

The Turin Theory of the subject of the School

by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translators: Heather Menzies & Vincent Dachy

Presentation at the 1st Scientific Conference of the Scuola lacaniana di Psicoanalisi (in formation), on May 21st 2000, of which the theme was : " The pathologies of laws and norms ".

I intend to do three things during the course of this presentation : contribute to the thinking of the Scuola on the theme of our first " Scientific Conference " ; propose the theme of the second Conference, which we decided yesterday evening would take place next year in Rome ; and finally to advance the movement of the School in formation towards its creation — its creation by the WAP.

These three tasks seem disparate. They are not. One and the same movement traverses them and is distributed in them. One School in formation is a dynamic unit; all the actions concur in the progress of the collective process which leads to its creation ; the Conference is itself a moment of this process.

The effective foundation of a Lacanian School in Italy is not a bureaucratic affair destined to be regulated by a small group gathered to one side, a confabulation of chiefs. It enters into a process of formation of which the very concept entails that it « takes place in the open » because it has to be subjectivised by a community that can only constitute itself in the very movement of this subjectivation.

The School does not come into being only at the end of this process. The School comes into being at the end in the objectified form of a new legal subject, a non-profit making association regulated by its statutes and by the Civil Code. But the School comes into being well before and continues well after in other forms. It comes into being during the whole process of its foundation under the form of " Acts of the School ", and its effective creation as a community is carried on well beyond its legal foundation.

The Scuola Italiana does not yet exist from the legal point of view. From the subjective point of view, it does indeed exist, and we come together under its signifier. What is the status of the School before it becomes a legal subject ? It is caught up in a desire, it comes into being in the form of a desire before coming into being in the form of a legal subject. It is this that has to be circumscribed. It does not only exist in the form of a vague or abstract desire, it exists already in the form of School events, that is, Conversations, Meetings, Conferences like this one, publications, the creation of multiple entities of transmission and research, and in the new articulation given to entities already in existence. And there are also the acts of the School, of which the most important is the one that scand the logical time of the community coming into being.

To scand the logical time of the School, requires locating its exact position at each moment in the process of its formation in relation to the fundamental co-ordinates that determine it. This may seem abstract, but it is not. We did this locating yesterday evening in the Conversation and during the course of the Assembly. It is this that I also want to pursue now.

I will communicate to you today a theory of the School. I have never before presented it. I had the moment of seeing yesterday, the moment of conclusion was

produced this morning on waking, and I finished the draft of these notes an hour ago, before attending the exhibition on the Countess of Castiglione. If the dream of the night supports the test of being shown to you I will publish this presentation as my « Turin Theory » — my “ Turin Theory on the subject of the School ”.

To know where the School is, to locate its position, does not come out of a contemplative practice, it does not consist in observation of objective facts. In fact, the knowledge that I am speaking of is communicated to the community of the School in formation, and in that way contributes to the very constitution of this community which then takes the forms of a legal entity. The communication of this knowledge, as the production of Acts of the School, have the effect of modification of the subject during the course of realisation. This property permits its qualification as interpretation. The life of a School is to be interpreted. It is interpretable. It is analytically interpretable. This is the thesis that I want to defend. This has as yet been little understood.

I say that mischeviously (laughs). I am not angry with anyone, no more than with myself. It has been little understood first by myself. I have skirted around this thesis, now I will pose it.

What a « collective logic » is has been little understood, it is a term of Lacan's that Éric Laurent was the first to bring back into circulation in our usage some years ago. Yet what does Freud say writing in the *Massenpsychologie* ? Lacan, who wanted to translate this title as “Group psychology and analysis of the ego”, summarises the contents in a sentence : “ The collective is nothing — the collective is nothing but the subject of the individual. ” What does that mean ? What does Freud demonstrate ?

1) The analytic experience is a collective experience for two ; psychoanalysis is not confined to the psychoanalyst's consulting room, it allows us to grasp the motive of group psychology, of collective formations.

2) The functions and the phenomena revealed at the level of the collective are the same as the functions which are revealed and the phenomena which are unfolded by the treatment. They are, in Freud's terms, the function of the ego, that of the ego Ideal, the phenomenon of identification. I summarise, I indicate a direction.

