

**THE NEW TYRANNY OF KNOWLEDGE:
SEMINAR XVII (1969-70) - BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW1**

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Introduction

Almost halfway through the year, Lacan makes a caustic reference to the just published 50th anniversary issue of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*:

If you read the body of work that makes up this anniversary issue of the *International Journal*, you can understand why the authors congratulate themselves on the solidity displayed over the past 50 years. I would ask you to put it to the test. Take any issue whatsoever in the past 50 years - you will never know its date. It always says the same thing. It is always just as insipid, and since analysis is a preservative, it is also always by the same authors. They congratulate themselves, in short, that these 50 years have clearly confirmed these primary truths: that the mainspring of analysis is goodness, and that, happily, what has become obvious throughout these years, with the progressive effacing of Freud's discourse is, in particular, the solidity and the glory of a discovery described as *the autonomous ego*, namely, the conflict-free ego. This is the result of 50 years of experience, in virtue of the injection of three psychoanalysts who had flourished in Berlin, into American society where this discourse about a solidly autonomous ego certainly

promised attractive results. In terms of a return to the discourse of the Master, in effect, one could hardly do better.²

Whatever criticism might be addressed to Lacan's person and work he can hardly be accused of 'always saying the same thing'. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the weekly and later fortnightly seminar that he conducted between 1953 and 1980. For over 25 years he confronted his different audiences with an ever-evolving presentation of his re-reading of Freud's discovery in a way that was often frustrating and impenetrable but always stimulating and ultimately fruitful for the theoretical and clinical work of those who took up his challenge.

In attempting to initiate ourselves into psychoanalysis in our largely clinical community, the unlikely option we chose was to work through these seminars chronologically in our own weekly seminar. This has resulted not only in a constant change in our own perspective on the unconscious and the challenges involved in working with it, but also in a growing body of translations - eleven seminars to date - that allow English language readers to tackle Lacan from many different angles and to explore the relevance of his teaching to their own situation.

A problematic title for problematic times

This year then we come to the seminar of 1969-70 which is commonly known as *Venvers de la psychoanalyse* but which Lacan himself in the introductory sessions called *La psychanalyse a Venvers*. There is fairly general agreement that this latter title can be translated as *Psychoanalysis upside-down* - an expression reflecting the turbulent state of Paris, especially university life, in the aftermath of the 'events' of May 1968. It also hints at the constant inversions in the formulae of the four Discourses, the leit-motif of this seminar. The former is far trickier - the obverse, the

² J. Lacan. *Seminar XVII (1969-1970). Venvers de la psychanalyse. Session of 11th February 70. Unpublished translation by C. Gallagher, pp. 4-5.*

nether side, the backside and, finally, the tempting but misleading other side were all considered. We finally went for the clumsy 'reverse side', which at least has the virtue of echoing *Venvers* and which by its very awkwardness encourages the reader to engage in the linguistic gymnastics that this seminar requires.

Something should be said about the context within which the seminar took place because it influenced it and is reflected in it. Roudinesco writes that the seminar offers a moving self-portrait of Lacan as he approached his seventieth year: an increasingly public figure besieged by a mass of adoring listeners and at the same time tormented by his relation to his former pupils and to the often recalcitrant members of the *Ecole Freudienne* he had created just a few years earlier. In the summer of 1969 he had been pushed out of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)* just as five years earlier he had been refused the right to continue his seminar in Sainte Anne. He found in the law faculty close to the Pantheon and in the heart of student and tourist Paris an amphitheatre much larger and more accessible than the two previous locations. These had really only been open to specialist audiences - doctors and philosophers - but this new situation allowed anyone to literally come in off the street and began the creation of a completely new type of audience.

