanalysis is a dialectics, an art of conversation."

In a spoken intervention (Appendix), Jean Hyppolite comments on Freud's *Verneinung* and suggests its translation as *dénégation* instead of *négation*. The question here deals with how the return of the repressed operates. According to Freud the repressed is intellectually accepted by the subject, since it is named, and at the same time is negated because the subject refuses to recognize it as his, refuses to recognize him in it. *Dénégation* includes an assertion whose status is difficult to define. The frontier between neurosis and psychosis is drawn here, between repression, *Verdrängung*, and repudiation, *Verwerfung*, a term that Lacan will replace by withdrawal, and finally by "foreclosure" (*forclusion*), the former being related to neurosis, the latter to psychosis.

When answering Hyppolite in *La Psychanalyse* that same year, Lacan establishes two poles of analytic experience: the imaginary ego and the symbolic speech. Lacan gives precedence to the Symbolic over the Imaginary. The subject who must come to be is "the subject of the unconscious" and "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other." In analysis, he says, "the subject first talks about himself without talking to you, then he talks to you without talking about himself. When he is able to talk to you about himself, the analysis is over."

To this reshaping of the Imaginary by the Symbolic, he opposes the intersection of the Symbolic and the Real without mediation of the Imaginary, which would be the characteristic of psychosis.

1954 – 1955, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1988

Lacan deliberates on the distinction made in his first seminar between discourse analysis and the analysis of the ego, both in relation to psychoanalytical theory and practice. He claims that "analysis deals with resistances." He reviews three works by Freud: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, on the Death Instinct; Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*; and *The Ego and the Id*.

Consciousness is transparent to itself, whereas the I (*je*) is not. The I is outside the field of consciousness and its certainties (where we represent ourselves as ego, where something exists and is expressed by the I). But it is not enough to say that "the I of the unconscious is not the ego" since we tend to think this I as the true ego. Lacan proceeds to re-assert the locus of the ego and reinstate the excentricity of the subject vis-à-vis the ego.

The ego is a particular object within the experience of the subject, with a certain function: an imaginary one. When in the specular image the ego is recognized as such by the subject, this image becomes self-conscious. "The mirror stage is based on the rapport between, on one hand, a certain level of tendencies which are experienced as disconnected and, on the other, a unity with which it is merged and paired. In this unity the subject knows itself as unity, but as an alienated, virtual one."

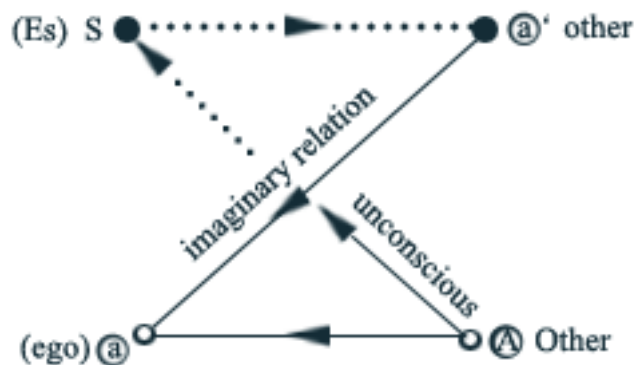
However, for a consciousness to perceive another consciousness, the symbolic order must intervene on the system determined by the image of the ego, as a dimension of re-connaissance.

In "The Dream of Irma's Injection" the most tragic moment occurs in the confrontation with the Real. The ultimate Real, "something in front of which words stop." "In the dream the unconscious is what is outside all of the subjects. The structure of the dream shows that the unconscious is not the ego of the dreamer." "This subject outside the subject designates the whole structure of the dream." "What is at stake in the function of the dream is beyond the ego, what in the subject is of the subject and not of the subject, that is the unconscious."

In his analysis of Poe's Purloined Letter, Lacan speaks of "an other beyond all subjectivity." The question concerns the "confrontation of the subject beyond the ego with the Id, the quod (what-is-it?) which seeks to come into being in analysis." "The purloined letter is synonymous with the original, radical subject of the unconscious. The symbol is being displaced in its pure state: one cannot come into contact with without being caught in its play. There is nothing in destiny, or casualty, which can be defined as a function of existence. When the characters get hold of this letter, something gets hold of them and carries them along. At each stage

of the symbolic transformation of the letter, they will be defined by their position in relation to this radical object. This position is not fixed. As they enter into the necessity peculiar to the letter, they each become functionally different to the essential reality of the letter. For each of them the letter is the unconscious, with all its consequences, namely that at each point of the symbolic circuit, each of them becomes someone else."

When Jean Hyppolite asks: "What use does the Symbolic have?" Lacan answers: "The Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real are useful in giving its meaning to a particularly pure symbolic experience, that of analysis." Since the symbolic dimension is the only dimension that cures, "The symbolic order is simultaneously non-being and insisting to be, that is what Freud has in mind when he talks about the death instinct as being what is most fundamental: a symbolic order in travail, in the process of coming, insisting in being realised."



The *Schema L*, systematized in *La lettre volée* (*Écrits*, 1966), is elaborated in this seminar. A four-term structure maps the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic as replacing the second Freudian topography: ego/id/superego. Two diagonals intersect, while the imaginary rapport links *a* (the ego) to *a'* (the other), the line going from *S* (the subject, the Freudian id) to *A* (the Other) is interrupted by the first one. The Other is difficult to define: it is the place of language where subjectivity is constituted; it is the place of primal speech linked to the Father; it is the place of the absolute Other, the mother in the demand. The Other makes the subject without him knowing it. With Lacan in Freud's *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*, *Es* is the subject. It knows him or doesn't. The further, more exacting insight, is It speaks or doesn't. At the end of analysis, it is It who must be called on to speak, and to enter in relation with real Others. Where *S* was, there the *Ich* should be.

1955 – 1956, Book III: The Psychoses

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1993

Psychosis is one of the three clinical structures, the one defined by foreclosure. The other two are neurosis and perversion. By way of foreclosure of the signifier of the

Name-of-the-Father it is possible to understand psychosis and distinguish it from neurosis. Foreclosure corresponds to Lacan's translation of *Verwerfung* (repudiation). The Name-of-the-Father is not integrated in the symbolic order of the psychotic, it is foreclosed: a hole is left in the symbolic chain. In psychosis "the unconscious is present but not functioning." The psychotic structure results from a malfunction of the Oedipus complex, a lack in the paternal function: the paternal function is reduced to the image of the father (the symbolic reduced to the imaginary).

Two conditions are required for psychosis to emerge: the subject has a psychotic structure (inheritance) and the Name-of-the-Father is called into symbolic opposition to the subject. When both conditions are fulfilled, psychosis is actualized; the latent psychosis becomes manifest in hallucinations and/or delusions. For Lacan psychosis includes paranoia (Papin sisters), so he bases his arguments on the Schreber case (as related by Freud). He argues that Schreber's psychosis was activated by both his failure to produce a child and his election to an important position in the judiciary. These experiences confronted him with the question of paternity in the real - called the Name-of-the-Father into symbolic opposition with the subject. The Name-of the Father is the fundamental signifier which permits signification to proceed normally. It both confers identity on the subject (naming and positioning it within the symbolic order) and signifies the Oedipal prohibition. When foreclosed, it is not included in the symbolic order.

Lacan rejects the approach of limiting the analysis of psychosis to the imaginary: "nothing is to be expected from the way psychosis is explored at the level of the imaginary, since the imaginary mechanism is what gives psychotic alienation its form, but not its dynamics." Only by focusing on the symbolic are we able to point to the fundamental determining element of psychosis: the hole in the symbolic order caused by foreclosure and the consequent imprisonment of the psychotic subject in the imaginary. "The importance given to language phenomena in psychosis is for us the most fruitful lesson of all."

The Saussurian opposition between signifier and signified leads to the radical separation of the two chains, until they are tied through anchoring points, *points de capiton*. These are points at which "signifier and signified are knotted together." Despite the continual slippage of the signified under the signifier, there are nevertheless in the neurotic subject certain points of attachment between signifier and signified where the slippage is temporarily halted. A certain number of these points "are necessary for a person to be called normal" and "when they are not established or when they give way" the result is psychosis. In the psychotic experience "the signifier and the signified present themselves in a completely divided form." Thus the language phenomena most notable in psychosis are disorders of language: the presence of such disorders is a necessary condition for its diagnosis: holophrases and the extensive use of neologisms (new words or already existing ones which the psychotic redefines). These language disorders are due to the psychotic's lack of a sufficient number of anchoring points: the psychotic

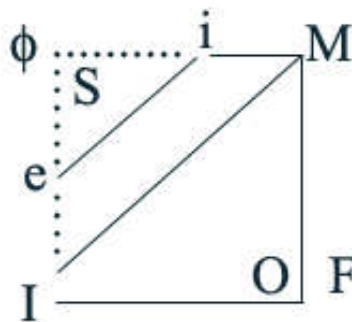
experience is characterized by a constant slippage of the signifier under the signified, which is a disaster for signification. Later, Lacan will posit that there is a continual "cascade of reshapings of the signifier from which the increasing disaster of the imaginary proceeds, until the level is reached at which signifier and signified are stabilized in the delusional metaphor." Thus "the nucleus of psychosis has to be linked to a rapport between the subject and the signifier in its most formal dimension, in its dimension as pure signifier. If the neurotic inhabits language, the psychotic is inhabited, possessed by language.

"On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis" (*Écrits: A Selection*) is a text written in 1958 and contemporary with *Les formations de l'inconscient*; it is a synthesis of Les psychoses and focuses mainly on the term foreclosure, *forclusion*, German *Verwerfung*.