3) A new definition of the collective follows : the collective is made up of a multiplicity of individuals taking the same object as ego Ideal. The same ego Ideal is put in the position of common denominator of several individual egos. Freud traces a schema about this reproduced at many points by Lacan in his Seminar.

4) The collective, collective formations, groups, as well as a School, can be analysed as a multiplicity of individual relations to the One of the ego Ideal. From the Freudian point of view, the being of the collective is only an individual relation multiplied.

5) The emergence of mass phenomena, such as those of the crowds to which Freud refers after Gustave Le Bon, supposes a considerable number, the gathering of a considerable number of people placed in an identical situation. But this evidence veils rather than manifests the structure of these phenomena, it causes it not to be recognized. Some disciplines establish themselves at the level of mass phenomena as such ; from the psychoanalytic point of view, the structure of the collective is constituted at the level of the relation of the subject to the Ideal.

6) Freud proceeds in this way towards an analysis of the collective. It is an analysis

in the sense that he divides the collective into a multiplicity of single relations.

This is Freudian. This is Lacan's reading of the Freudian text. The individual is not the subjective. The subject is not the individual, is not at the level of the individual. What is individual, is a body, is an ego. The subject-effect which is produced through it and which disturbs its functions, is articulated with the Other, the big Other. It is this that is called the collective or the social.

Thus in Lacan's sense the transference is not at all an individual phenomenon. A mass transference, as can be seen every day, is perfectly conceivable : it is a multiplied transference, caused for a large number of subjects by the same object supported by the same subject supposed to know, which is manifested in negative feelings as well as positive, and which is constitutive of a group.

If these rudiments are established, we can pass on to the practice of the School.

The place of the Ideal in a group is a place of enunciation. From there, two distinct modes of enunciation are conceivable, practicable. I simplify for the sake of the cause.

There is a discourse sent out from the place of the Ideal that consists in opposing Us to Them. The difference between friends and enemies is taken up by Carl Schmitt, who knew something about it, as the very foundation of the political entity. From the place of the Ideal, all discourse is established according to the opposition friends/enemies, which concretises it, intensifies it through the same subjective alienation in the Ideal.

An inverse discourse can be sent out from the place of the Ideal, which consists of enunciating interpretations. To interpret the group is to dissociate it and to send each one of the members of the community to his loneliness, to the loneliness of his relation to the Ideal. The first discourse is a massifying discourse that relies on suggestion, and to tell the truth, an ineliminable quantum of suggestion always remains. The second discourse is imperative and de-massifying. It is an analysis of group suggestion.

I said we would pass on to practice. Let's see what Lacan says at the moment when he founds his School in 1964, this Freudian School of Paris from which proceeds our own, the Italian School in formation.

How does Lacan move forward as founder of a collective formation ? At the very moment when he makes the School emerge from his discourse, the School as fiction of language, brings it forth from his discourse by addressing himself to it for the first time, he advances, he says, « as alone as I have always been in my relation to the analytic cause ».

In other words, he advances in the loneliness of a subject with a relation to a cause to be defended and promoted. He advances and presents himself not as a subject who proposes himself as Ideal but as a subject who has a relation to an Ideal, like the others whom he invites to join him in his School. It is not an annulment of the Ideal. There is no annulment of the Ideal in the School. If there were an annulment of the function of the Ideal there would not be a community of the School. There is no zero of the Ideal, but there is this, that Lacan returns each one to his loneliness as a subject, to the relation that each one has with the master-signifier of the Ideal beneath which he places himself. In the very moment when Lacan institutes a collective formation his first words are to dissociate, and bring forward the subjective loneliness, because it is a question with the Freudian School of Paris, of

a collective formation which does not pretend to make subjective loneliness disappear, but which, on the contrary, founds itself upon it, manifests it, reveals it. It is the paradox of the School.

The first word that Lacan addresses to his School at the moment of bringing together some companions, is an interpretation. It is made to dissociate the subject and the master-signifier, and at the same time the subject and the jouissance that his relation to the master-signifier comprises.