Lacan interprets the role of the different audiences on what he says in the first seminar of the year. In St Anne from 1953 to 1963 his mainly medical listeners had to be cajoled into taking psychoanalysis seriously. The distinguishing characteristic of that period, 'what was most tangible, the chord that was really struck, was fun ... a continuous stream of gags'.³ In the ENS, his audience made up of the most brilliant young French intellectuals, treated what he had to say as 'a teaching' - a logically coherent doctrine that could be related to their mainly philosophical interests. Now he has a new forum:

³ *ibid*, session of 26th November 1969, p. 8.

Naturally, no one knows what will happen here. I do not know whether the law students will come, but in truth, this would be crucial for interpretation. *This will probably be by far the most important phase of the three [my italics]*, since it is a question this year of taking psychoanalysis from the reverse side, and perhaps, precisely, of giving it its status, in the juridical sense of the term. In any case, it has always surely been concerned with the structure of discourse, and to the n[^] degree. If that is not what law is, if that is not where one touches on how discourse structures the real world, where would it be? That is why we are no less at our place here than elsewhere and that it is not simply for reasons of convenience that I accepted this godsend.⁴

'Here comes everyone'

In the preface to the second edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud concludes that since it had been ignored by his psychiatric colleagues and by professional philosophers, the growing popularity of the book must be due to 'a wider circle of educated and curious-minded readers'.⁵ Something similar was now happening to Lacan. While he was losing some of the most senior members of his School, the publication of his *Ecrits* in 1966 brought him to the attention of tens of thousands of people who up to then had little or no interest in psychoanalysis and who came from far and wide to hear for themselves the ongoing weekly seminar of the man who could write in such an extraordinary way about something whose claims to serious interest seemed to have died with Freud. By early 1970 his publishers were looking for a paperback selection of the *Ecrits* and translations were beginning to appear. Lacan seems to have taken all this as indication that he should address himself over the heads of the university and the *Ecole* to a wider audience and the best

⁴ *ibid*, p. 9.

⁵ S. Freud (1900). *The interpretation of Dreams*. S.E., IV, p. xxv.

example of this is his acceptance of an invitation to be interviewed on Belgian radio. As we will see later, this *Radiophonie*, as it came to be called, had little in common with the usual style of journalistic popularisation that most celebrities are obliged to submit to, but it was an indication of his new, almost populist, approach.

The official version - caveat emptor!

This background is necessary in order to tackle the text of this seminar but as we open it some further caveats must be entered. As I write, an official English translation has yet to appear but this is likely to be based on the official French version and readers should know that a shadow of suspicion hangs over it. It was published in March 1991 at the same time as the seminar on *Transference*. This latter was so flawed that it gave rise to a storm of criticism from serious students of Lacan's work, most recently exemplified by Moustapha Safouan's damning assessment of it in *Lacanianana* published by Fayard in 2001. As a result, a corrected official French version of *Transference* has now appeared.

The published version of our seminar has not received the same attention from critics but one is surely justified in wondering whether it too may not contain many errors. There is no critical French version to compare with the unofficial but acclaimed *Stecriture* version of *Transference* - cannibalised but not acknowledged in the corrected version. But when the official French text is compared to the 'pirate editions' that have been widely used by students over the years, a number of rather curious editorial decisions come to light. Here are the most obvious:

- The four replies to the questions of *Radiophonie* read by Lacan to his seminar are omitted.
- Only one of Lacan's two memorable visits to the University of Vincennes is reported.

- The discussion on *Hosea* with Professor André Caquot has been truncated and omits many of the lively exchanges with Lacan.
- A substantial number of passages in the 'pirate' editions ring truer and are certainly more vivid than the corresponding ones in the official version.

So distorted is the official version that it took us over a year to get a reasonably clear map of the seminar and to see how other interventions by Lacan in the course of the year take their place in it. In the light of this it may be useful to provide prospective readers with a chronology of the year in which the seminar was held. I think it will help to bring the dramatic quality of Lacan's contributions both inside and outside the seminar into focus and grasp in a more concrete way how these newly minted Four Discourses demonstrate the relevance of psychoanalysis to the understanding of the tumultuous social and political events that were taking place. In particular Lacan's analysis of revolution is important for the disturbances that in the late 60's were taking place world-wide and in particular in the North of Ireland where the 'troubles' were just beginning.