In the *Schema L* "...the condition of the subject *S* (neurosis or psychosis) is dependent on what is being unfolded in the Other *O*. What is being unfolded is articulated like a discourse (the unconscious is the discourse of the Other)."



In the *Schema R*: "...*I* as the ego-ideal, *M* as the signifier of the primordial object, and *F* as the position in *O* of the Name-of-the-Father. One can see how the homological fastening of the signification of *S* under the signifier of the phallus may affect the support of the field of reality delimited by the quadrangle *Miel*. The two other summits, *e* and *i*, represent the two imaginary terms of the narcissistic rapport, the ego and the specular image."



This schema articulates the imaginary triad with the symbolic triad, both of which cut the quadrangle of reality. The term 'reality' is ambiguous in that it designates both our rapport to the world and our rapport to the Real as inaccessible. Schema R is elaborated in terms of a particular form of psychosis (Schreber). Later, Kant avec Sade (1962) will develop the perverse version as Lacan is concerned with creating

the formal bases for his theory before addressing the problems of the treatment of psychosis.

The preliminary question seems to be the one of the Other, whose presence commands everything else. It is the place from which the subject is confronted with the question of its existence (sexuation and death). What is the Other? Is it the unconscious where "it speaks?" Is it the place of memory that conditions the indestructibility of certain desires? Is it the place where the signifier of signifiers is the phallus? Is it the place symbolized by the Name-of-the-Father since "the Oedipus complex is consubstantial with the unconscious? When the paternal metaphor does not allow the subject to evoke the signification of the phallus, when the response to the call of the Name-of-the-Father is a lack of the signifier itself, then it is a case of psychosis.

"This applies to the metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father, that is, the metaphor that puts this Name in the place that was first symbolized by the operation of the mother's absence." It designates the metaphorical, substitutive, character of the Oedipus complex.

$$\frac{\text{Name-of-the-Father}}{\text{Desire of the Mother}} - \frac{\text{Desire of the Mother}}{\text{Signified to the Subject}}$$

$$\longrightarrow \text{Name-of-the-Father} \frac{(\text{O})}{\text{Phallus}}$$

It is the fundamental metaphor on which all signification depends: thus all signification is phallic. If the Name-of-the-Father is foreclosed (psychosis), there can be no paternal metaphor and no phallic signification.

1956 – 1957, *Livre IV: La relation d'objet et les structures freudiennes*

Lacan confronts the theory of object relations defended by the *Société Psychanalytique de Paris*: Freud did not bother about the object, he cared about "the lack of the object." This lack has nothing to do with frustration. It is a matter of a renunciation that involves the law of the Father: "...between the mother and the child, Freud introduced a third and imaginary term whose signifying role is a major one: the phallus." The study is based on the function of the object in phobia and in fetishism (Freud's *Little Hans, A Child is Being Beaten*). In his analysis of Little Hans, Lacan states that anxiety arises when the subject is poised between the imaginary preoedipal triangle and the Oedipal quaternary: Hans' real penis makes itself felt

in infantile masturbation. Anxiety arises since he can now measure the difference between that for what he is loved (his position as imaginary phallus) and what he really has to give (his insignificant real organ). The subject would have been rescued from anxiety by the castrating intervention of the real father, but the father fails to separate the child from the mother and thus Hans develops a phobia as a substitute for this intervention. It is not Hans' separation from the mother which produces anxiety, but failure to separate from her. Castration, far from being the main source of anxiety, is what actually saves the subject from it.

We find imaginary solutions to the gap (*béance*) produced by the appearance of the phallus "as that which is lacking in the mother, in the mother and the child, and between the mother and the child," because the father alone is the bearer or possessor of the phallus. Lacan establishes three modes of rapport to this object: frustration (the imaginary damage done to a real object, the penis as organ), deprivation (the real lack or hole created by the loss of a symbolic object, the phallus as signifier), castration (the symbolic debt in the register of the law and the loss of the phallus as imaginary object). The mother falls from "the Symbolic to the Real" while the objects, through the mediation of the phallus, fall from "the Real to the Symbolic." The fall of the mother leads to the structuring preference for the father. Lacan muses about the way in which "the feminine object conceives the object relation." Lacan talks of motherhood, love, a case of feminine homosexuality (Freud's 1920) in which he sees a type of relation to lack and to the father.

As to the phallus and sexual difference, Lacan argues that in order to assume castration every child must renounce the possibility of being the phallus of the mother; this "rapport to the phallus is established without regard to the anatomical difference of the sexes." The renunciation of identification with the imaginary phallus paves the way for a rapport with the symbolic phallus, which is different for the sexes: the male has the symbolic phallus, i.e. "he is not without having it" - woman does not. Yet the male can only lay claim to the symbolic phallus if he assumes castration, i.e. to give up being the imaginary phallus. Further, the woman's lack of symbolic phallus is in itself a kind of possession.

The Real Phallus

Lacan uses the term penis to denote the biological organ and reserves the term phallus to denote the imaginary and symbolic functions of this organ. However, he does not always maintain the usage. This argues that the distinction between penis and phallus is somewhat unstable and that "the phallus concept is the site of a regression towards the biological organ" (David Macey). The penis has an important role to play in the Oedipus complex. It is via this organ that the child's sexuality is felt in masturbation. The intrusion of the real in the imaginary preoedipal triangle transforms the triangle from something pleasurable to something which provokes anxiety. The question posed by Oedipus is where the real phallus is located, the answer to the riddle is that it is located in the real father.

The Imaginary Phallus

In the distinction between penis and phallus, the latter refers to an imaginary object. The imaginary phallus is perceived by the child as an object of the mother's desire, as that which she desire ahead of the child, thus the child seeks to identify with this object. The Oedipus and the castration complex imply the renunciation of the attempt to be the imaginary phallus.

The Symbolic Phallus

The phallus which circulates between mother and child posits the first dialectic in the child's life which, though imaginary, frames the symbolic. An imaginary element is mobilized - the phallus becomes an imaginary signifier. The phallus is a symbolic object; it is a signifier.

The doctrine becomes systematized in *Les formations de l'inconscient*. In the 1960s the phallus is described as "the signifier of the desire of the Other" and the signifier of jouissance. Also the notion of objet a, the cause of desire, will be added to that of the phallus.

1957 – 1958, Book V: Formations of the Unconscious

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Cambridge: Polity, 2017

The formations of the unconscious are those circumstances in which the laws of the unconscious are most discernible: the joke, the dream, the symptom, the *lapsus* (parapraxis). Freud referred to the fundamental mechanisms involved in the formations of the unconscious as condensation and displacement, which Lacan redefines as metaphor and metonymy. With the former, the play of signifiers creates sense in nonsense in relation to truth. The latter reveals the lack of a word, "an item of waste sent like a ball between code and message." In this lack substitute words appear and function like "the metonymic ruins of the object."

At the junction between psychoanalysis and linguistics, Lacan wants to formalize the primordial laws of the unconscious that Freud had uncovered. His project is to define a topology of the levels of functioning of the signifier in the subject by elaborating the graphs that, under the generic name of Graph of Desire, will be at the core of "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" written in 1960 and published in 1966 in *Écrits*. Here the key concept is that of desire, and Lacan's dialectic of desire is quite distinct from Hegel's. The Graph of Desire will serve as a topology of the different steps constitutive of the subject. "It is precisely because desire is articulated that it is not articulable" in a signifying chain. Slavoj Žižek commenting on this formulation argues that subject is not substance, "it has not substantial positive being in itself, being caught between 'not yet' and 'no longer'. The subject never is, it will have been - either it is not yet here or it is no longer here, since there is only a trace of its absence."

The subject is dependent on the recognition of the Other who embodies "the legitimacy of the code," he alone can ratify a word as a joke, as stupidity or as madness. With the Other, Lacan moves on to the analysis of the Oedipus complex. Three stages structure the constitution of the subject. First, the paternal metaphor acts intrinsically on account of the primacy given to the phallus by culture. Then, the father intervenes as the one who deprives the mother: to her he addresses the message "You will not reintegrate your product" - the child as phallic object. The child receives "a message on the message," in the form of "You will not sleep with your mother" that liberates and deprives him of the object of his desire. From the alternative "To be or not to be the phallus," he can move to the alternative "To have it or not to have it." The third moment - the exit out of the Oedipus complex - requires the intervention of the permissive and generous father who, preferred over the mother, gives birth to the idea of the ego. It is in this context that the problems of becoming boy or girl - of the inverted Oedipus complex are raised.

Lacan plays with the term "insistence" in order to recall repetition, the characteristic of the signifying chain in the unconscious. "The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is but the elements of the signifier." In a previous writing, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud," he defines the unconscious as a memory that can be compared to that of modern thinking-machines where the chain that insists on reproducing itself in the transference can be found, and which is the chain of dead desire.

In "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," written in 1960, Lacan states that "it is not the law that bars the subject's access to jouissance but pleasure." In 1966 he will add a final sentence: "Castration means that jouissance must be refused, so that it can be reached on the inverted ladder (*échelle inversée*) of the Law of desire."

"The signification of the phallus" (*Écrits: A Selection*) is a lecture given at the Max Planck Institute in Munich in 1958. All the research accomplished during *La relation d'objet and Les formations de l'inconscient* culminates here, and serves as an introduction to *Le désir et son interprétation*.

