

THE EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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The Unconscious

In the beginning there were stories of psychoanalysis, among them the story of the unconscious. The unconscious was presented through diverse metaphors primarily including that of archaeology, and in the second instance that of architecture. A theory, and psychoanalysis was no exception, needs an interpretation, a literary one not an analytic one in this case, and this one makes a good use of the imaginary means. It worked here, too. Freud admired Schliemann, who discovered Troy under several layers of other urban ruins – and after initially giving up on the site only to return to it following his co-ordinates – and we started to discover Freud. This marked the beginning of dissemination of his work where the unconscious was its very reason.

Thus Freud invented psychoanalysis during his work with the hysterics, which in his time meant hysterical women. Something puzzled him about them and he started listening more closely. It was through the discourse of the hysteric, as we would say with Lacan, that he found the unconscious. How he discovered it has not ceased to puzzle us. Just think about this: the blabber as the cornerstone of psychoanalysis, yapping, moaning and complaining as a foundation of the unconscious. And then, why not? If he had closely followed the cascade of words and the sexual libido flowing in it, it was only to grasp that something of the order of the infinite was at play in that blabber. And very quickly Freud discovered that the hysteric does not know what she is talking about. This blabber was indestructible, unstoppable, and somewhat, almost like the drive, blind. And therefore it had all the characteristics of 'our' unconscious, as Lacan called it after founding his School in 1964. But it was not without the recourse to this inaugural discovery of Freud that Lacan came up with his own definition of the unconscious, one in the Seminar XI. Following this, he defined the unconscious a couple of years later that it is, quite simply, 'what we say it is'.

That the unconscious is what we say follows from another statement that Lacan made some time earlier, namely that language is the condition of the unconscious. If it were the other way round, as Laplanche wanted it, what would have Freud been listening to? A philosophical idea perhaps? As if an idea, and a concept, were not part of language. As if Lacan did not say that that the concept of the unconscious is included in the unconscious. Freud continued to prick up his ears not because language was performing phonetic acrobatics before him but because he found a real satisfaction at the heart of the hysterical blabber. If the unconscious was constructed as an effect of a use of language, the satisfaction was produced alongside it.

Now, what exactly did Lacan have in mind when he said that the unconscious is what we say? His assertion seems to imply that the unconscious is flat and even superficial. So we had to wait all these years since Freud's discovery to find that the structure of the unconscious is constituted as a surface? How disappointing it must have appeared to those who did not follow to realise that psychoanalysis is no longer a reflection of the oceanic chasm, a veil of profundity or a herald of mystery. Gone with the wind went the archaeology of the unconscious, gone the architecture of depth, and gone the metaphors of castles and palaces, of Alhambra and of Schliemann's Troy. Gone too was the other side of the Moon of the 60s. Lacan himself gives us 8 definitions mentioned by Dwelshauvers what the unconscious is not. Added to it we may find Hartmann's *opus magnum* on the philosophy of the unconscious.

The unconscious as a surface and the dignity of the subject as captured in relation to the Other on the surface – this was indeed something radically new. It led Lacan to where appearance is no longer the opposite, or a sign, of essence but enmeshed in it. 'A rose is a rose is a rose', G. Stein said long before as if she was a Lacanian. What appears as a rose is a rose, and the essence of the rose, what the rose really is, as Plato would say, lies in its appearance. The appearance is essence and the essence appearance, inseparable, like two sides of a band or inside and outside of a hole. The unconscious is just that kind of a rose.

Terrorism

Then there was a dream, not necessarily in this order, as the order of the unconscious keeps it elusive for him who speaks with it. In the dream the analysand appears on Breakfast TV program and is asked whether psychoanalysis can in any way contribute to the debate about 'terrorism'. 'I said yes', he adds, 'yes, it can, however minimally'. Perhaps he would want to change something in

peoples' perception of the problem or of him. Perhaps terrorism and psychoanalysis are even less apart than the 'foreign policy' and terrorism. He is worried about what concerns us all. It shows his good. Like all of us he is Creon, too. And he gives a brief answer to the newsreader – 'yes, it can, however minimally: the terrorists also suffer'. Suffering, or is it something else, awakes him. 'We all suffer', he adds, 'and the terrorists are no exception'. Of course the dream is not about terrorism but about what he says it is. Suffering weighs down on him. Suffering is the royal road to the unconscious, to the master signifier that weighs down on him. Would he like to be an exception by altering something concerning his suffering or is it the other way round? Is it true that he sees himself as someone of whom some knowledge can be supposed or does he expect the analyst to tell him this? Yes.

Some days later I open a newspaper and am reminded that the public debate on terrorism is widening and that in its spotlight can only be seen politicians, military and espionage experts. And nobody invites, it is true, psychologists, philosophers, psychoanalysts to contribute. It is perhaps partly because we would no longer speak about 'terrorism'. Again, the moment a metaphor provides a detour for all this thrust, there is a danger that an excitement of winding one another up might peter out.

So far I can find this one thing that 'terrorism' has in common with psychoanalysis. If one only hears about the former from those in power, it is because power is at stake here. The blabber of politicians, presidents, prime ministers mingles with the voices of temperance and descent from 'military sources', 'official sources', government sources', etc, but above all, not surprisingly, from journalists, namely media. The media is just another word for journalism – the ethics of a journalist, 'the public has the right to know', appears to be of interest to us – even if the journalist's report is moulded and edited by another. I say 'not surprisingly' not because it is part of their professional practice but because their criticism of those 'in power' does not contribute an iota to addressing the problem as an *effect*. Can it be that my analysand contributed effectively to the problem in one session? Of course he did not contribute to the problem at all because what he is confronted with concerns him as a subject. He questioned the mangled appearance of what he thinks is wanted from him, of the demand to be seen, to know about what? And his good intentions.

There is never a shortage of those, and when they amass and become 'too much' we get a hint at the other side of the discourse called the discourse of the good. There is nothing more unforgivable, according to Lacan, than the so called 'good intentions'. This could be understood that some bad intentions can be forgiven: 'I only wanted a bit of fun', says a man about his extramarital affair. At least his lover will know now why he is not worthy of her. But good

intentions, namely 'I did it for...' implies a bonus or a reward for the doer. 'One for you and one for me' is the name of the action called good.

