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PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND FRACTURES OF THE  
SOCIAL BOND<sup>1</sup>

Translated by John Holland

**T**his text<sup>2</sup> seeks to introduce a precise theory of the social bond, which Jacques Lacan deduced from the structure of the subject, as discovered by psychoanalysis.<sup>3</sup> In order to highlight its novelty, we shall examine it in counterpoint with Freud's discussions of society. Although this procedure may seem abstract, my goal is practical. I am seeking, on the one hand, a tool for examining the contemporary social bond, and on the other, a way of retrieving the social bond, as a category, from the metaphysical dimension to which most authors consign it. This is why the ideal reader of this work would be a naïve one—who has no academic knowledge about how the “social bond” has been defined, but who is animated by a “passion of ignorance,” a determination to discover what s/he does not know. We shall highlight the relevance of this bond by asking certain questions: is there a subjectivity that is particular to our age and is the functioning of the psyche “contaminated” by the social bond in which we are living?

**1. Position of the Problem**

The question of the social bond can be formulated as follows: what makes groups of people hold together when, for human beings, biological factors such as instinct and need no longer provide this sort of cohesion? If we direct this question to psychoanalysis, four answers emerge immediately:

1. The meaning of the expression, “social bond,” changes with psychoanalysis, and especially with Lacan. “Social bond” designates the way in which the subject is able to place what is most singular about her/himself within communal life. Lacan will say that the social bond aims at the subject's relation with the social bond itself, rather than with another subject; this distinguishes the social bond from group- or crowd-phenomena.
2. Emile Durkheim more or less invented modern sociology with his essay, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*.<sup>4</sup> (It was probably not by chance that scientific sociology was also simultaneously invented elsewhere: in Czechoslovakia

with another essay on suicide—which has not received the emphasis it deserves—by Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, who had been a student of Franz Brentano's at the same time as Freud.) Durkheim demonstrates the nonexistence or very restricted existence of "extra-social causes" of suicide, and deduces the social character of what leads people to this action. Scientific sociology, which claims to examine what is universal, is founded on the exclusion of singularity from the study of society. This already contributes to our theme: a conception of a society without a subject, worthy of the age of science, is constituted on the basis of a general theory of suicide.

In this context, it is striking that Freud finds humanity not on suicide, but on a murder: that of the father.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he argues that what provides the basis of each subject's own humanity is the relation with this murder. Only by taking responsibility for it can the subject become a part of the community of his/her counterparts. In this sense, nothing is further from psychoanalysis than suicide!

This paradox is based on the distinction between the subject and the individual. Scientific sociology begins with the study of suicide, by rejecting singularity in favor of society; "parricide" founds both the attempt to "live together" with others and a capacity for the act, on the part of a subject who can choose suicide. Each of the subject's acts is based on a "no" directed to the Other, a separation from the Other; suicide is a sort of separation in which the subject cannot explain the consequences of his/her act. Its radical success is also its failure, when this conclusion remains unreadable. Yet we can guess from this that there is a suicidal aspect to each of the subject's acts—a death of the subject, rather than of the individual. We shall need to take the measure of this death.

3. There is a price to becoming human: it involves the murder of the father, the consequence of which is guilt; it involves renouncing *jouissance*, and consequence of that is the desire that is caused by this loss; it involves the threat that this *jouissance* will be recovered, with the consequence that desire will end, and that anxiety will be occasioned by this return of *jouissance*. In short, guilt, desire, anxiety, aggressiveness and violence show us that human community does not exist without discontents. On the one hand, subjects try to defend themselves against this malaise through their love for their counterparts (love, in this context, is the libidinal bond that supplants biological determinations) and by designating the stranger, the foreigner both as the limit of the community and as the thief of *jouissance*, the lack of which seems to give consistency to the "discontents" of our civilization.<sup>6</sup>

4. Freud formulates a theory of the group and the crowd (the Church and the army), which explains the process by which the subject becomes a part of a community. The bond between the members derives from a double process:

a) each of them identifies with a trait of the leader (whether Christ, pope or general); b) a sharing of the same type of *jouissance* (the incorporation of an object that would give a bit of being back to whoever asks what s/he is).

If Freud provides us with a theory of society, he does not say what a social bond itself would be, even if, here and there, he gives us some implicit or explicit indications, especially in terms of the Oedipus complex (see the works on Christoph Haizmann, Dostoevsky, Woodrow Wilson, etc.).<sup>7</sup>

These preliminary remarks locate a tension between certain terms—subject, society, social bond and science—and they ally the social bond with the process of humanization. We can posit that the “accidents” of a social bond carry with them a “pathology” that will be specific to the subjects who inhabit that particular bond—and vice versa. A subjective economy will vary according to the nature of the social bond.