The alternative seems ineluctable: either the Mother or the Father. To choose the Mother means to be condemned to the dependency of demand, while the Father constitutes the access to desire, hence to salvation. If the Father must be preferred to the Mother, if the Father is the origin and the representative of culture (and of the Law), it is because he possesses the phallus that he can give or refuse. The absolute primacy of the phallus - the single emblem of Man - has become a real doctrinal (perhaps dogmatic) basis of Lacanian theory: "The phallus is the signifier of signifiers, the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire," its function "touches on its most profound rapport: that in which the Ancients embodied the Nous, the Mind, and the Logos, discourse, reason." Why such a privilege? "This signifier is chosen as the most tangible element

in the real of sexual copulation; it is the most symbolic in the literal sense," since "it is equivalent to the logical copula." Moreover, "by virtue of its turgidity, it epitomizes the image of the vital flow as it is transmitted in generation." Freud says, there is only one libido, masculine in nature. Later, Lacan will assert that "there is no such thing as sexual rapport," *il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel*, in the sense of proportion or relation: one sex counts for both sexes. Thus the phallus can only appear as veiled.

1958 – 1959, *Livre VI: Le désir et son interprétation*

Desire has to be placed at the heart of analytic theory and practice: the title of the seminar does not indicate a mere juxtaposition of the two terms, it ties them around the essential function of language. Desire, if the libido is its psychic energy, indicates the subject's dependency on the signifiers, which constitute the structure proper. This is what the cure, based on speech, must make clear beyond the analysand's demand. Lacan even asserts that "desire is its own interpretation."

In approaching this seminar one might be aided by reading the seven lessons on Hamlet (1959) published by Jacques-Alain Miller in *Ornicar?* in 1983. After Freud Lacan offers a new interpretation. Hamlet is the tragedy of desire: this is why "we are in the midst of clinical experience." What is this "bird-catcher net in which man's desire is articulated according to the coordinates of Freud, Oedipus and castration?" The structural analysis of the play, which orders not only the characters' positions but also the succession of events, should lead us to "situate the meaning and direction (*le sens*) of desire." The enigma is that of Hamlet's inability to act: he cannot kill Claudius - his father's killer, his mother's lover, and the usurper) - he cannot love Ophelia, "he cannot want." When, at the end, he discovers his desire - by fighting Laertes in the hole that has been dug out to bury Ophelia - this revelation is ineluctably linked to the death in which they all disappear. This tragedy shed light on the masculine drama of desire and on the anxiety of "To be or not to be," hopeless truth of modern man.

On the Father's side, the disappointment is beyond remedy: "There is no Other of the Other." The dead King wanders in quest of an impossible redemption. The Other, the place of truth, does not contain the signifier that could be the guarantor of such truth. The phallus is unavailable in the Other, which is rendered by the sign: - Φ . This would explain the almost desperate tone in Lacan's next seminar, *L'éthique...* What if the masculine subject turns toward his mother to praise her woman's dignity? Then he comes up against what she manifests of her desire: "not desire, but a gluttony that is engulfing." The horror of femininity rules over the play and hits Ophelia, the virgin fiancée, in the face. Her character is fascinating because it embodies "the drama of the feminine object caught in the snare of masculine desire," but above all because she is at the same time the object and the touchstone of desire: objet a (part object) of desire and phallus (present in Ophelia). The two

terms are not quite distinguished and if Ophelia can only be discovered in mourning, - "I loved Ophelia" - such mourning is both that of the object and that of the phallus. Against Jones, whose definition of *aphanisis* was an attempt to find in the fear of being deprived of one's desire a factor common to both sexes, Lacan maintains a radical asymmetry in the rapport to the phallic signifier. Man "is not without having it" and woman "is without having it." The only object of desire, and at the same time its only signifier, seems indeed to be the phallus, which only appears "in flashes," during decisive *phallophanias* where death is at the rendezvous.

Slavoj Žižek notes that for Lacan the phallus is the pure signifier that stands for its own opposite, that it functions as the signifier of castration. The transition from pre-symbolic antagonism (the Real) to the symbolic order where signifiers are related to meaning takes place by way of this pure signifier, without signified. "In order for the field of meaning to emerge, for the series of signifiers to signify something, there must be a signifier that stands for nothing, a signifying element whose very presence stands for the absence of meaning, or rather for the absence tout court." This nothing is the subject itself, "the subject qua S." This Lacanian matheme designates the subject deprived of all content.

1959 – 1960, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1992

At the root of the ethics is desire, but a desire marked by the "fault". Analysis' only promise is austere: it is "the entrance into-the-I," *l'entrée-en-je*. "I must come to the place where the Id was," where the analysand discovers, in its absolute nakedness, the truth of his desire. The end of the cure is then the purification of desire. Lacan makes three statements: one is only guilty of "having given in on one's desire"; "the hero is the one who can be betrayed with impunity"; goods exist, but "there is no other good than the one that can pay the price of the access to desire," a desire that is only valid insofar as it is desire to know. Lacan lauds Oedipus at Colonus who calls down curses before dying, and he associates him with Antigone, walled up alive, who has not given in at all. Both have rejected the right to live in order to enter the "in-between-two-deaths," - *entre-deux-morts* - that is immortality.

Since *Le désir et son interprétation*, the analysis of the son's passion (subject) has become more pressing. Who is the Father? Here is the terrible Father of the primal horde (Freud's Totem and Taboo); Luther's God with "his eternal hatred against men, a hatred that existed even before the world was born"; the father of the law who, as to Saint Paul, leads to temptation: "For me, the very commandment - Thou shall not covet - which should lead to life has proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, seduced me and by it killed me." Lacan adds, "I have put the Thing in the place of sin," denouncing the complicity between the law and the Thing, "which is called Evil." But what is the Thing against which the Father cannot or does not know how to defend himself? It has nothing to do with the

object, which is created by words. It is the outside signifier and also the hostile outside signified: a mute reality prior to primal repression that puts in its place the pure signifying web without being able to hide it. It is the center of the unconscious but it is excluded; it is the Real but always represented by an emptiness, the 'nonthing', *l'a chose*, the nothing, a hole in the Real from which the Word, the Signifier, creates the world. It is the place of deadly jouissance sanctioned by the prohibition of incest. It is associated with the mother who represents it by her manifest carnality, and with woman who, idealized in courtly love, speaks the truth: "I am nothing but the emptiness which is in my cloaca." The idea of a distorted sexuality meets the 70s mantra: "There is no such thing as a sexual rapport." Woman, who is the other, bears the burden of the curse, although the Thing is settled at the heart of all subjects who have to recognize it. Who am I? "You are the waste that falls in the world through the devil's anus." However, salvation holds on by a thread: the theme of the exquisiteness of the son's love for the father would be amplified in *D'un Autre à l'autre*. This father is a symbolic Father, he is all the more present for being absent, a Father without a body or the glorious body of signifiers, a father who can only be the object of an act of faith, for: there is no Other of the Other" to guarantee him. Sublimation is an attempt to confront the Thing: true love for one's neighbour consists in recognizing in him, as in oneself, the place and the wound of the Thing. As for disbelief, by rejecting the Thing it makes it reappear in the Real, which is the Lacanian definition of psychosis.

If ethical thought "is at the centre of our work as analysts," then, in the cure, ethics converges from two sides. On the side of the analysand is the problem of guilt and the pathogenic nature of civilised morality. Freud conceives of a basic conflict between the demands of civilised morality and the essentially amoral sexual drives of the patient. If morality takes the upper hand and the drives are too intense to be sublimated, sexuality is either expressed in perverse forms or repressed. Freud further develops this idea in his theory of an unconscious sense of guilt and in his concept of the superego, that interior moral agency which becomes crueller to the extent that the ego submits to its demands. The analyst, on the other hand, has to deal with the pathogenic morality and unconscious guilt of the patient and with the ethical problems that arise in the cure.

Lacan addresses the issue of how the analyst will respond to the patient's sense of guilt by arguing that he must take it seriously, for whenever the patient feels guilty it is because he has given way to his desire: "the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire." As to the pathogenic morality acting through the superego, Lacan asserts that psychoanalysis is not a libertine ethos. The ethical position of the analyst is revealed by the way that he formulates the goal of the cure. Ego-psychology, for instance, proposes a normative ethics in the adaptation of the ego to reality. Lacan opposes this stance and devises an ethics relating action to desire: "Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you?"

Traditional ethics (Aristotle, Kant) revolves around the concept of the Good, where different goods compete for the position of Supreme Good. Lacanian ethics see the Good as an obstacle in the path of desire, thus "a repudiation of the idea of Good is necessary." It also rejects ideals, such as health and happiness. Traditional ethics tends to link the good to pleasure: moral thought has "developed along the paths of an hedonistic problematic." Lacan does not take such an approach because psychoanalytic experience has revealed the duplicity of pleasure: there is a limit to pleasure, and when it is transgressed, it becomes pain. Jouissance is the paradoxical satisfaction that the subject derives from his symptom, the suffering he derives from his satisfaction. Finally traditional ethics puts work and a safe, ordered existence before questions of desire by telling people to make their desires wait. Lacan forces the subject to confront the relation between his actions and his desire in the immediacy of the present.

Lacan introduces the notion of *das Ding*, the Thing, via the opposition between the pleasure principle and the principle of reality, this opposition, however, is deluding since the latter is but a modification of the former. Two are the contexts where *das Ding* operates. Firstly there is Freud's distinction between *Wortvorstellungen*, word-presentations, and *Sachvorstellungen*, thing-presentations. The two types are bound together in the preconscious-conscious system, whereas in the unconscious only thing-presentations are found. This seems to contradict the linguistic nature of the unconscious. Lacan counters the objection by pointing out that there are two words in German for "thing": *das Ding* and *die Sache*. Freud employs the latter to refer to the thing-presentations in the unconscious, and if at one level *Sachvorstellungen* and *Wortvorstellungen* are opposed, on the symbolic level they go together. *Die Sache* is the representation of a thing in the symbolic, whereas *das Ding* is the thing in the real, which is "the beyond-of-the-signified." Thing-presentations found in the unconscious are of linguistic nature, as opposed to *das Ding*, which is outside language and outside the unconscious. "The Thing is characterized by the fact that it is impossible for us to imagine it."