No doubt the validity of the practice of interpretation at the level of the group will be admitted now that I have shown that it was Lacan's practice, and it will be seen that it has been constant. To pin to the IPA the signifier SAMCDA, "Society of mutual assistance against the analytic discourse", remaining unforgettable for the post-lacanians who people it henceforth, what was it other than to interpret it? When Lacan related the very structure of the IPA, and its deviation, to Freud's desire, what was it other than to interpret? Etc.

This dimension of the practice of interpretation will be admitted, but that a community can be founded upon it will be doubted. Interpretation is however the principle of this social link that is called an analysis. The School is nothing other than the effort to stretch the application of the principle to a larger collective formation. *But interpretation always has a desegregating effect. If each one is sent back to his loneliness, separated from the master-signifier, how would a community sustain itself? * It is the paradox of the School, and its bet — which supposes in effect that a community is possible between subjects who know the nature of semblants, and for whom the Ideal, the same for all, is nothing more than a cause experimented by each one, at the level of his subjective loneliness, as a subjective choice, of one's own an alienating choice, even forced, and implying a loss.

What Lacan calls a School is a collective formation in which in principle each one of the members knows this. He does not know it under the form in which I have developed it for you, since I have only developed it today, but he knows something of it insofar as he is analysed, is analysing himself, conceptually he has grasped what an analysis teaches, which is that each one is alone — alone with the Other of the signifier, alone with his fantasy, of which « one foot is in the Other », alone with his jouissance, extimate. The School is a collective formation where the true nature of the collective is known. It is not a collectivity without an Ideal, but a collectivity that knows what the Ideal is and what subjective loneliness is. The School is a sum of subjective lonelineses, and it is the meaning of our formula one by one. If I may borrow of the title of an American sociological work which had its hour of glory, crossing it with that of a famous novel by Carson McCullers, I might say: "The School is a lonely crowd".

The addition of lonelineses supposes the one-more. Is this some-One? It is first of all the Freudian cause, according to the formula that we owe to Lacan. Freud himself, and his pupils, spoke of the cause. The Freudian cause is a pure signifier that tries to name the relation that Freud had to this Ideal that he called the Cause, and that he shared with his pupils.

King Henry IV is credited with this sentence spoken in battle: "Rally beneath my white plume." The proper name of Lacan has become a rallying plume. Lacan has become the symbol, the master-signifier, the living signifier of a new relation to psychoanalysis, so that statements like: "I am with Lacan" or "I am not with Lacan", "I am against Lacan", "I hate Lacan", has served a number of subjects as points of reference to situate their position in psychoanalysis, and express real active forces in psychoanalysis. "I did not want it", says Lacan, « I only wanted it in

having allowed these forces to pass ». We can say that it was a choice for him, but a forced one, as real choices are. He became his own plume. Is this something one can want ? It is rather a misfortune, bad luck, a stroke of fate, a destiny : either one lets oneself be crushed or one bears the brunt.

It is not only ideal signifiers that are in play. It is also the relation of Freud-subject to the object-cause, the original desire with which he knew how to inspire other subjects, and which became the object of a transmission. It is also Freud's fantasy, his jouissance. Freud's desire, like all desire, was sustained only by a fantasy, this is not a pure desire. " The Freudian cause " is an ideal signifier, susceptible of being placed as common denominator by a community, but it was no less rooted in Freud's loneliness, his auto-erotism.

The discrepancy there is between the cause of Freud's desire and the Freudian cause as such, Lacan interpreted, decanted, formalised it. He logified Freud's desire to separate it from his particularity, to uproot it from the paternal fantasy, to bring out of it the form called of the desire of the analyst .

This desire is nevertheless not a pure desire. It is the desire to separate the subject from the master-signifiers that collectivise him, to isolate his absolute difference, to define the subjective loneliness, and also the object of surplus enjoyment which sustains itself with this void and fills it at the same time. This is Lacan's desire. The School comes out of it.