The way the word 'terrorism' is used today seems to suggest that it is an attribute describing a finite number of human beings or, if you like, a closed set. In other words, terrorism is unilateral. Its definition precludes 'us' or 'me' or even 'you', as 'we do not negotiate with terrorists'. It is only based on 'them' and 'him', as women lack interest in it. The third person is just the one that, according to Lacan, does not exist. What does not exist nevertheless does not cease to distribute and shuffle the lack in public domain. That's one way of approaching terrorism as an *effect*. The effect of the unconscious only reminds us that no one can authorise us, and that you too want things you do not know you do. It is in effect the unconscious that reminds us that what authorises us to speak, and therefore to act, are the things that you and I want for you and me *qua* your or my neighbour, whether it is love or hate or both. In the end you ask, at last, how to know the things the unconscious wants for you? And if you disregard or ignore them they will turn against you. The unconscious is a terrorist. In *Science and Truth* Lacan compared the position of the subject as always responsible to terrorism. Psychoanalysis is the only profession – for it is also a profession – whereby subject's responsibility is an effect of the unconscious. 'I am only authorised by what I say' is the Spartan rule of the ethics of psychoanalysis.

But if it is not you and not me, who else could it be if not him, the other, the unbearable neighbour I take with me to my dreams. When the responsibility for the nightmares, for Jerusalem and Bezier, for Warsaw and Cartage, for the Jews, Blacks, Muslims, for Gulags and Fatwas, is assigned to the other, then I see myself as an aim of tyranny and destruction. Poor me. This is what Tony Blair evoked when he said: 'No, terrorism is not an effect of our foreign policy but an act against 'our' values and way of life'. It is in this sense that the unconscious is a terrorist, as it objects to a complacent routine, undermines the dangerous naivety of good intentions, wrongfoots the narcissistic obsession with 'our' values, and rips into pieces the megalomaniacal claims of cultural and religious superiority.

Unilaterality appears as the condition for terrorism to have any meaning for 'us', for the terrorism itself. Not so with God, whether in terms of his existence or inexistence. When we speak about God, unilaterality is not in question. The question of God, just like that of language, truth, creation, everyday life, including eating habits, funereal rites, forms of pleasure, signs of evil has become pantheic. But what the public say about terrorism is of no consequences to psychoanalysis. The question of God, because it concerns the Other in its most radical form, is something psychoanalysis cannot do without.

So who are the terrorists? I have reread Jacques-Alain Miller's *Tenderness of the Terrorists*. Only a psychoanalyst could have approached the problem of evil action in such a way. And he makes sure that we do not take Stalin for anybody else: "No scruples, no decency. No vacillation, no lack in being,.. the perfect scoundrel". That will do. The scoundrel – whom Lacan distinguished from a fool, an indispensable clown-adviser at every decent royal court and only missing in modern governments – is the one who never lies, or does not tell the truth which is the same thing, and who believes that it is in our nature that everyone should have a Rolls-Royce, as Margaret Thatcher believed, or that becoming a millionaire is almost a social obligation to those who do not. But it was also Stalin, was it not, who had an idea that some of those who do not follow the Party guideline should be deemed as mentally deficient and sent to psychiatric institutions. Then came someone like Szasz to say there is no such a thing as a mental illness.

But the terrorists do not fill this Lacanian bill, and Miller is precise enough. Say of Stalin what you may, 20 million sent off to Gulags, lost, killed, starved, tortured to death, but this does not make him a terrorist, as he never put his life at risk, to die for ... a greater goal. Some of those who do, have a different reason. They have been told all their life that they are worthless and hopeless failures. So it is only an act of huge magnitude that could redeem them in the eyes of the supreme God. The Japanese kamikazes, the idea is not new, must have believed in something like this too, be it a country, its glory and their glory in afterlife. In this way or in the way of anger, revenge, mute and dumb helplessness, the terrorist puts everything at stake, namely his life. They the procession of idealist fools like Simon de Monfort, Ghengis Khan, Hannibal, extolled posthumously to the heroic status, but not of scoundrels.

Philosophy of psychoanalysis

To this very day some philosophers cannot forgive Lacan and psychoanalysis that it dares to transmit the lack – of total and unquestionable clarity, for example – without relying solely on the universality that in philosophy remains the main player. The idiosyncrasy can be seductive as well as irritating, and transference, as we know, can also turn into the negative one.

Succumbing to this dogmatic distinction it would only remain for us to say that the difference between philosophy and psychoanalysis depends on whether the one making it does so following his/her analysis. In other words, the true value of philosophy may be revealed if it appears as a signifier of a very special quality, a master signifier indeed. According to Lacan the subject suffers

from the signifier, sometimes from the signifier in relation to the imaginary, and sometimes from the signifier in relation to the real. It is not that psychoanalysis deals with the Real and philosophy with the love of truth, as Badiou tries to convince his readers. Both deal with the signifier, and in both there is something of the real at stake and something of the imaginary for a smoke screen.

For some 'philosophy', too, can be a symptom, provided it has emerged as a way of the subject's defence against the real, and therefore acquired a very special quality, namely that of an ideal. And of course, within the field of the ideal a hell, too, can break loose. So where is the subject of the symptom? Once a scorpion asked a frog to carry him across the river. 'Oh no, I will not', said the frog. 'Why not?', asked the scorpion. 'Because you will sting me'. 'I promise I will not', said the scorpion, 'I only want to cross the river'. 'All right, then', agreed the frog and took the scorpion on her back. Halfway through the crossing the scorpion stung the frog. 'And why did you do this?' asked the frog. 'Because it is in my nature', answered the scorpion. The work of the symptom has to do with what became 'nature'. It has to do with something that precedes the subject, that acts from without, compels him, pushes him, is stronger than him. Somewhere else Nietzsche says that not everyone has the right to make a promise.

Whatever the field of knowledge that precedes entry to psychoanalysis, there exists a question that causes a subjective shift in relation to knowledge. But this questioning happens, truly, as a result of transference, because emerges as an effect of the shift is the subject, the one who supposedly has another knowledge, and is therefore called analyst. This opens a path towards the particular. No, it is not a path, it is rather a slide, a spiral or a fall – things will only get worse after the garments, poses, habits of thought, efforts of the body get chucked all the way down to the pit of repression. Some will have survived and transformed to effect new ways for the *ananke*, the necessary. Upon undertaking a university course in pursuit of knowledge, my fears were confirmed that university does not take notice of the difference between the academic knowledge and the knowledge of experience, that side of intimacy that Lacan, and for a reason, called extimacy. It is also what we call truth. The truth is always extimate. It befalls and surprises you by appearing from around the corner the moment you try to cut it. 'The sun shone, having no alternative, on what was nothing new'. To Beckett the same never ceased to shine. My former tutor in philosophy used to go to the toilet in the middle of every tutorial, always at the exactly same time. He did it for years and will perhaps continue for the rest of eternity but it will always be his and nobody else's eternity. The sun shining on Beckett eclipsed the truth which is always new for the subject.