Yet, in relation to jouissance, as well as being the object of language, *das Ding* is the object of desire. It is the lost object which must be continually looked for, the unforgettable Other, the forbidden object of incestuous desire, the mother. The Thing appears to the subject as the Supreme Good, but if the subject transgresses the pleasure principle and attains it, it is experienced as suffering or/and evil because the subject "cannot stand the extreme good that *das Ding* may bring on him." It would seem then fortunately that the Thing is usually inaccessible.

1960 – 1961, Book VIII: Transference

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Cambridge, Polity, 2015

In *La relation d'objet* Lacan provided a way of understanding the paradoxical function of transference in the analytical cure. In its symbolic aspect (repetition) it

helps the cure progress by revealing the signifiers of the subject's history. He argues that in its imaginary aspect (love and hate) it acts as a resistance. He uses Plato's *The Symposium* to illustrate the rapport between analysand and analyst: Alcibiades compares Socrates to a box enclosing a precious object, *agalma*. Just as Alcibiades attributes a hidden treasure to Socrates, so too the patient sees his object of desire in the analyst. Lacan articulates the objet a with *agalma*, the object of desire we seek in the other.

Before, the emphasis was placed on repetition, now it is placed on transference love, *amour de transfert*: both are inseparable, but the perspective changes. To insist on repetition means to refuse to see in the analytic situation an intersubjective rapport to be dealt with here and now. What speech constructed in the past can be deconstructed in the cure by speech: the cure is "pure symbolic experience." On the individual level, it allows for "the reshaping of the imaginary," on the theoretical level for an intersubjective logic to be constructed. Thus, analysis is described as a particular experience of desire, on the side of sexuality. Speech has an effect only after transference. For Lacan "it is from the position that transference bestows the analyst with that he intervenes in transference itself," and "transference is interpreted on the basis of and with the aid of transference itself." In "The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power" (*Écrits: A Selection*) Lacan presented countertransference as a resistance of the analyst and raised the problem of the analyst's desire. Here, subjective disparity becomes the rule establishing dissymmetry between the two protagonists vis-à-vis desire: what the patient will discover through the disappointment of transference love. Because in the cure one learns to talk instead of making love, in the end desire, which has been purified, is but the empty place where the barred subject accesses desire. We should note that training analysis does not put the analyst beyond passion; to believe that it does would mean that all passions stem from the unconscious, a notion that Lacan rejects. The better analysed the analyst is, the more likely he is to be in love with, or be quite repulsed by, the analysand. In training-analysis there will be a mutation in the economy of desire in the analyst-to-be: desire will be restructured, so that it will be stronger than passions. Lacan calls it the desire proper to the analyst. In *The Symposium* the analyst's position is identified with Socrates', while Alcibiades occupies the position of the analysand, who after Socrates will discover himself desiring. "To isolate oneself with another so as to teach him what he is lacking and, by the nature of transference, he will learn what he is lacking insofar as he loves: I am not here for his Good, but for him to love me, and for me to disappoint him."

Alcibiades desires because he presumes Socrates is in possession of the *agalma* - the phallus as desirable. But Socrates refuses the position of loved object to assert himself as desiring. For Lacan desire never occurs between two subjects but between a subject and an overvalored being who has fallen to the state of an object. The only way to discover the other as subject is "to recognize that he speaks an articulated language and responds to ours with his own combinations; the other cannot fit into our calculations as someone who coheres like us." Socrates, by shying away from Alcibiades' declaration, by refusing to mask his lack with a fetish, and by

showing him Agathon as the true object of his love, shows the analyst how to behave: such is the other aspect of "subjective disparity" taking place in analysis. There is no rapport between what the one possesses and what the other lacks. The phallus, from being objet a, the imaginary object, emerges as the signifier of signifiers, as "the only signifier that deserves the role of symbol. It designates the real presence that permits identification, the origin of the Ideal-of-the-Ego on the side of the Other." There is a woman in *The Symposium*, Diotima, who speaks in the form of myth. In the fable where female lack is confronted with male resources, the feminine first has an active role before the desirable masculine. The reversal occurs because in love one only gives what one does not have: the masculine, by shying away from the demand, is revealed as a subject of desire. Later, Lacan would make Socrates the model of hysterical discourse, but also of analytic discourse because he attains the knowledge, the episteme, of love.

Having managed to provoke "a mutation in the economy of his desire," the analyst has access both to the unconscious and to the experience of the unconscious because, like Socrates, he has confronted the desire for death and achieved the "between-two-deaths" - *entre-deux-morts*. Having placed the signifier in the position of the absolute, he has abolished "fear and trembling." "One puts one's desire aside so as to preserve what is the most precious, the phallus, the symbol of desire." Desire is only its empty place.

1961 – 1962, Livre IX: L'identification

In *Le transfert* Lacan describes symbolic identification as identification with the signifier. Here, he examines the rapport of the subject to the signifier. In the three types of identification isolated by Freud in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921, S.E. XVIII), he finds:

1. A primitive identification with the father as such based on a single feature: the matrix of the Ideal-of-the-Ego, a symbolic introjection of the father's mark, "An identity of body links the Father of all times to all those who descend from Him."
2. A regressive identification in love relations: the object refuses itself, therefore the subject identifies with the object (one centered around objet a and the phallus).
3. A hysterical identification where the subject recognizes in the other his global situation.

By asserting the identification of the signifier and the identification with the signifier, Lacan brings about a new category consisting in the first two and centered on the rapport to the Father and to the phallus. It becomes crucial to institute the subject in his rapport to the signifier - to the signifier alone. To mark the difference between the preverbal and the verbal Lacan points at his dog, Justine, who has

speech but not language: insofar as she speaks, she never takes him for an other, she is not capable of transference and lives in the demand. In "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud" (*Écrits: A Selection*) he refers to the language of the affect and of the body as the "nonhuman" aspect of those who "do not have language." The only salvation lies in "the signifying identification" where the preverbal is articulated within the subject's relation to the word.

In "The agency of the letter..." the signifier is turned into an inscription in the unconscious, a seal, which in *L'identification* becomes the "unbroken line," *trait unaire*, a symbolic term which is to produce the ego-ideal. Though this trait may originate as a sign, it becomes a signifier when incorporated into a signifying system: identification raises the question of the identical. Can it be said that $A = A$? No, for there already is a difference due to repetition: hence $A \neq A$. Against the One of totality, Lacan institutes the 1 as the single mark, the unbroken line, made by mere repetition. The signifier has a unity only insofar as it is that which all the other ones are not, insofar as it is pure difference: the One as such is the Other. There is no tautology in expressions such as "war is war" or "Lacan is Lacan." The real thing has nothing to do with this, it is the same signifier that functions to connote pure difference, for, in repetition, the signifier represents the subject for another signifier and not for some one. The identification of the signifier and the identification with the signifier closely mingle. Formal logic, the study of the proper name, the complex grammar of negation... everything works toward defining the unbroken line as "a return, the seizing of the origin of a counting before the number." The phallus as the symbolic mark is at the origin since "narcissism and incorporation should be located in the direction of the Father and not in the direction of the parasited mother's body." Lacan's response to the problem of the origin (the chicken or the egg?) is the rooster, the signifier that makes the rooster, the letter or unbroken line. His project is to create "a topological structure of the subject."

To whoever asks, "What is the truth of your discourse?", Lacan answers: "I am an analyst, and as such, I have to disappoint you, I don't tell the truth about truth." "I can take you very far on the path of the 'who am I' without the truth of what I am telling you being guaranteed, but nevertheless, in what I am telling you, it is still a matter of truth."

1962 – 1963, Book X: Anxiety

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Cambridge, Polity, 2014

Lacan states that in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926, S.E. XX) Freud speaks of everything but anxiety just "to leave the emptiness in which there is anxiety." This affect, related to the structure of the subject, is not repressed but adrift; only the signifiers that anchor it are repressed. For Lacan anxiety, *angoisse*, is not without an object, but this object is unknown. Since anxiety is linked to desire, and fantasy is the support of desire, the starting point is the *fantasme* elaborated in the Graph of

Desire in *Les formations de l'inconscient*: $\$ \llcorner a$ (Subject barred by the signifier/relation to/objet *a*, which is the object of desire, the imaginary part-object, an element imagined as separable from the rest of the body). He then proceeds to define *objet a*, which relates anxiety with desire.

Objet a is the cause of desire, not its aim. On one hand, it is "the residue of division when the subject is marked by the 'unbroken line' of the signifier in the field of the Other." *Objet a* is different from the *a* of the mirror stage, it is not specular; neither is it "visible in what continues for the subject the image of his desire." It is what is lost during the original constitution of the subject where the Father is primary. If we consider the body, *objet a* is not created by the separation from the mother, but from the separation from the body proper. *Objet a* is the placenta, *l'hommelette*, and even the breast tied to the subject and detached from the mother. They are all objects of desire for us, and there is no anxiety for the woman. In a system centered on the signifier, *objet a* seems to be the irreducible Real, "a lack which the symbol does not fill in," a "real deprivation."

