

RE-ENGLISHING *ENCORE*

Cormac Gallagher

Introduction

I cannot help being struck at the contrast between the Congress that we are participating in today and the *3T's Conference* on the response to suicide in modern Ireland that is also taking place this weekend and in which our head of Department is playing the leading role. Everyone can appreciate how important it is to try to understand and prevent suicide. It is only right that the conference should have been opened by President Mary MacAleese, the speakers be interviewed on prime-time television and the proceedings widely reported in the media.

But as we left this hall last Wednesday morning after Professor Malone had presented a forty two year old mother of four who had made a very serious attempt to take her life just the week before, I found it hard to explain to him how we would be spending our time today and in particular the relevance of trying to tell one another how we are proceeding in the year by year labour of striving to transform our clinical approach to seriously ill people by trying to reach up to and into the thinking of Jacques Lacan.

Lacan saw his work as being essentially concerned with the crucial problems of our society and in particular with the overwhelming distress that leads people to develop crippling illnesses and resorting to actions - you remember his *passage a Vacte* and acting out - that are self-destructive or even suicidal. Introducing a study week-end of his own School just before beginning this twentieth annual seminar he reminded members again and again that they had to understand and demonstrate the inextricable link between his teaching and the clinic. Clinic, he reminds us in the first session of *Encore* is derived from the Greek word for bed, the bed of the couple who are in it to make love and the couch on which the

confidences of his analysands led him to his formulation that 'there is no sexual relationship'.

The twenty year war

I see I am down here to give the opening address. I had in fact submitted a title for my paper: *Re-Englishing Encore*. But this sounds so esoteric that perhaps it was a wise decision to bin it.

However it is what I am going to talk about and I hope you will find it neither high-faluting nor trivial as compared to the life and death matters I have just mentioned. Because what is at stake is an issue that has divided the followers of Jacques Lacan for more than twenty years and which in this year of 2004 has given rise to new extremes of virulence and mutual recrimination. It is well known that Freud found Christ's command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' excessive, so in a sense we cannot indulge in the old jibe: See how these analysts love one another! But some of the insults exchanged over the internet and in 'private' correspondence in the current dispute might at least have lead him to urge the interlocutors to consider another *tranche* of analysis in order to examine what might be the source of the violence displayed in these exchanges.

What is at stake is the publication, or rather the non-publication, of Lacan's seminars and the fidelity or otherwise to his spoken word in what has seen the light of day. Almost a quarter of a century after his death we are in the situation where - if we were to compare it to Freud's work - we have, say, two of the case histories, a bit of the metapsychology and one or two of the post-1918 works. In other words we would lack - take your pick - *Totem and taboo*, *The Wolfman*, *Moses and Monotheism* or whatever. In fact as of this year I think only nine or ten of the twenty-seven seminars Lacan delivered between 1953 and 1980 have been published.

Why do I bring this up today? Because, it was precisely in this academic year of 1972-1973 when *Encore* was delivered that the question of the publication of the seminars came to a head and we can see the traces

of Lacan's preoccupation with the transmission of his work in this form right throughout the seminar.

'Cast not your pearls before swine../'

The first words he pronounces are:

I happened not to publish The Ethics of Psychoanalysis. At the time it was a form of politeness on my part - after you, he my guest, be my worst, please go ahead.¹

Of course we can see the relevance of this 1959-60 seminar on ethics in a year where there will be much talk of Aristotle's notion of the *Supreme Good* and the way in which Aquinas adapted Christian thinking to it. But does the fact that he has not published it need to be given such prominence at the very beginning of the seminar? A number of sessions later we come across another reference to the *Ethics* and this time in a much more polemical tone:

For my part, what I had written, in the form of what was typed up, what was written about what I had said about ethics seemed more than usable to the very people who precisely at that very moment were busying themselves ... with designating me to the attention of the Internationale de Psychanalyse, with the result that is well known. But at the same time, it would have been a very good thing if from all of that there had all the same survived these few reflections about what analysis involved in terms of ethics. It would have been in a way all gain! I would have gone plop! And then the Ethics of psychoanalysis would have stayed afloat.

¹ J. Lacan. *Encore. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, 1972-1973. Unpublished translation, C. Gallagher. Dublin 2004. Session of 21st November 1972, p.1.*

This is an example - things must always be studied carefully - an example of the fact that calculation is not enough. Because for my part I prevented this Ethics of psychoanalysis from appearing. I refused, simply, with the idea that, good God, that I am not going to try to convince people who want nothing to do with me.²

I was not going to cast my pearls among swine in 1960! So should I allow my seminars to be published now?