Freud did not trust philosophers and did not make much of them. He made

exception in two cases: Kant whose categorical imperative he took to embody the truth about the superego, and Brentano, an epochal philosopher whose lectures inmixing elements of psychology and ancient philosophy he attended in the 1880s. So let me get the references right. Freud situated philosophy in the field of *Weltanschauung*, namely as a discipline and practice of presenting a picture of the self-contained world that, by this token, is free from cracks and incoherence. Freud regarded philosophy as a species of science, at least as not opposed to it, which means that he considered structure when dealing with different discourses. Obviously they differ but structurally they belong to the same modality of obsessional neurosis with paranoiac traits. In short, they belong to the order of thought. Freud even said ‘animistic’ thought, and he did not live in the time of baroque, although without magical actions. This has to do, he defines, with the ‘overvaluation’ of the words and beliefs that reality somehow takes place in accordance with thinking imposed on it. So it is an obsessional’s worldview that Freud gives us as a demonstration of a structure of error as constituting philosophical investigation.

Freud was the first one to consider the great discourses of humanity, religion, science, philosophy and art, from the perspective of the satisfaction they aim at to serve the subject. This is what bothered him about philosophy – it covers up the lack, the lack in being, because it does not know what to do with it. The philosopher overestimates knowledge by failing to include the lack into the equation. And if this lack is thought itself, it becomes unthinkable.

Lacan placed the thought at the level of *jouissance*, condensing Freud’s efforts without taking anything away from him. ‘Thought is *jouissance*’, Lacan says, because thinking, apart from being a process, is also a form of superegoic command. Thought follows the command: ‘Think!’.

‘You are from a different mould’, I was once told by a philosophy professor at one of the British universities. Can’t argue with that, so I took it as a compliment having no choice of receiving it otherwise at the time of graduation. *Tempus abire tibi est*. And so I was gone. They made it plain for me that references to Camus, Dostoyevsky and Freud were not welcome where a simple common sense was to suffice. They did not know how Einstein defined common sense, namely as a sum total of prejudices gathered before the age of 18. It sometimes felt like breaking the rules of the game, and Pirandello’s eggs were cracking there one by one. Nietzsche, Augustine, Heidegger? ‘We do not do this sort of thing here’, came a scoff of a ‘criticism’. It was a foreigner’s privilege which I stretched *ad libitum* when I could. It would be unthinkable, I imagined, for a French University professor to make such a dismissing remark when his student were to refer to Dun Scott, Bishop Berkeley or Hume. Of course I could not have known for sure. What could one want from these think-

ers who would go for a wee during lectures and not swerve from the comfort of using the works they knew by heart? Obviously I was at the wrong place, reading Freud between classes and refusing to write essays without him. But it was at the right time for all the master signifiers to be learnt and understood. Philosophy is about everything and nothing else.

To think or not to think?

As a passionate psychoanalyst Freud undertook to work out the function of thought as a compulsion on the basis of the real object missing from the scene of subject's satisfaction. Psychologist would call it a 'model' but I felt that one had to be fair to Freud and that nothing was further from his mind in the course of constructing the first ever faulty structure of the psyche. Having thus proposed an apparatus at the heart of which lies a fundamental failure he was now in the position to bring in thinking as a reproductive process. The process will attempt to connect – and therefore to patch up the fault – the instants of perception, namely establish an identity between a representation perceived from outside and a representation invested by the ego. The insistence of what Freud calls thought-process and a compulsion to think operates as a link between unbridgeable and irreconcilable signifiers. It constitutes an attempt to build a communication vessel between reality and experience. Whether Freud speaks of cognitive (judgement) or practical or theoretical thought the question is always about identity between perception and experience. These form an essential opposition. Thinking therefore is not on the side of truth – even if, as Lacan says in the *Ethics*, it is responsible for the process of search for the object – because it has a different function to fulfil, namely that of bridging subjective knowledge and the knowledge of reality, in other words a knowledge of another subject. This is Freud of 1895, though not without Lacan, my Freud at the time of being at the wrong place. I decided I will not stop arguing with the university philosophers without my master. It was just that I did not yet know that it was not Freud, or Lacan, who was my true master, but the unconscious.

Lacan takes up thinking in several places of his teaching, including, in the late 60s, that of the relation between 'I am' and 'I think' as mutually exclusive. Some years later he accounts for the position of the analyst as that of *apensé*. This brings the subject back to where it was, that is to say not to where the analyst interprets but to where the unconscious does. Jacques-Alain Miller's work shows the logic of the end of the era of interpretation. Both positions seemed linked to me. There was a logical connection between the unconscious as inter-

preting, as producing new sense, as making a new leap, and as wanting to be heard, namely to be interpreted, and the position of the analyst as not thinking. By giving the unconscious a hand, by allowing it to interpret, the analyst remains in the position of *apensé*. Lacan's proposition would thus be that one becomes an analyst through not having to enjoy the command 'think!' That's why the analyst, Lacan says, can be dumb, a *dupe*.

The unconscious interprets thoughtlessly which is one of the points at which we can locate Lacan as antiphilosopher. An analysand tries to make sense of a separation with his girlfriend and pauses for a moment: 'It feels like', he continues, 'my desire wilted'. That's the end of the session. Who knows how long it lasted, how many minutes or how many years? Some call it a short session. It is funny how Miller explains somewhere that by trying to be nice to our IPA colleagues, who prefer to work with alarm clocks rather than with the timeless unconscious, we refrain from calling the session short, and call it variable instead. This is closer to the truth as perhaps no two sessions last an identical amount of time. But we should be saying, he adds, that the session is infinite. He thus introduces a paradox of time. If the unconscious is timeless, as Freud said, and cannot be reduced to a series of indivisible moments Aristotle thought it was, or to Leibnitz's monads, the time of the session is in fact infinite. This is the basis for the cut. Philosophical analysis of a text is self-perpetuating and produces another text. The analytic session does not produce another session or another analysis. It produces a loss, following the cut, of *jouissance*, the time of wilting. Infinity implies subtraction because the infinity in question is not the one one arrives at by infinitely adding numbers, as Euclid did, but by taking a series as infinite, i.e. as including the infinite number, as Cantor did. Lacan's infinity was made of the real, of *jouissance* without limits. The infinity of adding numbers involves the limit, so a higher number is added, on and on. I will work on this somewhere else.