On the other hand, anxiety arises when lack comes to be lacking. It is not nostalgia for the material breast, but the threat of its imminence. Lacan uses Jones' analysis of the nightmare, "this being, the incubus, who weighs on our chest with his opaque weight of foreign *jouissance*," "who crushes the subject under his *jouissance*," and who is "a questioner." Anxiety, like desire, is linked to the Other, to the *jouissance* and to the demand of the Other. Lacan links it to the terrible commandment of the Father-God: "*Jouis!*" For instance, what or whose apparition does for the sudden gap of an opening window (The Wolf Man)? An uncanny strangeness or familiarity, it is the horror of the Thing against which only desire and law combined are able to protect us. This takes place when the subject loses the support of the lack that allows him to constitute himself: $-\Phi$ (the phallus as symbol of lack). It is difficult to situate $-\Phi$ and *objet a* in their mutual rapport. The phallus is sometimes the *agalma*, and sometimes an operating libidinal reserve that saves the subject from the fascination of the part object. Hence, the importance granted to symbolic castration in front of "the father's opaque and ungraspable desire," a castration at the origin of the law.

Anxiety, then, is an affect, not an emotion; the only affect which is beyond all doubt and which is not deceptive. Whereas Freud distinguishes between fear (focused on a specific object) and anxiety (which is not), Lacan posits anxiety as not without an object: it simply involves a different kind of object, one that cannot be symbolized as other objects are. This object is *objet a*, the object-cause-of-desire, and anxiety arises when something fills the place of it, when the subject is confronted by the desire of the Other and does not know what object he is for that desire. Also Lacan links anxiety to lack. All desire springs from lack, and anxiety appears when this lack is in itself lacking: "anxiety is the lack of a lack." Anxiety is not the absence of the breast, it is rather the possibility of its absence which saves the subject from anxiety. Acting out and passage to the act are last defenses against anxiety

And what happens in the cure? How can the analyst measure how much anxiety a patient can bear? How may the analyst deal with his own anxiety? The desire of the analyst is here involved and he has to institute, along with anxiety, the Φ , an emptiness whose function is structural.

1964, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1978

January 15 1964, marks the opening session of the seminars at the *École Nationale Supérieure* where, in the presence of celebrities (Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Fernand Braudel) and a new younger audience, Lacan talks about the censorship of his teachings and his excommunication from official psychoanalytical circles. He wants to train analysts and, at the same time, address the non-analyst by raising the following questions: Is psychoanalysis a science? If so, under what conditions? If it is - the "science of the unconscious" or a "conjectural science of the subject" - what can it teach us about science?

Praxis, which "places the subject in a position of dealing with the real through the symbolic," produces concepts; four are offered here: the unconscious, repetition, transference and the drive. The 1973 title has often been contested in favour of the 1964's: *Les fondements de la psychanalyse*, which implies neither that it is a matter of concepts, nor that there are only four of them. Lacan is suspicious of the rapport between psychoanalysis, religion and science. Did they not have a founding father and quasi-secret texts? Freud was "legitimately the subject presumed to know," at least as to the unconscious: "He was not only the subject who was presumed to know, he knew." "He gave us this knowledge in terms that may be said to be indestructible." "No progress has been made that has not deviated whenever one of the terms has been neglected around which Freud ordered the ways that he traced and the paths of the unconscious." This declaration of allegiance contrasts with the study of Freud's dream about the dead son screaming "Father, can't you see I'm burning?" The main problem remains that of transference: the Name-of-the-Father is a foundation, but the legacy of the Father is sin, and the original sin of psychoanalysis is Freud's desire that was not analyzed. In "The Freudian thing" (*Écrits: A Selection*), Lacan presents the Name-of-the-Father as a treasure to be found, provided it implies self-immolation as a sacrificial victim to truth.

Of the four concepts mentioned, three were developed between 1953 and 1963. As to drives, whose importance has increased since the study of objet a in *L'angoisse*, Lacan considers them as different from biological needs in that they can never be satisfied. The purpose of the drive is not to reach a goal (a final destination) but to follow its aim (the way itself), which is to circle round the object. The real source of jouissance is the repetitive movement of this closed circuit. Freud defined *Trieb* as a montage of four discontinuous elements: "Drive is not thrust (*Drang*); in *Triebe und*

Triebchicksale (1915, S.E. XIV) Freud distinguishes four terms in the drive: *Drang*, thrust; *Quelle*, the source; *Objekt*, the object; *Ziel*, the aim. Such a list may seem quite natural; my purpose is to prove that the text was written to show that it is not as natural as that." The drive is a thoroughly cultural and symbolic construct. Lacan integrates the aforementioned elements into the drive's circuit, which originates in an erogenous zone, circles the object and returns to the erogenous zone. This circuit is structured by the three grammatical voices:

1. the active (to see)
2. the reflexive (to see oneself)
3. the passive (to make oneself be seen)

The first two are autoerotic; only in the passive voice a new subject appears, "this subject, the other, appears in so far as the drive has been able to show its circular course." The drive is always active, which is why he writes the third instance as "to make oneself be seen" instead of "to be seen."

Lacan rejects the notion that partial drives can attain any complete organization since the primacy of the genital zone is always precarious. The drives are partial, not in the sense that they are a part of a whole (a genital drive), but in that they only represent sexuality partially: they convey the dimension of *jouissance*. "The reality of the unconscious is sexual reality - an untenable truth," much as it cannot be separated from death. "Objet a is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as symbol of the lack, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must be an object that is separable and that has some rapport to the lack. At the oral level, it is the nothing; at the anal level, it is the locus of the metaphor - one object for another, give the feces in place of the phallus - the anal drive is the domain of the gift; at the scopic level, we are no longer at the level of demand, but of desire, of the desire of the Other; it is the same at the level of the invocatory drive, which is the closest to the experience of the unconscious." The first two relate to demand, the second pair to desire. Under the form of objet a, Lacan groups all the partial drives linked to part objects: the breast, feces, the penis, and he adds the gaze and the voice. Here, he asserts the split between the eye and the gaze when he analyzes Holbein's *The Ambassadors* as a "trap for the gaze" (*piège à regards*), but also as a *dompte-regard* (the gaze is tamed by an object) and a *trompe-l'oeil*. In the foreground, a floating object, a phallic ghost object gives presence to the - Φ of castration. This object is the heart of the organization of desire through the framework of the drives.

In "*La Lettre volée*" (*Écrits*) Lacan states that "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other," meaning that "one should see in the unconscious the effects of speech on the subject." The unconscious is the effect of the signifier on the subject - the signifier is what gets repressed and what returns in the formations of the unconscious. How then is it possible to reconcile desire linked to the signifier and to the Other with the libido, now an organ under the shape of the "lamella," the placenta, the part of the body from which the subject must separate in order to exist? A new conception of

repetition comes into play, whose functioning stems from two forces: automatism on the side of the signifier and the missed yet desired encounter on the side of the drive, where *objet a* refers to the "impossible" Real (that as such cannot be assimilated). If transference is the enactment (*la mise en acte*) of the reality of the unconscious - what Lacan's deconstruction of the drive wants to bring to light - if desire is the nodal point where the motion of the unconscious, an untenable sexual reality, is also at work, what is to be done? The analyst's role is to allow the drive "to be made present in the reality of the unconscious": he must fall from the idealized position so as to become the upholder of *objet a*, the separating object.

1964 – 1965, *Livre XII: Problèmes cruciaux pour la psychoanalyse*

For Lacan the fundamental problem is that of the subject's relation to language. However, taking into account the Real - from the trilogy of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real - modifies the situation. Previously, the crucial issues were the rapports between identification, transference and demand; now the question "will entail the holding out of a form, of an essential topology for analytic praxis." The signifier returns as structured on the Möbius strip with three forms of the hole, the torus or ring, the cross-cap, and Euler's circles as the maze of the torus or of the spiral of the demand on the surface of the Klein bottle. These figure though constructed in a simple and combinatory way, are nevertheless complicated to comment.

The torus is a ring, a three dimensional object formed by taking a cylinder and joining the two ends together. The topology of the torus illustrates some analogies against the structure of the subject: its centre of gravity falls outside its volume, just as the centre of the subject is outside, being decentered (*ex-centric*). The "peripheral and central exteriority of the torus constitutes one single region." Psychoanalysis posits the distinction between container and contained much as the unconscious is not a purely interior psychic system but an intersubjective structure, "the unconscious is outside" - *extimité*. A common concept of structure implies the opposition between directly observable contingencies and deep phenomena, which are not the object of immediate experience. Lacan disagrees with such an opposition as implicit in the structure. He rejects the notion of observable contingencies, since observation is always already theoretical; and he also rejects the idea that structures are somehow distant from experience, since they are present in the field of experience itself: the unconscious is on the surface and looking for it in the depths is to miss it. As the two sides of the Möbius strip are continuous, so structure is continuous with phenomena.

Thus, the Möbius strip subverts our normal (Euclidean) way of representing space, for it seems to have two sides but in fact has only one. The two sides are distinguished by the dimension of time, the time it takes to traverse the whole strip. The figure illustrates how psychoanalysis problematizes binary oppositions

(love/hate, inside/out, signifier/signified, truth/appearance): the opposed terms rather than be radically distinct, are viewed as continuous with each other. For instance, the Möbius strip helps to understand the traversing of fantasy (*la traversée du fantasme*): only because the two sides are continuous it is possible to cross over from inside to outside. Yet, when passing a finger round the surface of the strip, it is impossible to determine the precise point where one has crossed over from inside to outside. With Slavoj Žižek, the traversing of the *fantasme* implies to accomplish an act that disturbs the subject's fundamental fantasy, unhinging the level that is even more fundamental than basic symbolic identifications. For Lacan, "fantasy is not simply a work of imagination as opposed to hard reality, meaning a product of the mind that obfuscates the approach to reality, the ability to perceive things as they really are." Against the basic opposition between reality and imagination, fantasy is not merely on the side of the latter, it is rather that little piece of imagination by which the subject gains access to reality - the frame that guarantees the sense of reality. Thus when the fundamental fantasy is shattered, the subject sustains a loss of reality. Then, traversing the *fantasme* has nothing to do with a sobering act of dispelling the fantasies that obscure the clear perception of the real state of things or with a reflective act of achieving a critical distance from daily ruminations (superstitions). Fantasy intervenes as support when a line is drawn between what is simply our imagination and "what really exists out there." On the contrary, "traversing the *fantasme* involves the subject's over-identification with the field of imagination: in it, and through it, the subject breaks the constraints of fantasy and enters the terrifying, violent territory of pre-synthetic imagination, where *disjecta membra* float around, not yet unified and domesticated by the intervention of a homogenizing *fantasmatic* frame."