## 2. Freud

What sparse elements did Freud provide that would help us develop a theory of the social bond?

1. Freud’s subject is defined by desire and a lack of satisfaction; because it speaks, the subject is lacking and can only re-find objects, which become substitutes for the lost object—the Thing of *jouissance*. The instinct mutates into the drive, which is the psychic representative of the somatic; because s/he speaks, the human being is constrained to wonder what to do about her/his anatomy, which does not dictate behavior. One response to this question comes from the silence of the organs themselves; another comes from language. On the one hand, the subject is determined by this very lack of determination—the drive; on the other hand, the subject encounters the Oedipus complex.

2. This implies a distinction between the subject’s life and organic life. Freud defines the latter as the whole of the forces that resist death. This is a way of recognizing that the death drive, the part of the subject that does not speak, must be situated at the heart of the human. Traumatic neurosis, repetition, nightmares, negative therapeutic reaction, etc.—all of these put Freud on the track of what is “beyond the pleasure principle,” which he called the death drive.<sup>8</sup>

3. How can subjects who are created in this way cohere into a group? Through the Oedipus complex, the subject accepts the foundations of humanity, and this complex makes the most important step possible: the separation from the parents.<sup>9</sup> The Oedipus complex itself repeats the murder that provides the basis for humanization. We know the consequences of this murder: the substitution of a determination by language for the biological

determinations that had maintained the group's cohesion; the setting-up of a totem, the first version of the symbolic father, to set the limit between the human group and the natural world; the renunciation of *jouissance*, which is marked by the killing of the animal. From then on, the borders that demarcate the human group do not separate people from animals; instead, they separate human language from *jouissance*, which is not language.

4. From this, Freud extracts the theory of the group mentioned above: groups cohere, on the one hand, by identifying with the signifier of a leader, with a paternal trait, as it were, and, on the other hand, through an object that gives the subject back a bit of its *jouissance*-substance. This collusion between the ego ideal and the object accounts for the effectiveness of hypnosis. The subject identifies the object with what is most singular in itself and this object ends up being completely absorbed by the signifier. This statement may seem overly complicated, but Lacan will take it up and will remind us that psychoanalysis was born by breaking with hypnosis: by putting as great a distance as possible between the ego ideal and the object that is supposed to cause the subject's desire.

5. This enables us to formulate the problem of the social bond in Freudian terms: how can subjects cohere into a group without giving up on their desire, without sacrificing it to the community through a collective hypnosis? Desire is based upon a consent to language as our habitat, and therefore to lack, in which we encounter the defect in a knowledge that would respond to this desire (primal repression). This desire is based on taking responsibility for our guilt for "parricide"; it is based upon confronting the threat of a return of *jouissance*, which involves facing anxiety; finally, it is based on the fact that we bear the biographical traces of the imbroglios of *jouissance*, and therefore we also carry its existence through the symptom. These are the terms that Freud used to describe the "discontents" of civilization, a sense of malaise that results from the fact that speaking beings are the basis of civilization.

Lacan pays homage to Freud for being

...worthy of a discourse that maintains itself as close as possible to what refers to *jouissance*—as close as it was possible up till Freud. It is not very comfortable. It is not very comfortable to be situated at this point where discourse emerges, or even, when it returns there, where it falters, in the environs of *jouissance*.<sup>10</sup>

In locating the point where discourse emerges, Freud provides us with a surprising opposition, between *jouissance* and itself: not between the reality and pleasure principles, but between the pleasure principle and what is "beyond" it. Yet this is also Lacan's thesis: a social bond can only be founded on what is most heterogeneous to it, which he calls *jouissance*.

Lacan, in relation to Freud, seems to consider that the question of what constitutes a social bond can only be asked by those who have left their habitual communities, groups and societies, all of which are marked by a common identity. How does such a figure relate to others? This question may seem unusual, but it shows us what politics is. In a trivial way, we could say that the question is how to create a community composed not of our counterparts or friends, but of those who are different or dangerous, and with whom we may have relations of hatred.

### 3. From the Structure of the Subject to the Discourse of the Master

There is no social bond without a subject. Yet there is no subject of speech without language and its structure. The structure of language is the condition of speech, even if speaking implies that the subject must do more than merely repeat the Other's words. Speech subverts the discourse that has preceded it. The relation between speech and the linguistic structure that comes before it is a relation between the front and the back. The structure of language is the reverse of speech precisely because structure does not speak. Yet by speaking, the subject enters into this structure. Structure necessarily goes beyond any occasional speech, and therefore Lacan called it a "*discourse without speech*" (*Other Side*, 12).

