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Prelude 3

Treatments of the body in our times and in psychoanalysis

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The psychoanalyst's act and its effects on the body

In approaching the theme of the treatment of the body we must be very clear as to four fundamental questions: the specificity of the normal trauma, and therefore of any trauma that a subject may find in life; the sexual trauma, which Freud examined in order to illustrate the particularity of the truth that is at the basis of the phobia and the neurosis in the subject; and finally the two crucial questions of the last period of Lacan's teaching, the relation to *lalangue*, that is to say, an opaque real of jouissance that underlies the symptoms. We may say that the true trauma of the subject is precisely his relation to *lalangue*, from which the fourth fundamental question derives: this is the illusion of the existence of the sexual relation that feeds the fantasy. Sometimes the fantasy may appear to be delusional, and it is only through the long work of an analysis that the 'black' of one's own jouissance can be circumscribed. Hence Lacan's definition of the body in his Seminar XX: *Being is the jouissance of the body as such*.¹

The topic that animated the discussions between Lacan and Chomsky in the United States, namely, the body is language, tested them.² Chomsky postulated that the body is like a genetic real with organs and the language itself is one of them. Lacan, on the other hand, maintained that language is supported by its function of being a hole in the Real. The body is not primary, as a negativation of jouissance through the signifier must operate, a One that becomes minus One, so that the zero may be deduced. This negativation makes it possible to locate outside that which is impossible to represent, and which is not exactly an organ, as Crick and Watson would have liked. It occurs because of a desire that gave birth to a word that the organ or the body become deserts of jouissance and are able to speak. How? Through symptoms. Lacan refers to this

¹ Lacan, J. (1998) *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. New York & London, Norton, p. 6.

² Lacan, J. (2016) *The Seminar, Book XXIII, The Sinthome, 1975-1976*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA, USA, Polity Press, p. 21.

when he proposes his thesis: ‘The real, I will say, is the mystery of the speaking body, the mystery of the unconscious’.³

The current techniques of treatment of the body are indeed techniques of the Master signifier, that is to say, techniques that put the body in a signifying order.⁴

Lacan defines some techniques, such as that of Joyce, as *techniques of the artisan*. Joyce was excessively overwhelmed by his father. This can be seen in *Ulysses*, where he has to sustain his father with his art, thus making of himself the *artisan* of an order. He attempts to create a sense.

Psychoanalysis, too, is a technique that affects the body; but it does not promote an order for the subject – it rather creates an enigma about his desire. The various techniques function like that of the *artisans*⁵, finding humor in illusions. Another artist, Felisberto Hernández, writes in this connection: ‘Who, today, does not fondle *half* [*media*; also *stocking*] an illusion?’⁶ The narrator tries to sell women’s stockings [*medias*], and to achieve that he looks for a proper metaphor with which the verb *acariciar* [to fondle, to caress, to stroke] adopts a signification that moves between illusion and something that fondles stockings.

The *artisan* has a conception of knowledge [*saber*] as dogma, as in religion. He himself separates knowledge [*saber*] from the subject’s truth.⁷

Unwittingly, the separation that Lacan establishes between knowledge and truth departs from what Freud hoped to obtain by aiming at the truth about the sexual trauma. For Lacan, instead, it is a question of coming close to the letter, the limit of the hole of what is impossible to be known that is proper to the *parlêtre*. In fact, he invented the neologism *troumatisme* in reference to the trauma that makes a hole in the subject. The invention of the knots enables the perception of the nuances of the *varité* of the subject. *Varité* is another neologism, well accommodated to underlie the subjective variety of truth on the hole in knowledge. The knots are ideal to show the *jouissance* of the Other that is outside language, as well as outside the body, as is the case of phallic *jouissance*.⁸

In his discourse of 1967 to the École freudienne de Paris, Lacan introduced the psychoanalytic act, which increasingly acquired importance in his doctrine until the end of his teaching. As from *L’étourdit* it is necessary to separate the statements [*dichos*] from the sayings [*decir*]. The saying is of the register of ex-sistence. In relation to the saying it is necessary that somebody be incarnated, so as to have a body. Following that, there emerges the ‘poem period’, during which the marks of the analysis become incarnated in the body. Lacan holds this position until his seminar *L’insu*, when he says that the subject regards himself as a God – that is to say, produces S_1 represented for

³ Lacan, J. (1998) *The Seminar, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. New York & London, Norton, p. 131.

⁴ Soler, C. (2006) *Los ensamblajes del cuerpo*. Medellín, Asociación Foros del Campo Lacaniano de Medellín, p. 108.

⁵ Lacan, J. (2016) *The Seminar, Book XXIII, The Sinthome, 1975-1976*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA, USA, Polity Press, p. 14.

⁶ Hernández, F. (2012) *El Cocodrilo*. <https://cuentosimperdibles.wordpress.com> 8/10/2012

⁷ Lacan, J. (2017) *Talking to Brick Walls. A Series of Presentations in the Chapel at Sainte-Anne Hospital*. Cambridge, UK and Medford, MA, USA, Polity Press, p. 30.

⁸ Lacan, J. (1974) *La Troisième*. Rome, 1/11/1974. Unpublished transcript.

another signifier, which has an effect of sense that obturates everything. Man sleeps the *un-Bévue* – as in somnambulism, where the somnambulist has an unconscious, and when he wakes up from his walk on the roofs he may experience vertigo.

The vacillation of the fantasy leads man's shrewdness to resorting to poetry. Lacan refers to the fact that poetry is an effect of sense, but also effect of hole: *only poetry allows for interpretation*.⁹

As to the analyst's act and its effects on the body we have to take into account that there must be desire for the act to exist: they are inseparable. An act is not just the action of a body. Lacan indicates that the act depends on its effects. The act is the effect of a desire, and the effect of a word, even if at the moment of the act there are no words. The experience of analysis is founded upon the analyst's act as well as upon transference as enactment of the reality of the unconscious. Lacan uses the term *inmixing* in relation to the difference produced by the introduction of the signifier, and then uses it again in reference to the function of the act. He also uses the expression *intrusion of the act*, and arrives at the formula: 'In interpreting, the analyst intrudes with a signifier'.¹⁰ Izcovich is accurate in his formula that states that the interpretation and the analytic act are not *optional*, as they are necessary to facilitate the opening of the unconscious:

As regards penetrating, producing a semblant, making be, Lacan unfolds the writing to highlight the dimension of being, obtained by the fact of making a difference. The *intrusion* touches the body to the point of breaking into *jouissance*.¹¹

There are marks on the body that become incarnated in it: the mark of the father, of repetition, of desire, of exile which make of the subject a speaking being, and make of him a subject that speaks without knowing. What comes after the work of an analysis, apart from the identification with the symptom?

An analysis affects the body. Some S₁ are marks on the subject produced by the experience of an analysis.¹²

Translated by Leonardo Rodríguez

⁹ Lacan, J. (1976-1977) *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIV, L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*. Session of 17/5/1977. Unpublished transcript.

¹⁰ Izcovich, L. (2019) *L'identité, choix ou destin? Essai de psychanalyse*. Paris, Stilus, p. 139.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹² Izcovich, L. (2017) *The Marks of a Psychoanalysis*. London, Karnac, p. 235.