So it was not a few minutes, as the analysand returns to the statement some years, I lost count of how many, later. 'My desire wilted because... it willed it'. The flash of the unconscious, its sudden opening and closure struck out the infinity in a blink of time. The name of the subject's desire is that of wanting to go where it had taken him, where he wanted, despite or irrespective of tears, to go. Such is the Freudian ethics. As for Lacan's ethics the secret *jouissance* of 'wilted' remained on the side of giving up on one's desire. But what opened the field of desire was not so much the 'willed it' as the fall of the said *jouissance*...

Thinking – that which mediates and seeks identity between subject's knowledge of the unconscious and the knowledge of the Other, otherwise known as a battery of signifiers – gives way to the object *a*. 'Enjoy your thinking' is the dancing clown in whom hides the horror, and the error, of that little real that

looks from beyond. Where there is thinking, we have a horizon of the object. From *pensé* to *a*. Then back to *apensé*.

Being and lack

“It is not up to psychoanalysis to account for philosophical error for the benefit of philosophy, as though philosophy thereafter would be able to ‘realise’ or account for itself. There can be no such thing, since to imagine it is precisely philosophical error itself. The subject is not wrong to identify with his consciousness, as you have me put it, God knows why, but in being compelled to miss the topology which makes a fool of him in that identification”. This is Lacan responding to philosophy students at Vincennes in 1966. There is more to quote. And more. A philosophical error – which consists in that paranoiac effect of causally linking being and thought, and making no room for illusion – can only be accounted for, Lacan is saying here, by the subject. Whether the subject identifies with being a ‘philosopher’ or a ‘thinker’ is of no consequences to the fact that the type of error involved cannot be corrected. To establish a causal link between thinking and being, after the work Freud conducted with the hysterics, was for Lacan one of the areas he approached with a measure of suspicion. If I think I cannot be at the same time. If I am, and you just let me be, and I drift on the sea of the other, as Blanchot dreamt of, does this constitute thinking?

The act of thinking, in so far as it builds a mediation between the subject’s knowledge and the battery of signifiers on the side of the Other, removes the basis of being by this very stroke. There is nothing to fall back on once I go where ‘it thinks’. Thinking is a balancing act, a tightrope crossing with anguish walking along under his feet. When the subject hears the clocks ticking, only three or four in the collection of over forty, she evokes a hide and seek game in her childhood which she played with a boy who would hide in the wardrobe with the clock in his hands. But what awakes her, what brings her to analysis is the dream of a bomb going off in the wardrobe. She is suspended by the mystery of non-being whose name is anxiety in so far as it is aroused by the other wanting, what if not something called ‘me’. The violently opened gap in language makes this move all the more filled with trembling.

The order of being – despite everything Heidegger said concerning *Sein* all this time when he was in love with Hanna – reveals itself as a lack in being and, therefore, as wanting to be. I want to be this, I want to be that is the law of identification. Lacan’s modification, therefore, (this ‘therefore’ follows for him from the analytic experience) leads him to the following: it thinks where I am

not, whilst being remains within the field of the gaze and of the only instance of homogeneity, namely of the image of the body as a whole. Isn't it what Freud inserted into the discourse of philosophy when he responded to Silberer's observations during his work on narcissism?

According to Freud the philosophical insight, which is subject to the critical agency of the superego facilitating the compulsion of vigilance, works as a kind of narcissistic gaze into the work of the I-libido. The object of this observation not only structurally belongs to the space of the ego image, as Lacan defined it, but is the very image in its idealised, i.e. self-investing, self-loving, self-aggrandised, in short auto-erotic form. Thus the mode of observation called philosophical, Freud concludes, vacillates between what he called the *Selbstgefühl*, 'sense-of-self' or 'feeling-oneself', and self-criticism. The philosopher is the one who, feeling he is watched, watches himself. Philosophical observation produces the effects of self-observation and self-analysis, given that this *self* names a reflective direction the libidinal investment takes. So the true object in this process is the regressive offshoot of the intersubjective failure or, more precisely, the libidinated me as looked at or, quite simply, the me. That's why Freud insists on the paranoiac element in the philosophical observation. I-watching-myself-being-watched is constitutive of equally ideal and paranoiac circuit that is very often accountable for what happens in observation and introspection. Such would be a portrait of a philosopher as a thinking being. Freud's account seems amusing at times but also raises questions that are rarely pursued. What would become of philosophy if the philosopher made a move towards the lack rather than towards everything? It is perhaps the type of question to which Lacan tried to respond. And he did best he could because there is no answer to this question except at the level of the subject.

Freud's objections remain valid, and have been reinforced by Lacan's comments aiming at separating the discourses which are separate. That's why it is not clear to me, as it was not to Natalie Charraud, why Badiou made psychoanalysis a condition of philosophy. It is possible, in the speculative sense of the word, that what led him to this claim was a supposition that the opposite holds true. It is a view I have heard expressed by some philosophers, namely that without the concepts that evolved in the history of philosophy for over two thousand years, there would not be a psychoanalytical theory. And I would only say to those who espouse such a view that they could not have got it more wrong than that. For there is nothing more plain in Lacan, not to mention Freud, than a very simple instance on which the psychoanalytic clinic was based, namely that the condition of psychoanalysis, whether at the time of Emma, Dora or Ratman, is language.

The School

The school exists to the extent that it has been founded by Jacques Lacan. It was founded in 1964, so it has existed for 42, less one, years at the time of writing this sentence. The sole reason for it coming into existence was Lacan's desire in the act called founding. The Founding Act or *Acte de fondation* thus bears the mark of existence. Then there is a history that preceded the act, the ostracism and banishment to which he was subjected from the hands of the IPA. He was banned from teaching in the IPA and his students and trainees were asked to make allegiance. And each one did, one by one, the best ones staying with Lacan. But why the best ones? Perhaps the most courageous ones, those who took the risk, who had nothing to gain, who had no bonus to expect, who were intrigued, fascinated by Lacan? No. Those too, but, above all, those who loved him, therefore, the best ones. Psychoanalysis began with Lacan at this moment. Of course, there was the father of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic movement of several decades, but all this knowledge did not have to be transmitted through transference. Psychoanalysis began with the transmission of the break. Its history was then added as an appendix.

