

SCRÍOBH



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Editorial – An ineliminable difference from sublime to ridiculous

Dear reader, there are three essays in this the 12th edition of *Scríobh* – the a-periodic journal of ICLO-NLS – committed to bringing texts crucial to psychoanalysis of the Lacanian Orientation into the English language, where they had gone previously unpublished. This edition is no different - on belief, certainty, religion, science, delusion and psychoanalysis - and yet it is exceptional! It is of course number 12, and for example, in mathematics twelve is a superior highly composite number and a *cosmic* number in science and religion (from a twelve tone Pythagorean temperament, in the origin of music theory, to the twelve lunar months of the Babylonian calendar and the twelve Greek Gods of Mount Olympus.) Indeed, on our cover we have *God the Geometer*, indicating a natural world created as harmonious and which might be expressed perfectly in a mathematical writing. And, of course, 12 is one of two (known) “sublime numbers” that is to say, a positive integer which has a perfect number of positive factors including itself and whose positive factors add up to another perfect number¹: the other sublime number, by the way, has 75 decimal digits:

6086555670238378989670371734243169622657830773351885970528324860512791691264.

Which, indeed, would make for an impractical number of disciples...

Gustavo Dessal goes first, indicating that Freud thought that “evolution and progress of reason would free the world from all religious faith – and that the secularisation of society would be a self-imposing process,²” – some illusion of a future. Lacan in turn, (having reread Freud) was less susceptible to the same naivety, and predicted the rise of autoerotism in the face of the decline of the name of the father and patriarchy generally, and the vice-grip that religion would take, fuelled let’s say, by a growing existential uncertainty – singularly unaddressed by science... Dessal writes, “religion, politics and delusion constitute a kaleidoscope [...] that has taken on a special radicalisation,³” where it is religion demonstrates its triumph.

Fabien Fajnwaks is next; along the axis: on the side of psychosis, certainty in delusion / belief in the real on the side of psychoanalytic episteme, further indicating that for Lacan, science proceeds on the basis of a *Verwerfung* – a foreclosure of the Thing, where the approach of modern science consists in being able “to extract the knowledge present in nature and the sky, knowledge which is written in mathematical characters.⁴” What is proposed is an absolute “writing without remainder;” as Stephen Hawking once put it, beyond his own devout atheism: “If we do discover a theory of everything... it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason — for then we would truly know the mind of God.⁵”

¹ <https://www.mathpages.com/home/kmath202/kmath202.htm>.

² P. 3, this Issue.

³ *Ibid* p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid* p. 13.

⁵ <https://theconversation.com/hawking-tackled-the-biggest-question-of-all-how-did-the-universe-begin-93422>.

Although, it should be noted, that not-all scientists agree with this as a possibility. We can think, for example, of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in the quantum field ("the more precisely the position of some particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be predicted from initial conditions, and vice versa.⁶) and Gödel's incompleteness theorem, suggesting that any attempt to construct a theory of everything is bound to fail: "Gödel's theorem, informally stated, asserts that any formal theory sufficient to express elementary arithmetical facts and strong enough for them to be proved is either inconsistent (both a statement and its denial can be derived from its axioms) or incomplete, in the sense that there is a true statement that can't be derived in the formal theory."⁷ So, with regards to mathematical systems, the foreclosure involved in the position of an absolute mathematical writing, is perhaps demonstrated, which if you like verifies the *non-scientific* psychoanalytic position – belief in the real as impossibility involving a remainder.

What "duplicity" then... it's analogous to the point Yves Vanderveken draws out from Lacan's teaching about the dimension of the unconscious structured like a language: a "hiatus" between two of its registers, signifier and signified, as bound together in a duality where each is subjected to different sets of laws. Broadly, the various "duplicities" of scientism and religion are by-products and indeed sometimes even exploitations of this gap, to the point in the 21st century we now have the online culture of "life-hacks": "if you leave now you may never reach your full potential – you came here to become a better person," opines the pop-up bubble message on lifehack.org/about... as I am clicking away from their website... "stop letting outside forces dictate the direction of your life [...] chart your own course with the Full Life Bundle. It has all the tools and strategies you need to stop letting life happen to you [...] Take Control of Life... You'll receive everything today for just \$7.99."⁸ Enough said.

Raphael Montague, 30-05-2023

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uncertainty_principle.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_everything.

⁸ https://start.lifehack.org/p-flf-book-digital-325be93?utm_campaign=take+control+life&utm_content=global&utm_medium=cta+to+product+page&utm_source=blog&utm_term=slide+up.

Religion, Politics and Delusion

A God to the Measure of Each

Gustavo Dessal

There is no doubt that Freud - like Darwin and Marx - changed the history of thought. The world forgave Freud's Oedipus complex and [theories of] infantile sexuality, which became incorporated into common discourse. But Freud had some predictions so lucid that they were not tolerated. It is still inconceivable to accept the idea that the human subject can persevere in its own destruction - even now, when the current state of civilisation shows us that deep down, speaking beings are the only species who suffer from a profound and incurable maladjustment to the world that we inhabit. We destroy it with the same ferocity with which we can hate ourselves, in addition to our fellow men, and we find ourselves on the verge of no longer being able to bear our own existence.