What is this structure?

If we define language as the power of symbolization, this power consists in the articulating of elements—signifiers—each of which, when isolated, has no meaning. Lacan writes this element as S (the initial for signifier) with the numeral 1, to indicate its isolation; the  $S_1$  necessarily calls to another signifier, in order to be able to signify what it is itself incapable of saying. Because of its imperious call, it will be referred to as the master signifier. The other signifier, the one that responds and works on signification, is written as S with the numeral 2, less because it is the second than because at least two signifiers are always necessary for producing a signification (at least one signifier,  $S_1$ , must be extracted from all the signifiers in this  $S_2$ ). This signification is the minimal form of knowledge, and therefore this  $S_2$  will be read as knowledge. Lacan specifies that our definition starts from an  $S_1$  that has been extracted from the set, which then addresses a network of signifiers forming the Other's knowledge:  $S_1 \cdot S_2$  (*Other Side*, 12-13).

Signifiers, however, are not simply articulated with one another in the speech act. There must be a subject, so that the signifier, above all, will represent the subject that is connected with it. As soon as the master signifier is articulated, and even before any other signification is produced, the subject becomes precisely its *effect*. To say that the subject, which Lacan writes as  $\$$ , is the effect of the articulation between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  is to recognize that the first signifier only represents it; it fails to transmit the subject's being exhaustively into knowledge. The subject is only, as it were, "half-said" [*mi-dit*], and this condition raises the question of what is "truly" speaking. In *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan will go so far as to

claim that “the subject...doesn’t exist” (100).<sup>11</sup> The subject, like women, can only be verified one by one, in this case, in relation to the articulation of signifiers, in which it “function[s] only as a lack.”<sup>12</sup> It can thus be written as  $\$$  (which is S, the initial of “subject,” as barred). “ $\$$ ” is thus a sort of signifier that Lacan uses in order to write the absence of a subject, thereby representing it and bringing it into our calculations. As we shall see, any other term of the structure of the subject can be substituted for it in transcribing the subject-effect that results from the signifying articulation: there are only symbolic articulations and there are no articulations without a subject-effect.

This is also why the subject “expects” the signifying chain to produce, apart from any signification, something of its being as subject, a being that does not exist, but which can be given positive form. Yet what the subject encounters in a form of knowledge that has been put to work is always-already and only...knowledge. In other words, the aspects of the subject’s being that escape representation by the signifier are *produced* precisely as what is *missed*. When  $S_1$  intervenes on  $S_2$ , the subject arises as divided, and there is a loss, which Lacan writes as the letter *a*.

In speaking, the subject discovers that it is divided from its being; it lacks being. Freud identified this lack with desire, as the essence of the human. Lacan qualifies *jouissance* as a “negative substance,” in which the subject encounters the flaw in speaking. In order to designate the aspects of the subject that do not become caught up in the signifier, Lacan writes them as *a*.

Since language falls short of exhausting the real of the subject in representation, this failure has another element: the production of a meaning [*sens*] that exceeds signification, and from which we sometimes derive *jouissance*. This *jouissance* is that of meaning—*jouis-sens*—instead of the *jouissance* that is lost in speaking. From this, we can already make a certain number of deductions concerning clinical practice: a) the subject is divided, separated from *jouissance*; its incurable condition is to desire, unless it pays the price through anxiety; b) this *jouissance* is lost in speaking, but is exchanged, in part, for the “*sens-joui*” (what is “too” strong in the pleasure of speaking); c) one meaning can always be reversed into another meaning, and therefore equivocation is a characteristic of speech; d) the result of equivocation is the battle for the last word, the one that would put an end to the flight of meaning, thus bringing about a final signification, of which the subject would finally be the master. The psychotic, for example is a subject who excels in re-entering discourse as a master.

In order to formalize these processes, Lacan uses the *matheme*, which provides a mathematization, even if it is not a part of mathematics as such. Etymologically, the term, “mathematics” designates precisely what can be taught (because it is a language without speech).