For me it was the time when I saw the first war in my life, Vietnam. I saw the napalm bombs dropped by B-52s in long series over the dense, dark green jungle. There must have been people living there. The trees would light up like matchsticks in long successions looking like fireworks. There was something deeply terrifying and sinister under this appearance of fireworks. These were the works of fire and I did not want to know how many people were torched to death. Then there was a public execution of a Vietnamese prisoner, thin like a cane, his hands tied up in the back, by an American officer who shot him dead in the head. Today we do not have a Vietnam but Abu Ghraib. But the pictures, despite a colossal technological difference between then and now, were circulated around the world in no time. US government with Johnson at the helm was ostracised by the world opinion. In Paris Lacan was excommunicated for teaching the wrong things. This was no death penalty, like for Socrates who was condemned to death for corrupting youth. What Lacan built in the place where Socrates welcomed the goblet of hemlock, was a school of knowledge of the unconscious. He built it with love and on love, even if on the other side, or on the underside, there was hatred. At that time, watching the execution on a black and white screen, I felt like shooting the officer myself. I was left with the 'why?'

Since then the signifier 'school' has been inscribed in psychoanalysis. The school became a place of work, of refuge, if that's the word emerging from the Greek *schole*, to speak to one another with the symptom. What brings the

workers to work together is the equal measure of transference and ignorance which is a mode of passion of which the analyst makes a few – four to be precise – uses. To this extent any discourse is possible in the Lacanian school because any of the four modes of ignorance is possible, master's because it is also the unconscious, hysteric's because there is no obsessional one, and that of university because, since the school is not structured like a university, what would be ignorance without the knowledge of it. But only the analyst, in the discourse where the lack is dominant, knows, through *his* ignorance, all four. The analyst, as it is well known, was defined by Lacan as a saint partly because in the religious tradition the saint does not embody the supreme benevolence and altruism, as was once assumed, but an *ascesis* of questioning and lack, provided we take this *ascesis* with the etymological eye of what it actually means in Greek, namely 'exercise', 'practice'. But most importantly, nobody really knows where the saint's desire goes, what satisfies it and what not. The School then was founded on this unknown sealed in the act that the subject has in relation to the cause. And it continues to be founded as a place of psychoanalytic formation with the pass – a testimony presenting and accounting for the end of analysis – at its heart. Let's just say that the place of the school is where the desire for certainty turns into an encounter with the 'void of guarantee', which is how knowledge and ignorance topologically converge. And there is no reason to dissuade anyone from thinking that it is not the same today.

Psychoanalysis and religion

One of the breakthroughs of psychoanalysis as invented by Freud was the formulation of the structure of sacrifice. To put it succinctly, self-sacrifice as a common practice in the Christian domain whether in public or in private, does not promote relinquishment of enjoyment, called *jouissance*, or sexual satisfaction, in psychoanalysis but refuels it. The self-imposition to give up on the enjoyments, elsewhere called pleasures, has an effect of producing more and more *jouissance* which is a mixture of wanting comfort out of more discomfort.

This was one of the ways in which Freud tried to rid of religion. Religion supports the idea and practice of punishment. The unconscious does not. Religion belongs to the set of practices where the guarantee can be provided at the moment of need. Although psychoanalysis does not promise guarantees, nor any salvation or redemption, it offers a possibility of an absolute singularity for anyone.

Miller rightly points out that Lacan never thought it would be possible to rid of religion. He even spoke of the triumph of religion. He gave obsessional

neurosis a legitimate place, unlike Freud who thought the world would benefit if the obsessionals did not exist although they proved indispensable for the hysterics. There is something so deeply precious to the obsessionals that they carry it around and take it everywhere they are lead to. And they never drop it or forget it or part with it even when they do all these things. Obviously there is nothing more precious than the image of an irreplaceable life style and values.

Apart from that Freud defined religion as an illusion. He also defined it as an experience of the ego, an overwhelming experience as he interpreted the letter of Romain Rolland. Today we are offered a similar spiritual experience from the hands of the Hindu woman, nicknamed the 'priestess of hugs', otherwise known as Amma, who for over thirty years has been travelling the world round to take into her arms politicians, senators, and celebrities. This is what Freud was talking about when he mentioned 'oceanic feeling'.

In the end Freud approaches religion through the death of Moses. Moses is a means to establish the One, first monotheism, and Freud remains Christian to the end, then the One that in the analytic discourse comes to be produced. On the other hand, the death of Moses is a prelude to the 'death of God'. Somehow when Freud writes about the future of an illusion, he also says that illusion has a future. Does philosophy have a future? According to Nietzsche yes. According to Freud philosophy is not an illusion.

But let's say in defence of philosophy that it is nevertheless a discourse that places thinking in the dominant position while at the same time bypassing what is missing in it as included. It is almost as if it had 3 rather than 4 elements. For this reason philosophy can be approached, and one is tempted to say 'only', as a work of a thinker and a writer one by one provided he or she subscribes to what I would call *universalis qua singularis*. If this were a principle of philosophical discourse, it would not be so bad concerning its future. It would even be good enough to enable us to understand why in the case of some authors examining and analysing the culture of today in the broadest sense of the word, they are lead to and end in an attempt to save philosophy as such an *universalis* even if these attempts make a firm use of analytical concepts including that of the lack. And why not if this is what it has always done? Perhaps with just one exception.

Freud was adamant from the start that he was not interested in reading Nietzsche's ideas in order to be able to formulate his own. And he did not change his mind just because he received Nietzsche's collected works for his birthday present from Ferenczi. That was his honesty. Someone nevertheless insisted that there is no one without the other. He, Ronald Lehrer by name, wrote a book *Nietzsche's Presence in Freud's Life and Thought* where he tried to reduce Freud's clinical formulations to Nietzsche's maniacal intuitions. I bought

the book and then regretted it because it tries to construct a dimension of extrasubjectivity where Freud's ideas can be willy-nilly traced back to Nietzsche's insights. Whether they can or not seems a spurious exercise that could just as well be presented using set theory. What do A and B have in common, what does A say that B does not, etc? Nietzsche's revolutionary and profound statements did not prevent him from paying the highest price when his psychosis finally triggered. But his passion makes a good case for those who aspire for the universal to be studied one by one. And of course there is more to be learnt from Nietzsche than about the death of God.

