

Editorial

Lacan and Theories of Knowledge

In Jacques-Alain Miller's article "The Responses of the Real," he presents the idea that response, decision, and choice all come from the real. Even though we spend our time looking for responses of the real, the analysand says what he does not know; that is, he does not know what he says. Miller gives the examples of hysterics and mythomaniacs. Miller then says something that might seem surprising, that mathemes also respond on the side of the real. Indeed, even the gods and oracles are on the side of the real, as magic seems to be. All of this is to say that the real starts with the impossible. The real is quite different from Freud's notions of it, which tend toward a kind of "scientism." Miller, then, talks about how the real differs from Jean-Paul Sartre's *en soi* (in itself) and *pour soi* (for itself). Insofar as the real is not something natural, but is constructed, it resembles Sartre's *en soi* a bit. Picking up Lacan's statement that everything that is real is rational—where one would probably want to work with the idea of psychoanalytic logic rather than the word rational—, Miller says this is not true. The real lies and stumbles and deceives. Indeed, it is what does or does not respond. Moreover, it always returns to the same place, but as a semblant. One cannot respond to anyone before a subject is there, is constructed. The real not only lies, but also disturbs any smooth flow of the signifying chain. Insofar as the signifier functions like metaphor, the subject, for science, is merely a flow of signifiers, itself an effect of the signification of knowledge. So what we have at the beginning is not some sort of pure real, but the *proton pseudos*, misrecognition.

In "Controversies over the Mental," Phillippe Lasagna argues that the cognitive sciences are *savoirs* (knowledges) that are over twenty years old. Although interdisciplinary, this theory of knowledge includes cybernetics which thinks that the "knowledge" called the science of communication comes from the brain. This theory gives rise, not only to Gilles Deleuze's notion of the post-human, but also to a denial of the subject of consciousness, or a divided subject. When cognitivism ap-

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peared in the 1970s, its adherents placed themselves against structuralism as it was based in Noam Chomsky. As such, they gave new life to psychology and phenomenology and to behaviorism which dismissed the idea of a mental state in favor of the brain. Mind, for such thinkers, comes from interactions. Intelligence is artificial. All of this is systemic. And Buddhism becomes their ethic alongside Darwinianism and the knowledgeable gene. Psychoanalysis has become a kind of biological cognitivism where any mentality would be reduced to belief and Aristotle's "the One" would be cited as a basis on which such a correspondence theory of truth exists. Communication theory does not allow the Lacanian idea that the inertia of language is at its base. Thought becomes the equivalent of what Lacanians might call an affect from the Other. And Lacan's *jouissance* becomes equal and equivalent to what we call mind; that is, the body we love.

In Eric Laurent's "Uses of the Neurosciences for Psychoanalysis," he argues that what is generally described as the plasticity of the nervous system is, for Lacan, traces made by language and images. But the contemporary idea of the nervous system is that it comes from the brain—physics + biology. Indeed, Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychoanalysis" has been used in

support of such arguments. But Freud bypasses biology in *Civilization and its Discontents*, looking, rather, at death and the social. All in all, Laurent says, mentality comes elsewhere than from physics. Neuropsychology is against the idea of any subjectivity. There is no such idea as that the unconscious is made up of things said to the subject that hurt him or her. Lacan breaks these neuroscientific ideas down with his concept of traces which become signifiers. Indeed, the truth of a life cannot be wholly said, in part, because it issues from a body that is essentially fragmented, even though it seems whole in the imaginary. This produces a divided subject. Noam Chomsky argues that there is a structure to the orders of learning that is already there. The cognitive, then, proceeds from an unknown rule. But Chomsky has no theory of reference other than some idea of the creative. In other words, for Chomsky, language is a mystery. John Searle argues that the rule might be known through a computo-representational theory of mind. Chomsky argues for