The answer came mainly from the husband of Judith, his daughter, Judith whom he mentions and alludes to on a number of occasions during the year. Jacques-Alain Miller had set about editing the first seminar that he had attended in 1964 and had presented Lacan with what he called the 'established' text of the *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* in late 1972. Lacan tells listeners how pleased he is with the result:

77zanfcs to someone who has taken up this seminar that was announced, the first at the Ecole Normale which will be coming out soon...I was able to get the feeling that I sometimes encounter when put to the test, that what, for example, I put forward that year was not so stupid. At least was not all that much so, since it allowed me to advance other things which it seems to me, because this is what I am at now, hold together.³

But there is still this hesitation about handing over to a public that will simply pick and chose according to their own preconceptions - and we can see that his concern was not misplaced - something that is readable and sure to adulterate the rigour of the teaching he is trying to transmit. To give an example of what he feels should be published, he contributed a *Postface* to Miller's offering dated 1st January 1973 - so dense and enigmatic is it that the translator did not even attempt to give a version of it and the

² *op.cit.* Session of 13th February 1973, p. 3.

³ *ibid.*, Session of 9th January 1973, p. 2.

English text that we have does not even mention its existence. To the best of my knowledge it remains untranslated to this day.

Perhaps, Lacan muses, there is even now another way of publishing the seminars - and once again it is the *Ethics* that comes up. It is:

*..of all the seminars, the only one that I would rewrite myself; and of which I would make an écrit. I should really do one of them, no? Why not choose that one?*⁴

I think that on the whole we should be grateful that Lacan did not have the opportunity to put the *Ethics* or indeed any of his other seminars into the unreadable form he would have wished. Instead he entrusted their publication to his literary heir and thereby hangs a different kind of tale...

'...the original which does not exist'

Jacques-Alain Miller shows his hand clearly in an editorial note to the English edition of the *Four Fundamental Concepts* which appeared very soon after the French was published:

*My intention here was to be as unobtrusive as possible and to obtain from Jacques Lacan's spoken work an authentic version that would stand, in the future, for the original which does not exist.*⁵

Published with Lacan's full approval, these words went pretty well unremarked during his lifetime but almost immediately after his death a storm of protest broke out. What do you mean 'the original does not exist'? From his earliest seminars Lacan had ensured that stenographers

⁴ *ibid.* Session of 13th February 1973, p. 4.

⁵ J-A Miller, *Editor's Note* in J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. J-A Miller. Trans. A. Sheridan, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, (1977) 1979, p. xliii (emphasis added).

took down his every word. Later there were a host of tape recordings, dozens of versions taken down by his listeners - I have some of my own - and finally quite a number of copies initialled by Lacan which he had corrected and given as gifts to people on different occasions. There might be no original - *verba volant* - but we can get pretty damn close to what the man actually said and it is this, not your 'established' (read Maoist) version, that should be transmitted to future generations of Lacanians. The twenty year war of words and judicial proceedings had begun!

Let us come back to *Encore* which is what I am supposed to be presenting to you. Miller's agreement with *Seuil* was that after the publication of *Four Fundamental Concepts*, two seminars would appear each year. One would take the seminars historically beginning with *Freud's papers on technique* and the other would deal with the seminars as they were being currently delivered - beginning with *Encore*. So we have Lacan saying at the beginning of the last session of the year:

*Thanks to someone who is willing to devote himself to brushing up what I tell you here - he is there in the front row -four or five days ago I received a nicely scrubbed truffle of my locutions - I am talking about those of this year.*⁶

So Miller was keeping his promises. Before Lacan had finished his teaching for the year he was already presented with a polished version of the first twelve sessions! And by 1975 it was in the shops!

