

## THE SEMINAR OF BARCELONA on *Die Wege der Symptombildung*

Jacques-Alain Miller - with Roser Casalprim, Lucia D'Angelo, Vicente Palomera and Joan Salinas.

### Part One

#### *The choice of a theme*

V. Palomera: We are going to introduce in our *Journées* a new way of working consistent with the working of a Seminar. One may call it new because it was customary for our invited speaker to give a concluding lecture. In these third *Journées*, this is Jacques-Alain Miller. First of all, I would like to thank him for having agreed to come. Needless to say, the whole section always greatly enjoys his visits to Barcelona. I would add that he had expressed his preference for working in the way of a seminar, as opposed to a lecture. This requires some of us to accompany him, that is to say, that we be his companions in work, and that we assist him in this path.

When I spoke to Jacques-Alain in La Coruna, I told him the title we had selected for our *Journées* - *The Forms and Uses of the Symptom*. He asked what theme I thought appropriate to work with the seminar. Unexpectedly, I answered why don't we take *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, Lecture XXIII of the *Vorlesung*? At this point, I would like to apologise for not specifying in the programme that the title *The Paths to Formation of Symptoms* is a reference to Freud's lectures. This resulted in many of you not bringing the text. I judged - mistakenly - that the title would echo like a reflex in the ear.

I would also like to recall having said to Jacques-Alain why don't we produce something similar to what you have done twice with our colleagues in Milan? I was referring, as you all know, to the famous *Marginalia of Milan* published in *Uno por Uno*. Let's recall that these *Marginalia* were made upon two of Freud's texts - *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* and *Constructions in Analysis* - to introduce and prepare for the last two International Congresses of the Freudian Field (*How do Analyses End?* in 1994 and *The Power of Words* in 1996). Why not try and produce a *Marginalia of Barcelona* if we have in mind the International Encounter of Barcelona in '98?

Here I recall the paths which led me to propose this title for a seminar on the symptom. I was convinced that Lacan somewhere had referred to Freud's text in a precise way. Finally, I remembered where. In fact, in 1975 Lacan gave a lecture on the symptom in Geneva where he said the following: "Read a little of the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud's *Vorlesungen*. There are two chapters on the symptom. One is called *Wege der Symptombildung*, the paths to the formation of symptoms, which is chapter XXIII, then you will see that there is a chapter XVII which is called *Der Sinn, The Sense of Symptoms*. If there is any contribution Freud has made, this is it. It's that symptoms have a meaning, and a meaning that can only be interpreted correctly - 'correctly' meaning that the subject lets some parts of it drop - as a function of his early experiences, namely in so far as he encounters what today I am going to call, through lack of being able to say anything more or anything better, sexual reality".

When I went back to these lines, I discovered something even more interesting, a disagreement between Lacan and Freud: "Freud placed a lot of emphasis on this. He thought that the term 'auto-

erotism' needed to be accentuated, in the sense that the child initially discovers this sexual reality on his own body. I permit myself, and this doesn't happen every day, to disagree - and to disagree in the name of Freud's work itself." Lacan proceeds to the case of Little Hans, about which, curiously, J.-A. Miller gave a seminar in Barcelona a year ago, published in *Freudiana* No. 17 under the title *The Unconscious = Interpreter*. J.-A. Miller referred to the role of the 'subversive phallus', to the strange *jouissance* which irrupts in the auto-erotic economy of Little Hans, an economy governed by the polymorphous sexuality which is - up to this point of irruption of *jouissance* - safeguarded by Little Hans' position as ideal ego for the mother. Lacan explains the introduction of what Little Hans used to call his *Wiwimacher*, his 'widdler' - because he did not know how to call it in any other way - in his circuit.

Then, in Geneva, Lacan takes Little Hans' symptom as a counterpoint: "It is only necessary to know that in certain beings, the encounter with one's own erection is not the least auto-erotic, it is the most 'hetero' that exists. However, they ask what is this? and they say so nicely that poor Little Hans only thinks about this, about this something, incarnates it in objects which are frankly external objects, as is known in this case by the horse which paws, kicks, plunges and falls to the ground. This horse that comes and goes, that has a certain way of sliding along, knocking over the cart, is exemplary for him of what he has to confront and of what he does not understand, without doubt, thanks to the fact that he has a certain kind of mother and father. His symptom is the expression, the signification, of this rejection." As you see, Lacan refers to the phobic symptom because it exemplifies *jouissance* as being always 'hetero'.

On the other hand, the examples of symptoms which Freud gives in these lectures refer to hysterical and obsessive neurosis. In *The Sense of Symptoms* we have two examples. The first is what we could call 'the lady of the table cloth', in which the symptom appears in the place of the subject's name. The symptom is a metaphor of the subject - it is in this sense that Freud speaks of *Sinn*. This is precisely something which we cannot say about Little Hans, where the phobic symptom - the fear of horses - more than the subject's name, a metaphor of the subject, is a metaphor of the Other and not of the subject. (Note what we have just read in Lacan: the symptom is the signification of this rejection.) The heterogeneity is, on another level, the variety of symptoms, where the symptom of Little Hans objects to the concept of auto-erotism in the formation of symptoms. Another way of introducing this 'hetero-erotism' would be to refer to the drive. On this point, Lacan's thesis is that there is no genital drive, there are only partial drives. The problem for Freud was also to understand how one can maintain a sexual relation with one's partner deriving only from the partial drives, where the phallic phase always manifests itself as a discontinuity in the development of the auto-erotic libido.

Now, after this justification of the title, I will give the floor to Jacques-Alain Miller.

### ***A turntable***

*J.-A. Miller*: In this seminar, we will construct a turntable of multiple uses. A turntable which will firstly distribute and communicate every part of Freud's work; secondly it will distribute and communicate all the constructions elaborated in the teaching of Lacan; and, thirdly, it will distribute and communicate the work of Freud and Lacan with each other.

