



Il «mistero del corpo parlante»

Le «mystère du corps parlant»

O «mistério do corpo falante»

The «mystery of the speaking body»

El «misterio del cuerpo hablante»

Lacanian Variations XX 130

Freud:

1. The one belonging to the feminine side of the human species is defined as having been castrated (she saw, she concluded). Her relationship with the others and the world will thus be determined by the search, following all possible ways, of what she is lacking.
2. Besides, as a woman strictly speaking, she is quite mysterious, even disquieting. Thank God, it is not prohibited for that one to be also a man... i.e. to correspond to the definition we give of her, and which forces her to position herself as castrated.

Lacan:

1. There is no doubt, since they speak, that women have a masculine side, which further implies: demand, castration, desire and its phallic signification, etc.
2. The feminine side of the species *parlêtre* is that which is defined as not being castrated. The thing is not lacking for her, therefore there is no such word which would symbolize its absence.
3. Hence: - "The" woman does not exist, since she is not inscribable in any signifier. - It is impossible to write the relationship with the woman since she is not inscribable herself. - The relationship with the woman; it is the other name of the sexual relationship.
4. "A" feminine jouissance does exist. It is experienced, recorded, but it cannot be said. More precisely, it can be avowed as such, but nothing can be said about it. If this feminine jouissance could be said, one could qualify it, and say of it that it is like... ; such as, for example, what one experiences when one shivers of pleasure under a caress, yet more extremely, because the caress relates to the most sensitive organ of the body.
In addition, this feminine jouissance cannot be said as being "the" feminine jouissance, since it cannot be defined, due to the lack of the signifier that would represent it.
5. If this jouissance cannot be said, can it be at least compared? It certainly can, in its manifestations. But how can one be certain of the constancy of the relation of its manifestations with what this jouissance really consists of, when it is experienced? For a woman in particular, it is necessary to rely on what she is actually saying. Indeed, every woman can say if the jouissance she experienced was more or less intense compared to a previous one, taken as

reference. That is, we have to believe her... And from one woman to another, what else can be compared if not the manifestations of their jouissances, since the jouissance of each of them can neither be said nor quantified, i.e. cannot lend itself to “objective” measurement?

6. “Objective” hints here on the one hand to modern science, based on the mathematical writing, which is “the substitution of what is called a letter for any number of ones”, i.e. a constant which allows calculation (*Encore*, p.118 – p. 130, English translation); on the other hand, “objective” points at the object *a* of fantasy, which is the measuring unit of pleasure: a pleasure which is worth such amount of sucking, such amount of guilders; which is worth perhaps even an incalculable number of sucking and guilders, but of sucking and guilders nevertheless!

7. One should acknowledge that, besides the fact that this feminine jouissance *is* experienced, and although it can be activated in the same “objective” way as for men, in the case of women it does not necessarily follow the same path. It can be actuated in very different manners, sometimes even without physical contact. It functions differently than for a man, and independently of him. How come?

8. Is it because this jouissance cannot be said, that it should be banned from answering a law that could be stated - banned thus from being in charge? Do women know what will make them enjoy, *encore*? Actually, it seems they don't, therefore they know that they cannot pledge anything. From the phallic perspective, in fairness women find themselves insulted in return.

9. That, in its own way, feminine jouissance exists (ex-sists), so be it! Why would this be very important? And to whom? – It is understandable that for women this is indeed very important, since they are a mystery to themselves. Yet, it is apparent that it does not matter to women unless it is not enough for them to experience it, and they want moreover to disclose one fragment of this mystery, to know something about it; providing they are hysterical, i.e. interested in it from a man's point of view.

- From man's perspective then, since he has his mathematical formalization, his object related, fantasmatic equation, which quantifies his jouissance, why and how would this other jouissance still tickle him? The question is all the more relevant as what makes a man interested in the body of a woman can be sufficiently explained in terms of her being for him castrated, according to the image of the mother. Meaning that she is without mystery for him, since the relationship with the mother falls under the presumably common reference to the object.

Therefore, a man can, *quoad matrem* (*Encore*, p. 36 ; p. 36 English), enlist in his fantasmatic equation the women who go with it which allows him to offer them the object they lack, thus enabling him in his turn to affirm himself as a man.