I am not going to bore you with the subsequent publishing history which has often been told. Let it be simply stated that until 1991, *Encore* was the only post-1964 seminar to appear. So, until then, no seminars **XII**, **XIII**, **XIV**, **XV**, **XVI** - all of which we have laboured through and presented at our Congresses. And since then, no **XV^m**, **XIX**, **XXI**, **XXII**, etc. One wonders how students of the strict Millerian obedience can claim to know their Lacan if they keep to the meagre rations that he provides for them. Perhaps they peek at the pirate editions or the scrupulously non-

⁶ op.cit. C. Gallagher. Session of 26th June 1973, p. 1.

commercial publications prepared by different Lacanian associations for their members. If they do they are in for a shock. In *Reading Seminar XX* - which I have to admit I only read in diagonal - you would have to believe that there is something of an embargo on referring to any of the seminars not published by Miller. Paul Verhaeghe is alone I think in drawing attention in it to the fact that '*...Seminar XX cannot be read and studied in an isolated fashion - it is one of the highlights of a larger series of seminars.*'⁶

From JAM to Bruce Fink

When we were reading Bruce Fink's translation together last year we were soon to learn that despite its erudition, its accuracy and its literary flair we were in fact being sold a pup. No fault of Fink's except for some editing decisions we will come to. But the official Miller version from which he was working had seriously distorted the spoken word in such a way as to seriously obscure the specifically new steps that Lacan was taking that year. And if we are supposedly trying to follow the subtle transformations he is bringing about in his thinking, with a view to shifting our own clinical preconceptions, this is a not a matter of indifference.

Let me explain:

In the first place, the thirteen sessions held by Lacan are reduced to eleven - this is the justification, I presume, for the co-editor of *Reading Seminar XX* to refer to Fink's as the 'complete version'.⁷ The two lengthy contributions of Francois Recanati and the illuminating paper of Jean-Claude Milner are omitted with barely a reference to their having taken place. Now, Recanati is a logician and I find his argumentation convoluted and impenetrable. But Lacan did invite him in these years to address the Seminar on three occasions and he goes out of his way '*to pay*

⁶ S. Barnard & B. Fink, Eds. *Reading Seminar XX*, Albany, SUNY, 2002, p. 110.

⁷ *ibid*, p. 2.

*homage to Recanati who assuredly proved to me that I had been well heard*⁹ Would it not have been appropriate to allow readers to see what Lacan means by being 'well heard'. As for Milner, a distinguished linguist, he certainly opened my eyes to the flaws being uncovered in the schools of de Saussure and Chomsky. It was astonishing - and reassuring - to hear his opinion that scientific linguistics in the early seventies was in fact moving in the direction of Lacan's *linguisterie!*. Why not spread the news?

These are the most substantial omissions though I will later have occasion to mention other important if minor ones.

But the most crucial aspect of distortion in the established version is the accretion onto what was said in 1972-73 of major discoveries from the previous four or five years of Lacan's teaching and their foisting on the reader as having been newly minted for this occasion. Virtually all the elements highlighted in *Reading Seminar XX* had originally been discussed in successive seminars at least from 1968 on: *The psychoanalytic act, From an Other to the other, L'envers, Semblant* and *...ou pire. L'envers* is mentioned by the French contributors since it had been published in 1991 but not by the others since no official English version existed for them to quote - although it had been the subject of our Congress the year before *Reading Seminar XX* was published. What is the logic that governs such drip-feeding of Lacan's teaching and such docility among those being thus fed?

In the first session of the year we are presented with the *Four Discourses*. Fink in his scrupulous way notes that these had first been put forward in *Seminar XVII* - but there is no such caveat in the original French. Equally the formulae on sexuation appear as if they had just been formulated. The clinic of the 'not-all' which Claude-Noele Pickman explored for us last year is also a novelty, and even the by now well-worn message that 'there is no sexual relationship' is presented as new. And there are many more incredible revelations that would indeed make *Encore* the 'most startling' and 'sophisticated' work Lacan has ever

⁹ op.cit. C. Gallagher. Session of 10th April 1973, p. 30.

produced if it were the case that all these novelties were appearing here for the first time!

Now this nit-picking may seem to indicate that it is I and not Fink who should be described as scrupulous. But my modest point is this: these distortions make it very difficult to separate out the new things that Lacan is advancing this year and make an articulation of his thinking impossible for us. The justification for the laborious struggle of following the twists and turns of his thinking is made senseless if we are trying to follow them in such an adulterated text. One thinks of Brill's attempts at making the *Psychopathology* and the *Joke* book more palatable to Americans by changing Freud's parapraxes and jokes.

Homer does not nod

These are the two major problems with Miller's version of the seminar but there are also minor ones which tend to make Lacan more dogmatic and inflexible and which also sterilise the wit and charm which made Lacan - despite his obscurity - such an endearing and effective teacher.