This turntable is indispensable for the orientation of our work in the Freudian Field this year about the symptom - to orient ourselves, but also to disorient ourselves a little bit. In order to be well oriented in

an analytic theme it is necessary also to disorient ourselves a little; that is, not to think about the theme in a too familiar way - getting a little bit lost has all its value.

Before starting, I would like to thank the invitation of José Monseny, president of the Catalonia Section, to participate in these *Journées*, the third of the ESP-Catalonia. As Vicente Palomera recalled, instead of a lecture he proposed a seminar, which presupposes a common theme, a certain dialogue, a mutual verification of what is being said. The objective is to dilute a little bit the dimension of the big Other, which there is in a lecture, something that not only irritates me, but also, given that my theme this year in Paris is *The Other does not Exist*, is not the way I want to work. In Paris, I no longer give a course but a seminar in the company of Eric Laurent, and I would like to do something similar here.

Vicente has already pointed out that the programme did not specify that we were going to work with Lecture XXIII. So, we start from the fact that almost nobody recognises in the phrase *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms* the title of a lecture by Freud. This is remarkable and perhaps it will make us see that a certain return to Freud is necessary, as Lacan used to say. I would like to thank Vicente Palomera, the person in charge of the organisation of this event, for enabling me to give this seminar. As I wanted to give a seminar rather than a lecture, I would like to praise him for his *Witz*, in proposing a seminar 'about' a lecture. I would also like to celebrate the pertinence of the chosen text. He chose it on the basis of an indication of Lacan's, which also needed to be recalled. He has told us about the mysterious way in which this punctuation had been inscribed for him.

I would like to add that the effects of this seminar have started even before the seminar itself. The introductory comments made by Vicente seem to me very pertinent, as do what I have read of the first comments by Lucia. I feel that we find ourselves in a collective space with shared references and with a similar perspective on analytical problems. I will give the floor to Lucia.

### **Presentation**

*Lucia D'Angelo*: The privilege I had of knowing that the title of J.-A. Miller's seminar concerned Freud's two lectures on the symptom allowed me quickly to reread them. It has to be said that the indication of these Freudian references by Lacan in the *Geneva Lecture on the Symptom*, provokes in the reader a certain surprise, especially when, in the course of his own lecture in Geneva, Lacan explains that he had carefully read these references for his own elucidations on the symptom.

The question I asked myself was: why not examine these problems from other, later texts of Freud, in which things are not so complicated? In 1930, Freud himself states, in the preface to the Hebrew translation of these lectures, the following: "[T]hey gave a fairly accurate account of the position of the young science at that period and they contained more than their title indicated. They provided not only an introduction to psychoanalysis but covered the greater part of its subject-matter. This is naturally no longer true. Advances have in the meantime taken place in its theory and important additions have been made to it, such as the division of the personality into an ego, a super-ego and an id, a radical alteration to the theory of the instincts, and discoveries concerning the origin of conscience and the sense of guilt. These lectures have thus become to a large extent incomplete; it is in fact only now that they have become truly 'introductory'. But in another sense, even today they have not been superseded or

become obsolete. What they contain”, says Freud in 1930, “is still believed and taught, apart from a few modifications, in psychoanalytic training schools” (SE XVI: 11).

As can be verified, these lectures come from an especially involved, intricate, moment in Freudian theory; neither before, nor after the well-known turning of the '20s, but on the turn itself. Freud tries to make all the pieces of the puzzle fit, at the price of having to force more than one of the pieces. Metapsychology and the concept of narcissism had recently brought new elements to the theory, but proved insufficient to resolve all the difficulties which Freud encountered in pursuing the work of elaboration.

Strachey's comment, in which he says that nowhere in Freud's work can one find so many different definitions, for example, of the unconscious, as in the lectures of 1915 and 1917, is intriguing. This is a detail which Lacan himself retains in the Geneva Lecture. I believe that all these questions make the reading of these lectures all the more interesting and their incontestable theoretical and clinical richness derives from this.

Let us look at the theoretical antecedents which Freud relies on at the time of writing these articles on the symptom: he has the unconscious, the psychic apparatus and a first theory of the drive - ego-drive and sexual drive. From the theory of the drive established in 1905, the operative distinction between object and sexual aim means that the Freudian schema is based entirely upon the deviations, and not upon the supposed norms, of sexuality. The pathological character of the symptom can only be revealed - and one has to maintain the expressions that Freud uses in these lectures - in the case of the exclusivity of the object and libidinal fixation. Around 1910, the great clinical contributions of Freud are produced. His famous cases had already been published, and at that time the history of the *Wolf Man* was already written and ready for publication. A new aetiological proposition emerges from the isolation of the new conceptual operator of infantile sexuality and the castration complex. The pathological aspects derive from sexual development, and this is also a term to retain from these lectures.

The symptom then appears integrated in a combination which involves both the sexual drive and the ego-drive, and the deviation of the libido is a defence against woman's castration. Freud reconsiders the pathological symptom in neurosis and tests the clinical distinction in the light of perversions. The conceptual triad is then: libidinal fixation, regression to auto-erotism, and narcissistic object choice in the framework of the theory of libidinal development, which allows him to establish at this point a relation with psychosis. In both neurosis and psychosis, libidinal fixation and regression to auto-erotism put him on the pathway of an important conceptual ordering which is produced from the concept of narcissism.

In *On Narcissism* of 1914, Freud establishes the triad: auto-erotism, narcissism, object-choice; and, in the framework of libido theory: ego- libido, object-libido, and narcissistic libido. There then emerges another clinical distinction: transference neurosis and narcissistic neurosis. This is why we have to take these references from the context of the Freudian theory to try to solve the questions posed to us, given that the whole problem of the symptoms can be explained from the point of view of the libido theory and its relation to the unconscious, with the multiple meanings which the unconscious acquires here, which are preparing the way for the future structural account of the '20s.