Nietzsche's death of God was his name for the era of the Other that does not exist. How did Freud come to reach this point? Through the death of Moses, through the death of his father. But also through the patricide which the death of God represents. The position of psychoanalysis becomes manifest as the Other that does not exist. But this is not a position for all who are in analysis. An analysand believes in God because it provides her with the comfort of an illusion which she does not find in analysis. Then one day she says: 'you are Godsend for me as you came from nowhere to look after me'. The Other functions for her as wanting to look after her. This is almost an invention, as it touches on *ex nihilo*, as the Other comes from nowhere, perhaps only through words and wishes she has for him. Unlike an encounter with the Man in psychosis, the name of God, what we call the Name-of-the-Father, has a comforting function and evokes for her the question of love and desire of her long dead father.

And what about those endless, albeit finite, monologues in the Holy Confessional, the purportedly obvious analogy between speaking on the couch and to the priest's ear? And what about prayers? Why not to say that in some religious practices, like that of Islam but also in Christianity, the numerous prayers could be seen as a practice of penance without a chance of being able to articulate to an other some thorn of suffering, whether we call it sin or regular undermining of one's self-esteem. It seems that guilt is not a necessary ingredient of every religious practices.

Are there ever more direct reminiscences arising from the beginnings on the couch than that of an experience of confession? Your sins are absolved, my son, say 3 Marries and off you go. Couldn't analysand do some housework in the analyst's house if he has no money to pay for sessions? Could he have more sessions because 'money is not a problem'? 3, 4 or 5 Marries helps to maintain guilt and punishment in so far as both keep the Other as commanding and enjoying master in place. Can it be that God wants this, asks a young man? Ask the unconscious. The Other of the unconscious knows no punishment. But does it know it? Let me find out. Not so with guilt which is the site of desire. When you renounce the latter, Lacan formulated his ethics, the former

re-emerges with a double force. The question that emerges with it is: what do you owe the subject, symbolically speaking?

When Lacan takes up the death of God in the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* he breaks it down to two stages. Firstly, God is dead and has always been dead. The second stage brings in a surprise. He himself does not know that he has always been dead. Lacan will later say that if there is anyone to know it – to have supposed that God knows that he is alive, for he cannot know he is dead – it is the subject. And what he supposes is that there is another subject who knows, for example the analysand himself.

What remains of the *jouissance* of the Other, is the signifier of the lack in the Other's desire. Incidentally, Lacan called it the most secret element in psychoanalysis. He did this when giving commentary on Hamlet, so he must have considered it of value in the case of obsessional neurosis. It is the obsessional who delays *ad infinitum* the step of removing the Other from the drive to open up the field of desire.

The fall of an assumption that there will always be another to love me, to guarantee that my love for him may one day be repaid all in one day, comes under the fall of *jouissance* that deserves to be distinguished from Freud's paradox of sacrifice that simultaneously reduces and boosts *jouissance*. Lacan's remark helped me get closer to the gist of this paradox. The willingness to sacrifice a 'pound of flesh' is a follow up to the subject's claim to have the phallus. But if the subject indeed had the phallus – and all the unbound power that imagination could bring with it – why would he want to sacrifice it? Who on earth would want to sacrifice their most precious possession that guarantees access to all wisdoms and riches of the world? No one, that's the point, because the phallus is nowhere to be found. And this was a clear indication for Lacan at the time of working on sublimation that what really is at stake in *jouissance* is not its aim, which always remains the same, but the object.

In the paradox of sacrifice, *jouissance* remained the same and only its place altered. It changed from the subject, who showed readiness to sacrifice some of his flesh, to that of the superego that now commands the subject from elsewhere to enjoy the thought of sacrifice. Now the ferocious superego commands the order of the day: Be, Think, Sacrifice and enjoy it! This change of place of *jouissance* does not change the false authority under which the analysand set out to love and work. This false authority, this so to speak *phallacy* comes as an effect of a belief in the Other whose *jouissance*, whose 'borne' suffering is part of identification. How if not by suffering for the neighbour? This is valid for Christian tradition where the One in question is also the image of the suffering one. Any way out of the sin, which is supported by guilt and penance, is to suffer more. To suffer less one has to suffer more. This is how less is more.

Of men, women and love

Love is the sole condition for speaking, whether speaking well or not, to an other. But just because the subject is in some way 'in love' when speaking to an other, does not imply that he knows how to speak about love when speaking. Very few did and Lacan was one of them. And what he said of love today became part of the collection of his aphorisms: 'to love is to give what one does not have'.

The connection between love and speaking could be called a Freudian condition of love to the extent that he situated love in the place of a gift, and therefore a giver. But this did not prevent him from stripping love bare to a hypnotic effect that was paramount for the work of transference both as facilitating analytical work and being its main obstacle at the same time.

The 'sole condition' appears only as an evocation, and a reminder, of the primary act of giving voice to an other, of calling and demanding, which is not the same as screaming. Freud made a distinction between a scream, which was more on the side of cathartic emission, and a call of demand designating articulation of needs and therefore entry to language. It is interesting that precisely at the point when Freud speaks about the first tokens of love, namely when the child's mother, responding to the call, gives the child through her tone of voice, her words, her touches and warmth, the first interpretation, that he also finds in this initial exchange and its marks what he will call in one of the letters to Fliess 'the origin of morality'. He seems quite proud of himself to make this connection. Love and morality. It is in this combination, it seems to me, that we could find some basis for what in Lacan's teaching will become passion. Tender, aggressive, tyrannical, maniacal, moaning, obsessive, terrorist passion that would not exist without the neighbour, is how Lacan advanced early Freudian enterprise to the point of symptomatic formation. Yes, to work with the symptom, to identify with the symptom can also mean, not for all naturally, to work, to love, to hate, and to ignore, with passion. Passion is what is left of being and what is not a lack, a remainder of the real therefore. The saint whose desire is touched by a question mark of the one who wants to know as to where it is going, is not without passion. It is more difficult to say a passion for what. One can love this passion or hate it like the frog but there will always be a scorpion deceiving us somewhere sometime. Couldn't we have ever wished for a more nagging and pressing partner-symptom than passion? It seems not between men and women. Passion, *jouissance*, what is the difference?

A Belgian-born couple therapist Esther Perel, who lived and worked in the USA, has recently written a book that immediately catapulted her to fame. This, at least by American standards, is worth noting. What is the discovery that

made nine or so publishers court her until one won her hand and a contract? That love and sex are incompatible. That if you want to keep your relationship, which is presumably on the side of love, you have to translate sex into seduction and erotic play. Perel is the first one to notice that more often than ever before married couples do not want to sleep with each other anymore. Men and women, she claims, need space for themselves alone, and therefore a space that separates them. And once the space of separation is erected between them, and they can go off to holiday without the partner, they can then resume, or indeed commence the game of seduction. The problem, according to Perel, is that we expect one person, a spouse, to provide what an entire community used to give: love, friendship, sex and other forms of bonding. Go your separate ways, she recommends, and you will be brought together. Many couples benefited greatly from her advice. One couple, for example, in order to sustain their relationship, have been meeting only in motels. Another one make love outside their block of flats when they both come home tired after work. Another couple have a very intense social life and pretend not to know each other at the parties and meetings they go to. This is not exactly what Tolstoy recommended when he said that man and wife should abandon sex altogether and live like brother and sister in so far as this would guarantee that the incestuous thoughts were much more to be desired.