Freud saw this with crystal-clarity, even if at the time he did not foresee the magnitude of the catastrophe we would be capable of causing. The First World War had a devastating effect on him. If analytical experience had confronted him with the darker side of man's condition, the war overshadowed everything even further. It eliminated the last remnants of hope he had placed in psychoanalysis as an instrument capable of impacting the direction of collective behaviour, and he concluded that nothing could be done about it. His final pessimism was a faithful reflection of his impotence, and yet he maintained an illusion about the future that contrasted surprisingly with the bitter lucidity he maintained until the end of his life. He believed that the evolution and progress of reason would free the world from all religious faith, and that secularisation of society would be a self-imposing process. This was also the belief of the main protagonists of the Enlightenment, without the necessary distance to understand that the Enlightenment would too end up taking on a millenarian and therefore religious aspect.

Lacan also made forecasts that revealed a clairvoyant perception about the course of civilisation. He foresaw a future whereby the belief in the father and truth would be swept away by the increasing promotion of autoerotic satisfaction. At the same time, he understood that the orphan-hood of the meaning of existence - in which we would remain - would ensure the unshakable victory of religion, despite Freud's desire.

It is interesting to note that most people - including many in the intellectual and academic world - consider religion to be the root cause of violence, and that nothing else has resulted in so much death and destruction. Historical facts completely belie this. Neither the two World Wars, nor the Stalinist barbarism had any connection with religious beliefs. The Islamic State has often been used in recent years as an example of the danger of religion, and of course, there is no lack

of justification for this argument. However, this movement has an ambiguity that is difficult to resolve, since the political dimension in the emergence of this terrible phenomenon is impossible to ignore. Leninism was one of the historical forces that staunchly defended secularisation. Yet, Bertrand Russell, after visiting Russia in 1926 and talking with Lenin himself, concluded that the revolution had, from the very beginning, a religious foundation, namely, that revolution was basically a covert religion. Hence many other intellectuals wondered to what extent Marxism in its conception of history, sustained with theoretical arguments that are irrefutable - even for those who declare themselves enemies of that ideology - did not lead to a form of religion and millenarianism in practice.



The Spanish Inquisition is also often shown as an example of heinous murderous violence. The most recent studies (including work by Karen Armstrong, a specialist in the history of religions¹) reveal that, in the first twenty years of its existence, executions did not exceed two thousand people. Of course, barbarism is not only measured in figures and statistics, but at the same time one cannot ignore the comparison with the 1794 liquidation by the republican army of half a million *Vendée* peasants who opposed the French Revolution.

The enormous difficulty in analysing violence and its relation to religions is that the very definition of 'religious' is an extremely complex issue. It implies the concept of belief, which forms a knot where delusion (in its strictest but also most general sense), the political and the need for meaning inherent to the human condition, are articulated. Christian Science and the Mormons are just two examples among the many that could be mentioned, that were born from this knot. The clinical status of its creators did not prevent them from gaining a strength that has spread in an astonishing way. The religious phenomenon has

¹ Cf. Armstrong, K., "The Myth of Religious Violence, In *The Guardian*, Thursday the 25th of September, 2014. Retrieved here: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/25/-sp-karen-armstrong-religious-violence-myth-secular>.

accompanied all the miseries that the pandemic has dragged to the surface of the social fabric, which calls for a profound revision since it exceeds the framework of official religions and their derivatives entirely.

Religion, politics and delusion constitute a kaleidoscope that is not new, but is one that has taken on a special radicalisation, instrumentalised by the transversality of neoliberal thought and the dressings of individualism. In the personalised search for redemption, not only does religion demonstrate its triumph, but also its remarkable polymorphism.

Translation *Caroline Heanue*
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Belief in the Teachings of Jacques Lacan¹

Fabian Fajnwaks

At first it may seem surprising that the phenomenon of belief in psychoanalysis is approached through the psychotic subject's relation to his delusion and hallucinations. Where contemporary thought questions the phenomenon of the return of religion in our hypermodern societies, and where the belief in an Other seems to impose itself as/at an unsurpassable horizon of so-called post-industrial societies, psychoanalysis with Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan is interested in the relation of belief or unbelief that the psychotic subject maintains with the most salient phenomena of his psychosis, which take the place of the real.

If Freud made it possible to situate the psychotic subject's relation to his delusion and hallucinations as one of certainty and not of belief, this is what Lacan will observe in relation to Freud's term *Un glauben*. This observation makes it possible to verify - and this is what we propose to demonstrate here - that in Lacan's teaching belief relates to the real, broadening the approach and thereby making it possible to situate this real outside the phenomena of triggered psychosis. If in psychosis there is not, strictly speaking, belief but certainty in relation to the phenomena of delusion and hallucinations, Lacan will approach the more clearly real dimension that emerges in the experience of an analysis as a matter of belief.

Certainty

When Lacan approaches the psychotic phenomenon and its mechanism in *Seminar III*,² he points out how the psychotic subject does not believe in his hallucinations. Rather, the relation to them takes the form of certainty in Lacan's commentary on Freud's *Un glauben*. This concerns the relation that the psychotic maintains vis-à-vis his hallucinations and delusion. *Un glauben* does not name the unbelief in these phenomena, it does not designate the opposite of belief as Lacan points out in *Seminar III*, but rather something that is situated in the register of certainty. Even though nobody else hears what he hears, the voices speak to him and are addressed to him. There is therefore certainty of the hallucination and delusion and that there exists for example, a conspiracy seeking to harm the

¹ Text originally published in *Ironik*, Issue 49, the 23rd of December 2021. Available online: www.lacan-universite.fr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/IRONIK-49_FAJNWAKS_DEF.pdf
The French word "*croyance*" translates both belief and faith. [TN]

² Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book III, The Psychoses*, Ed. J.-A. Miller, Transl. R. Grigg, New York & London, W.W. Norton & Co., 1993.

subject of which he finds unequivocal signs around him. If the delusional subject can recognise that the phenomena surrounding him are of an order other than reality, the certainty that they are addressed to him is no less strong. He can criticise them, but this criticism does nothing to detract from the certainty of the existence of variable, changing elements which give consistency to his delusion, and which above all, are addressed to him. He is concerned by these different signs that he perceives. President Schreber's "soul murder" [*Seelenmord*], is a central element of his delusion. Schreber can interrogate this, question it. For if Schreber asks himself what a soul murder could be, this question does not detract from the central importance that this event took place and that it concerns him, even if this phenomenon presents itself at the limit of meaning. Even though he attributes this fact to the paternal dynasty (Lacan indicates these missing elements in the explanation of his delusion due to the absence of Chapter Three of the *Memoirs*³), to his relationship with his father or brother, this event which took place is certain for him, and is posed as a guarantee of the entirety of his extremely florid delusion.

In this passage from *Seminar III*, Lacan evokes the difference between the phenomenon of jealousy in a neurotic subject and in a delusional subject, where the relation to certainty is also verified. For the neurotic subject, jealousy dispenses with all certainty whatever the realities that present themselves to him. It is the story evoked by Lacan of a jealous subject who pursues his wife right up to the door behind which she is locked in with another man, which contrasts deeply with the fact that the delusional subject dispenses with any real reference.

Lacan tells us that this certainty is radical. It occupies the subject's entire experience and integrates, and associates scattered and heterogeneous elements with the elements of the delusion. Even if the delusion can be criticised and recognised as being such, nothing can shake or put into question the certainty that lies at its basis.

Lacan links certainty with the enigmatic character that such an event entails. A strange association to say the least, because we recognise the opposite character of certainty and enigma. There is certainty where there is full sense.⁴ It is the same kind of plenitude of meaning that Lacan observes at the level of full speech, because full speech - in opposition to empty speech - is precisely full of meaning. This is what leads Lacan to say - in a vertiginous paradox - that the height of meaning is indeed the enigma,⁵ precisely because the enigma appears when meaning is at its height, to the extent that one cannot say what a word means. We

³ Schreber, D.-P., *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, NYRB Classics, 2000.

⁴ "*Sens plein*" can also be translated as "full meaning". Cf. Lacan, J., op. cit., p. 113. [TN]

⁵ Lacan, J., *Introduction to the German edition of the first volume of the Écrits*, in *Autres écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 553.

observe this phenomenon at the level of neologisms. A neologism is a word so full of meaning that the subject cannot say what it means.

Supposed Knowledge⁶

We can briefly mention here the function of the subject-supposed-to-know that allowed Lacan to renew the concept of transference, which was a little worn out in psychoanalysis at that time. Supposed knowledge certainly implies belief, a belief that the Other knows. This belief makes it possible to support the analysand's words throughout an analysis and is reduced towards the end of the treatment without disappearing completely. Belief concerns knowledge and situates it on the side of the Other, whether it is the medical, therapeutic or analytical Other. It is a function that allows the speaking being to unfold his truths when he is listened to, because he imagines that the Other knows. This function operates essentially in the neuroses that Freud did not hesitate to call "transference neuroses" by contrasting them with narcissistic neuroses - such as melancholia, schizophrenia and paranoia - which were according to Freud, in principle, incapable of establishing a transference. Knowledge is on the side of the subject particularly in paranoia. It is he, in the certainty of his delusion, who knows. Therefore, for the paranoiac there is no supposition of knowledge or belief on the side of the analyst.

What is interesting in the subject-supposed-to-know, is that this function allows the subject to articulate a knowledge in the very place where he assumes that it is the Other, the analyst, who has this knowledge. Thus, the knowledge produced in the treatment lies at the place of truth and constitutes an elucubration of knowledge, articulated in the cure, to try to account for the *jouissance* that the subject's fundamental fantasy ciphers. We cannot say that the subject believes in this knowledge, because it is a fictional construction that makes it possible to try to decipher the bits of real present for the subject.

Everyone is delusional

We can ask ourselves, what remains of belief in the paradigm of Lacan's later teaching, where meaning [*sens*] is foreclosed for the being who speaks. Lacan refers to the "*j'ouis- sens*" [I hear-meaning], that is to say, to the "*enjoyment*", the meaning enjoyed by each one and the fact that "everyone is delusional."⁷

⁶ "Le *suppose savoir*" can also be translated as "supposed knowing or supposed to know" [TN]

⁷ Lacan, J., "Lacan is for Vincennes", in *Culture/Clinic*, Vol. 1, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, p. 6.

Paradoxically, Lacan in his later teaching is interested in belief in the form of *believing in*. Belief is associated there with the real, for example in believing in one's hallucinations and delusions in the form not only of *believing them*, but also of *believing in them*.⁸ The same formula applies for belief in one's wife in the form of believing *in her* rather than believing *her*. In this case, it is a matter of believing in her in so far as she stands in the place of his symptom and not of believing her, of believing what she says.⁹

The perspective of the real opened up by Lacan is oriented towards the belief in the real, the real present in the symptom as a *sinthome*, where the symbolic in all its manifestations does not take the place of something in which one could believe. The non-dupes err [*les non-dupes errent*]: to be dupe of the structure, sticking to it.¹⁰ You must believe in it to be dupe, those who are not dupe err. Here, belief is articulated to the structure but insofar as the structure is approached as knowledge, as knowledge inferred from what is at stake in the subject's symptoms. It is to believe in the knowledge that analysis, for example, allows to bring out.