As for Lacan's assertion of the subject's constitutive decentrement, subjective experience is not regulated by objective unconscious mechanisms decentred with regard to the subject's self-experience and as such beyond control, but by something more unsettling. For a standard view the dimension that is constitutive of subjectivity is that of phenomenal self-experience. In Lacan's perspective the analyst is the one who can deprive the subject of the very fundamental fantasy that regulates the universe of self-experience. The subject of the unconscious emerges only when the subject's fundamental fantasy becomes inaccessible, is primordially repressed, argues Žižek. Thus, the unconscious is the inaccessible phenomenon, not the objective mechanism that regulates phenomenal experience. When the subject displays signs of a *fantasmatic* self-experience that cannot be reduced to external behaviour, what characterizes human subjectivity proper is the gap, *la béance*, that separates the two: fantasy becomes unattainable; it is this inaccessibility that makes the subject empty, $\$$. The rapport totally subverts the standard notion of a directly self-experiencing subject. Instead, there is an impossible rapport between the empty, non-phenomenal subject and the phenomena that remain inaccessible. This actual rapport is registered by Lacan's articulation of fantasy, $\$ \leftrightarrow a$, developed in Seminar XIV, *La logique du fantasme*.

Lacan's interest in topology arises since he sees it as providing a non-intuitive, purely intellectual means of expressing the concept of structure. His topological models "forbid imaginary capture": unlike intuitive images, in which perception eclipses structure, here "there is no hidden of the symbolic." Hence, topology replaces language as the main paradigm of structure: it is not a mere metaphor for structure; it's structure itself.

1965 – 1966, *Livre XIII: L'objet de la psychoanalyse*

The theme of the subject divided between knowledge and truth is raised throughout the seminar. Lacan responds to the alternative between the mathematical model and metaphor by stating that "topology is not a metaphor, but a rigorous montage with the *objet a*." Thus the use of four *mathemes*: the disk with a hole, the Möbius strip, the torus and the Klein bottle. "The hole of the lack of the *objet a* would be located at the intersection of the fields of truth and knowledge": such is the contribution of psychoanalysis. It can therefore question science as to the truth whose contingency is missed or forgotten; the same happens with religion. Lacan both splits and unites his audience in two categories: "those who use my word for analytic purposes," and "those who prove that it can be followed in all its coherence and rigor, that it fits in a structure valid even outside its present practice." He also distinguishes between the analyst who at the moment of knowledge is divided (and he knows it), and the status of the subject-supposed-to-know (the subject of science) who restores the prestige of *méconnaissance* by thinking that he is uniting knowledge and subject.

Lacan goes to the Graph of Desire and relates them to his topology. The *objet a* is situated on four sides:

1. the demand of the Other (*objet a* is feces)
2. the demand on the part of the Other (*objet a* is the breast)
3. desire on the part of the Other (*objet a* is the gaze)
4. desire of the Other (*objet a* is the voice)

In this perspective he gives an account of his lectures in the United States, organized by Roman Jakobson, notably "Of Structure as an In mixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever," at Johns Hopkins University. Michel Foucault talks about Velasquez's *Las Meninas*. His address allows Lacan to conjure his theory of the painting as "a trap for the gaze," a gaze in which what falls is *objet a*. The little girl is the slit in the perspective and the vanishing point, the hidden center of the painting, and "in this gap, *béance* where there is nothing to see, it is impossible to recognize the structure of the *objets a*: underneath the Infants' dresses, 'it looks at me,' while the eye is made not to see..." Georges Bataille's *Histoire de l'oeil* is quoted as a text that establishes a connection among all the *objets a* in their rapport to the feminine sexual organ. Therefore, the phallus is the sign that occupies the place of

this gap, the impossible or untenable real. This entails a reshaping of the unconscious around language and the gaze (excluded by Freud). Lacan goes back to the Freudian dimension of desire and of the subject whose foundation is castration. The vagina, the feminine sexual organ, becomes the objet a, which fascinates and leads to ruin unless there is the screen of the phallus, even under the form of Φ . In the end, the penis, as a manifestation that is seen, hardly hides the presence of an objet a that would be an enigmatic a .

The gaze, it should be noted, is not found on the side of the subject, but on that of the object. "It marks the point in the object (the picture) from which the viewing subject is already gazed at" (Slavoj Žižek). The gaze is a spot in the picture, which does not warrant the presence of the subject and by blurring its visibility, introduces a split in the rapport between the object and the subject: the latter cannot see the picture at the point from which it is gazing at him. Žižek brings out *Psycho*, where Norman Bates' house is rendered uncanny because Hitchcock's viewpoint switches from the house coming closer (as seen by the approaching woman) to the same woman coming closer (as seen from the house), giving the anxious impression that the house is gazing at her.

1966 – 1967, *Le séminaire, Livre XIV: La logique du fantasme*

Lacan stresses the importance of the signifying structure in fantasy. He takes as his starting point the matheme $\$$, which is the logical articulation of fantasy. The matheme was already introduced in *Les formations de l'inconscient*, in the graphs of desire, and was later developed in 1960 in "The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious" (*Écrits: A Selection*) as the first topology of the subject.

$\$$ represents the division of the subject barred by the signifier that constitutes him. The sign $\langle \rangle$ enunciates the relation either of inclusion/implication, or of exclusion between the two terms. It's a binary system where the verb as such disappears to leave room for the algebraic sign of a pure relation. Definitions of objet a will vary over the years; to understand it here, one should go back to the part object of *La relation d'objet et les structures freudiennes*, and then address its analysis in *L'angoisse and L'objet de la psychanalyse*. In 1960, however, Lacan mentions the fascination of the fantasy in which "the subject becomes the cut that makes shine in its inexpressible oscillation".

The *objet a* would be the primal object, forever lost, the remainder or the product, which cannot be assimilated because it is real, of the cut operated by the primal signifier engendering the subject when it repeats itself in absolute difference (*L'identification*). "If a is the frame of the subject, this frame falls at the level of the most fundamental act of life, the act in which the subject as such is engendered, i.e. the repetition of the signifier." This is the symbolic paternal mark or the phallic

mark since there is no signifier of sexual difference: "The phallus alone is the sex-unity." The objet a creates a hole constantly filled, in the partial drives, by the different *objets a*, the breast, feces, the penis, the gaze or the voice, objects that are in themselves caught in imaginary substitutions. To understand fantasy, one should try to determine the logical status of objet a, which can only be accomplished by way of a topology dealing with geometrical figures. Is objet a situated on the side of the drive or of desire of which it is the cause? Is it born out of the separation from the placenta as a part of the body proper or from the division from oneself from the signifier, the cost that the speaking being has to pay to become a subject? Is there really an alternative? Lacan talks of a surface where "desire and reality" are "the right and the wrong sides"; however, the passage from one side to the other is unnoticeable, as if there were only one side, because "the relation of texture does not entail any break." Might the fantasy allow oneself to go from the drive to desire and from desire to the drive, to link them or to disjoint them?

Lacan oscillates between exaltation and bouts of anxiety: "The logic of fantasy is the most fundamental principle of any logic that deals with formalizing defiles," and at the same time defers his presentation of "alienation in terms logical calculation" because its formulation is not yet ready. The reason might have been that "truth is related to desire," which "creates difficulties for handling it like logicians do." His aim is to define "a logic that is not a logic, an entirely new logic that I have not named yet, for it needs to be instituted first." Using the character of Diotima from *The Symposium*, he mentions academic Penia (the lack) before psychoanalytic Poros (male resource) and wonders, "up to what point, between the two, he could let the obscurity go."

The seminar shifts its course toward the search for a logic of the subject around the Cartesian cogito, then toward "the sexual act," questioning "the impossible subjectivization of sex," and of jouissance.

The multiple transformations of Descartes' cogito ergo sum (either I think or I am"; "either I don't think or I am not"; "I am where I don't think," or "I think where I am not") end with a play of words: Cogito ergo *es*. The Latin *es* (you are) marks the fundamental dependency on the Other and raises the problem of the passage from objet a to the Other or from the Other to objet a. Applied to desire, "I desire you" means "I implicate you in my fundamental fantasy" as objet a. Applied to love, "You are not, therefore I am not"; "You are nothing but what I am"; "You are the nothing that I am." Now, in German, *Es* is the id, defined as the "non-I," the impersonal id, is it the reservoir of drives? Is it the cauldron (with a hole in it) of Freud's witches? Or is it an aggregate of signifiers?