There is an artifice present in the examples Perel seems to pride herself on, since after all she does succeed in keeping the couples together or in not ceasing not to write their relationship. She does not write it off either by devising in each case a mechanism that would help them to face up to the old 'can't live with them can't live without them'. What her interventions and good advice seem to touch on has nothing to do with desire to the extent that love, the pleasure of thinking about another, as Jacques-Alain Miller defined it, can take form of desire where only words remain as signs of love, and where unsatisfaction assumes a (+) value. Perel does not seem to be concerned with a 'shortage' of desire but with excesses of being together at all possible levels. And she says: enough! She is dealing with an impossibility of silence of the sexual relation as Lacan formulated it in the 1971. After saying that the Other does not exist, this is his second formula of non-existence. Sexual relationship does not exist because it cannot be said or written. Why then bother to try to say what is impossible to say instead of allowing for various actings-out to realise what desire cannot? That's precisely what desire is as Lacan defined it. It is unrealisable.

So what does the excess have to do with, and does it not name what Lacan already put his finger on when he said that *jouissance* of the Other does not indicate love. It is in this way that he introduced us to *Encore* leaving the concluding remarks on the lips of love. These two, *jouissance* and love, are often

confused as to the reasons for coming to analysis. And let's note that they are never confused with what does not give us such a reason, namely desire. There is no desire to go to analysis, which is how Lacan separated it from love called transference.

When dealing with relationships, with their excesses and impossibilities, Perel does not cease, that much seems to be certain, to what? The first part, 'does not cease' introduces us to necessity, to something that does not stop pressing, insisting, being stronger than me, so it has perhaps to do with the symptom. As for the second part, Lacan offers us a variety in the form of the displacement of negation. Something insists and compels in the symptom but not in the same way as in the sexual relation which, unlike the symptom, cannot be written. Hence the double negation: the sexual relation does not stop not being written. This opens a dimension of an impossibility. The relation between non-existence and negation is not straightforward. When someone says that God does not exist, does this amount to negating God? And if Valéry says that atheism is a privileged way to speak about God, does this imply that atheism as a negation of God equals his non-existence? In Valéry's statement plainly not. Then there is a negation Freud introduced, namely that when interpreting a dream I say that the woman in it is not my mother, this indicates that it is indeed my mother. In this case, negation is a condition of repression which is a modality of existence as the repressed can return at some unexpected point later in life. Then there is also a problem with desire of which it cannot be said that the subject does not desire, but that he desires not to.

What Lacan says in his 'the sexual relation does not exist' does not amount to negating the sexual relation. If the couples do not do it at home they will end up doing it in a motel or in an alley under the cover of the night or with strangers at a party. It seems that Perel would not deny this. She seems familiar with the Scorpion's 'nature'. Whatever we do in love, Lacan says, will be sustained by the fact that when a being approaches another being, it hits a miss, so to speak, as if the aim had to do with something, some remainder, of *jouissance* of the Other. This is how it is for men when a woman appears to them as an object *a* of fantasy, and therefore the only way she is *a*-veil-able to him.

A veil has a function of marking the point of *jouissance* to the extent that the veil, at least before Lacan, was a sign or 'symbol' of something beyond it. With Lacan the veil assumes another sense. It marks the woman who wears it does not have. So it becomes a function of the lack. From the point of view of cultural and religious insignia, like in Islam, the veil conceals the erotic point not because there is something to be found under it but because beyond it there is nothing. Hence it is to no avail to demand to strip a woman bare because what the man expects to find underneath her garments has already been

inscribed on them. The veil indeed responds to what in the relation of a man to a woman is called nakedness, and if in some cultures it covers the face then, perhaps, it is because her femininity is not to be seen.

The hit and miss game, which is what Lacan left us with concerning love, if it is a game, is another name for the impossibility of the sexual relation. They never meet each other except in infinity, they never enjoy at the same time for who and what would be there to know it? And they never write love letters in the same way which means that they come from two different corners of enjoyment. The 'sexual relation does not exist' belongs therefore not only to non-existence but also to nonnegation and impossibility. Impossibility is what we practice to be surprised and taken aback when it turns into the possible. But non-existence for Lacan refers to a specific register, namely that of the symbolic. So it concerns speech where it is how love is made. 'Love exists' would be Lacan's ultimate conclusion of his discourse, provided we approach this existence alongside the nonexistence of the sexual relation.

Lacan made love into the fifth element. Love permeates life even if there are different modes of love including hatred, aggression, ravage or what he called *hainamoration*, a hate-loving partnership with another. If there is no escaping responsibility from one's subjectivity, there is no escaping it from loving someone, somewhere and concealing it somewhere else. What Lacan said about God stands for love. Theologians could do much better without God than he could. Couldn't we say that love is the condition of God rather than God the condition of love? And if we cannot do without God as the uncertain Other who demands the sacrifice of what is dearest, is it not because love is already inscribed in 'not without God' or in God the Father loving us, which is why sacrifice becomes possible? Nothing is perhaps as uncertain.

You have a good life, don't you? No, I don't have a good life, my 4 year old daughter replies, I have a good father. She is far ahead of me and can grasp the condition for having something good about life. It will be some time before she transforms this condition into an effect which will allow her to give what she does not.

The secret of psychoanalysis

Why not to say that the use of the Name, i.e. subscription to the father's desire is equivalent, logically speaking, to the subscription to the function of the secret in psychoanalysis? There is a secret in psychoanalysis and perhaps psychoanalysis itself will always be a transmission of a secret. In his teaching Lacan steered clear of the Sirens of the master signifier, the One that emerges,

whether in religion or science, as Supreme Meaning. By doing that he steered clear of bombarding his listeners with meanings and with anchoring points, which is what the master signifier does; by making the signifier and the signified into a couple, it strikes a meaning, a *dominanta* of meaning, as Lacan put it, suggesting perhaps that if mastery is not foreign to music it is not foreign to speech either. The progression of his teaching appears as a progression of the secret, from the secret of the signifier through the secret of the lack in the signifier to the secret of *jouissance* in the later phase.