Lacan says that, regarding his delusion and his voices, the psychotic not only believes *in* them but also believes them. It is a question of showing the difference between neurosis, where the subject believes in his symptom, that is to say, believes that it means something, and psychosis, where the subject believes his voices. To begin an analysis, one must believe that the symptom tells a truth, and it is this that can be analysed. This symbolic dimension of belief based on the truth of the symptom will fade as the analysis progresses and one approaches the core of *jouissance* in the symptom, as the real dimension of the symptom, its *jouissance* imposes itself in the analysis. Belief here relates to the symptoms' symbolic dimension at the beginning of an analysis, to the possibility of being able to extract one or more truths from them. When the analysis advances, this belief will move towards the real dimension of the symptom, towards its function of lodging a satisfaction to the detriment of access to the truth to which the symptom could lead. The symptom thus approached proposes itself as a remainder which ensures the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary knot in its function of *sinthome*. At the end of analysis, if there is something in which one believes, it is indeed in the *sinthome* obtained by the analysis itself. The shift takes place from the symbolic to the real, and now we find the belief attached to the core of irreducible *jouissance*, isolated in the analysis.

⁸ The author distinguishes between «*de les croire [croire quelque chose]*», which is a direct object from «*d'y croire [croire à quelque chose]*, which is an indirect object]. [TN]

⁹ Cf. Lacan, J., *The Seminar Book XXII, RSI*, lesson of the 21st of January 1975, *Ornicar ? N°3*, May 1975, p. 109-11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Unlike the neurotic subject, the psychotic's belief in his hallucinations has a real dimension, and the part of truth of what the voices say - their content - is subordinated to this real dimension. This means that belief in what the voices say is firmer, more solid than the truth present in the subject's symptom in relation to the real of jouissance. The psychotic subject believes what the voices tell him, and he also believes *in* them. Thus, the difference between the neurotic's belief in his symptoms and the psychotic's belief in his voices, concerns the gap between truth and real.

But the generalisation of jouissance beyond the division phallic jouissance/feminine jouissance that Lacan presents in *Seminar XX Encore*, leads us to question: what becomes of belief and certainty in this new paradigm? We can say that if certainty remains associated with the phenomena of psychosis according to *Seminar III*, belief is linked to the real and it takes on more consistency than in Lacan's first teaching. Because of Lacan's growing interest in the register of the real, belief takes on more relief in the 1970s, previously oriented more towards the place of the Other as the place of the unconscious and truth that analytical knowledge permits to obtain. Certainly, in this first paradigm, elementary phenomena in psychosis were needed to bring out a real in which the subject believes. With the extension of the real of jouissance in Lacan's later teaching, we can say that belief in a real takes up a little more space there. In any case, this allows Lacan to assign it a place which appeared restricted in his reference to the phenomenon of the Freudian *Unglauben*.

To believe thus becomes to believe *in* the real. This may seem marked by a certain paradox because one could think that belief intervenes as a response to a phenomenon of uncertainty. The bar on the Other for example, in religious belief, where it is a question of restoring a completeness to the Other in the form of God, knowingly aware that he is barred. The paradox lies in the fact of founding belief on a real element; an element which one could say exists for *itself* and which does not need to be believed in to *exist*. Belief thus comes here to the place where Lacan notes the certainty of the psychotic subject in relation to delusion. Perhaps we should differentiate here between belief in hallucination and certainty with regards to delusion: *belief* in *what* the voices say to the subject, associated with a real phenomenon such as the return of voices, and the certainty associated with the work of reconstituting a symbolic fabric that the delusion attempts to perform.

It should be noted that belief does not apply here to an element as general as the Other for example, to take up the above-mentioned example of the religious subject. It bears on an element as fragmentary, as the symptom or hallucination as standing in for the real. The partial paradox here is also verified at this level, because the subject believes in the fragmentary phenomenon, the one that

manifests itself and not in more abstract phenomena in which one would have expected him to believe, such as the lack in the Other.

It may seem bizarre that for Lacan psychoanalysis affirms the existence not only of a belief in the unconscious, a *sine qua non* condition for psychoanalysis as a practice to exist, but also from these developments, a belief in a real released by the analytic cure. We will come back to this question.

Science

The certainty of conspiracy discourses, the strong return of religious belief in the social sphere, makes it possible to find signs which allow us to explain the rise to the social zenith of a senseless real. This is different from paranoia. This does not signal the subject but allows an attribution to an Other, the causality of what one cannot explain. We verify this decline with the great movement of secularisation that the appearance of modern science supposed. Where previously it was the Church that ordered what could or could not be known during the great period of scholasticism, it will be from now on in the hands of mathematicians, physicists and astronomers, who will be responsible for deciphering the secrets of the universe, secrets written in mathematical characters as Galileo asserted.



It is at this level that we can situate the historical dimension of unbelief: the fall of the Other and of the subject-supposed-to-know, and a movement towards biological, molecular materialism - belief in the knowledge that could be extracted from biological reality, from gametes, cells, genes, which become the subject-supposed-to-know of science. The Other of knowledge has moved towards the material cause with a sort of superstition that makes speaking beings believe in this knowledge to be explored.