Lacan elaborates on the notion of "unbeing," *désêtre*, which would become the mark of the end of analysis. He elaborates on puns: the unconscious desire is "pure desire," *dés-être* like *dés-espoir*, despair, is an *irpas*, from the Latin *ire*, to go and the negation *pas*, not, which is an *impassé*, something that had not gone through, linked to the desire of the Other, but also an *impasse*, a dead end, due to repetition. The

interpretation does not entail any solution, issue, to the interpreted desire because there is no solution, issue, to the unconscious desire that "will always remain a *désirpas* (desire-not)." For Lacan, is this knowledge of the truth of the unconscious desire really the solution, issue to be offered in analysis, the solution to the unfulfilled desire" of hysteria, to the "prevented desire" of phobia, or to the "impossible desire" of obsession? By itself, the *objet a* upholds "the truth of alienation"; to discover this truth is to discover that "there is no universe of discourse" because something real (something impossible because not symbolizable) eludes it.

"The big secret of psychoanalysis is that there is no sexual act," all there is sexuality, a very different thing. The act has a specific definition: it provokes a signifying doubling that allows for an insertion of the subject in a chain in which he inscribes himself. Or it raises the institution of the signifier. But there is no signifier of sexual difference and none of the feminine sex either. Between man and woman "there is this third object, objet a, whose always sliding function of substitution makes it impossible to keep them opposed in whatever eternal essence. It is impossible then to posit a subject inscribing himself as sexed in the act of conjunction to the subject of what is called the opposite sex." At the symbolic level, "there is no sexual rapport": there is merely $(a + 1)$ and $(a - 1)$, where a term marks the difference as a plus or a minus. The phallus is "the sex-unity": the 1 symbolizes the incommensurable.

Lacan uses Marx's analyses of use value and exchange value, and starts his theory of "man-he" (*l'homme-il*). The "man-he" is also the man-standard and the man-stallion (*l'homme-étalon*), as well as the bull and the poor bearer of the symbol of sex, doomed to symbolic castration. He does not know how to live since there is no Other to guarantee him, not even if he were God, marked as he is by castration. The only safeguard is the construction of a protective society based on masculine homosexuality. The Father of Freud's primal horde, because he supposedly *jouis* all women, sees "his jouissance killed." Then, if the almighty phallus circulates, it is due to women. "Woman represents the phallus as an exchange value among men; and, if the power of the penis bears the mark of castration, it is because fictitiously she becomes what is enjoyed, *ce dont on jouit*, and circulates as an object of jouissance: she is the locus of transference of this jouissance value" represented by the phallus. Through her identification to the use value embodied in the phallus, woman transforms herself into an object-good. Yet, she does not lack *ressources*, such as masquerade, to act as "man-she," *l'homme-elle*. "She is inexpungible as a woman precisely outside the system of the sexual act," or "she has a different use of her own jouissance outside this ideology." Thus, Lacan establishes "the radical heterogeneity" of the jouissance of the two sexes whose rapport could only be problematic. He begins here a reflection that will lead him to *Encore*, the twentieth seminar.

1967 – 1968, Livre XV: *L'acte psychanalytique*

Since *La logique du fantasme*, where he states that there is not "sexual act," Lacan questions the difference between the act, *l'acte* and a mere action, *agir*. To make love would be an action, *un agir*, and to get married an act, *un acte*, because there is a commitment and a recognition, which entail repetition and the inscription in the Other. The signifier will appear soon: the absence of contradiction between Saint John's "In the beginning was the Word," and Goethe's "In the beginning was the action." Lacan then asserts "the irreducibility of the sexual act to any truthful relation." Since love is itself purely narcissistic, a social pact is what remains of a possible rapport between the sexes.

As to the different types of acts in psychoanalysis, there is the founding act: before, the effects of the unconscious existed, but nobody knew that they existed. There is the entrance into analysis and the fact of becoming an analyst, which are decisions and commitments. On the side of the analysand, there are slips and failures, which lead Lacan to give an *Éloge de la connerie*, Praise of Folly. In analysis it is almost impossible to answer simply to the injunction "render unto truth the things that are truth's and unto folly the things that are folly's," because the two overlap and then one finds "the folly of truth even more often than the truth of folly." The passage à *l'acte* and the "acting out" are activities that, although they fill a distressing hole, reproduce the past instead of remembering it in words. On the side of the analyst, "outside the manipulation of transference, there is no psychoanalytic act." In order for the analysand to move to the function of analyst, the latter - while pretending to be the upholder of the subject-supposed-to-know - must accept being "reduced to the function of cause of a process in which the subject-supposed-to-know is undone." Moreover, in the end the analyst must accept to be "nothing more than a waste of the operation represented by the objet a," which will produce an effect of truth. The position of the analyst is untenable, and this is why he opposes "the most violent misconstruction, *méconnaissance*, as to the analytic act itself." Besides, the analysand who experiences *désêtre* discovers, when becoming an analyst, that he is forced to restore for another the subject-supposed-to-know. The transmission would thus be completed, very different from the *pas* itself. The psychoanalytic act, a "setting into act of the subject" and a "setting into act of the unconscious," is like a tragedy where the hero falls in the end as a piece of trash.

"In the beginning of psychoanalysis is transference," without any intersubjectivity, because between the two partners the subject-supposed-to-know acts as a third, as "the pivot from where everything that goes on in transference is articulated." This pivot is the signifier introduced in the discourse instituted by it, a formation as though detached from the analysand, which has nothing to do with the analyst's person. It is "a chain of letters that leads the not-known to frame knowledge," which concerns desire. The Graph of Desire still guides the analysis but an identity is asserted between the matheme of the subject-supposed-to-know and the *agalma* of Plato's *The Symposium*, which presents "the pure angle of the subject as the free

rapport to the signifier, a signifier from which both the desire of knowledge and the desire of the Other are isolated."

Lacan wants to establish, as to the passage from the analysand to the analyst, "an equation whose constant is the *agalma*" (this term being a sort of compromise between objet a and the phallus). Once "the desire that, in its functioning, upholds the analysand has been resolved, the analysand no longer wants to remove the possibility of such desire, the remainder which, insofar as it determines his division, makes him fall from his fantasy and destitute him as subject." Lacan interprets the depressive position often noticed as the end of the analysis in terms of *désêtre* and "subjective destitution." "The subject sees its assurance sink, a self-assurance that comes from the fantasy in which everybody's opening onto the real is constituted." The subject realizes that the grasp of desire is nothing other than that of a *désêtre*. "In this *désêtre* what is unveiled is the nonessential nature of the subject-supposed-to-know; the analyst-to-be is dedicated to the *agalma* of the essence of desire, even if it means that the analyst-to-be has to be reduced to an ordinary signifier, since the subject is the signifier of the pure signifying relation." Does going through the fantasy, then, mean going toward the drive or toward a confrontation with the signifier? Thus Lacan answers: "The being of desire meets the being of knowledge to be reborn from their knot in a strip formed by the only side on which only one lack is inscribed, that which upholds the *agalma*." The *agalma* becomes the signifier of the bar that is put on the Other (A); the gap of ($- \Phi$) opens in the Other; and the (a) falls from the Other.

Slavoj Žižek argues that "here we find the inescapable deadlock that defines the position of the loved one: the other sees something in me and wants something from me, but I cannot give him what I do not possess - or as Lacan puts it, there is no rapport between what the loved one possesses and what the loving one lacks. The only way for the loved one to escape this deadlock is to stretch out his hand toward the loving one and to return love, that is to exchange, in a metaphorical gesture, his status as the loved one for the status of the loving one. This reversal designates the point of subjectivization: the object of love changes into the subject the moment it answers the call of love. And it is only by way of this reversal that a genuine love emerges: I am truly in love not when I am simply fascinated by the *agalma* in the other, but when I experience the other, the object of love, as frail and lost, as lacking 'it', and my love none the less survives this loss."

1968 – 1969, *Livre XVI: D'un Autre à l'autre*

Lacan takes a stand in the crisis of the university that follows May 1968: "If psychoanalysis cannot be articulated as a knowledge and taught as such, it has no place in Academia, where it is only a matter of knowledge." He rejects non-conceptualization: structure is the real. Dealing with the passage from objet a to the Other and from the Other to objet a, Lacan analyzes and combines Pascal, Marx and

the logic of the link between l, the unbroken line, the trait *unitaire* of *L'identification* and a as follows:

$$\frac{l}{a} = l+a$$

To that, he adds questions on feminine jouissance (is it the place of the Other or of the Thing?), on the *nullibiquité, non-ubiquitousness*, of the phallus that testifies that jouissance is real but cannot be symbolized, on the Phallus as a symbol that is lacking or outside system, and the repetition of the Graphs of Desire.

Marx invented surplus-value, plus-value, and he, Lacan, invented the objet a. He asserts that he is going to construct the *plus-de-jouir* so as to isolate the objet a, he will do so by homology with surplus-value. In the matheme of fantasy, $\$ \langle a \rangle$, "the being of a is the *plus-de-jouir*, surplus-jouissance.¹ At the level of the enunciation, perversion reveals "surplus-jouissance in its bare form." The rapport between surplus-jouissance and surplus-value is the function of the *objet a*. The perverse has given to God his true plenitude by giving a back to the Other. Hence, a is in A (the small other is in the big Other); however, a makes a hole in A. Jouissance is excluded, the Other is the place where it is known, a is the effect of fall that results from it. So, after going from a to A, one must go from A to a.