Lacan 1969-70: A chronology

1969

26th November: Lacan makes his first appearance at the *Faculté de droit* and introduces the first three of his four discourses.

3rd December: He delivers his first *Impromptu* (also called *Analyticon*) at the new University of Vincennes to a raucous assembly of 800 students who constantly heckle him, one going as far as to do a striptease in front of the dais. It is here that he first presents his schema for the University discourse.

10th December: He returns to the Sorbonne only to have his seminar cut short after ten minutes by a porter who turns out the lights and closes the blackboard.

Between 17th December '69 and 18th March '70: Seven seminars are held under more or less normal conditions and Lacan develops his theory of the Four Discourses.

From 18th February on: The question of the Real Father begins to take a more prominent place and, in particular, Freud's theory about the murder of Moses begins to take centre stage.

1970

8th April: Lacan reads to the seminar his written replies to four of the questions posed by Robert Georquin of Belgian radio in *Radiophonie*.

15th April: Professor Andre Caquot gives a critical assessment of the work of Ernest Sellin, a biblical scholar mentioned by Freud as supporting the thesis of *Moses and Monotheism*, that Moses had been murdered by the Jews. Lacan's active contribution to this presentation is played down in the official version. Ed Robins who had consulted only the official version for his paper, *Not an iota*, has described the 'pirate' version of the encounter, which he read later, as 'astounding'.

19th April: Lacan delivers the closing address at the Congress of the *Ecole Freudienne*. The theme of the congress was 'Teaching' and Lacan bemoans the fact that none of the contributors had seen fit to refer to the 4 Discourses - especially what he was developing about the University discourse.

13th May: The 2nd anniversary of 13th May 1968 - date of a massive demonstration and the beginning of a general strike - results in the sudden closure of the Law Faculty. Lacan answers the questions of those who had turned up for the seminar in the open air, on the steps of the nearby Pantheon.

20th May: The official seminar begins again.

4th June: Lacan pays his second visit to Vincennes. He had cancelled the two others he had promised because of the way the first *Impromptu* had been reported and he almost came to blows with the person responsible for this when he saw him again with a tape-recorder. For some reason this

session is completely ignored by the editors of the official French version of the seminar.

10th & 17th June: These final seminars of the year pass off without incident and include a further extract from *Radiophonie* read by Lacan to his audience.

Lacan and the Maoists

As we can see Lacan succeeded in holding only eleven regular seminars in 1969-70. The rest were interrupted in one way or another by ongoing civil unrest - '*Simply in coming to see you today*' he tells the audience at his second visit to Vincennes, '*I encountered 36 [hot police] vehicles that, just by themselves bear witness to the mass of force ...*'.⁶ Roudinesco even tells of a serious attempt to assassinate Lacan at the end of 1969 by a certain Pierre Goldman who a year later was arrested and convicted of murder.⁷ These were anxious and dangerous times but although Lacan was in touch with some of the best-known revolutionaries - who included Daniel Cohn-Bendit and his son-in-law, Jacques-Alain Miller - he did not condone the Maoism that inspired them. Since 1966, Mao's Cultural Revolution had closed all the secondary schools and universities in China and the more radical of the student protesters seemed determined to bring about something similar in France. A major part of the seminar is directly inspired by these current events with the intention of showing - with the help of the 4 Discourses - that revolution only succeeds in creating new repressive regimes. To the angry Vincennes students he retorts:

I would tell you that the revolutionary aspiration has only one possible way of ending, only one: always with the discourse of the Master, as experience has already shown.

⁶ J. Lacan, *op. cit.*, session of 4th June 1970. p. 7.