The master signifier represents the subject in the name of a truth, and is articulated with another signifier, which is put to work to produce the subject's being as a surplus of *jouissance*, which is beyond knowledge:

$$\uparrow \frac{S_1 \rightarrow S_2}{S} // \frac{S_2}{a} \downarrow$$

We can guess what institutes the subject ( $S$ ): it is its relation with the signifying chain ( $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ ). These relations define the structure of every speaking subject. If subjects cohere into groups in the same social world, it is not because they establish direct contacts with each other, but because the signifier that represents each of them is articulated with knowledge. This is why Lacan insists that the signifier represents the subject not for another subject, but for another signifier: *the social bond is the subject's relation with the social bond*. If we use the term "discourse" to designate the structure of every articulation of signifiers, we can almost say, just as Lacan does in the seventeenth seminar, that "discourse" and "social bond" are equivalent.

In sum, the structure of the social bond could even exempt the subject from adopting a figure of the Other.

The structure of the subject of speech can, as it were, become confused with the social bond of which it is part. This can happen because the social dimension is constitutive of the very definition of the subject; this is a Lacanian version of the truism that one does not become human by oneself, a situation that dooms to failure the efforts of anthropological detectives to find the missing link! It would be interesting to follow out Lacan's suggestion that there is a relation between collective logic and discourse; it is this relation that enabled him to posit that the *a* and the function of haste are identical.<sup>13</sup>

This inscription of the subject is structured by the incompatibility between the signifier that represents it and the *jouissance* of its being; this *jouissance* is produced and will have the status of what cannot be made homogeneous with knowledge. In this sense, the being of the subject's *jouissance* constitutes the "hole in knowledge" that Freud tried to account for with his concept of primal repression. Furthermore, if the subject calls for knowledge, it is the master signifier that commands this knowledge, which will function alone, unbeknownst to the subject. Freud designates this functioning, which remains unknown, as "unconscious knowledge"; it takes the form of parapraxes, bungled actions, symptoms, etc.

Freud notes the yield of pleasure that is attached to the unconscious formations: our paradoxical attachment to our symptoms, the extra pleasure (laughter) that arises in the joke, the secondary benefits of illness (and even the negative therapeutic reaction), the forepleasure that is associated with the simple fact of speaking.... From all of this, we can suspect that there is a connection between the unconscious for-

mations and fantasy. Only with Lacan did it become possible to locate within these “productions” the presence of the surplus-jouissance that is written as *a*.

The discourse of the master is Lacan’s name for the basic structure by which the subject is inscribed within structure itself. He calls it this because the master signifier—like the ego ideal, which represents the subject for all the other signifiers—is in the dominant position. This discourse, as we have just seen, gives us the *structure of the unconscious*. This structure articulates what is both most particular in the subject (unconscious knowledge, primal repression, the aspects of the subject’s being that escape the signifier, the various master signifiers in its history) and the social bond that constitutes what is human as such. Furthermore, the discourse of the master gives us the structure of the unconscious, which manifests itself in parapraxes that end up subverting the master.

#### 4. The Structure of the Four Discourses

This matrix, by which the subject is inscribed in both language and the social bond obliges us to distinguish the terms that are used and the places where they are situated, as well as their order and direction.

Three terms belong to the register of the signifier, and another to that of jouissance. Lacan emphasizes that signifiers (signifier, the Other, knowledge, signifier...) go around in circles. The point of insertion of discourse resides precisely in what limits knowledge: the jouissance that Freud had dared to confront (*Other Side*, 15). These terms are introduced in a logical order so as to designate the functions that are specific to discourse (92-93). Lacan states that the particular letters that are used to write these mathemes are less important than the constancy of their relations with one another: the subject ( $\$$ ) which articulates and is the effect of the articulation of the master signifier,  $S_1$ , with knowledge,  $S_2$ , which, when put to work, produces *a*, the effect of which is an ordered chain:  $\$ \rightarrow S_1 \rightarrow S_2 \rightarrow a$  (15). The writing of the four letters respects the initial matrix, in which the signifier represents the subject for another signifier. One can wonder whether it would then be possible to continue by adding another vector:  $a \rightarrow \$$ . To do so, however, is impossible. The final product does not reach the first letter and this impossibility marks the incompatibility between signifier and jouissance. In this context, the impossible is one of the names of the real; locating this impossibility within logic is a way of situating it in discourse (165). If the vector,  $a \rightarrow \$$ , were possible, it would write the threat of restoring jouissance to the subject; such a threat would mark its death as subject of desire, since a subject can only exist to the extent that it is separated from the jouissance that leads it to speak: “In effect, if *jouissance* is forbidden, then it is clear that it only comes into play by chance, an unusual contingency, an accident” (50).