One should bear in mind that we do not yet have *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* nor *The Ego and the Id* nor *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. What we do have, and I believe Lacan takes this very much into account, is *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

If we compare the two lectures to which Lacan refers us, namely *The Sense of Symptoms* and *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, we can see that the underlying tendency in each of them is different, starting with the type of cases presented. The first is about the two cases of obsessional symptoms in two women - clearly hysterics, I think - and the second concerns exclusively the hysterical symptom as stated several times by Freud. In *The Sense of Symptoms*, Freud emphasises the aspect of sense and hardly mentions the libidinal problem, while in *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, he stresses the libidinal fixation, that is to say, the fixation to *jouissance*. In both articles, Freud emphasises interpretation, with an unequivocal equivalence between symptom and dream, as well as parapraxes. This seems to me an essential equivalence.

### ***The binary sense-jouissance***

J.-A. Miller. Despite what appears to be accidental in the choice of this text for today, we are in a fundamental place in the work of Freud and in the teaching of Lacan. Lucia has pointed out at the end, and in a single stroke, the value of the binary stressed by Lacan between Lectures XVII and XXIII of the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*.

In chapter XVII, which carries the title *The Sense of Symptoms*, sense is at stake. This seems easy to see, given that Freud himself spoke of *Der Sinn der Symptome*, but to see how is not so evident: it has the effect of a purloined letter. In chapter XXIII, *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, libido is at stake - *Befriedigung*, satisfaction, *jouissance*. This is the path taken by Freud in his second cycle of lectures: it goes from sense to *jouissance* in the symptom. One could say that this path - as it can be read in Freud's popular lectures, given to an audience of non-analysts - is the same path as the formation of Lacan's teaching. The ordered, oriented, vectorised binary goes from sense to *jouissance*.

The first thing that caught my attention while entering this room was that it has two sides. It struck me as a happy place: it invites us all the time to look from one side to the other and back again. This is exactly what Lectures XVII and XXIII tackle between them, sense and *jouissance* in the symptom. It functions as a basis for our lucubrations, a simple, firm and evident basis. Despite the almost negligent way in which Lacan points it out in Geneva - in a lecture which was unknown until someone brought it to me years later to be published - there is something essential of Lacan at this point. This ordered binary concentrates the central thematic of the teaching of Lacan - a central thematic which I have approached in my previous course *From the Symptom to the Fantasy*.

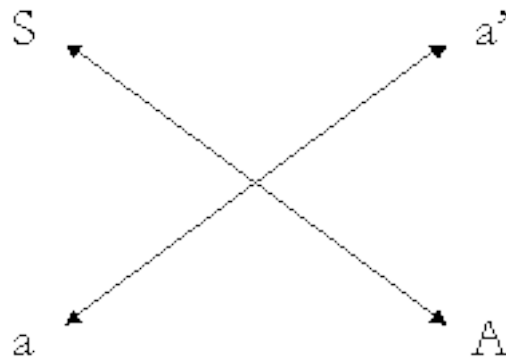
### ***The five Lacanian operations: to separate...***

How are sense and *jouissance* articulated in psychoanalysis? This is why I wanted to talk about Lacan first, because we thought - before we verified it in such an extraordinary way - that amongst us Lacan is more read than Freud... More seriously, given that we deal with Lacan's concepts and mathemes for the strength they give, for the precision they contribute, I thought it best to tackle the Freudian problematic from Lacan. In this way I have prepared a short structural path to open here the following steps.

Lacan's point of departure, the *Function and Field of Speech and Language*, points out, stresses, constructs, emphasises sense in the practice of psychoanalysis, sense in the unconscious, sense in the symptom. It highlights:

- that sense, if one could say so, has no sense except in language and that it is explained by the signifier,
- that sense supposes the function of speech, that it is speech which gives sense, full speech, and when speech does not produce sense, 'true' sense, it is empty speech; but the difference between the empty and the full is given by the criterion of sense,
- that the determining axis of Freudian analytic phenomena is the symbolic axis,
- that the imaginary is subordinated to it,
- that the real is - to use a word found in these lectures - a precondition for the insertion of the symbolic in the life of human beings and in psychical reality, and
- that the real presents holes, pores, in the action of the symbol and at the same time finds itself for that reason negated by the action of the symbol.

This first Lacanian elaboration results in a schema which Lacan calls L, the first letter of his name, but the basis of which is an X, opposing the symbolic and the imaginary.



Sense, to be put in its place of birth, is located in the symbolic axis. Sense needs the symbol, the signifier, and furthermore needs the Other, be it as an interlocutor or as the place itself of the structure of language. In this perspective, the intention of signification, the wanting-to-say, finds this structure, A, which modifies the message that results from it.

In opposition to this axis we find the imaginary couple a-a', which comes from the mirror stage. It takes as a reference *On Narcissism*, a text prior to this lecture. Lacan considers that the Freudian libido circulates in the imaginary axis, in as much as it is fundamentally narcissistic. The libido is situated in

narcissism. Between a and a', there is libido, *Befriedigung*, what we call *jouissance*, in such a way that the imaginary axis is also the axis of the drive in Lacan.

Lacan has entered psychoanalysis with a binarism opposing sense and *jouissance*. I will characterise thus the first Lacanian operation which we still practice: it is to separate, to divide, to cut. Here comes the imaginary, there the symbolic. The orientation is always from the imaginary to the symbolic, with a certain disdain for the imaginary, and, for this reason, for the drive. Throughout the first Lacanian orientation there is a devaluation of the drive, which we do not recognise when we speak of the imaginary, but it is there. Furthermore, there is the principle that it is always dangerous in practice to confuse the two of them, the symbolic and imaginary.