⁷ E. Roudinesco. *Jacques Lacan*, Fayard, Paris, 1993. pp. 446-447.

What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a Master. You shall have one!⁸

The only revolution that avoided this trap, he argued, was the psychoanalytic one that he was inaugurating. Psychoanalysis can modify the master's discourse by evoking new signifiers and allowing a new style of discourse to emerge. He bitterly reproached the leaders of the extremist *Gauche proletarienne* for subverting this enterprise by diverting the energies of some of his most able students - notably those from the *ENS* - away from analysis into street protests and strikes.

A new graphical representation

After these lengthy preliminaries, it is finally time to attempt a reading of the seminar. As is usually the way with Lacan, it is prolix and often obscure and on occasion presents apparently self-contradictory propositions. But it also illuminated by moments of brilliance and totally unexpected perspectives on commonplace topics. The sarcastic quotation on the stagnation of the IJP that I began with is a fine example of this and here he is on one of the most influential voices in 20th century philosophy:

This operation described as Wittgensteinian is nothing other than an extraordinary expose, a hunting down of philosophical blackguarding ... The analytic operation, for its part, is distinguished by advancing into this field in a fashion distinct from what is found, I would say, incarnated in Wittgenstein's discourse, namely, a psychotic ferocity, alongside which Occam's well known razor, which states that we should not accept any logical notion except it is necessary, is as nothing.⁹

⁸ J. Lacan, op.cit., session of 3rd December 1969, pp. 16-17.

⁹ *ibid*, session of 21st January 1970, pp. 9-10.

Again, there are his provocative remarks about how analysts should behave with respect to culture, his discussion of the ferocious ignorance of Yahweh about things sexual as revealed in the prophet Hosea, some startling re-interpretations of Freud's case histories and much more.

However, the centrepiece of the seminar is his revelation of the Four Discourses, the latest of the many schemas he had used over the years. Schemas L and R; the Optical schema; the Graph of desire; the torus and the crosscap, and so on, had all played a key role in the attempt to formalise his re-reading of Freud. But while previous schemas were directed mainly towards clinicians and philosophers, the Four Discourses are much more geared to the experience of the man and woman in the street. They call for no special acquaintance with neurosis or psychosis or the intricacies of mathematical logic - just an enlightened interest in the uses of power and knowledge by government and university and a concern about the place of truth in a capitalist society dominated by need for production. These issues were also at the centre of the preoccupations of committed intellectuals like Michel Foucault and Jean-Paul Sartre. Foucault in particular had raised awareness of the power-dimension involved in hospitals, prisons and universities and had insisted on what Lacan would call 'the new tyranny of knowledge'. I have previously discussed his theses about the ways in which, for example, governments used their detailed research into people's sexual behaviour in order to manipulate those under their power. But over against the overwhelming enthusiasm and verbosity of Foucault, Lacan had posited that what he wanted was 'a discourse without words'. It is not what you say that matters but the position from which you say it. In order to clarify and elaborate this Lacan proposes discourses that are set out in an algebraic form. What is important are their functions rather than the particular words that are spoken, rather in the way that $x + y = z$ is a form of writing which allows any value to be given to x or y or z : $2+2 = 4$ or a set of two apples added to a set of two apples gives a set of four apples.

The weakened social **bond and** revolution

From the outbreak of the protests of May 1968, which showed just how deep-rooted was public concern about the uses of power, Lacan had mocked psychoanalysts for the poverty of their contribution both to the struggle itself and to an understanding of the forces involved in it. The Four Discourses present his highly articulated way of showing the key elements that had to be taken into account. In this seminar he introduces them in a reasonably clear way and it is not until the very last sessions that he adds some complicated refinements regarding impossibility and impotence (or inability) between different positions.

The discourses, as they evolved throughout Lacan¹'s work and in the work of his successors, have frequently been presented, (most clearly and concisely perhaps by Paul Verhaeghe¹⁰) and it is not my intention to repeat here work that has already been done. I simply want to show how Lacan introduced the discourses in this particular seminar and to give some examples of how he applied them.