Because of the particularities of the symbolic that Freud had already noticed, any symbolic element can move a quarter-turn forward or backward, and come to occupy a place that has just been held by another term; it can then act upon ( $\rightarrow$ ) the following term. On the other hand, Lacan places a double slash or solidus ( $//$ )<sup>14</sup>

between the last and the first terms, to indicate that the former cannot reach the latter:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{S} &\rightarrow S_1 \rightarrow S_2 \rightarrow a \quad (a // \mathcal{S}) \\ S_1 &\rightarrow S_2 \rightarrow a \rightarrow \mathcal{S} \quad (\mathcal{S} // S_1) \\ a &\rightarrow \mathcal{S} \rightarrow S_1 \rightarrow S_2 \quad (S_2 // a) \\ S_2 &\rightarrow a \rightarrow \mathcal{S} \rightarrow S_1 \quad (S_1 // S_2) \end{aligned}$$

In this fourth writing,  $a$  represents the subject for another signifier, which is written as  $\mathcal{S}$ , and the nonexistence of the subject is written here as  $S_2$  (the unconscious is knowledge without a subject); the product obtained from linking  $a$  to  $\mathcal{S}$  is a master signifier,  $S_1$ .

Organized around an impossibility and an impotence or incapacity (the impossibility of saying the whole truth, and the inability to reach the next term), discourse treats *jouissance*: in this context, “treating” means not curing, but rather writing and locating impossibility and impotence, the consequence of which is to enable the subject to position itself.

The object  $a$  can represent the subject, but only if it is made positive: for example, as the surplus-*jouissance* that has been removed from negative *jouissance* (that is, the *jouissance* lost because we speak, a remainder of which nevertheless persists). Thus the child who receives a gift from his/her mother may see it either as an object that serves as a substitute for a lost *jouissance* or as a signifier of the mother’s love. As we shall see, the psychoanalyst must know how to play in different ways with the possibility of putting  $a$  in the position of representing him/her for another signifier.

We have designated the place of  $S_1$  as that of the master, of the command, the call; this is the place of the *agent* that inscribes the subject in discourse through the articulation of the chain. Knowledge is in the place of an *other*, which must submit to the master; it is the place of *work*, and Lacan will refer to it as that of the slave.  $\mathcal{S}$  is the term for which the signifier is “truly” articulated; not everything can be said about this place, for truth disappears.

If the subject cannot be reduced to either a signifier or a form of knowledge that would exhaust it, this is less because of any quality inherent in the subject itself than because it occupies the place of truth. Indeed, in another situation or discourse, such as “scientific” psychology, in which the subject is treated as an object of science, this “subject” could be absorbed entirely into a theory. Thus cognitivism identifies the subject as an information-processing system.

Finally, the place of the product,  $a$ , also needs to be singled out. These four places can thus be written as follows:<sup>15</sup>

$$\begin{array}{cc} \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} & \frac{\text{other}}{\text{product}} \end{array}$$

This matrix needs to be completed with the vectors that indicate the relations between the places: the master commands ( $\rightarrow$ ) the other; truth calls to ( $\rightarrow$ ) the agent, but also calls to an other, which answers for the agent's failure to represent all of it (truth  $\rightarrow$  other); the other delivers ( $\rightarrow$ ) the product; the product is a response to the agent (product  $\rightarrow$  agent):

$$\uparrow \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \begin{array}{c} \rightarrow \\ \times \end{array} \frac{\text{other}}{\text{product}} \downarrow$$

Lacan thus effects a forcing. He considers this to be a quasi-mathematical formula whose permutations are dictated by the minimal rules of its construction: the independence between terms and places; the order of terms; the relations between the places. It thus becomes possible to permute the terms throughout the places, while respecting their order, and to wonder whether putting a particular term in the position of agent will have any interest or meaning for us. This procedure is like that of a mathematician who has defined addition in relation to the whole numbers of the decimal system; s/he posits an operation such as  $3 + 2$ , and finds 5 as the sum. Then s/he sees that this operation can be applied to situations from everyday life: three hand towels in one drawer plus two dishcloths in another equal five linens altogether (which does not mean that the towels and the dishcloths have to be put together in the same drawer).