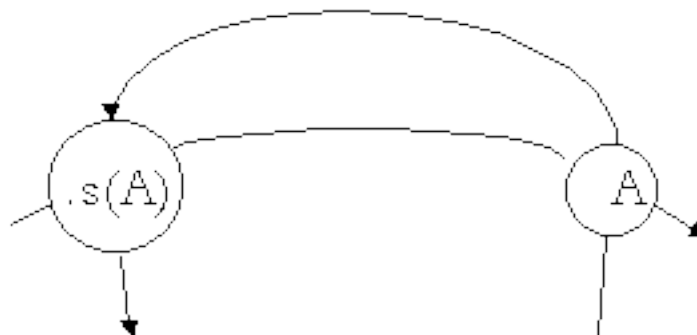
This first Lacanian operation is a wonderful tool. Lacan takes Freud's cases and reorders them as if by a miracle, separating the waters like a Freudian Moses. In Freud's cases, in present day cases, in theorisation, nothing resists this.

What are the paths to the formation of symptoms in this perspective? I will put it in the singular: it is essentially the symbolic path. In the inaugural text of Lacan, the symptom appears as a sense, a repressed sense. Of course, we have to take into account the signifier of this repressed sense, so I will say, rather, that the symptom appears as an enigma. It manifests itself supported by a signifier whose signified is repressed, that is to say, it has not been communicated to, or accepted by, the Other. The symptomatic is constituted by a signifier with repressed signified. The signifying material of the symptom can be taken in a part of the body, parasitized by the repressed signified, or in thought.

The path to the formation of symptoms, in this perspective, follows the axis subject-Other.

**... to articulate**

This is found in the second Lacanian operation. He takes the symbolic axis in a more complex way, with the inclusion of the effect of retroaction. I will not develop this in detail. You know Lacan's graph. What is a graph? It is a set of pathways. Lacan's graph, made of vectors, is the equivalent of the Freudian *Wege*:

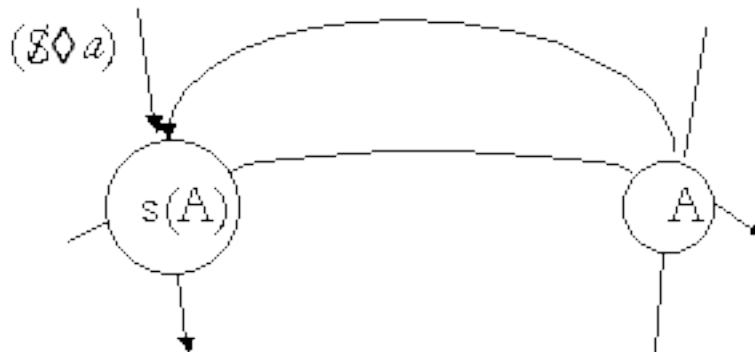


The graph leaves no doubt that, for Lacan, the symptom is located in  $s(A)$ , as an effect of the signified of the Other. This is translated, let us say, in what Freud himself calls *der Sinn der Symptom*: the

symptom is a special effect of the signified of the Other. Special in which way? Here, things get complicated.

When one arrives at this second operation, it is not enough to divide, to cut and to separate. The second operation is to articulate sense and *jouissance*. Lacan realises this in a graphic form, in which he places the fantasy as touching upon the formation of the symptom.

The symptom is not a normal sense, it is not an effect of the usual *Sinn* in the way it is connected with the fantasy.



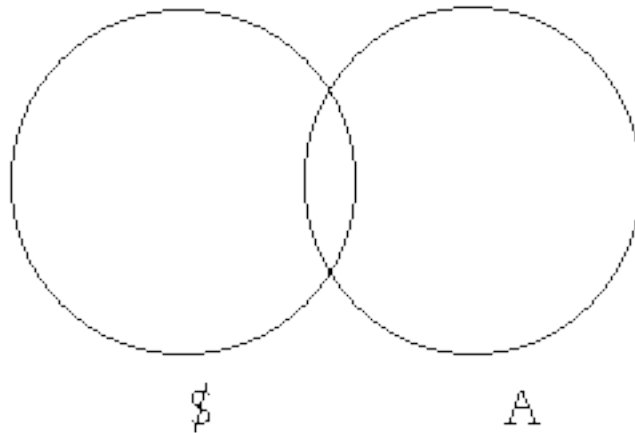
At this point one does not know whether Lacan is Freudian or Freud Lacanian. In Lecture XXIII, this appears as an open book. Furthermore, the fantasy,  $(\$a)$ , is the result of a long circuit which is a libidinal circuit, in which the drive appears as a signifying chain, and desire as signified of this signifying chain. Lacan also invents a quilting point (*point de capiton*) of the drive with desire. He also locates the connection between *jouissance* and castration. In sum, the circuit of the drive is articulated with the semantic circuit.

**... to deduce, to produce and to knot**

There is a third Lacanian operation after separation and articulation: deduction.

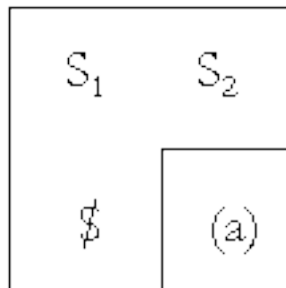
The schema of alienation and separation is the new representation of the symbolic axis subject-Other, which is the reason why these two circles are called the subject and the Other. It results in the deduction of *jouissance*





from sense. It shows that *jouissance* under the form of (a) necessarily complements the effect of sense. First there is signifier and sense, this is what Lacan calls alienation; in a second moment, there is a *plus-de-jouir*, this is what Lacan calls separation.

The fourth operation is the production.



The production of a *plus-de-jouir* from the signifying apparatus is demonstrable in this system.

The fifth operation is to knot. It gives the foundation of the whole perspective. In this zone, not so articulated, not so differentiated as the others, the equation, the identification, of sense and *jouissance* is at stake. It is what Lacan calls the enjoyed sense. However, sometimes this means to oppose radically sense and *jouissance*. This is a zone where Lacan has begun to question as such the relation between sense and *jouissance*, trying out many versions of it.

This is the path of Lacan's teaching. Let's return to Freud.