A community came out of Freud's desire which took the form of a Society, the analytic Society, of which the bedrock is the savage horde described in " Totem and Taboo ". This is linked to a father who is a living signifier, from which follows, after his death, the constitution of a fraternal syndicate, of an elite of brothers, a mafia in a word, around his grave. Everything indicates that Freud's desire was retained in the oedipal logic, where the existence of a universal is sustained by its antinomy with the One-who-is-not-like-all-the-others. From this fact, the relation that the woman has to his desire remained opaque to him.

Lacan's desire went beyond the Oedipus, and from him came, not an analytic society, but a School. In a School there is not, at least in principle, a one exception, an exception solitary and antinomic to the ensemble as the oedipal formula requires. There is no exception, but an ensemble, or rather a series of exceptions, of lonelineses incomparable to each other, except that all are lonelineses structured as lonelineses, I mean as barred subjects, fastened to master-signifiers, and inhabited by the extimity of a surplus enjoyment particular to each one. In the framework of the School, these lonelineses are each treated as exceptions, and they are non-syndicalisable.

In this sense, the School is a logically inconsistent set. It is Russell's set, that of the catalogues that do not contain themselves, a set without universal, " outside Universe ", where the " for all x " does not apply. It is not-all, which does not mean that it would be incomplete, that it would always lack some bit, as one usually understands. It is not-all in the sense that it is logically inconsistent, and presents itself in the form of a series in which a law of formation is missing. It is also by reason of structure that the lacanian movement presents itself in an essentially dispersed form ; the WAP itself is only one-among-others.

There is no all of the School. The School is an anti-totalitarian set par excellence, ruled by the function that Éric Laurent recalled yesterday, of the S of the barred big Other. It follows that, paradoxically, the only statement capable of collectivising the School is the one that affirms its being not-all. It further follows that to institute a

School, constitute the lonelinesses into a School community, is nothing other than to subjectivise it.

What does « subjectivise the School » mean ?

In a first sense it means : for each one, one by one, to adopt the School as an Ideal signifier. But that implies that each one measures the gap between the cause particular to his desire and the freudian cause as ideal signifier. That means not to imitate but to repeat Lacan's interpretation for one's own sake.

Secondly to subjectivise the School means for each one : to be member of the School in the loneliness of his relation to the School.

But thirdly to constitute this community one is nothing other than to make of the School itself a subject, a barred subject.

This is the thesis that I propose at Turin : the School is subject. It is on this condition alone that a School merits its name, that it is worth it. It is not worth it as an agregate of statutes, of goods, of assemblies – which must also be there, of course. A School does not merit being founded, that we aggregate to it, except on condition that it be a fully practising subject.

What does « the School is a subject » mean ?

A subject is not a collective substance. « Eat-me », « this is my body, this is my blood », only One could say that, and it was not a subject, but a God. One should know what a subject is when one has read Lacan. Again the concept must be assimilated. Until this afternoon, I hesitated to say : « the School is a subject ».

I started to say it, but timidly, hiding it in the detour of my sentences, to see if stones were going to be thrown at me and if I would get used to saying it, to thinking it. I state it today : the School is a subject. This subject is determined by the signifiers of which it is the effect, because that is what determines a subject and nothing else. It is for this reason that the act of setting the signifiers that determine the School is an act of absolute responsibility, because it is an act of interpretation, operating on the subject through the bias of speech. It is also why Lacan thought that the School needed analysts, Analysts of the School, analysts capable of analysing the School as a subject. The school needs legal statutes, perhaps, no doubt, but above all it needs interpretations of itself as subject.

When I was still approaching the theme of the School as a subject, last March, I drew attention to the fact that Lacan had put on the cover of the journal of his School, Scilicet, the following sentence , “ You can know what the École freudienne de Paris thinks of it”, and that he thus took his School as a subject of thought. That means that it is the School that thinks through its members. Note well that Lacan's journal was made, not of collective works, but of individual contributions and it is this set of contributions, brought together one by one, that he presented to the public saying : « This is what the School thinks ».

Here one must be Hegelian, as Lacan himself was, as any reasonable being is, up to a point. The School is a moment in the objective Spirit of psychoanalysis. If you do not believe in it, if the hypothesis does not interest you, do not enter a School, it's no use to you. Lacan, at the moment when he invited his School to pronounce itself by a vote on his « Proposition of October 9th 1967 on the psychoanalyst of the School », wrote that it had to be supposed that the spirit of psychoanalysis was blowing among the members of this Assembly.