Of the social bonds characterized by the three elements that are part of the signifier ( $S, S_1, S_2$ ) each of which can come, in turn, to command, Lacan will speak of their kinship with the discourse of the master; they are oriented towards exercising power, unlike the analytic discourse, where the agent is  $a$ , an element that is not a signifier (69). Each of these four terms can come successively to occupy each of the four places, as long as their order is respected. In this way, we start with the following arrangement:

$$\frac{S_1}{S} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{a}$$

which is followed by a clockwise quarter-turn, which yields:

$$\frac{S}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2}$$

or, if the first arrangement is given a counterclockwise quarter-turn, by:

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{S}$$

and then with a final counterclockwise quarter-turn:

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{S}{S_1}$$

With this fourth possibility, which can be obtained by both a clockwise and a counter-clockwise half-turn of the discourse of the master, the element that is not a signifier (*a*) occupies the place of the agent. Lacan designates each of these possibilities with the name of the agent: the discourse of the master (with  $S_1$  as agent), the discourse of the university (when knowledge,  $S_2$  commands), the discourse of the hysteric (with the divided subject as agent). For the moment, we shall not mention the name of the final discourse, although we shall emphasize that when *a* comes at the place of the agent, it *goes against the master*, and moves knowledge into the unconscious.

If the function of the social bond is to respond to an impossibility, we have three ways of dealing with the incompatibility between the signifier and *jouissance*, and the contradiction between knowledge and *jouissance* (79). However, exhausting the four possible theoretical forms of the social bond brings out a mathematical peculiarity, a logical impossibility: given how the places are defined, it is impossible to generate a new writing (for example, by changing the order of the terms) without having each term ending up occupying, in another discourse, the same place it had occupied in the original discourse. As a result, the four forms represent a sort of radical: it is the only possible way to generate, by combining the four terms and four places, four radically different discourse structures. Thus, these four forms are the only ones that can be produced on the basis of the logic that underlies discourse; the four terms and the four places lead to four radically different (discursive) structures (44-45). This logical impossibility accounts for and formalizes the clinical impossibility that each discourse must treat.

There is no structure without a logical impossibility that marks the impact of the real on structure itself (44-45). This is what led Lacan to search in Freud's texts for indications of the impact of the real, such as what is "beyond the pleasure principle," "repetition" and the "death drive." The seventeenth seminar provides a close rereading of *Totem and Taboo* and of the Oedipus myth and reduces them to the statement [énoncé] of an impossible act: it is impossible for the founding murder to be an act, since humanization followed, rather than preceded it; there was no humanization if the brothers did not take responsibility for the murder as such (125). In other words, it is impossible for the dead father to be equivalent to *jouissance* (123). This impossible equivalence places the real at the heart of Freud's myth. Oedipus himself did not know that the murdered man was his father and that the woman he married was his mother. In this case, what is essential is elsewhere: Oedipus was admitted to Jocasta's bed because he had passed a test that concerned truth.

What, then, is truth? Lacan describes it as the sister of the real, of *jouissance*; it is a sort of meaning-effect that knowledge gives off, in its movement towards a *jouissance* that it cannot absorb. If the real is impossible, truth is impotent; it cannot say everything because it lacks being. What truth hides is castration, which is to be understood not only as the forbidding of *jouissance* to anyone who speaks, but as an incurable structural division between the subject and *jouissance*. To love truth is to give what one does not have—one's being as *jouissance*—in order to repair

this primal weakness (52). “Truth is child labor,” in the sense in which it is said that truth comes out of the mouth of babes, precisely because the child gives birth to castration (153, translation modified). The child verifies the accessibility of the symbolic operation that will enable him/her to learn that the division from jouissance cannot be cured.

In this context, Lacan revises our understanding of the Oedipus complex and the “real father,” who as agent of castration, becomes the point at which the subject is inserted into the structure.<sup>16</sup> This new approach can give rise to a number of misunderstandings if it is read too quickly: people have thought that Lacan identifies the real father with the spermatozoon, when he designates the latter as the limit of science’s knowledge on this subject, or that the real father is the father as he exists in reality (*Other Side*, 127). As Lacan says,

First, in general, everybody acknowledges that he is the one who works, and does so in order to feed his little family....

There is something to show that the mystagogy that makes him into a tyrant is obviously lodged somewhere quite different. It’s at the level of the real father as a construction of language, as Freud always pointed out, moreover. The real father is nothing other than an *effect of language* and has no other real. I am not saying “other reality,” since reality is something quite different (127, emphasis added).

Others have concluded that, for Lacan, nothing real is involved here: that the real father can be reduced to a symbol, which could be translated into Lacanian terms as a “structural operator,” thus removing the term, “effect,” from the expression “language-effect” (123). What is surprising is that these same readers postulate the existence of a primal jouissance, from which the subject has been driven away by the advent of speech. This is why the following passage is important:

...what [these critics] should see is this, for example. It is the position of the real father as articulated by Freud, namely, as impossible, that makes the father necessarily imagined as a depriver. It is not you, nor he, nor I who imagines; it arises from the position itself. It is not at all surprising that we always encounter the imaginary father. It necessarily, structurally depends on something that evades us, which is the real father. And it is strictly out of the question that the real father be defined in any assured manner unless it’s as the agent of castration (128, translation modified).