**An anecdote of the Introductory Lectures**

Mr. Whitehead, collaborator with Bertrand Russell in the creation of the first effective symbolism of mathematical logic, a philosopher in the full exercise of his profession, used to say - it is a phrase which enchants me - that all philosophy was nothing more than commentary on the work of Plato. He reduced all philosophy to this. Under this inspiration, I would say that all Lacan's teaching is a commentary on Freud's Lectures XVII and XXIII. There is a little exaggeration in this but, who knows, no more than in Whitehead's phrase.

You may think this is to give too much honour to these lectures, given to a lay audience of non-analysts, lectures presented to a relatively 'naïve' public, as Freud remarks, a public of good will, but not an erudite public like the two parts of this one here today. It is a work of exposition, it is not a work of investigation. These lectures have something of smoothness, of continuity. One should not forget the conditions in which they were delivered by Freud, during the First World War, when he was, one has to say, quite nationalistic. This would be forgotten later when he writes to Arnold Zweig saying that one does not have to identify too much with German culture, and one of them goes to Jerusalem, the other to London as an immigrant. There is little indication of the moment in these lectures, but there is a funny anecdote. To make a scansion, I will read it, it is the only indication in these lectures of that time.

It concerns the way in which the Oedipus complex was received by the German troops in the First World War.

"Listen to this episode which occurred in the course of the present war. One of the stout disciples of psychoanalysis was stationed as a medical officer" - it must surely be Abraham - "on the German front somewhere in Poland. He attracted his colleagues' attention by the fact that he occasionally exercised an unexpected influence on a patient. When he was questioned, he acknowledged that he was employing the methods of psychoanalysis and declared his readiness to convey his knowledge to his colleagues. Every evening thereafter the medical officers of the corps, his colleagues and his superiors, came together in order to learn the secret doctrines of analysis. All went well for a while; but when he spoke to his audience about the Oedipus Complex, one of his superiors rose, declared he did not believe it, that it was a vile act on the part of the lecturer to speak of such things to them, honest men who were fighting for their country, and fathers of a family, and that he forbade the continuance of the lectures. That was the end of the matter. The analyst got himself transferred to another part of the front. It seems to me a bad thing, however, if a German victory requires that science shall be 'organised' in this way, and German science will not respond well to the organisation of such a kind" (SE XVI: 300).

In a certain way, Freud already prefers psychoanalysis to a German triumph, if the German triumph would not need to talk about Oedipus. This is to illustrate the atmosphere of these lectures.

This could lead us to underestimate these lectures, but we won't! I have reflected upon this and have concluded that the simplification to which Freud obliges himself - a simplification is also necessary in a seminar, in the acceleration of a theoretical exposition - finally shows the fundamentals and lineaments of his theory, its framework. Not only is there an obligation of condensation, but also an obligation of continuity, and Freud, in giving ten or fifteen lectures in a series, makes appear as a problem the articulation between the themes, a problem which does not appear at the time at which they are elaborated thoroughly but separately. The simplification has its own advantage: it must articulate themes that are otherwise investigated in a dispersed way.

## **Freud's pathway**

What is Freud's pathway? As he recalls in Lecture XVI, the first of this cycle, this was the second year of lectures. In the first year, he had spoken about dreams and parapraxes in relation to their interpretation. He would make these communications to a public which had the experience of dreaming and of making slips of the tongue. The source for this first cycle was the works of discovery - *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* - while *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* remains a little to one side. In the second cycle of lectures - ours - he takes neurotic symptoms, transference neurosis, as he calls it at the time, anxiety hysteria, conversion hysteria and obsessional neurosis. As he himself says, it is no longer an introduction to the theme but rather psychoanalysis itself. The non-analysts in the audience supposedly do not have the experience of these serious neurotic symptoms.

Lecture XVII, *The Sense of Symptoms*, the real introduction to the new cycle, is based on what was brought out in the previous cycle. It is an application to symptoms of what had been said in relation to dreams and slips of the tongue. It can be verified that symptoms are like dreams and slips of the tongue, that they have a sense which can be interpreted. Once this is well known it deserves to be questioned, as Lacan finally does. From this point of departure he goes to Lecture XXIII, *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*. What is there between these two lectures?

I will give the titles: Lecture XVIII, *Fixation to Traumas - The Unconscious*; XIX, *Resistance and Repression*; XX, *The Sexual Life of Human Beings*; XXI, *The Development of the Libido and the Sexual Organizations*; XXII, *Some Thoughts on Development and Regression - Aetiology*, and Lecture XXIII. Lecture XXI, Strachey puts it very well, is a summary of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*.

What takes place in these lectures that makes a bridge between Lectures XVII and XXIII? Freud introduces the drive, the libido, the sexual, and also the perversity of the sexual - given that, as Lucia has said, the sexual does not refer so much to the norm as to perversions. What takes place, what is it about? In this extraordinary part of the work, which goes from Lectures XVII to XXIII, Freud attempts to link the two aspects of his work:

- the discovery of the unconscious, the interpretable phenomena, the discovery that phenomena dismissed as being without sense can be interpreted, the unconscious defined by interpretation, and
- the discovery of infantile sexuality and of the perverse traits in sexuality in 1905.

These are the two axes of Freud's work and one can read here, as in an open book, his effort to make this articulation. It seems - it is debatable - that there is more juxtaposition than articulation, deduction or production.

## **Regression and repression**

All the Lacanian operations derive from this gap that arises from the Freudian effort to link these two aspects. This is my interpretation. It does not seem to me to be forced, when one can read in Lecture XXII (SE XVI: 341): "But above all I think I ought to warn you now not to confuse regression with

repression" - in German, repression (*Verdrängung*) and regression are not homophonous, as indicated in a footnote by Strachey. Freud says: "Repression has no link with sexuality, please keep this in mind." This means that Freud clearly separates repression - which refers to a semantic mechanism (something cannot be said, one does not succeed in saying it because there is repression) - from the register of sexuality. I do not know if my reading seems to you a bit forced; to me it seems miraculous to find such proof in this text.