Small things: Beckett tells the story of taking down some of *Finnegans Wake* at Joyce's dictation. There's a knock on the door and Joyce shouts 'come in'. Beckett faithfully takes it down and when he is reading it back, Joyce said - 'Let it stand'. 'He *was quite willing to accept coincidence as his collaborator*', notes Ellmann. As was Lacan with all his talk about contingency and *tuche*. But when he calls out *Bonjour!* to a latecomer this sign of friendly welcome has to be excised lest we might feel that Lacan was capable of reacting to his fellowman - or woman as the case may have been. Later in the same seminar he can't find a reference:

Where is it? Where is ekstasis? Shit! It's murder! Again I can't find the page when I have to produce it for you! Good, wait! There you are! There you are, pages 29,28 and 29...¹⁰

¹⁰ op. cit. Session of 20th February 1973, p. 10.

This too is left out! Obviously it would be too much for future generations to learn that Lacan too can lose his rag and say rude words in public! I would not go so far as to suggest that Lacan's remarks before and after his seminar should be included. But even there his growl '*Je traine, je traine, (I'm dragging this stuff out)*' that I find in my notes at the end of one of the sessions adds a touch of humanity, and even more his bark to Gloria: '*Donnez-moi un cigare!*'

More important from a teaching point of view are Lacan's admissions of his slips and his awkwardness when he is trying to get across difficult material. Here he is on the Borromean knot:

This for example is the case that already last year I put on the board. Naturally since I made a small mistake.. .It is not quite satisfying but it is going to become so. Nothing easier in this order than to make a mistake. Ah! Another mistake!

As you see it inscribed here, it is easy for you to see that since these two rings are so constructed that they are not knotted to one another, it is uniquely by the third that they hold together. Which curiously is something that I did not manage to reproduce with my rings of string. What's the matter? But thank God, I have all the same another means of making it than reproducing what I did on the board, I mean, failing to do so. (To his assistant: would you mind opening it for me. That one.)¹¹

And in the bewildering series of displacements of negation by which he illustrates his notions of contingency, necessity, possibility and impossibility, it is consoling to see Lacan himself becoming confused:

This to cease not to be written, as you see, is not a formula that I put forward by chance. If I took pleasure in the necessary as what

¹¹ op. cit. Session of 15th May 1973, p. 9.

does not cease not to be written on this occasion, I beg your pardon: which does not cease, does not cease to be written on this occasion - the necessary is not the real, it is what does not cease to be written.

If we are struggling with this, at least so is he. And a little later:

What would allow us, to strengthen this implication? Assuredly something that the displacement of this negation, namely, the passage to what earlier I missed so well by a slip that in itself is quite significant, namely, the passage from negation to does not cease to be written, to the necessity substituted for this contingency, here indeed is the suspension point to which all love is attached.¹²

In Miller's - and Fink's - version the Master does not make mistakes! But the clarity and polish imposed on the original is no substitute for Lacan's assertion that the truth can only be half-said - *mi-dit*.

From half-saying to dogmatic assertion

It is in the context of his discussion of the history of Christianity that Lacan gives some of his most evocative indications of what he means by the half-saying of the truth. He relates it to the *Baroque*, arguing that his teaching is aligned more to this counter-reformation style of art than for example to the earlier Renaissance. So what characterises the *Baroque*?

The Baroque is at the start the storyette. The storyette! The little story of Christ. I mean what history recounts about a man. Don't get worked up, it was he himself who designated himself as the Son of Man. What is recounted by the four texts described as evangelical not so much because they are good news as good

¹² op. cit. Session of 26th June 1973, pp. 13-14.

announcers for their sort of news... They write in such a way that there is not a single fact that cannot be contested in them - and God knows that naturally people charged straight into the muleta, they did not spare themselves - but that these texts are nonetheless what go right to the heart of truth, the truth as such, up to and including the fact that I state that one can only half-say it.. In this style of things, you cannot say better than the Gospels. One cannot say the truth any better. That is why they are Gospels.⁸

Lacan's brother Marc-François had established a reputation as a commentator on the Gospels although we do not know whether he would agree that they only half-say the truth. What is undisputed is that Lacan's elliptical and ambiguous style of teaching was based on the notion that to tell the truth about the truth was not really the way of revealing to a subject the truth of his desire. Miller has a much more direct approach and unlike the evangelists consistently eliminates hesitations and redundancies in the record we have of the spoken word. It is not easy to convey what this does to the text but here is a sample in which Lacan gives a new twist to his longstanding rejection of the theory of developmental stages:

*This idea of development is confused with what? With the development of mastery, as I said earlier. Here is where one must all the same have a little bit, anyway, a little bit of an ear, like for music, I am master/being (je suis m'êtré). I make progress in mastery/being, development is when one becomes more and more master - I am master/being of myself, as of the Universe - this indeed is what I was speaking about earlier, in terms of *con-vaincu*.⁹*

⁸ op. cit. Session of 8th May 1973, p. 5.