Without language, there is no way of constructing the real as what escapes knowledge. It is then necessary to assume responsibility, with castration, for the conse-

quences of this construction. The first of these is that there is no cause of desire except through castration (50-51).

### 5. Historicizing the Discourses

This matrix enables Lacan to account for social bonds that had long pre-existed psychoanalysis. Thus the dominant social bond for the Greeks of the fourth century B.C.E. put the questions ( $S_1$ ) of a philosopher such as Socrates in the place of the command; the master commands the slave's knowledge ( $S_2$ ) to produce a surplus-jouissance that can only be written mathematically as a square root, and which the philosopher-master immediately takes away from the slave. This can occur even if neither of them ever knows what animates the master's procedures (and thus why is in the position of truth). Lacan examines Hegel's master/slave dialectic in the same way, and deduces from it that knowledge "is the means of jouissance" (51).

The Middle Ages, with the accumulation of ancient science in encyclopedias and libraries, the inventions of the university and of scholasticism, give us a precise idea of a social bond in which knowledge ( $S_2$ ) comes to command. Knowledge puts jouissance to work, and issues orders to embodied course credits [*unités de valeur*]; I have said this, without any embarrassment, about my own teaching. (Today, in the French university, we refer to them as "modules.") These bits of surplus-jouissance lead students to enroll themselves for the jouissance of the professor, to give their bodies in order to fill up the university courses. Excluded from knowledge, they are put to work (Lacan invents the term, "astudied" for them) in order to produce subjects ( $\$$ ) who want to learn: they are "students," who study, but who do not necessarily know (105). As Lacan says, "the desire for knowledge bears no relation to knowledge—unless, of course, we wheel out the lubricious word 'transgression'" (23). The "astudied," as he remarks later, "constitute the subject of science with their own skin" (105-106). The place of truth is occupied by the master ( $S_1$ ), in whose name the teaching is given, without the master's ever really being subjected to genuine doubt: "It's true because Socrates said so!"

In the discourse of the hysteric, the subject commands. Anyone who doubts that this is a social bond should remember the epidemics of hysteria in the seventeenth century, after the high Middle Ages (the Convulsionnaires of Saint-Médard or the demonic possessions of Loudon). Descartes may well have played a decisive role in bringing out the function of the subject by putting forward his "movement of renunciation of...wrongly acquired knowledge" (23). Yet Lacan approaches this discourse less through this context than through its clinical manifestations. The subject of speech, divided from jouissance, comes to command for a precise reason: because the ancient master and knowledge failed to answer for what has been excluded from speech. This exclusion involves the sexed subject, grappling with the signifier's inability to *say [dire]* sex: a single signifier, the phallus says the opposition between men and women. For this reason, no signifier can say the aspects of

sexuality that do not get taken up by this signifier. What clinical practice discovers is that the subject in this discourse chooses precisely to incarnate the portion of *jouissance* that humans lose through speaking; this is the position that Freud qualifies as feminine, characterizing it in terms of its position as object, as passive, and even as masochistic.

The hysteric devotes herself to getting this excluded part recognized: she (or he) takes the floor to speak, manifesting her wrenching relations with *jouissance* through her symptoms, seeking a master ( $S_1$ ) who would claim to be able to respond to her advances by producing knowledge ( $S_2$ ). Yet she will then show how this knowledge can only respond in vain to the question of feminine *jouissance*, which is thus put in the place of truth. Hence the positions of the hysteric (whatever her/his anatomy may be): she literally “makes the man” [*fait l’homme*] ( $S$ ), in the sense of bringing into existence a *parlêtre* [speakingbeing] who is “supposed to know woman.” In this way, she locates feminine *jouissance* as the limit of knowledge. The failure of knowledge preserves, and perhaps even demonstrates, the possibility of this *jouissance*. She seeks a master whom she can command. She loves the father’s castration, which she herself activates, since in loving the father’s (the master’s) castration, she gives what she does not have: her missing being, with, as a bonus, the proof of its existence through love.<sup>17</sup>

From a certain point of view, it could be said that the hysteric creates the social bond. She certainly invented the discourse of the analyst. This shows us why it is important for the subject in analytic treatment to be hystericized: insured against being absorbed into the analyst’s knowledge, the analysand addresses the subject-supposed-to-know without fear (or at least without this particular fear).