In his books *L'oeuvre claire*¹¹ and *Clartés de tout*,¹² Jean-Claude Milner indicates an element that seems fundamental to us when considering the current state of science. He points at a paradigm shift from when Lacan became interested in these questions, a shift that goes from mathematical physics to the paradigm that takes the life sciences as a model, in modern science. In the previous model it was about demonstration and calculation, whereas in the paradigm of genetics, which generalises with life sciences, it is the model of literalisation that takes precedence, according to Milner. That is to say, a formalisation which has no other writing than form, but which in fact, does not write anything, and proceeds rather by classification, without necessarily unfolding a demonstration, therefore, without implying a mathematical writing of the living. This is what happened with the decoding of the genetic code, which despite the promises it had given rise to (for example, being able to predict diseases), only provided an ordered cartography of the genetic writing without this allowing for a true writing of the genetic code. I recall here the work of Denis Noble, the kind English biologist who visited us during the ECF Study Days in 2007, and who unmasks the myth of the *intelligent gene* in *The Music of Life*,¹³ namely, the *belief* that genes harbour an information capable of producing radical changes at the level of the organism. Noble explained in this work that in order to become operative, the gene must meet a protein and this encounter can give rise to infinite combinations at the level of organic effects that a gene can produce in its marriage with a protein.

Jean-Claude Milner argues, in *Clartés de tout*, that in his approach to these questions concerning the relation of psychoanalysis to science, Lacan relied heavily on the masterful work of Alexandre Koyré . “*Koyré is our guide*,” Lacan writes in *Science and Truth*.¹⁴ You have to read Koyré, for example, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*,¹⁵ to understand how Copernicus first had to

¹¹ Milner, J.-C., *A Search for Clarity: Science and Philosophy in Lacan's Oeuvre*, Transl. Ed Pluth, Northwestern University Press, 2020.

¹² Milner, J.-C., *Clartés de tout : de Lacan à Marx, d'Aristote à Mao*, Lagrasse, éditions Verdier, July 2011.

¹³ Noble, D., *The Music of Life, Biology Beyond the Genome*, OUP Oxford, 2006.

¹⁴ Lacan, J., “Science and Truth”, in *Écrits*, Transl. B. Fink, New York & London, W.W. Norton & Co., 2006, p. 727.

¹⁵ Koyré, A., *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, A&D Publishing, 2015.

consider the limitlessness of the universe, and not that the celestial sphere above the earth was closed as we believed it until then, in order to be able to affirm and verify that the earth is not the centre of the universe. We can see clearly that the operation precisely concerned a belief, and that it was the mathematical calculation that made it possible to go against the belief based on a visual observation.

Following Lacan's indications in *Seminar VII* concerning the operation of *Verwerfung* present in science, one may wonder what place belief has in the discourse of modern science. Reading *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century*¹⁶ by historian *Lucien Febvre*, Lacan argues that science proceeds by a *Verwerfung*, a foreclosure of the Thing, in its search to obtain an absolute knowledge without remainder. The approach of modern science consists in being able to extract the knowledge present in nature and in the sky, knowledge which is "written in mathematical characters" as Galileo affirmed. This approach asserts itself without remainder, because science thinks it is able to obtain this writing, to which no remainder will resist. Whence Lacan's proposition that science aims at absolute knowledge, that is to say, a knowledge which, to be able to posit itself as absolute, because it would have completely mathematised the real to which it is applied, must necessarily therefore foreclose the Thing, which can thus resist the writing of this knowledge.

This search pursued by modern science for a writing without remainder of the real excludes the prospect that there could be in this real something that resists it. Science believes that everything should be able to be mathematised. I said *believes*, which clearly indicates a place for belief in this approach to science, with a vanishing point in its approach.

Kant asserted that there will not be "*a Newton of a blade of grass*," to indicate that there were phenomena in nature which could not be mathematised. Today we verify that the science project based on this paradigm of life sciences believes it can, contrary to what Kant said, find "*a Newton of a blade of grass*." I underline *believes*, because in fact science does not mathematise anything. It only orders elements of knowledge extracted from what it observes without being able to truly proceed to a mathematical writing of this biological real.

In *A Search for Clarity* Milner proposes - with what he calls the Lacanian "second classicism," which corresponds to what Jacques-Alain Miller has called Jacques Lacan's later teaching - that the pathway of the matheme introduced by Lacan, comes closer to a mathematical writing than the one operating in science

¹⁶ Febvre, L., *The Problem of Unbelief in the 16th Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, Harvard University Press, 1985.

currently. The *matheme*, which allows for an “integral transmission” as Lacan affirms in *Encore*,¹⁷ circumscribes a real to be transmitted, whereas the life sciences take up a mathematical type of writing, merely having the form of mathematics. Milner then points to an intersection that seems fundamental to me, between science and psychoanalysis. Where science, the model of life sciences, no longer mathematizes, psychoanalysis, which has borrowed the *matheme* from mathematics, succeeds in circumscribing a real that henceforth eludes science. Psychoanalysis is therefore closer to the real than science, which only quantifies data according to the form of mathematics, especially quantitative data, which does not formalise knowledge extracted from the real.

This observation strongly resonates with Lacan's proposition that “*what is real is what makes a hole in this semblance, in this articulated semblance that is scientific discourse.*”¹⁸ A semblance articulated in the manner of a knowledge, which in and by its structure, misses the real.