Lecture XXII offers an auto-conceptualization of the path. He himself explains his clinical point of departure: it is hysteria, in which the factor of libidinal regression is not so evident. There is in hysteria a regression to the primary libidinal objects - we think of a libido attached to the father, etc., which also appears in the example of the supposed obsession which we will see later - but there is nothing like what is manifested in obsessional neurosis, that is to say, a regression to an earlier stage of the sexual organization, the attachment to a previous *jouissance*, for example, especially the anal-sadistic. The principal role in the mechanism of hysteria falls to repression, not to regression.

This supposes the distinction of two types of regression: the regression to primary objects, and regression to previous stages of development. He says that, as it is absent in hysteria, libidinal regression to an earlier stage of development was clarified much later than the mechanism of repression. He distinguishes it from obsessional neurosis where regression to earlier stages could be observed, especially regression to the anal-sadistic, etc. The advantage of obsessional neurosis is that there is regression and also repression, in such a way that it is a much more rich and complex neurosis than hysteria. A little tribute for obsessional neurosis once in a while.

### ***An internal obstacle***

This period is a key moment in the work of Freud, as Lucia has pointed out. Afterwards, in the '20s, the division of the personality into three agencies, the ego, the super-ego and the id, will be made. To what does this division of the second topography correspond?

We can perceive this very well in the lectures. Repression is what is opposed to speaking, or - to formulate it in a more Freudian way - it opposes the emergence of representations in consciousness. Freud's permanent question in these lectures is: what is it that is opposed to the sexual? What is it that is opposed to the full development of sexuality? What is it that obliges the libido to regress to earlier stages of its development? What is this force? What makes a barrier there? In these lectures there is an answer. The obstacle, the barrier, is in part external reality, which does not lend itself to the development of the drive. This is what Freud calls *Versagung*. The opposition between the pleasure principle and the reality principle can account for the phenomenon if 'reality' is taken in the sense of external reality.

However, in this text Freud finds an internal obstacle to full sexual development: parallel to repression are the ego drives, which will say yes or no to the sexual drives. In this way Freud presents an ego with laws, *Gesetzen*. It is from this point that Freud will invent the super-ego.

In these lectures we have the kitchen of the super-ego. Freud's problem is one of parallelism. At the level of sense, we have repression as a barrier. What, at the level of libido, corresponds to this? The

problem is the dualism unconscious - libido: what is valid at the level of the unconscious is not valid at the level of libido. From this the second topography will be derived.

At this point Lacan comes to say that yes, repression does have to do with libido. What is opposed to saying it all is the same as what is opposed to the full realisation of the sexual. In this way Lacan breaks the barrier which Freud had established and which conditions, for instance, the opposition between repression and regression. This can be seen in the third moment of his elaboration: Lacan deduces the partial character of the drives from language. From the capture of the human being in language, he tries to deduce the partialization of the drive. Freud never articulated it in this way, but encountered it as an autonomous phenomenon in relation to the repressive logic of the unconscious.

### ***Sinn and Bedeutung***

Let's return to Lecture XVII, *Der Sinn der Symptom*, the one to which Lacan refers in Geneva. He points out that *Sinn* is not *Bedeutung*. You know these two words from a famous article by Frege, *Sinn und Bedeutung*. Lacan points this out very well - *Sinn* is the effect of sense, what is determined by the signified, and *Bedeutung* concerns the relation to the real. The difficulty in translating the second word into Latin languages derives from the fact that it is at the same time 'signification' and 'reference'.

I will use this observation to offer you my reading of the difference between the two lectures. The first is explicitly entitled *Der Sinn*. The second, which is called *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, unfolds *Der Bedeutung der Symptom*. Freud demonstrates there that the reference of the symptom is the fantasy, that the real at stake in the symptom has got to do with the fantasy. He does not identify the real with the fantasy: Lecture XXIII says that the fantasy is more like a fundamental veil in front of what is truly real, that is to say, fixation.

### ***The cases***

Here we have to follow the path of Freud, which deals with the two cases of women in chapter XVII, which he classifies as obsessional, and chapter XXIII which supposedly refers only to hysterical symptoms, to regression in hysterical symptoms because, he says, in obsessional neurosis there is also counter-investment. I would have liked to develop this now but because of the time, we will continue tomorrow.

In Lecture XVII, he presents two obsessional symptoms, but we agree that they are fragments of cases of hysteria. The first concerns a woman with a compulsive behaviour to protect her impotent husband. The second a ceremonial before going to bed that finally points towards the staging of the sexual non-rapport, sustained by a libidinal bond to the father. As in the first case, the husband is a substitute for the love of the father. Freud characterises them as obsessional symptoms because of the character of *Zwang*, the compulsion of the acts. His choice of cases is remarkable; I think it is because he is addressing himself to a non-practising audience and they are very clear symptoms...

*L. D'Angelo*: Freud said 'odd'.

J.-A. Miller. Odd. He had chosen them because they have a sense, evidently sexual, and furthermore they are explained by their *Bedeutung*, by a reference to a previous experience. The first woman stages her scene as a repetition and a correction of an earlier event that has been traumatic for her. Through these examples, Freud links meaning and the libidinal. The *Bedeutung* is a previous experience.

From this point, he introduces the lecture about the trauma, the unconscious. He takes it as a principle that under each neurotic symptom there is always a trauma - every neurosis contains, he says, a fixation of this kind.

Furthermore, he introduces the principle that the meaning of symptoms is always unknown to the patient, which leads Freud to a stronger statement: "In order for the symptom to be produced, it is necessary that it be unconscious". In other words, symptoms are not formed from conscious processes. This will lead Lacan to consider the sense that is repressed in the symptom (from his first point of view).

### ***What is intercepted in the symptom***

In this text something of the interpretative optimism of Freud remains. As a deduction from the principle, he says: "The symptom disappears when one succeeds in making its meaning conscious. Symptoms disappear as soon as their meaning is known." In a certain way the economic factor of libido has not yet been imposed for Freud. It would be interesting to study how Freud formulates this principle, and then says 'it is not exactly like this...' The principle is excellent, but the symptoms don't know it...