The secret of the signifier as universal, and the secret of discourse as the social function of Oedipus, leads towards singularity, namely towards the secret of *jouissance* ciphered and deciphered at the same time. To the extent that analysis aims at speaking about *jouissance*, psychoanalysis could be defined as a deuniversalisation *qua singularis*. What is the *universalis* in psychoanalysis if not what appears under the function of the name, in psychoanalysis called the Name-of-the-Father, to the extent that *jouissance* of the Other is not a sign of love?

What the father transmits to the child in the form of the sexual function concerns something of the order of the absolute, mother as absolute *jouissance*, for a father like Hegel. On the other hand, the very function of the paternal metaphor opens, like in the case of the king who makes a judgement, a dimension of what cannot be named, what is impossible to say. At the end of his teaching Lacan tied the impossible to the sexual relation.

So what is the secret of psychoanalysis? When we think about a secret we think about it being guarded by the subject. 'I am not going to tell you this', the child says, 'because it's a secret'. But then we do not think of psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis the secret is not guarded by the subject but by the object. The secret of psychoanalysis, this is no mystery, has to do with the object. Towards the end of his work Lacan brings the object closer to love because in love's heart there is a void, the impossible to give that one nevertheless continues to give, one by one, to pass it on. And the subject wonders whether it was not the object's presence from the start that was the thorn of the drive that led the subject to love. For the object in question is not the one that can be socially shared, exchanged, substituted, the so-called goods or human values. The object that arises through anxiety is not transferable or exchangeable (more or less like a last minute one way ticket). In short, I am talking about the object that is not to be received and must therefore be given away to the Other. This is how Lacan inaugurates the pluralisation of names of the father on the basis of a singular object with the words: 'I love you but, inexplicably, I love in you more than you – object *a* – and therefore mutilate you'.

Indivisibility of the object, together with the fact that it is nonreturnable and nonexchangeable, names what we encounter in everyday life as a strange

presence of what is not for me nor for you. Thus such an object divides those who try to make an exclusive claim to it. The question of 'ownership' of Jerusalem could be presented in this way. As the most desirable object that divides its claimants, Jerusalem remains indivisible and unpartitionable. And if it cannot be divided, it can, therefore, be transferred from one side to another, say every six or twelve months, or every full circle of festivities, religious dues, seasons all enjoyed by one side until the object is passed on to another side. One year the Israelis, next the Palestinians, then the Christians, so that none of them would have it entirely for themselves.

For the later Lacan the dimension of hate emerges as a lining of love. One does not exist without the other, hence Lacan's *hainamoration*, 'lovehate'. Hate, as well as anger and ravage, open for the subject a very particular dimension beyond desire, namely privation. We recall from his early period that privation is real at the level of the lack, namely the *Penis-neid* for a woman, and the castration complex for a man. For both sexes the relation with object is mediated through a lack, which is why an imaginary function (imaginary father) is made use of. It is the moment when we blame someone for screwing up our life, when we reproach him for making us inadequate, limited and unable to utter that one fundamental thing, namely the sexual relation. The one to be blamed for such a sexual incompetence is the imaginary father. But it can also be a moment when thanks to the (imaginary) father life turns out to be good enough. The passage from the real father, as initiating castration, to the imaginary father as, let's call him a 'patron' of privation, is based on the symbolic function of the Name.

What Lacan called pluralisation of the names means that each privation bears a different name, that for each subject there is something else. We could say that the analytic practice aims, through 'for each subject something else', at using the secret of *jouissance*, where the particular and singular use is the only trace of the absolute *jouissance* of the mother, as Lacan called the Freudian Thing, *das Ding*. As Eric Laurent put it, the function of the father is to guide from drive to love and not the reverse. Or from passion to desire.

The secret of psychoanalysis lies in the object that emerges in this passage. Which is perhaps why the secret is guarded not by the subject but by the object, something that may appear as incomprehensible to all the supporters of state regulation of psychoanalysis. Bernard-Henri Lévi went so far as to say that psychoanalysis is the right to the secret. In the light of technological developments and alternative ways of introducing the sexual function – where neither privation nor the phallus as a condition of desire seem to play a part – from adoption through design babies to babies on order, there also emerges a right to the father or the right to the name. In so far as technology is on the side of the state, i.e. on the side of legal variation, psychoanalysis remains on the side

of the name of the secret and of transmitting it in and outside the consultation room.

No matter how hard, or how modestly or discreetly, he would try, and despite his good intentions – which still are where they used to be – the psychoanalyst is unable to put forward anything resembling a programme, an ideology, a worldview. On the side of the symbolic, he only deals with creations and constructions when and only when they herald a subject of the unconscious. As for the nonanalytical interpretation he is free to make any he pleases, although they are not designed to escape the inadequacy of what guides him. Below the last layer of an archaeological site, where the ruins of Troy are finally found, there is...

This is what we call psychoanalytic experience, which deserves to be distinguished from the experience of psychoanalysis, and whose condition is that it is not our experience, or yours, but the subject's. Is it a taste, a smell, a glimpse or a silence of the master signifier that will come to say 'find me, love me and drop me'? Like in the case of the passage from 'my desire wilted' to 'my desire willed it', the experience relies on seizing the unconscious when it opens. After the passage the subject will never be the same again. This seizing occurs by way of contingency. It could have occurred but did not have to. We could say that before this passage the future of the unconscious, or the unconscious as future, was contingent. It appeared only as an effect of the passage and retrospectively made the passage possible.

What caused that the subject will never be the same is the shift from the possible to the necessary. This shift occurred as an effect of division of the subject whose being was taken away from him. What appeared in that place of loss was what we call retroactive temporality. We could say that he subscribed to the unconscious, and that the impossible happened.

This is what Jacques-Alain Miller pointed out when he spoke about dispelling a confusion between the possible and the contingent by separating them. When we speak of the phallus and phallic signification as contingent, we only distinguish it from the necessary. The phallus is not necessary because it does not have to be inscribed and only sometimes is. Therefore it is contingent. But the contingent, in the light of the new definition, is impossible to the extent that when it happens there is an effect of surprise and disbelief. 'I cannot believe it took so many years... to realise that... wilting... that I actually willed it... wanted it... and now there is no going back...' When the initial surprise subsides the impossible becomes possible. It is possible that in the psychoanalytic conditions such things happen. In psychoanalysis the impossible happens.