This is another way of saying the foreclosure of the Thing by the discourse of science in its quest to want to fully quantify the reality to which it applies. This foreclosure produces effects: the return of this foreclosed real in the form of passage-to-the-act in psychosis, effects discredited in the new fuzzy categories of DSM-type psychiatry or completely ignored in neuropsychiatry. But also effects in the form of crises in the socio-economic dimensions, unforeseen and unforeseeable crises by the rise of new cognitive paradigms in sociology and economics, which ignore the forces at work in the social. It is precisely this foreclosed real that Milner evokes in the texts quoted above and which psychoanalysis today would be better able to consider than science.

As a result, we notice that belief has paradoxically moved to the side of science, with the rise and generalisation of the biological paradigm where previously it was on the side of religion for example. From the moment that science no longer ciphers, no longer mathematizes, there is a suspension of this function of writing which leaves science open to manifestations that were once found in other domains of civilisation. This phenomenon is at its height in neurosciences, where the effects of what is visible on a scanner at the cerebral level are taken as being the cause, in a staggering inversion. If it is coloured at such and such level of the brain, it is because the coloured area is at the origin of such or such pathology. This belief – because that is what it is – in neural causality, which is based on observation, is lodged in the very place where one no longer wonders about a causality other than the anatomical-material causality.

¹⁷ Cf. Lacan, J., *Seminar Book XX, Encore*, Ed. J.-A. Miller, Transl. B. Fink, New York & London, W.W. Norton & Co., 1999, p. 100, 110, 119.

¹⁸ Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, livre XVIII, D'un Discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, Established by J.-A. Miller, Paris, Seuil, 2007, p. 28. Unpublished in English.

“The Triumph of Religion”

On the religious side, we are also witnessing what we have been calling for some years a return, a return which is in itself a curious phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that deserves our interest because it is concomitant I believe, with the rise to the social zenith of the object *a*, without finding any semblance other than religion to dress it. From when would we place this return? The specialists do not comment but I think that it could be localised around the failure of hope placed in science, thus giving rise in our societies to this interest in religion and multiple beliefs in opposition to the classical model of unique and massive monotheisms. Some historians date this return to the explosion of New Age cultures in California in the early 1980's. This element is interesting, because Nathan Hale Jr., an American historian who has written two volumes on the history of psychoanalysis in the USA,¹⁹ notes in a very correct and evocative way that psychoanalysis imported in the USA, in the Ego-psychology version, sought to medicalise everything to do with the subject in an extreme way, to make it soluble in American pragmatism, and this for reasons of medical practice, because to practice psychoanalysis (in many East-Coast states) required a medical licence.

A book, such as Otto Fenichel's *Psychoanalytical Theory of Neuroses*,²⁰ which has long been considered a psychoanalytic textbook for analysts in training, was written to accommodate Freud's theory of the unconscious and neurosis to the medical model. So, Hale Jr. points out a fact that strikes me as very interesting. The development of New-Age theories in California in the 1980's was nothing more than an attempt to reintroduce the subject where Ego Psychology had almost completely eliminated it. One could perhaps add to this development of New-Age theories the multiplication of evangelical churches, notably Pentecostal churches in recent years, to also reintroduce a meaning to which the hypermodern subject can relate, where the real excludes it. Lacan had already glimpsed this in *The Triumph of Religion* when he affirms: “[we] are going to secrete as much meaning as anyone could possibly wish for, and that will nourish not only the true religion but a pile of false ones too.”²¹

In fact, Lacan associated the rise of the real, manipulated by science, with the search for meaning to dress this real. “*Somebody is going to have to give meaning*

¹⁹ Nathan, G. Hale Jr., *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States – Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

²⁰ Fenichel, O., *The Psychoanalytical Theory of Neuroses*, Volume I & II, Paris, PUF, Psychoanalysis Library, 1987 & 1979.

²¹ Lacan, J., *The Triumph of Religion. Preceded by Discourse to Catholics*, Transl. B. Fink, Cambridge, Malden, MA, Polity Press, 2014, p. 66.

*to all the distressing things science is going to introduce. [...] A meaning to human life, for example [...] It is not because things are going to become less natural, thanks to the real, that people will stop secreting meaning for all that.*²²

Is that where we are? In some ways yes. For some years now there has been a growing interest in religious matters especially among young people. Churches, synagogues and mosques are welcoming more and more people of all ages. This phenomenon also feeds on the search for and affirmation of an identity, in times when the real that science makes emerge through its manipulation, pushes people to cling to diverse and multiple beliefs - to the [only] “true” religion, as Lacan indicated with the Apostolic Church of Rome, but also to “a pile of false ones.” Identity itself is undermined, on the permanent brink of fragmentation by the rise of the real, which leads subjects either to attach themselves to their identity, which they call originary [*d’origine*] according to their master signifier, or to communities of jouissance in which they seek an inscription, whether or not they share the same practice of jouissance. We verify that in neither case is belief at stake, but rather the search for a One that makes it possible to find a unity in the face of the fragmentation produced by the movement towards “*the infinitely small*” led by science.

More generally, we also note a more diffuse, but no less interesting phenomenon: the rise of so-called religious feeling without attachment to any particular church. This feeling seeks an absolute in different forms: communion in different forms (in themed meetings, shows, etc.), joint consumption of products, different types of bodily practices. An absolute, destined to envelop both the body and the ego identity, threatened by the burst that produces the rise of the real. Here, belief is attached to the body, almost in the manner of a body event produced voluntarily that makes it possible to envelop this fragmented body in different forms. We find here the same function that religious practice can have for different psychotic subjects, in that it allows a regulation and gives rhythm to the very body of the subject, whether or not he believes in the principles that guide this practice. As a result, we can see that it is not so much belief that is at the forefront of these practices as the unifying function of the practice itself, which acts in such a way as to reintroduce a meaning, if only in its function of bodily equipping [*appareillage corporel*]. It can be accompanied by belief in certain religious practices, in which case the meaning found is even more accentuated. But we verify how secondary its place becomes.