"I mainly talk about a dead God, maybe in order to better free myself from my relation to a dead Freud." Yet, in *Le Pari*, Pascal raises the question of the existence of God. The only true question is that of the subject: Does I exist? Do I exist? "The nothing that life is," which is at stake for Pascal, is the surplus-jouissance. The assumption of the loss creates the gap, *béance*, between the body and its jouissance: such is the effect of the objet a, the lost object, in the field of the Other. For Pascal, the central point is "the infinite nothing"; the only salvation is grace, for God's mercy is bigger than His justice. Grace allows proximity to the desire of the Other in its various forms: "I ask myself what you want," then "I ask you what you want," which leads to "Thy Will be Done!" However, this sentence is uttered to a faceless Other. God's will, for not being our will, comes to lack; then, for lack of God, we are left with the Father as dead, the Father as a name (the pivot of discourse) and as the rapport of jouissance to castration. "The Name-of-the-Father is a rift that remains wide open in my discourse, it is only known through an act of faith: there is no Incarnation in the place of the Other."

Slavoj Žižek aptly describes surplus-jouissance (*lacanian ink 15*) as follows:

"So in the case of the caffeine-free diet Coke, we drink the Nothingness itself, the pure semblance of a property that is effectively merely an envelope of a void. This

¹ Bruce Fink notes that the translation of *plus-de-jouir* rendered in *Television* (New York: Norton, 1989) as "over-coming" is deficient. Since *plus-de-jouir* is based on plus-value (Marx's surplus value), it means a surplus, extra or supplemental jouissance: the plus should be understood in the sense of Encore, More. He stresses, "The more sensual sense of being 'overcome' with or 'overwhelmed' by pleasure is related to the Other jouissance.

example makes palpable the inherent link between three notions: that of the Marxist surplus-value, that of the Lacanian objet a as surplus-jouissance, and the paradox of the superego, perceived long ago by Freud: the more you drink Coke, the more you are thirsty; the more profit you have, the more you want; the more you obey the superego command, the more you are guilty. In all three cases, the logic of balanced exchange is perturbed in favour of an excessive logic of "the more you give, the more you owe (or the consumerist version "the more you buy, the more you have to spend"), of the paradox which is the very opposite of the paradox of love where, as Juliet put in her immortal words to Romeo, 'the more I give, the more I have'. The key to this perturbation is the surplus-jouissance, the objet a which exists (or rather insists) in a kind of curved space in which, the more you approach it, the more it eludes your grasp (or, the more you possess it, the greater the lack). Perhaps, sexual difference enters here in an unexpected way: the reason why the superego is stronger in man is that it is man, not woman, who is intensely related to this excess of the surplus-jouissance over the pacifying functioning of the symbolic Law. In terms of the paternal function, the opposition between the pacifying symbolic Law and the excessive superego injunction is the one between the Name-of-the-Father (the paternal symbolic authority) and the "primordial father," allowed to enjoy all women. This rapist "primordial father" is a male (obsessional), not feminine (hysterical), fantasy: it is man who is able to endure his integration into the symbolic order only when this integration is sustained by some hidden reference to the fantasy of the unbridled excessive jouissance embodied in the unconditional superego injunction to enjoy, *jouir* to go to the extreme, to transgress and force constantly the limit. It is man in whom the integration into the symbolic order is sustained by the superego exception."

1969 – 1970, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 2006

Lacan identifies four viable types of social bond, which regulate intersubjective relations. Articulations of the symbolic network, the Four Discourses get structured throughout dramatic reflection: *plus-de-jouir* and jouissance; the master and the slave; Marx; knowledge, truth and jouissance; the Father of Totem and Taboo who is all love - or all jouissance - and whose murder generates the love of the Dead Father, a father to whom Lacan opposes both the Father presiding over the first idealization - the one deserving love - and the Father who enters the discourse of the Master and is thereby castrated *ab initio*. For Lacan "the death of the father is the key to supreme jouissance, later identified with the mother as aim of incest."

Psychoanalysis "is not constructed on the proposition 'to sleep with the mother' but on the death of the father as primal jouissance." The real father is not the father of biological reality, be he who upholds "the Real as impossible." From the Oedipus complex Lacan only saves the paternal metaphor and the Name-of-the-Father which "is positioned where knowledge acts as truth. Psychoanalysis consolidates the law."

The novelty in this seminar is the return of the hysteric, with Dora and *la Belle Bouche erre* - the Beautiful Mouth wanders - an allusion to the dream of the beautiful butcher's wife analyzed by Freud and carried on in "The direction of the treatment and the principles of power" (*Écrits: A Selection*). Three questions: the rapport between jouissance and the desire for unfulfilled desire; the hysteric who makes man - *fait l'homme* or the Master - she constructs him as "a man prompted by the desire to know"; a new conception of the cure as a "hystericization of discourse," which the analyst introduces at the structural level. This leaves untouched hysteria as attributed to woman - the only discourse where sexual difference comes openly into play. Castration is "the deprivation of woman," insofar as "she would fulfill herself in the smallest signifier." Woman is absent from the field of the signifier.

As to the *mathemes* "a fundamental starting relation" functions as a postulate:

$$\frac{S1}{\$} = S2$$

S1 refers to "the marked circle of the field of the Other," it is the Master-Signifier. *S2* is the "battery of signifiers, already there" at the place where "one wants to determine the status of a discourse as status of statement," that is knowledge - *savoir*. *S1* comes into play in a signifying battery conforming the network of knowledge. is the subject, marked by the unbroken line - trait *unaire* - which represents it and is different from the living individual who is not the locus of this subject. Add the *objet a*, the object-waste or the loss of the object that occurred when the originary division of the subject took place - the object that is the cause of desire: the *plus-de-jouir*.

Discourse of the Master:

$$\frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{a}$$

It is the basic discourse from which the other three derive. The dominant position is occupied by the master signifier, *S1*, which represents the subject, *S*, for all other signifiers: *S2*. In this signifying operation there is a surplus: *objet a*. All attempts at totalisation are doomed to fail. This discourse masks the division of the subject, it illustrates the structure of the dialectic of the master and the slave. The master, *S1*, is the agent who puts the slave, *S2*, to work: the result is a surplus, *objet a*, that the master struggles to appropriate.

Discourse of the University:

$$\frac{S2}{S1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{\$}$$

It is caused by a anticlockwise quarter turn of the previous discourse. The dominant position is occupied by knowledge - *savoir*. An attempt to mastery can be traced behind the endeavours to impart neutral knowledge: domination of the other to whom knowledge is transmitted. This hegemony is visible in modernity with science.

Discourse of the Hysteric:

$$\frac{\mathcal{S}}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S1}{S2}$$

It is effected by a clockwise quarter turn of the discourse of the master. It is not simply "that which is uttered by the hysteric," but a certain kind of articulation in which any subject may be inscribed. The divided subject, *S*, the symptom, is in the pole position. This discourse points toward knowledge. "The cure involves the structural introduction of the discourse of the hysteric by way of artificial conditions": the analyst hystericizes the analysand's discourse.

Discourse of the Analyst:

$$\frac{a}{S2} \rightarrow \frac{\mathcal{S}}{S1}$$

It is produced by a quarter turn of the discourse of the hysteric in the same way as Freud develops psychoanalysis by giving an interpretative turn to the discourse of his hysterical patients. The position of the agent - the analyst - is occupied by objet *a*: the analyst becomes the cause of the analysand's desire. This discourse being the reverse of the discourse of the master, does it make psychoanalysis an essentially subversive practice, which undermines attempts at domination and mastery?

In any case, this algebra is concerned with the positions, which are fixed:

$$\frac{\text{the agent}}{\text{truth}} \qquad \frac{\text{the other}}{\text{production}}$$

At the end of the seminar Lacan adds the opposition between 'impossibility' and 'impotence' - *impuissance*: "the impossible is the real where speech, as *objet a*, functions like a carrion" and "impotence protects truth." He states in his new translation of *Wo Es War, soll Ich werden*, work is for the analyst and "*plus-de-jouir* is for you": "Where *plus-de-jouir* was, the *plus-de-jouir* of the other, me, insofar as I utter the psychoanalytic act, I must come."

There is the story of the three Congolese, analyzed by Lacan after WWII: "Their unconscious functioned according to the rules of the Oedipus complex, it was the unconscious that had been sold to them at the same time as the laws of colonization,

an exotic form of the discourse of the Master, a regression before imperialist capitalism." Are the capitalistic or imperialistic discourses mentioned only metamorphoses of the discourse of the Master?

As to the *envers* of psychoanalysis, sometimes it is the discourse of the Master when it functions as a foil. Sometimes it is unconscious discourse as the knowledge located where wrong and right sides (analytic discourse) cannot be separated, following the Möbius strip. "The *envers* is assonant with truth; one moves to the *envers*, but the *envers* does not explain any right side."

Radiophonie" (*Autres écrits*) is an interview recorded while *L'envers...* is taking place. In it Lacan declares that if "language is the condition of the unconscious, the unconscious is the condition of linguistics." Freud anticipates Saussure and the Prague Circle when he sticks to the patient's words, jokes, slips of the tongue, and brings to light the importance of condensation and displacement in the production of dreams. The unconscious is the fact "that the subject is not the one who knows what he says. Whoever articulates the unconscious says that it is either that or nothing." Linguistics has no hold on the unconscious since it leaves as a blank that which produces effects on the unconscious, the objet a, the focus of the analytic act - of any act. "Only the discourse that defines itself in terms given by psychoanalysis manifests the subject as other, whereas science, by making the subject a master, conceals him, so the desire that gives way to him bars the subject for me without remedy." There is only one myth in Lacan's discourse: the Freudian Oedipus complex. "In psychoanalysis, as well as in the unconscious, man knows nothing of woman, and woman nothing of man. The phallus epitomizes the point in myth where the sexual becomes the passion of the signifier." There is, however, no algebraic formula for the unconscious discourse: "...the unconscious is only the metaphorical term designating the knowledge only sustained when presented as impossible, so that it can conform by being real - real discourse."