If one day we must make a School in Italy, if the School is already in progress among us, it has to be supposed that the spirit of psychoanalysis is also there. One would like it to be better, more brilliant, more exciting, sensational, but in the end, if the Son of Man was born in a stable why could the spirit of psychoanalysis not blow in Turin this afternoon?

The spirit ? In psychoanalysis, it's the Witz. To speak of the spirit of psychoanalysis is a witticism. The spirit of psychoanalysis is nothing other than the subject supposed to know and it is a question of instituting the place from where it is inscribed as effect. It is a question of the signifying determination of the School, its complex symbolic organisations, its statutes, its publications, having the effect of instituting the School as subject supposed to know. It is this subject itself that we interrogate and institute at the same time when we make an Assembly vote and like an oracle collect its response, formed of the secret choice of each one. Not through rummaging in the entrails of animals, but by demanding of each one to put some symbols on a paper that one slips into a box. The response institutes the School as subject. Direct democracy is not an anarchist practice — in actual fact with anarchists there is always a chief of the horde who is very much there, and they have to walk straight — direct democracy is the necessary signifying process through which to subjectify the School, to make of it a subject supposed to know, woven out of our lonelinesses, which thinks and replies.

The School-subject means that the School is an inaugural experience in the sense of the analytic experience. The School is inaugural to the extent that it inaugurates a new subject supposed to know, and that its history is a set of analysable subjective phenomena.

In a School, everything is of an analytic order. It is an axiom, and it is the condition on which a School be interesting. As I drag my boots in it since I found myself drawn into it by the Lacan aspirator, I can tell you : it is also a truth of experience. Baudelaire said that with Balzac, even the doors have some genius. In the School too there is nothing which does not have the psychoanalytic genius, that does not participate in the spirit of psychoanalysis. Indeed, this can be in the form of fighting against it, of repressing it, of denying it.

We understand the difficulty of giving legal statutes to a School, which assure the interface of the School with the State. These are two regimes logically distinct, the first responding to the logic of the not-all, the second to universal logic. Now, between the subjects responding to different logics there is no relation nor dialogue possible. One speaks but it is not a dialogue, it is a misunderstanding.

I said yesterday that the School must preserve its inconsistency as its most precious good, as its agalma. In this it is a secret society, invisible to the State, as the analyst himself is non-existent in the eyes of the law. It is not a question of a deliberate clandestinity, conspiratorial, but of the effect of the logical structure of its subject supposed to know. The School is in itself its own purloined letter, unfindable by the police, this police that, according to Hegel, forms the very essence of the State. Certainly, to give a place to the emergence of its subject supposed to know, the School constitutes an legal association but is not identical with it.

This association must therefore comply with laws, that is, to statements which apply to all x. Massimo Recalcati speaks very well of the inhumanity of the law in his work for this Conference, page 136. The inhuman law is all law, the law is structurally inhuman because it ignores the particular, and if there are judges, it is in order to humanise it.

A colleague threatens us with the thunderbolts of the law, reminds us that the law is valid for all, that there is no exception for psychoanalysts. He would like the law to come in to restrain the superego of the analytic group. Does he not know that the voice that says « no exception for psychoanalysts » is the very voice of the superego ?

The superego, its excess, its spitefulness, are they on our side ? This colleague believes he has detected in us a will to do evil to him, to wrong him, a capricious will, arbitrary, authoritarian, and he would like to place us before the judgement of the Name of the Father to civilise us, protect himself from us. It is the pure logic of the Œdipus : to the capricious desire of the mother from whom the superego would originate, oppose the law which is valid for all, the pacifying effect of the Name of the Father. But with us Kant is interpreted by Sade, and we know that the Name of the Father is only a mask of the superego, that the universal is in the service of the will to jouissance. We learn it as well in remembering who inspires Kant, namely the genial paranoiac, Jean-Jacques Rousseau : the beautiful fantasy of the general will did not take long to reveal a gluttony, a ferocity without limit.