10. If all men as well as the hysterical share of each woman are interested in the feminine jouissance and answer it by way of fantasy, who else can still be interested in it, who can still make an enigma out of it, who can still confer it the function of the cause? The same ones of course: women, because they know that to offer their body as equivalence of the object leaves them in embarrassment, if not in suffering; men (and the hysterical share of women), because they know that an equivalence is not an identity.

The fact that the latter answered the enigma by their hypothesis concerning the object, through an answer which ensures them a certain stability in their world and their mode of satisfaction, does not say why the difference as such constituted for them a problem necessitating a solution - in other words why the difference affected them in their body - anxiety – so as to put this difference at work via the signifier: unconscious.

11. In the case of the *parlêtre*, it is verified that the difference introduced by speech does affect; and that the affect generates speech in the form of a question on itself; subject therefore. The reason being that the difference cannot be introduced as such if it weren't for the work of the signifier. Not of the signified or of the signification of each word, which does not exist, but via the signifier, defined as distinct from all the others. *Moteriality of lalangue*, states Lacan. The signifier being at the place of the Other, from where it comes to the *infans*, it is written on the body as difference of jouissance - thus anxiety. And the fantasmatic answer will only represent here a stopper of meaning, a *mi-rage* of the ultimate meaning of false-being. This difference, how then to define it, i.e. how to come to an end with respect to the affect which sets it off, or at least how to route it? Can we say that, as for the sexual relationship, the difference is in no way inscribable, and that any attempt to do that can only repeat it? Certainly, but only by transforming it too, since the fact of speaking "I" sets into function the object supposed to abolish it and thus transforms the anxiety into more bearable affects. Speech – coming from the Other -, introduces and marks on the body the difference, the real. In its turn, this difference becomes speech, and question. From one generation to the following, the question reproduces itself, and speech is transmitted. Who started? And in order to say what? Mystery of a life which reproduces itself only via the misunderstanding... (*Encore*, p. 109, p.121, English ed.).

12. The body is affected by *lalangue*, and so it is a speaking body; the body is a speaking body, and thus it affects another body. Hence, as a speaking body, the body may wish to hold on to another body and reckon with it in order to be accountable for its ex-sistence. Can't one find here "that what invisibly holds bodies" (*Encore*, p. 86, p. 93, English)? Not as celestial bodies here, but as bodies of the *parlêtres*: bodies that are not hindered by the awareness of the visible anatomical difference; bodies that are not hindered either by the gravitational formula of fantasy which would allow the calculation of the distance between them; yet bodies which are caught in "the points of dead ends, of impasses" (id.), that the writing of *lalangue* marks out on their surface, points which "show the real acceding to the symbolic".

13. Is it an obligation for the speaking body to have to hold on to another speaking body? This seems to be true, since we notice that the psychotic subjects, as well as the neurotics ones, need that their speech be not only uttered but also received, even if this is done according to a logic that differs from one structure to the other. All *parlêtres* would thus constitute the Other, via an affected body, as partner. Yet, doesn't our clinic force us to distinguish between the time when the speech from the Other is printed as a mark of this difference and thus constitutes the speaking body, and the time when this speech reverberates as a question which establishes the link with the Other? Isn't it necessary therefore that the Other, after having marked down the difference, accommodate it by giving it a meaning? Indeed, aren't the melancholic subjects as well as the autistics characterized precisely by the fact that they only have a speech without address, cut off of any demand to a partner, of any aim at affecting his body? If Lacan said about the autistics that they were rather verbose, can't we say the same thing about the melancholics? The former, while being autistic, emit sounds, even words, which are patently accompanied by specific affects; the latter continue, more or less in silence, to mull over their being of inexpressible abjection and to experience the pain coming from it. Nonetheless, they are both, in their own way, speaking beings. Thus, the *moteriality*, though existing, seems well to be initially a characteristic of the body unit of the species *parlêtre*, and even of its organism, independently of any possible partner. Will any anatomy ever elucidate the mystery of the speaking body?

14. In fact, what relationship can be established between the other jouissance, the feminine one,

which has no access to the symbolic, and the *subs(is)tance* enjoying the real of *lalangue*? Aren't we confronted here with the passage from a relativist theory of the other *jouissance* to a generalist theory? And in this case, what remains from the specificity of the former? What are the consequences of the latter on the analytical experience and its end? Maybe in Rome...

Marc Strauss, Paris, 23/03/10
(translation by Radu Turcanu)