Here, belief appears correlated to the real in a different way than the one we indicated earlier. It is not a matter of believing in the real that the *sinthome* or a woman as a symptom represents, but belief appears as a correlative effect, as a consequence of the rise of the real that science makes emerge in civilisation. What

²² *Ibid.*, p. 64-65.

is interesting to note here is the lability, in hypermodernity, of the belief in this search for meaning. We put forward a hypothesis: belief no longer finds its foundation in an address to the Other, as was the case in religious belief. From the moment when there is no longer an Other to localise *jouissance*, as indicated by Lacan in *Television*,²³ *jouissance* is freed from the function of envelope of the One of *jouissance*. From now on, we believe in this One in an instrumental dimension, a practice of belief which does not open towards Otherness. This is the source of “*unheard of fantasies*,²⁴” a term that can be found in the same passage of *Television* to name the most whimsical and crazy realisations, to which the assistance of science makes it possible to give substance. Belief finds a real element somewhere here, as indicated earlier with analysis. A real element, resulting from the individual fantasy of a subject, for example, to become a man (transition W–M), while keeping her internal female organs, and thus be able to give birth as a “*man*”, defying the natural laws of anatomy. A realisation that has no other support than a singular fantasy, a belief in this possibility that is not inscribed in a collective, horizontal approach, which religion, for instance, allows. Belief in the fantasy that gives rise to its prowess, reinforced by the progress of medicine and by the participation of the Law that follows the movements of society, most often by adapting to it.

Translation Caroline Heanue

Reviewed by Eva Sophie Reinhofer and Florencia F.C. Shanahan

²³ Lacan, J., *Television*, Transl. D. Hollier, R. Krauss, A. Michelson, London & New York, W.W. Norton, 1990, p. 32.

²⁴ Here and in the following sentences “fantasy” translates the French term “*fantasme*.” [TN]

Duplicity, Lure, Deception - Who are we kidding?

Yves Vanderveken

Let's bet that the "first" Lacan can already largely guide us regarding what prevails on the current question of the *fake**... I shall take only one reference. It dates from 1957, when Lacan addresses the French Philosophical Society. His presentation appears in *Écrits*, under the title "Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching."¹

Lacan endeavours to introduce the dimension of the unconscious for those who are not familiar with it, and to rectify what psychoanalysts since Freud have done with it. He objects: it is not enough to say "that the symptom is symbolic," pertaining to some "symbolism."² What does he mean by that?

He says it, and this is crucial to our question: the symptom "is not a signification"³ - hidden, buried, deep. Topically, Lacan scoffs at those - situated on the side of psychologists, and who lean, he says, "on political biases" (*sic*) - who have a conception of the unconscious, as a "confined" entity...⁴ In the thread of *Seminar III*, he insists: "it is insufficient to say that psychoanalysis would teach that there is a meaning in symptoms⁵" - let's say a hidden meaning in things.

He hammers home that what psychoanalysis teaches, is that the unconscious, "*it speaks [ça parle]*."⁶ It is the dimension of the unconscious, structured as a language, which he wishes to demonstrate. The symptom has the structure of a text, of which "the truth [...] must be situated *between the lines*."⁷ It can be read because it is itself inscribed in a writing process. This is very different from considering that it has a hidden ultimate meaning. The unconscious delivers, he says, "a truth of a different provenance."⁸

To qualify the signifying dimension of the unconscious and its effects, Lacan employs an entire semantic declension referring to a fundamental misrecognition

* Text delivered during the day of "The Question of the School", "Fake", 23 January 2021, by video conference.

1 Jacques Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching" in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink, London/New York, 2006, pp. 364-383.

2 *Ibid.*, 3pp. 70, 376.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 371.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 369.

5 Lacan, J. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book III, The Psychoses, transl. R. Grigg, London and New York: WW Norton & Co., p. 14.

6 *Cf. Op, cit.*, Jacques Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching," p. 364.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*, p. 369.

[*méconnaissance*] pertaining to the speaking being; misrecognition that he situates as a consequence of imaginary identifications that constitute the ego, and which are to be “traversed.” But the unconscious, in so far as “it is sustained by a structure [...] identical to the structure of language,⁹” is no exception in this register. It is a structure which is based on the “*duplicity* [sic] that subjects the two registers that are bound together in it to different laws: the registers of the signifier and the signified.¹⁰” A hiatus therefore crosses the connection between these two registers. It is through this hiatus that the unconscious delivers a message. It “betrays¹¹” a conflict that needs to be read, which can and must therefore be interpreted. The symptom, as a “particular unconscious formation” is not a signification, but a “relation to a signifying structure which determines it¹²” and to which the speaking being is *alienated*.¹³

Lacan has masterful words to draw the contours of this fundamental alienation. The human being is “condemned,” by the duplicate structure of the unconscious, to be its “marionette.¹⁴” The signifier dominates significations and founds – by what he nicely calls “scrap[s] of discourse” which have struck you, marked you, – the “transformed cipher” which makes of you its “living alphabet.¹⁵” He constitutes the subject of the unconscious as a “rebus,” which conceals not a meaning, but a code, which must be articulated, in order to be able to read what Lacan calls a “tendentious signification¹⁶” of its experience.