⁹ op.cit. Session of 13th February 1973, p. 8.

In Fink, faithfully following JAM, this becomes:

Development is confused with the development of mastery. It is here that one must have a good ear, like in music - l a m the master (mètre), I progress along the path of mastery (m'etrise), I am master of myself (moi) as I am of the universe. This is what I was talking about earlier, the vanquished idiot (con-vaincu).¹⁰

It would be tedious to parse the two versions line by line, and this example is only chosen for its brevity. Right through the text there is this same elimination of the question, of the approximation, of the half-saying, of the involvement of the reader/listener.

In a conversation with a young Swiss psychiatrist in 1984, Miller had stated the *'the meanderings of this teaching are this very teaching itself'*.¹¹ But this only renders more puzzling the editorial decisions he has made in the direction of clarity and certitude. And he appears to be at odds with himself when he says a little earlier to his interlocutor: *'I consider that I restore the meaning, when the meanderings of oral expression obliterate it'*.¹² No doubt the task of producing for the public the text of Seminars that Lacan himself hesitated about surrendering for so long is a burdensome one and it is perhaps not by chance that on the back cover of this pamphlet, *Entretien sur le Séminaire*, he says that when the work is completed it will constitute a *somme* of more than twenty volumes. A set of course, but the word *somme* is also used in French to denote the load carried by a beast of burden. Has this burden been too much for one man to carry alone? When we look at the rhythm of publication after this conversation took place - one in 1986, two in 1991, the next in 1998, I believe, we are entitled to wonder whether this is not indeed the case. More is the pity since collaborators in abundance were to hand.

¹⁰ J. Lacan. *Encore. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, 1972-1973*. Ed. J-A Miller, Trans. B. Fink, New York & London, Norton, (1998) 1999, p. 56.

¹¹ J-A Miller. *Entretien sur le séminaire avec François Ansermet, Navarin, Paris, 1985*, p. 39.

¹² *ibid.* p. 20.

The received English version

As I have said, my quarrel is not with the excellent scholarly work of Bruce Fink but rather with the limitations imposed on him by the editorial choices of the official French edition. My re-Englishing is certainly not intended as a critique of his English style which I would consider to be superior to mine and in general more readable.

I do however have a few brief remarks about the options he makes in translating some of Lacan's key terms. In the first place there is the curious and for me inexplicable decision to draw the bar of the new writing of *Lafemme*, not though *The*, but through *Woman*.

When Lacan first introduces this notation we get the following:

*... the radical difference between what happens on the other side, namely, starting from - \bar{I} cannot say the woman, since precisely what I will try to state the next time in a way that will hold up ...that on the side of the woman, but mark this the with this oblique stroke with which I designate, every time I have the opportunity, what should be barred. Starting from woman, it is something other than the o-object, I will state it for you the next time, that is at stake in what comes to supply for this sexual relationship not to be.*¹⁸

Fink's translation changes this in a rather radical way - one not justified by the Miller version which also puts the oblique stroke though the *La*:

*Next time I will enunciate in a way that stands up ... the for woman - but write woman with the slanted line with which I designate what must be barred - for **Ronton** something other than*

¹⁸ op. cit. C. Gallagher. Session of 13th February 1973, p. 19.

*object a is at stake in what comes to make up for (suppléer) the sexual relationship that does not exist.*¹³

Most unusually for Fink there is no foot-note to explain this change. Perhaps there is a justification for it in terms of a subtlety of English grammar of which I am unaware.

This is really the most important point. But the reader can see the frequent anomalies that come from not adopting object-o rather than holding to the French object a and the lack of consistency incurred in shifting without notice from the different forms of the French *jouir* and *jouissance*, to enjoy and enjoyment, depending on the context. The regular use of enjoyment may not turn the reader on, but at least he knows where he is!