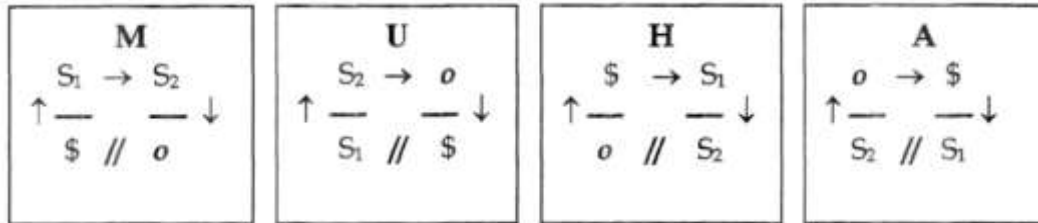
Summarising their structure we can say that they are made up of four elements or terms and four positions or sites. These terms and positions are well known. What is different is the way they have been organised here in order to show how they structure four fundamental forms of social bond.

Terms: SI: The master signifier
 S2: Knowledge
 \$: The divided subject
 o: *o-object*

Positions: Agent
 Truth
 The other
 Production

¹⁰ Paul Verhaeghe. *From impossibility to inability*, in *THE LETTER*, Spring, 1995.

The first important thing to hold onto is that the positions are fixed and the terms movable. If the order of the terms given above, $S_1-S_2-\$-o$, is maintained (and there is later a question of why this should be so) the following four possible arrangements appear which Lacan designates as discourse of the Master (M), discourse of the University (U), discourse of the Hysteric (H) and discourse of the Analyst (A). From the first sessions Lacan puts them on the blackboard in their now familiar form:



What they are intended to present is a psychoanalytic writing of the four basic types of social bond that exist in Western society and for Lacan they are a formalisation and extension of Freud's remarks about the three fundamental professions that have traditionally been seen as impossible: governing, teaching, healing. For the latter Freud substituted analysing and Lacan adds a fourth impossible profession: making oneself desirable - a new way to define the position of the hysteric. Although this way of writing things introduces a new kind of rigour, I do not think that it excludes ambiguity, and the relation, for example, of S_1 to S_2 in the Master discourse is open to a number of interpretations - at least in this seminar. In fact Lacan goes on to claim that the very incompleteness of the formulae is part of their strength:

It is a matter of articulating a logic which however frail it may seem to be - my four little letters look harmless, except that you have to know according to what rules they function - a logic which however weak it appears, is still strong

enough to comprise what is the sign of this logical force, namely, incompleteness.¹¹

From the beginning Lacan is derided for claiming to represent such complex human issues in a diagrammatic way: 'A man can't be reduced to an equation', growled a student on his first visit to Vincennes. And just before his return to the university, Lacan felt compelled to justify his procedure to the seminar, and to highlight the pre-eminence of writing over speech in grasping the real:

In truth, putting it on the blackboard is distinct from talking about it. I remember that at Vincennes ... someone felt obliged to shout out at me that there were real things that truly preoccupied the assembly. Namely, that people were being beaten up at a place more or less distant from where we were gathered, that this is what we should be thinking about, that the blackboard had nothing to do with this real. That is where the error lies. I would go as far as to say that, if there is any chance of grasping something called the real, it is nowhere other than on the blackboard. And even what I may have to say about it, what takes shape in speech, is related only to what is written on the blackboard. A function is something that enters into the real, which had never entered there before and which corresponds, not to discovering, experimenting, circumscribing, detaching, extracting, but rather to writing ...ⁿ

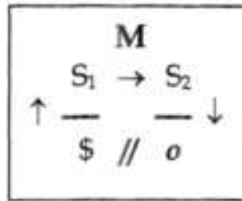
How then does the writing of these discourses allow some access to the real? I make no pretence to being able to give an adequate answer to this question, so I simply propose to offer a brief impression of each of the

¹¹ *ibid*, session of 20th May 1970, pp. 1-2,8.