This “is what attaches each of us to a scrap of discourse that is more alive than his very life,¹⁷” and that does not merely have effects in the register of the signifier. At this time, when according to Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan had a simplified theory of the fantasy,¹⁸ he considered that these effects pass to the unconscious and are *concretised* in the very pantomime of each one, even determining the subject’s behaviour.¹⁹ Hence the term, puppet of his unconscious, and what Lacan will deliver as the only possible hope in “Television”: “to clarify the unconscious of

9 *Ibid.*, p. 371.

10 *Ibid.*, emphasised.

11 *Ibid.*, 366.

12 Cf. *Op. cit.*, Lacan, J., “Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching,” p. 371.

13 *Ibid.* 372.

14 *Ibid.*, 446.

15 *Ibid.* 372.

16 *Ibid.*, 373.

17 *Ibid.*, 372.

18 Jacques-Alain Miller, “Du symptôme au fantasme et retour,” *L’orientation lacanienne*, teaching delivered under the framework of the Department of Psychoanalysis University Paris VIII, lesson of the 24th of December 1982.

which you are the subject²⁰ - in order to isolate the bits of real by which you are moved.

The key point for the question before us today - it seems to me - is the following:

This alienation of which we are the “cipher,” this duplicity which “lures²¹” us and leads us around by the nose - determining our existence - comes under the register of the Freudian unconscious. Lacan believes it necessary to specify, that lodging it in the register of the structure of language, which “the signifier *stamps* in the unconscious,” of the neurotic, situates things “ten thousand leagues above the question ‘Who is he, [the neurotic taken here as a paradigm] making fun of?’²²”

In other words, it is only by misrecognising or rejecting the fallacious structure of the unconscious that the question is reduced at this level. After the psychologist, it is the neurologist that Lacan takes as paradigmatic of this depreciation: when science interferes in the psyche and ignores the laws proper to the Freudian unconscious, which themselves stem from a syntax proper to the signifier.

It is a truism, which glues to the corset of the hysteric, that she “pretends,” [*fait semblant*] that there is a theatrical facticity to the symptoms she presents. Let’s turn the question around, says Lacan, if we want to rise to the occasion of the effects of the unconscious: “Who is the neurotic deceiving?” “As a response, it is better” he concludes, to ask “why does the neurotic get it wrong?²³”

Neuroses (taken as a paradigm) are all responses, says Lacan, to this structure of the unconscious which determines it. It is a mistake to consider these responses [symptoms and neurotic behaviours] to be merely illusory. “They are imaginary only inasmuch as the truth brings out its fictional structure in them.²⁴”

There is a real here; a real that responds *to* the unconscious. The consequence that I draw from this is that it is only by misrecognising it, in the sense of repression, that the contemporary category of the “perverse manipulator” [narcissist] can flourish in psychology. It is only by rejecting it, in the sense of foreclosure that the political paranoia [*paranoïsation*] of the world can develop. These are the contemporary forms where the structure of the unconscious returns.

The facticity proper to the fictional structure of the signifier then falls back to the field of the other and of the lie. It is no longer the neurotic who is mistaken, but

19 Cf. *Op. cit.*, Lacan, J., “Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching,” p. 376.

20 Lacan, J., “Television, A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment,” trans. D. Hollier, R. Krauss and A. Michelson, London/New York: Norton, 1990, p. 43.

21 Cf. *Op. cit.*, Jacques Lacan, “Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching,” 446 & 377.

22 *Ibid.*, 377, emphasised.

23 *Ibid.*, 376, emphasised.

24 *Ibid.*, 376.

he, the other, who deceives us, it is his speech [*discours*] which is fake. It is no longer the unconscious, it is the other who is manipulating me. It is the very notion of truth which, touching the real, disappears. It is turned into the falsity of the other and the Other, who hide the sense of a final and manipulative truth, of which the world would be the marionette.

I like to believe that a psychoanalysis can lead to the production of a lucidity which separates us somewhat from adherence to suggestion – always feeble or delusional, in any case grotesque - while making us a little better able to respond to the real at stake.

Translation: *Sheila Power and Caroline Heanue*
Reviewed by *Raphael Montague and Florencia F.C. Shanahan*

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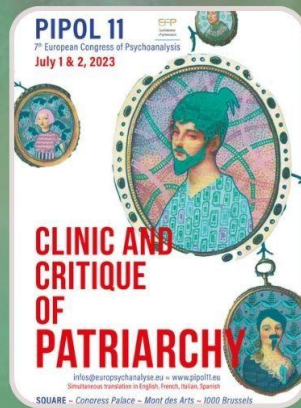
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July 1st -2nd

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"Clinic & Critique
of Patriarchy"

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Towards the PIPOL 11 Event

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In person & Zoom

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June 10th

Towards PIPOL XI

Dublin & Online

June 23rd

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Group
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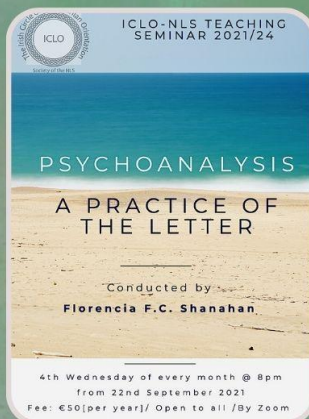
Dublin



June 28th

A practice of the
Letter

Dublin



June 14th

Clinical Case
Discussion

Dublin



New Lacanian School



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