As regards the neologisms that try to mimic Lacan's, I find them unhelpful or misleading. '*Llanguage*' (pace Russell Grigg) obscures the fact that in *lalangue* we are precisely dealing with *langue*, the tongue, and not language; linguistricks makes it sound as if Lacan is playing tricks with linguistics, whereas the omitted Milner paper shows that linguists are in fact moving towards something resembling his *linguisterie*. *Linguisterie*, like *lalangue* which was introduced the previous year, probably deserves to be kept in the original tongue until English speaking linguists formalise the shift that Milner is attributing to their continental colleagues. Finally, the very awkward 'signifierness' is unnecessary since Lacan himself used the usual French word *signifiance* in his idiosyncratically ambiguous way to indicate both what signifies and what does not signify.

However, none of these remarks are intended to take away from the splendid task accomplished by Bruce Fink and his translation - and especially his notes - are indispensable tools for any serious student of the seminar.

¹³ J. Lacan, op.cit. (1998) 1999, p. 63.

What is new in *Encore*?

Obviously in trying to follow the spoken word of someone who considered himself to be an analysand of his public more than their teacher and master - and even this position only half-says the truth of the matter - things constantly re-appear from previous years and previous sessions as they do in any analysis. So once again I feel cautious about asserting what new step forward Lacan took in the current year. As we have seen above it is not what appears most prominently in the Miller version: the *Four Discourses*, the *Formulae of Sexuation*, the *clinic of the not-all*

Perhaps, as has been suggested, there are new things about writing here but Lacan seems to be looking back rather than referring to the present when he talks about the crucial moment constituted by the introduction of writing into his teaching:

*Since then, I put the accent on what I founded in terms of a precise articulation. One that is written, precisely, is written on the board with four letters, with two bars and with some strokes, five to be precise, which link each of these letters.*TM

There is of course more about this new writing of the Borromean knot which he had introduced the previous year but which really only takes on its full importance in the following two years leading up to the Joyce seminar. In short it would be a daunting task to disentangle what is specific to this seminar, in terms of Lacan's teaching on writing, from what was said before and what was still to come.

Lacan himself seems to give us a clear direction when he is talking about a talk in Milan during his winter sports break:

I am trying to elaborate what is involved in this affair of the sexual relationship starting from the fact that if there is a point from

²⁰ op. cit. C. Gallagher. Session of 9th January 1973, p. 3.

which this might be illuminated, since precisely there is something there that is not joined up, it is precisely on the ladies' side inasmuch as what is at stake is the elaboration of the not-all; that it is a matter of opening up the path. Which is my true subject this year - behind this Encore, which is... anyway there you are!¹⁴

But how is he going to elaborate this central issue of the sexual relationship?

Other speakers, notably Patricia McCarthy and Pauline O'Callaghan, will have a good deal to say about this in the course of the day. But here in conclusion and very briefly is what I think may be Lacan's almost obliterated forward advance of this year.

I think it has to do with love. Love as opposed to the enjoyment of the body of the Other which from the first session on he has repeatedly affirmed is not a proof of love. Is there a remedy for the solitude of the mad or perverse enjoyment of the body of the Other?

If it is true that there is no sexual relationship because simply enjoyment, the enjoyment of the Other taken as body, that this enjoyment is always inadequate: perverse on one side in so far as the other is reduced to the small o-object, mad I would say on the other in so far as what is at stake, is the enigmatic way in which there is posited this enjoyment of the Other as such. Is it not from affronting this impasse, this impossibility defining a real as such that love is put to the test in so far as with respect to the partner it can only realise what I called, in a sort of poetry, to make myself heard, courage with respect to this fatal destiny?¹⁵

The contingent drama and destiny of love - as old as humanity - is now newly seen as a way of supplying for the impossibility of the sexual

¹⁴ op. cit. Session of 13th February 1973, p. 10.

¹⁵ op.cit. Session of 26th June 1973, pp. 12-13.

relationship not formulated as such before Lacan. The centrality of love might appear to be off-set by a remark he makes at the beginning of the final session:

I spoke a bit about love. But the pivotal point of what I put forward this year concerns what is involved in knowledge and I stressed that its exercise could only represent an enjoyment. This is the key, the turning point.'^{12'}

However, love is inseparable from knowledge and he comes back again and again to the rock-solid conviction of this that is gained in psychoanalysis from the transference love that is directed towards the subject supposed to know and to the hate that succeeds it when the analyst is no longer seen as the one who knows.