¹¹ *ibid*, session of 3rd December 1969, p. 10.

discourses in turn, stressing their applications and as far as possible letting Lacan speak for himself.

The discourse of the Master:



In the early days of the seminar Lacan states that it is not easy to find an example of the discourse of the Master. A curious statement in light of the fact that the Hegelian analysis of history, to which he frequently refers, is built on the interaction between Master and Slave. But by early January, and in particular with reference to his warning to the revolutionary students, he points out that the French Revolution itself had ended with the installing of Napoleon, a much more absolute master than the royal one who had been deposed:

I note here that revolution, no matter what capital R is attached to it in French, is nevertheless at present reduced to what it was for Chateaubriand: the return of the master, the very one, the great one, our own, who for a historian, worthy of the name, Tocqueville, only precipitates the ideologies of the *Anden Regime*.¹²

Among the others whom Lacan obliquely refers to as masters who have occupied the position of agent in the Master discourse are General de Gaulle who had recently departed the scene and Lenin who had assumed totalitarian power after the Russian Revolution had disposed of the Tsar. To the Maoist idealists who were aiming at a new classless society he says:

¹² *ibid*, session of 9th April 70, p. 20.

OK, I would like to make one little remark. The configuration of Workers and Peasants has all the same led to a form of society where it is precisely the University that is in the driving seat. What reigns in what is commonly called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the University.¹³

We will return to this. More useful, perhaps, in trying to understand the Master discourse is the distinction Lacan makes between the antique master and the modern master. The former had slaves, the latter has workers and unknown to themselves, students. The distinction between them is intimately linked to the distinction between ancient and modern science. Ancient science is based on know-how, as witnessed by Plato's constant reference to the craftsman who, though a slave, knows how to do things. Indeed Lacan repeatedly affirms that the role of philosophy throughout the millennia has been to facilitate the master in plundering the knowledge of the slave and in order to make it his own. The well-known passage of *Meno* in which Socrates extracts mathematical knowledge from a slave is an example, though not an unambiguous one, of this process. Lacan links it to the Maoist distrust of university-type knowledge:

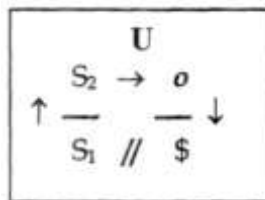
If there is something whose tone strikes me in the thematic that is called Maoist, it is its reference to the knowledge of manual labour. I absolutely do not claim to have an adequate view on this, but I am simply highlighting a point that struck me in function of the schemas I have been telling you about. The re-emphasising of the knowledge of the exploited seems to me to be very profoundly justified in the structure. It is a matter of knowing whether there is not something here - for me, this is how the question is posed -

¹³ *ibid*, session of 3rd December, 1969, p. 15.

that is entirely dreamed up. Because how, in a world in which there has emerged, in a way that indeed exists and is a presence in the world, not the thinking of science, but science in some way objectified, I mean these things entirely forged by science ... can know-how at the level of manual work carry enough weight to be a subversive factor? This is how, for me, the question arises.¹⁴

The birth of modern science in the 16th and 17th century allowed a new type of knowledge to emerge, a knowledge that, with Descartes, abandoned its link to truth and imposed new conditions on those who would be masters. Descartes' remitting of the truth to God allowed science the freedom to pursue its way towards an ever-growing knowledge that is divorced from truth. It is not clear whether Lacan identifies the modern master to the capitalist but in any case it seems clear that a new relation has been created between science and the Master discourse. There is no political leader no matter how down-to-earth and folksy he may appear who does not appeal to the latest reports of the OECD or the World Bank or more locally the ESRI to show the scientific justification for his decisions. These are not my figures, says the new master these are the figures scientifically demonstrated by one or other research institution - preferably one whose respectability is guaranteed by its professors and PhD's.

