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Preface to the English-language edition of Seminar XI : 17th May 1976 : Jacques Lacan

by Julia Evans on May 17, 1976

Published in English here:

Pvii-ix of ‘The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis’ : translated by Alan Sheridan : London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis : 1977 : see below.

Published in French :

a) Ornicar ? : 1977 : vol 12/13 : p124-126

b) École Lacanienne de Psychanalyse – Pas tout Lacan : [here](#) : available : [Préface à l'édition anglaise des Écrits](#) or [here](#)

c) p571-573 of [Autres Écrits: 2001 : Jacques Lacan](#) : index available [here](#) : Préface à l'édition anglaise du *Séminaire XI* :

Note : from <http://jonathanleroy.be/2016/02/orientation-lacanianne-jacques-alain-miller/> :

Jacques-Alain Miller's – Introduction to his Cours [2006-2007 Le tout dernier Lacan](#) :

L'année 2006-2007 aura été entièrement consacrée au tout dernier enseignement de Lacan, c'est-à-dire celui qui débute avec son dernier article conséquent de 1978, renommé par J.-A. Miller « L'esp d'un laps » (Autres écrits, p. 571-73) pour se poursuivre avec les Séminaires XXIII et XXIV, respectivement De l'insu que sait de l'une-bévue sait l'amour et du Moment de conclure (à paraître au Seuil).

The Preface – quoted from op. cit. :

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

Translated by Alan Sheridan

[Jacques-Alain Miller gives it this title ‘L'esp d'un laps’ – see note above]

When the space of a lapsus no longer carries any meaning (or interpretation), then only is one sure that one is in the unconscious. *One knows.*

But one has only to be aware of the fact to find oneself outside it. There is no friendship there, in that space that supports this unconscious.

All I can do is tell the truth. No, that isn't so – I have missed it. There is no truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie.

But one runs after it all the same.

There is a way of sorting out this muddle that is satisfactory for other than formal reasons (symmetry, for example). Like satisfaction, it is acquired only with use, with the use of an individual – who, in psycho-analysis (psych = fiction of), is called an analysand. And, as a matter of simple fact, there is no shortage of analysands, in our lands. That is a fact of human reality – what man calls reality.

It should be noted that psycho-analysis has, since it has ex-sisted, changed. Invented by a solitary, an incontestable theoretician of the unconscious (which is not what one imagines it to be – the unconscious, I would say, is real), it is now practised in couples. To be fair, the solitary was the first to set the example. Not without abusing his discipline (for they were disciples only because he knew not what he did).

This conveys the idea he had of psycho-analysis – a plague – except that it proved to be anodyne in the land where he brought it ; the public adopted/adapted it quite painlessly.

Now, a little late in the day, I add my pinch of salt : a fact of hystory, or hysteria : that of my colleagues, as it happens, a case of no importance, but one in which I happened to find myself implicated for concerning myself who introduced me to them as having imposed on myself Freud, the Beloved of Mathesis.

I would have preferred to forget that : but one does not forget what the public constantly reminds you of.

So one must take account of the analyst in psycho-analytic treatment. He would have no social standing, I imagine, if Freud had not opened up the way for him – Freud, I say, to call him by his name. For no one can call anyone an analyst and Freud did not do so. Handing out rings to initiatives is not to call by a name. Hence my proposition that the analyst hystorizes only from himself : a patent fact. Even if he is confirmed in doing so by a hierarchy.

What hierarchy could confirm him as an analyst, give him the rubber-stamp ? A certificate tells me that I was born. I repudiate this certificate : I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject.

There remains the question of what could drive anyone, especially after an analysis, to hystorize from himself.

It cannot com from himself, for he knows something about the analyst, now that he has liquidated, as they say, his positive transference. How could he contemplate taking up the same function ?

In other words, are there cases in which you are impelled by some other reason than the wish to set yourself up, that is, to earn money, to keep those who are in your care, above all yourself, according to Jewish morality (to which Freud remained attached in this respect).

One must admit that the question (the question of another reason) is necessary to support the status of a profession newly arrived in history. A history that I do not call eternal, because its *aetas* is serious only in relation to real number, that is to say, to the serial of limit..

Why, then, should we not put this profession to the test of that truth of which the so-called unconscious function dreams, with which it dabbles ? The mirage of truth, from which only lies can be expected (this is what, in polite language, we call 'resistance'), has no other term than the satisfaction that marks the end of the analysis.

Since the main aim of analysis is to give this urgently needed satisfaction, let us ask ourselves how someone can devote himself to satisfying these urgent cases.

This is an odd aspect of that love of one's neighbour upheld by the Judaic tradition. But to interpret it in Christian terms, that is to say, as Hellenic *jean-f..trerie*, what is presented to the analyst is something other than the neighbour : it is the unsorted material of a demand that has nothing to do with the meeting (of a person from samaria fit to dictate Christic duty). The offer is prior to an urgent request that one is not sure of satisfying, unless one has weighed it.

I have therefore designated as a 'pass' that putting of the hystorization of the analysis to the test, while refraining from imposing this pass on all, because it is not a question, as it happens, of all, but of scattered, ill-assorted individuals. I have left it at the disposal of those who are prepared to run the risk of attesting at best to the lying truth.

I have done so by virtue of having produced the only conceivable idea of the object, that of the object as cause of desire, of that which is lacking.

The lack of the lack makes the real, which emerges only there, as a cork. This cork is supported by the term of the impossible – and the little we know about the real shows its antinomy to all verisimilitude.

I shall speak of Joyce, who has preoccupied me much this year, only to say that he is the simplest consequence of a refusal – such a mental refusal ! – of a psycho-analysis, which, as a result, his work illustrates. But I have done no more than touch on this, in view of my embarrassment where art – an element in which Freud did not bathe without mishap – is concerned.

I would mention that, as always, I was entangled in urgent cases as I wrote this.

I write, however, in so far as I feel I must, in order to be on a level (*au pair*) with these cases, to make a pair with them.

Paris 17.5.76

J. L.

Please note:

Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts: 1963-1964 : beginning 15th January 1964 : Jacques Lacan

[Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts: 1963-1964 : beginning 15th January 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) : Availability & notes [here](#)

Summary of Seminar XI, 'The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis' : July 1965 : Jacques Lacan

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Postface to Seminar XI, 'The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis' : 1973

Also in [Autres Écrits: 2001 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](#) : translation available [here](#)

[Julia Evans](#)

Practicing Lacanian Psychoanalyst, Earl's Court, London

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Lacanian Sites

- [Bruno de Florence](#) musicologist. Goldsmiths College graduate London. Lutecium co curator
- [EuroFederation of Psychoanalysis](#) EFP engages into generalized ideology of evaluation, the propagation of CBT, the attempts to marginalize the talking cures.etc
- [LacanOnLine.com](#) LacanOnline.com is a site for exploring psychoanalysis through the work of Jacques Lacan.
- [New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis](#) Jacques Lacan founded Psychoanalytic Schools in order to offer an organisation to those who followed him, analysts and non-analysts, with the aim of reconquering the Freudian Field, which he embraced as his main task.
- [The Letter](#) A discussion list around Freudian and Lacanian texts and related events.

Mental Health and Government Sites

- [Alliance for Counselling & Psychotherapy Blogspot](#) Texts & Action on Issues in UK politics
- [EuroFederation of Psychoanalysis](#) EFP engages into generalized ideology of evaluation, the propagation of CBT, the attempts to marginalize the talking cures.etc

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