But his key reference is to Aristotle and to the way he sees how friends come to love one another. This is interwoven with speculations about the soul and *Supreme Good* of which Lacan makes his own use. He has prepared his remarks.

So then here is more or less what I wrote for your use. In short, what was I writing to you? The only thing one can do that is a bit serious: a love letter.

The soul could only say itself - that is what I wrote to you - because of what allows a being, a speaking being to call it by its name, to put up with the intolerable in its world... Which only esteems this soul here, in this world, by its patience and its courage in facing up to it. All of this is affirmed by the fact that right up to our time, the soul has never had any other meaning.

The existence then of the soul can certainly be put in question - that is the proper term - by asking oneself whether it is not an

²³ *ibid*, Session of 26th June 1973, p. 1.

effect of love... Sex does not count in it... And what I said earlier about this courage, about this patience in tolerating the world, is the true surety of what makes someone like Aristotle end up in his search for the Good as being only able to be carried out by admitting the fact that in all the beings in the world, there is already enough internal being, if I can express myself in this way, that they can only orientate this being towards the greatest being by merging its good, its own good with the very one that the Supreme Being is supposed to radiate. That within this, he evokes philia for us as representing the possibility of a bond of love between two of these beings, is indeed something which by manifesting the tension towards the Supreme Being, can just as easily be reversed from the way in which I expressed it. Namely, that it is in the courage to support this intolerable relation to the Supreme Being that friends, the philoi, recognise and choose one another... The outside-sex is the man on whom the soul speculates. There you are!^{2}*

It is often hard to know whether Lacan is talking about man-woman, or woman-man, or indeed same sex relationships but in one instance at least he seems to be clearly stating what a woman loves in a man:

The woman, I have said, can only love in man the way in which he faces up to the knowledge which he ame's (loves/souls).¹⁶

This, and here I am only speculating, refers to the man who has rejected the phantasy that there is somewhere something that knows more about him than he does in his unconscious. And that it is sorting this out that makes a soul of him: '*...a soul that is on occasion lovable when something*

²⁴ *ibid*, Session of 13th March 1973.

¹⁶ *ibid*, Session of 13th March 1973, p. 17.

*is willing to love it.*¹⁶ - a foretaste, perhaps, of struggle that Lacan will soon return to in James Joyce's *Odyssey*.

And finally as he approaches the end of his own struggles for the year he proposes to us what he thinks psychoanalysis has contributed to our own time by linking knowledge to the eternal drama of love:

*The important thing in what psychoanalytic discourse has revealed is that this knowledge that structures by a specific cohabitation what is involved in the being that speaks, this knowledge has the closest relationship with love. For what supports all love is very precisely the following: a certain relationship between two unconscious knowledges.*¹⁷

If this, virtually his last word on the subject this year, leaves us still wanting to know more about love, we can at least draw comfort from the fact that he has not dispelled the mystery and has prompted us to search for what more we can learn about this many splendored thing that plays such a predominant role in our lives as analysts and in the lives of those who seek us out.

Conclusion

And Lacan himself? Do we get any glimpse of why he turned so late in his life to this praise of a sentiment that the whole history of psychoanalysis, and he and Freud more than anyone, has treated with such suspicion? Perhaps in his ruminations at the end of the seminar as he wonders aloud whether he will come back next year:

So then, since after all I have completed the cycle of these 20 years, after 10 years, my right to speak was withdrawn from me and it happens that for reasons in which destiny played a part and also on

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*, Session of 26th June 1973, p. 12.

*my part a part of an inclination to please someone, I continued for 10 years more (encore). Will I continue next year? Why not stop the encore right there?*²⁸

Who was this someone that Lacan felt so inclined to please that he overcame the humiliating rebuffs he had undergone from the IP A, his favourite pupils and his medical colleagues. It is perhaps the one to whom he refers to on a number of occasions in this year as the single person to understand his allusions about love and in particular his metaphorical use of *Don Juan*. The daughter who was to become the universal legatee of everything he had to bequeath to the future.

Address for Correspondence:

*School of Psychotherapy
St Vincent's Hospital
Elm Park
Dublin 4
Ireland*

²⁸ *op. cit.* Session of 26th June 1973, p. 17.