The discourse of the University:



This is more fully illuminated by the University discourse, which in our day incarnates the procedures of modern science as well as its sidelining of the truth. Given his audience and the lasting sequelae of May 68 it is no accident that this is by far the most developed of the discourses in this seminar. Lacan returns to it again and again to show how radically it has changed since it has moved from its traditional role of being the servant of truth and society's principal transmitter of culture - Newman's ideal of a university - to being the servant of capitalism and power.

This is clearly illustrated in its algebraic formulation. The knowledge - & - which takes the dominant position in the University discourse, finds its truth in the master signifier Si...

... Because here the Si of the Master is well and truly involved, showing the problem of the new tyranny of knowledge. This is what makes it impossible in the course of historical movement for truth to appear, as we might perhaps have hoped. The sign of truth is now elsewhere. It is to be produced by those who are the substitutes for the slaves of antiquity, namely, by those who are themselves products, as they say, that are just as consumable as any other.

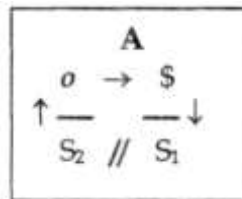
Are these products, these substitutes for the slaves of antiquity, the students? At times Lacan seems to say so. You are part of an experiment, he tells his listeners, on his first visit to Vincennes. Has it ever occurred to you to ask what precisely that part is? Lacan himself seems to oscillate between seeing them as little o-objects who find themselves at the university because of the desire of their parents and grand-parents, and pitying them as fodder for the capitalist system which has bought their teachers and has put the whole university to work at the service of production. The reforms that are being put in place to placate the revolutionaries of '68 are going in the wrong direction. The university is no longer a community of scholars, it is being taken over by technocrats

who want to harness academic teaching and research to the ends of their masters. In such circumstances the university is quite incapable of playing the role society has traditionally expected of it.

Lacan strives to wake up students to the danger of seeing their studies as a way of accumulating credits which can then be exchanged in the market place. They will end up, he warns them, by being reduced to these credits, and be bought and sold accordingly. This is just the contemporary way of becoming slaves and they are rushing into it:

A certain number of people here as students are pushing themselves forward to be recognised in this society which is in the process of really losing the run of itself, namely, of very quickly getting rid of its principal supports. Your credits will pass progressively from a use value to an exchange value. (Notes 39)

The discourse of the analyst:



In this new, more public forum Lacan is no longer focussing directly on analysts and there is little new here for them beyond what was stated in *The psychoanalytic act*.¹⁴ He seems more concerned to let people know that there is an analytic discourse that respects their subjectivity and is distinct from the other discourses that speak through them, of which they are instruments. He addresses the analyst only to tell him that if he makes himself an instrument of the Master discourse or the University discourse he is betraying his calling. Hence an extended polemic against Jean Laplanche and a critique of the way he is quoted as equivalent to

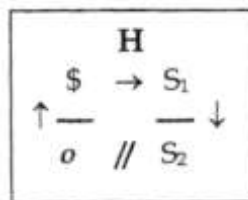
¹⁴ J. Lacan. *Seminar XV. The Psychoanalytic Act. 1967-68*, unpublished translation. Cormac Gallagher.

Lacan in the recently published doctoral thesis of Anika Rifflet-Lemaire. Despite his reservations, Lacan had contributed a preface to this work. But he really seems to agonise over his rejection of the University discourse because in the end it is only through the university that change can be brought about in society. In fact his own discourse is contaminated because of his involvement in the university, marginal though it may be, and as we know he will soon try to set his stamp on the Department of Psychoanalysis at Vincennes (later St Denis).

But he repeatedly presses the point made in previous years that what people expect from an analyst is an analysis. The algebra clarifies this because it illustrates that, over against the University discourse where the master is at the place of the truth, for the analyst the place of the truth is occupied by knowledge.