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the law of human action “without law,” while Donald Davidson says that human action comes from an anomal monism. Lacan says that human action comes from the real via the impossible. Searle and Chomsky make of cognitivism an approach wherein decision is governed by utility, a kind of Darwinian argument. While Thomas Quine was anti-cognitive, arguing for the indeterminateness of radical translation and ontological relativity which would create a world of language, Lacan says, rather, that the “true” comes from *lalangue*—our most private relationship with language—wherein language, then, makes a social link which seems to be “natural.” *Jouissance*, in its turn, is encountered contingently, as the fantasy aims at what is missed in *jouissance*. Instead of producing certainty, knowledge produces doubt. Quine will settle only for the notion that one always revises language. For Lacan, rather, the drive aims for a final and impossible sexual satisfaction, impossible because everyone, but the psychotic, encounters castration. Where cognitivists and neuroscientists search for a norm, a metalanguage, Lacan finds a “no rapport,” a hole in the real. And psychoanalysis is not a metalanguage. What the neuroscientists are arguing is that the unconscious is only nerve plasticity and that medicines such as glutamates will fix or unfix memory. And let us not forget the use of electroshock! Where is the Lacan who asks what patients make of their memories, one by one?

In “The Discourse of Science, the Imaginary Axis and a Concept of the Differential, From the Perspective of Lacan’s Psychoanalytic Topological Logic,” Ellie Ragland questions some of contemporary theories of science. Her critique focuses on the two basic paradigms of meaning assumed by American thought—one of Symbolic logic and another of logical positivism. In doing so, Ragland employs Lacan’s topology that allows her to describe the interpretations of knowledge by such relativist historians of science as Karl Popper and Paul Feyerabend as “an imaginary axis of thought.” She explains, “By that I do not mean imagination or images *per se*, but interpretation(s) whose meanings derive from identifications with the phallic signifier one finds strongest and most convincing, the one which, in turn, becomes a guarantee or proof of a certain truth.” Drawing on Lacan’s theory of psychoanalysis,

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Ragland points out that neither symbolic logic nor logical positivism take into account an unconscious logic and that they are deduced from the imaginary. It explains why psychology

focuses on the visible behavior characterizing it by the linguistic norms that describe already existing behaviors within a given concept of reality. In her article, Ragland questions several editions of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, known as *The DSM* manuals, according to which the reality paradigms have become medical and pharmaceutical recommendations for cure that is expected today to be absolute and immediate and so, it is given by a pill. However, such “cure,” Ragland argues, only modifies the symptoms without addressing their meaning. As revealed in psychoanalysis, there is always meaning causing a given “disorder.” This meaning functions via displacement and substitution. Ragland criticizes *The DSM* manuals for equating a person with his or her kind of suffering, in other words, they define the person as separate from the cause of his or her suffering. Ragland argues that the person here is not attached to his or her suffering, but rather *has* a disorder.

In “Depression Screening as the Latest Avatar of Moralism in American Public Mental Health,” Thomas Svolos says that depression screening started in the USA in 1991 and was soon extended to schools, work sites, primary-care doctors, and so on. It was supported by drug companies and was criticized only by Scientology. Employers also support such screening, places such as Harvard, the Union Pacific Railroad, and so on. The Taylor doctrine scrutinizes workers, and corporations take over the unconscious (cf. work of Frederic Jameson on late modern capitalism). In the 1950s, the USA had mental hygiene which referred back to the temperance and taboos on sexuality of the 1800s. Moments of change in economic history give rise to such movements as the contemporary one on morality. We end up with a service of goods.

In “The United States of Depression,” Thomas Svolos says that screenings are standard in the USA. Indeed, the pay that doctors receive is linked to their work in screening. Quick treatment is the byword. This has led to a degradation of clinical practice. In France, screening has appeared today, but, at least, it is being discussed as an idea.

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“What is a Woman and What is Feminine *Jouissance* in Lacan?” asks Liora Goder in her essay. She ponders Lacan’s theory of sexuation according to which a woman is situated beyond the phallus that leads to her absolute mystification as the absolute Other. She questions one of the general assumptions about the nature of sexual relationship as achieving “oneness.” Goder says that in sexual relationship, the *jouissance* is always autoerotic, even autistic, although it includes the other, yet, the two do not become One—such is the thinking behind Lacan’s famous “there is no sexual relationship.” In a relationship, according to Lacan, the divided subject is only interested in the object *a*, or, as Goder sums up, the subject can only relate to his partner through the intermediary of the object of his desire and the object of his drive. In this article, Goder discusses a case from her practice which demonstrates how a man can situate himself on the feminine side, which does not make him homosexual.

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