He searches for the economy, and finally introduces the symptom dynamically; that is to say, something is opposed to the arrival of sense in consciousness. From this point on in chapter XIX, he studies unconscious resistance - the paradox that patients suffer from their symptoms but do not appear to want that much to get rid of them. In this direction, he can point out the condition of the unconscious, the *Unbewusstheit* of the symptom, which can only emerge from the unconscious. That is, there is a sense which wants to be expressed; if it does not succeed in expressing itself, the symptom appears. This allows Freud to say that 'the formation of symptoms is a substitute for something else that is intercepted'.

The word 'intercepted' is fundamental. It seems to inspire the first schema of Lacan: the interception of a wanting-to-say by something else. Freud is so thrilled that he repeats it, 'a substitute for what is intercepted'.

This allows him to understand in one unit the formation of the dream and the formation of the neurotic symptom. But while there is something in common between the symptom and the dream, the basis for the inclusion of the symptom in psychoanalytic practice, at the same time he repeats in these lectures that a symptom is not a dream. Repression, the essential motor of the dream, is nothing more than the precondition for the formation of symptoms. It is only the symptom which introduces us to the most intimate of sexual life. This is the bonus of which one has to become aware in the formation of symptoms in contrast to the dream. In this work the reference is always to the *Traumbildung* or *Traumarbeit*, the dream-formation or the dream-work. At the same time, the existence of a supplementary element in the symptom is imposed for him: dreams do not remain as a permanent

subjective opacity, one which eventually modifies the body, if one admits the extended auto-erotism of which he speaks. The difference between dreams and symptoms, which Freud highlights, is that 'symptoms always serve the same purpose, that is, sexual satisfaction'. Freud does not question what the use of the symptom is. It is always the same - sexual satisfaction. It serves as a substitute for a sexual satisfaction that is lacking in life. Here he is introducing frustration. I have underlined the element of 'no saying': the *Versagung* is already a statement.

In Freud, the definition of the symptom as a mode of *jouissance* is patent. Taking into account, of course, the character of compromise-formation, that is to say, the link between *jouissance* and defence.

### ***Libido as signified***

Freud's observation is that what is at stake in the symptom is to obtain satisfaction, and to defend against it. This connection between *jouissance* and defence is what Lacan will deduce: that there is something excessive in *jouissance* which always obliges the subject to defend himself against the *jouissance* he is searching for. Lacan will give an account of this by opposing *jouissance* to language, the signifier in as much as it negates *jouissance*: the repressive power is in language itself. The Name of the Father is language. A *plus-de-jouir* remains, the gain of pleasure, the *Lustgewin*.

Everything that Freud says between Lectures XVII and XXIII is preparatory for the question of how someone falls ill. He approaches this problem in Lecture XXII where he says: it is not only reality that functions as a barrier. When there is a frustration, the libido regresses and searches for a new mode of satisfaction, but at this moment there is an internal veto, an internal 'no saying'. He poses the question on p.350: "What are the powers from which the objection to the libidinal trend arises?" This is the point of entry for Freud's developments of the 1920s.

We see the Freudian libido encountering in reality the *Versagung*, a certain saying 'no', encountering in the ego a veto. It always finds a signifier. There are several things in these lectures that lead us to see the libido as equivalent to a signified. One sees that the libidinal opposition is equivalent to the semantic repression. When Freud speaks, for example, of the plasticity of the sexual drives, which can replace one another, as a net of communicating vessels, when he stresses the detours of the libido in encountering a 'no', he shows that the libido is capable of substitution and displacement, that is, of metaphor and metonymy. This is the inspiration of Lacan's graph. He succeeded in presenting in his graph the circuit of language and the circuit of libido in the same conceptual form.

All Lacan's effort of articulation, deduction and production is founded upon this double aspect, and upon the path that goes from sense to something beyond sense. The doctrine of the pass itself has an aspect of a pathway. First, there is the subject supposed to know; that is to say, an effect of signification - the subject supposed to know is on the side of the *Sinn*. From here the subject goes towards the *Bedeutung*, towards the fantasy and supposedly crosses it.

The fifth operation is an effort to think in terms other than pathways. It makes visible - as Lacan said in *Seminar XVII* - the kinship between truth and *jouissance*. Sense and *jouissance* have the same root in impotence. If he introduces enjoyed sense it is because he himself puts into question the object a.

He does it explicitly in *Seminar XX, Encore*. The object *a* is only the elaborated part of *jouissance*, it is the fantasmatic or semantic part of *jouissance*, the part of *jouissance* already drawn into the fantasy.

Object *a* is a false real.

### **Discussion**

Can we discuss for a while? I would like the opinion of Mrs. Casalprim.

*R. Casalprim:* With respect to your general approach, I had made the same journey, keeping to Lecture XXII to point out the difference between regression and repression.

*J.-A. Miller:* I wonder if there is something forced in reading this concern of Freud's in distinguishing repression from regression as the testimony itself that he does not manage to articulate the phenomena which he establishes in parallel, and for this same reason that he has to construct his own topography.

*R. Casalprim:* I had a question which arose while I was reading these texts. In Lecture XXIII you have mentioned the question of hysterical neurosis, and at the end the question of counter-investments. It seems to me that Freud had established that the fantasy determines the symptom in hysterical neurosis, but I asked myself: where does the fantasy lie in obsessional neurosis? On the other hand, with *The Wolf Man* and the question of infantile neurosis, this question occurred to me: there is something, let's say, resolved in the hysterical neurosis in relation to bisexuality, the question is, what happens with the obsessional fantasy?

*J.-A. Miller:* Freud leaves aside the obsessional symptom. Why? Chapter XXIII already appears to suit all neurotics. This shows Freud's acuteness concerning what is for him an obsessional neurosis. We have the answer in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. The hysterical subject has an honest symptom which makes him suffer honestly. He comes with a paralysed arm which does not function and which makes life difficult for him. It may have a meaning, a relation with the fantasy, or it may eventually allow the subject to see an earlier fixation - this is more questionable. I say it is an honest symptom because it causes suffering. The obsessional comes like this (Jacques-Alain Miller makes a gesture with a twisted arm) and says: 'I am the most beautiful in the world'.