What defines the analyst? I have always said, analysis is what one expects from a psychoanalyst. But this, *what one expects from a psychoanalyst* - we obviously have to try to comprehend what that means. What one expects from a psychoanalyst is to make his knowledge function in terms of truth. This indeed is why he limits himself to a half saying.

The discourse of the hysteric:



From his early formulations in *The Family*, Lacan has engaged so often with hysteria that it seems difficult to imagine how he could say anything new about it. But here he comes up with a new and provocative formula: '*What I want/* says the hysteric, '*zs a man who knows ... how to make love*\ This is Lacan's latest encapsulating of the hysteric's position and the reason why she is so often disappointed with her male partner. He first

puts it forward in an exchange with the Vincennes¹ students. He tells them:

JL: The psychoanalyst initially only had to listen to what the hysteric was saying. What the hysteric says is pure gold ...

X: So the Hysteric is the psychoanalyst's Master.

JL: 'I want a man who knows how to make love'. Ah yes, the man stops there. He stops at the fact that he is, in effect, someone who knows. As for making love, you can call back later!

The hysteric refuses to bow to the master. She is not a slave and as all the case histories show, she is on a kind of strike and refuses to surrender her knowledge. The algebraic formulation of her discourse helps to illustrate this in a more rigorous way.

Lacan returns once more to Dora as the most exemplary of hysterics and the one in whom Freud most brilliantly exposed what is at stake. This is fundamentally her desire for knowledge as a means to enjoyment and this is illustrated in the second dream where she finds in a dictionary a substitute for her dead father. Nowhere is Lacan more provocative and tantalising than in these passages and they are worthy of a much longer and more serious study. I would simply like to highlight one aspect of his treatment of hysteria, since it continues the polemic he has been conducting for a number of years against an oedipal clinic. In introducing the myth of Oedipus - in a way that is a subject of ridicule to scholars like Lévi-Strauss and Kroeber who have spent their lives studying the myth - Freud left the solid ground of his experience and led his followers onto a path that has proved to be ultimately sterile:

Why, *he asks*, did he substitute for the knowledge that he had collected from these golden mouths, Anna, Emmy, Dora, this myth, the Oedipus complex?

It is not in the supposed knowledge of the myth of Oedipus that analysts can find their bearings but in the authentic knowledge that hysterical patients possess and are willing to reveal to those that have ears to hear.

Conclusion:

Let me conclude with a quote, not from this seminar, but from the work of one of Lacan's first and most sensitive interpreters. Jean Clavreul is one of those who has made the most intelligent use of the Four Discourses especially in his classic study of *Vorare medical*. However, the following remarks are taken from the back cover of *Le désir et la loi* and I hope they will serve as a stimulus to those who have had the courage to tackle this seminar, to continue the difficult work that is necessary to exploit all its resources. He writes:

Our time, which has witnessed the birth of psychoanalysis, is one in which the discourse of the Master has achieved complete success. It brings with it an ethic of the Good and of commodities, but it also produces an ever more severe segregation with regard to its minorities. The mad, the addicts, the delinquents and all those who do not participate in a competitiveness that has been exalted into a principle, confront our society with problems that it resolves in the same way as it deals with industrial or radioactive waste.

Psychoanalysis takes this remainder, these symptoms, into account ... It is based on an experience inaugurated by Freud, and takes care to ensure that Knowledge will not be an obstacle to the emergence of Truth. It is an *ethic of the Subject...*

As clinicians, in constant contact with human suffering, we well know that there are times when psychopharmacology has an indispensable place in

the alleviation of symptoms. But the articulation of the Four Discourses and the witness of such doctors as Freud, Lacan and Clavreul should sustain us in our efforts to ensure that the subject who addresses us is never reduced to a bothersome leftover of the invincible globalisation of a science divorced from truth.

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