

VIIIth Congress of the NLS

Geneva, 26th and 27th June 2010

Daughter, Mother, Woman in the 21st Century

Argument

The 20th Century was the century of the emancipation of women and feminism. Freud already had to deal with a certain emancipation of women, as is patent in the cases of Dora and The Young Homosexual Woman. The social victories and the transformations of modes of jouissance which were gained have not for all that resolved the way in which women have to make do with semblants to “become a woman”, to quote Simone de Beauvoir’s famous phrase. In 1973 with his Seminar *Encore*, Lacan took part in the debate of the time. What is the place of love between the sexes today? How do couples come together and also how do they come apart? How do women live their jouissance and the mode of solitude it includes in our individualistic civilisation? How can they respond to the solicitations of medical technique with regard to procreation, for example, or the offer of plastic surgery? Many of these questions have taken on more weight in our society over the past ten years in parallel with the decline of the paternal function and the object’s ascent to the zenith. Equality in the workplace, the massive professionalisation of women (which Lacan already spoke of in his ‘Guiding Remarks’ for a Convention on Female Sexuality), the dictatorship of the modern, standardised forms of masquerade, along with the choice now possible of the moment of pregnancy and the prolongation of the period of fertility all also have their down side. The liberalism of lifestyles, which heightens both a supposed symmetry between the jouissances and the incommensurable of feminine jouissance, pushes many feminine subjects towards an exaltation of love but also towards devastation (*ravage*). Such are the subjects, exhausted by the war between the sexes, lost in their jouissance, suffering from a solitude heightened by their troubles in love, who address themselves to psychoanalysis in order to find an answer to their questions on the feminine position.

It will be up to us, at our Congress, to examine the symptomatic forms of this position one by one.

As Dominique Laurent indicates in the Scilicet article ‘Woman’ in preparation for the WAP Congress: “From the Freudian anatomical lack to the lack of the signifier of *The woman*, the relationship of women to the semblant and to ‘a-speech’ (*l’aparole*) unfolds, to guard against this lack. So women know that it is up to them to give existence, in a singular fashion, one by one, to this being that has neither a signifying nor a libidinal essence.” It is a forced choice, a decidedly anti-biological one.

Our next Congress, which will take place in Geneva, is situated in continuity with the WAP Congress in Paris. The Societies and Groups of the NLS will thus be able to begin their work on

the theme 'Semblants and Symptoms' which is the theme of the WAP, and further develop it in the dimension of what Eric Laurent has called 'the Feminine Position of Being'.

The title of our Congress is therefore: 'Daughter, Mother, Woman in the 21st Century'. It will be held in Switzerland, in the city of Geneva on 26th and 27th June 2010.

(Translated by Natalie Wulfing)