Exactly as Freud describes, he does not perceive the suffering of his symptom: he has incorporated it so well into his personality that it is a motive for pleasure. Obsessional symptoms are pleasurable. In this there is something desperate, that the subject experiences his symptom as the most admirable thing of his personality. This is a limit point that takes away the very meaning of cure. We will see this tomorrow, when Joan Salinas speaks about the *variété* of the symptom, an expression that refers at the same time to 'truth' and 'variety'. There is always a link for Lacan between symptom and truth. When he talks about the symptom as the very being of the subject it is most applicable to the obsessional subject. To the point where the idea of cure itself disappears. The only thing that can be said is that if this obsessional remains with something which makes him suffer, he must make with this part the same as with the rest, that is, that he should also recognise himself in it, that he should adopt it as well. This is what Lacan calls the identification with the symptom, the re-absorption of the symptom in pleasure -



which is another way out. It is not only that the symptom is a mode of *jouissance*, it is to enjoy one's symptom more than one's fantasy. The invisible *jouissance* of the obsessional is the enjoyment of the symptom.

*H. Tizio*: I would like to contribute with a precise remark about why the obsessional symptom is left apart. In the text of the *Rat Man*, Freud talks about this point as a possibility of discerning a new type of symptom-formation. This new type is the obsessional symptom, starting from the two moments in which he puts in relation repression and the cancellation of the obsessional act.

*J.-A. Miller*: Yes. Freud also points this out in Lecture XXII, in the link between *jouissance* and defence. Hysteria succeeds in giving a simultaneous expression of the two contradictory things, while in obsession, there is a time to set something up and a time to cancel it. What in hysteria is grouped together, in the classic obsessional symptom happens in two moments, opposed to one another. In hysteria there is a special twist to express at the same time the *pro* and *con*; more rigorously, in obsession, first there is the *pro* and afterwards the *con*.

*L. D' Angelo*: There is also the reference to the body. He says that the obsessional "renounces almost completely the manifestation of his symptoms at the level of the body, and creates all his symptoms in the ambit of the soul".

*E. Paskvan*: A confirmation regarding the symptom in the obsessional neurosis - from *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. There Freud says clearly - I remember because it caught my attention, a homage to the obsessional neurosis - the neurosis to which he is most grateful, since it has taught him the most, and he says it continues to be an enigma for him. It is afterwards when he analyses the problem of the division between the two moments, etc.

*V. Palomera*: All these interesting observations have been prompted by your allusion to the 'honest symptom' in relation to hysteria and I wanted precisely to stress that in respect to the same Freudian definition of the symptom as a 'compromise-formation', there are always two things implicated. On the one hand, the symptom as a 'disfigured *jouissance*' - it is the term used by Freud - a *jouissance* which is presented as a disguised *jouissance*. This is the level of what we call, after Lacan, 'the formal envelope of the symptom'. Freud writes: "The symptom repeats somehow that modality of satisfaction of one's early infancy... disfigured by the censorship which is born in the conflict..". It is therefore the dimension of the symptom as a *jouissance* presented 'in another way'. But in the second place - and this seems to me central in the dialogue which is taking place - the symptom is also a '*jouissance* experienced in another way'. And in dealing in this chapter XXIII with the symptoms in hysteria, Freud makes explicit that what is at stake is a satisfaction already modified, because it has passed from pleasure to unpleasure. There are therefore these two values in the symptom: a disguised *jouissance* and a *jouissance* experienced in another way, given that what was once pleasurable is now unpleasurable.

*J.-A. Miller*: It is for this reason that he said "I am talking about the hysterical symptoms only because they are the ones which cause displeasure". The problem of the obsessional symptoms is that they cause pleasure. All of Lacan's constructions can be understood as the effort to make of the libido something that can be situated in the set signifier-signified. Freud himself says in chapter XXIII, which for

the time being I have not broached, everything that has been said so far is preliminary: there is the barrier, *Versagung*, the veto; the libido escapes, it should return, but in this circuit it links itself with representations belonging to the system unconscious. The libido is directed to an object in the exterior world, there is frustration - 'the lady says no' - the libido escapes, but not towards another lady, but towards fantasies, it escapes to the system unconscious. Then, Freud says, when the libido regresses to representations of the unconscious, it acquires the properties of this system; that is, it shows itself capable of condensation and displacement, metaphor and metonymy. One can see that there is a destiny of the libido which is like that of the signified. This allows Lacan to translate all of this in terms of desire.

Freud does not exploit this. He does not have the idea that it is possible to deduce things which happen in sexuality from the linguistic phenomena of the unconscious. I believe that it is for this reason that Lacan says in the same lecture that Freud is a weak man. To be weak means to float between two poles. He has the elements to recognise that only one operator is at stake, but he does not do so. Besides being a sexual obsessional, as Lacan says, Freud is a weak man because there he floats. Take this *cum grano salis*.

This does not mean that Lacan is perfect. We should never think this, much less say it. As my friend Horacio Echegoyen has said to me, to have a cult of personality is not appropriate. I did not answer him on this point because I did not know what he was talking about. Lacan has a serious symptom in his teaching. He said that Freud has weakness as a symptom, but Lacan also has a symptom. Perhaps we will talk about this tomorrow.

Copyright © Jacques-Alain Miller 2003. This text from the website of the London Society of the NLS, at <http://www.londoncircle-esp-dev.com/>. Please include this portion of the text in any printed version of this paper.

Copyright © by the Author. This text from the website of the London Society of the New Lacanian School, at <http://www.londonsociety-nls.org.uk>. Permission to circulate material from this site must be sought from the LSNLS. All rights reserved. Please include this portion of the text in any printed version of this paper.