Religion is not to be confused with the law, since it knows a beyond of the law, which is love, and which puts the subject in this position of which Manzetti reminds us, that of Antigone, on page 102 of the volume of texts of this Conference.. It is the response of Antigone that we were able to make yesterday. He who places himself beyond the Œdipus, perceives, as Lacan teaches, that the Name of the Father and the superego are the two faces of the same thing, that the universal law is structurally inhuman, that the « for all and each one » is uttered by the superego. The law in as much as none is supposed to ignore it, implies the existence of a subject supposed to know all. The subject of law as subject of all knowledge, disappears as barred subject, becomes impersonal, becomes the « one » of the superego. He who dreams of constraining us through the law is unable to conceal the evil joy that is his to the idea of reducing the subject supposed to know of the School in formation by means of the law. What law there is in the unconscious, and which functions in the name of the Father even though in truth it is that of the superego, is the phallic law : « for all x, phallic x ». That is why the woman is the unthought of the unconscious, and why one would not know how to think the woman without interpreting the unconscious. The phallic law determines what Freud called the horror of femininity.

Kant's moral law sets itself up by rejecting « the pathological », that is, the feeling of pleasure and pain. It does not want to know any particularity, any circumstance, any detail. This « not wanting to know » is not that of repression but that of foreclosure : there is a paranoia of the law, a paranoiac jouissance to speak in its name, and that is why there is not only the law, but judges who are the interpreters, the therapists. There is also a sadism of the law, the law makes one suffer, and that is why there is the judge to humanise it.

A world without a judge, where the law would have no interpreter where the universalising inhumanity of the law would be applied without mediation in relation to the particular, would not be a Kantian world, but a world of Kafka. Those who heard Mauricio Mazzotti yesterday evening at the ordinary Assembly, had a glimpse of the stratification of the law, underlined at this Conference by Éric Laurent, of its maze, of its labyrinthine character, of the number of stops to be made at its different specialists, who are in agreement, who are not in agreement. To say it in one word, impossible to reduce to the « for all x » the impossible of the sexual relation. The flashing formula of Focchi sums it up in relation to the United States : « The law becomes a Kamasutra »

Yesterday evening was a great moment. We saw the School in formation refusing the affront proposed to it by B*, to interpret his discourse. It is that of a colleague who, after having shared with us the avatars of a long gestation which stretches over more than twenty years, retreats today before the foundation of the School, of its new subject supposed to know, and chose to remain in the reign of the Father. Is the debate between the salutary « for all x » of the law and the solitary One, the One of exception who would be Jacques-Alain Miller ? Jacques-Alain Miller is not solitary, he is an at-least-one who gives testimony to his difference, and who does not spare his effort to enable others to do it also. And it is just because there are others that a School is possible. The place of enunciation that Jacques-Alain Miller occupies does not entail exclusivity ; it entails that others occupy it as well, must occupy it, occupy it effectively. As Spinoza says, « part of my happiness comes from the fact that others understand what I have understood », of Lacan, of psychoanalysis, of the School, and in particular of the eminence of this place from where the School is interpretable, and from where its analysts are expected.

Yesterday we watched the function of logical time emerge in our experience of the School. The moment of conclusion had not yet come, and Mazzotti, who knew how to assume for us *the step back* necessary to take to resist the aggressive suggestion induced by the discourse of B*, merits a homage to be rendered to him here. Let us look no further for the theme of our next Conference : « The moment of conclusion ».

It is the title of one of Lacan's very last seminars. Let us study the moment of conclusion in the session and in the treatment, its logic, its dialectic where it enters with the moment of seeing and the time for understanding , the relation of logical time to duration. I can do no better here than to quote Focchi, when he evokes the singular mode that each one has to respond to the non-existence of the sexual relation : « We know well the suspensions, the accelerations, the surprises, the fugues, the prevarications, the sudden illuminations that come up when in the analytic experience one follows the traces of this singularity. »

That's what give the A, marks the tempo, makes the programme of our next reunion called scientific.

We will see whether, in the lapse of time that separates us from it, a sufficient transference of the mass to the School will condense in a final urgency to force us finally to declare the School instituted among us as a subject supposed to know.