An hysteric is able to create this bond because a woman is introduced into the sexual relation [*relation*] as object *a*, the term that causes the desire of the *parlêtre* (and also her own). This term, in the position of truth, goes against the preceding social bonds, and leads her (and the male hysteric) to create this third bond.

The fourth discourse is instituted when what objects most radically to the social bond comes to “command” the other; this “objection” puts the subject itself to work in order to produce new master signifiers, which can respond to, welcome, bear and treat this subject. This new production supposes that such treatment is possible, and that a hitherto-unknown knowledge can exist in the place of truth. This discourse did not have to await psychoanalysis in order to manifest itself.

Let us take a single example, suggested by Lacan, who refers to a certain number of ancient Greeks (Empedocles and the pre-Socratics, Pericles) as psychoanalysts (*Other Side*, 38). In the Greco-Persian wars, the Greek city-states, faced with the invading Persian fleet, found themselves in what seemed to be an impossible situation. In terms of proportions, it would resemble a threat of invasion of the principality of Monaco by the U.S. navy.<sup>18</sup> The members of the small Athenian republic were seized by fear (the affect that, according to Freud, characterizes the collision with *jouissance*) before the imminent danger of being crushed by the Persians, who

had, for them, become the figure of fierce and obscene jouissance. In the discussion of which strategy to adopt, an admiral suggested a new idea, which had never been tried; it functioned as a sort of interpretation. Instead of going out to face the enemy, they should allow the Persians almost to reach the city, to go as far as the straits of Salamis; there, the Persian ships would be immobilized by their own great numbers and would become vulnerable to the highly mobile Greek galleys.

In this way, the Persians were defeated, but the victory raised a new question: “Who were the real victors, we or the gods?”<sup>19</sup> The Athenians discovered that their interpretation had opened up something real, which was stronger than the true, an area guaranteed by the gods. Treating the Persian threat through strategy led the Athenians not to efface themselves before their victory, but instead to produce a real that awakened them!<sup>20</sup>

This question changes the status of knowledge: far from being guaranteed by the master, it has a “real” limit. This is the change of discourse that ended up in preparing the way for modern science. The discourse of the master would return and that of the university would become dominant, but the very change in discourses also transformed knowledge. A modern science began to speak through mathematics, departing from the laws of the signifier. The signifier came to represent itself,  $A = A$ , thus showing that the Greeks’ knowledge was merely mythical and producing something else, which science imposed upon us: a detached, unconscious knowledge, in which the signifier would insist by representing an absent subject for another signifier (*Other Side*, 90-91).

## 6. The Lacanian Field

It can never be repeated too often that Lacan’s theory of the social bond implies the coexistence of the four discourses. When what cannot be treated arises, it puts the dominant discourse in a difficult position, substituting for the agent something that comes in from the real. As Lacan remarks in *Encore*, the analytic discourse arises whenever there is a change in discourses (16). The Lacanian field is defined by its attempt to treat an “impossible” jouissance, and it includes—and, indeed, requires and authorizes—this changing of discourses. Lacan himself suggests that it be called the “Lacanian field,” in order to distinguish it from the Freudian field, which, at best, succeeds in situating jouissance at its limits (*Other Side*, 81). This explanation distinguishes between the social aspect—to which Freud’s group psychology adapts quite well—and the social bond.

It would be impossible to formalize this theory without the fourth discourse, the analytic discourse. Lacan notes that this discourse provides the only counterpoint to that of the master (*Other Side*, 69, 87). Every term related to the signifier retains a kinship with the master, but with the analytic discourse, a signifier does not occupy the position of agent. With psychoanalysis, despite the vector between  $a$  and  $S$ , jouissance does not return to the subject; instead, the analyst substitutes him/

herself for jouissance and becomes nothing more than its semblance. The discourse of the master can be called the reverse, or the other side, of psychoanalysis, not only because it is the opposite pole in terms of this four-part structure,<sup>21</sup> but also because the master signifier sets up a matrix in which there is only one true alternative to this signifier: the semblance of the object. As Lacan writes, “There are only four discourses. Each takes itself for the truth. Only the analytic discourse is the exception. It would be better, in conclusion, for it to dominate, but this discourse, precisely, does not seek domination.”<sup>22</sup> The analytic discourse goes so far as to *organize the loss of the power* that the other discourses hold on to!

Perhaps this *envers* [reverse]—and Lacan accentuates the similarity in sound between this French term and *vérité* [truth]—should be understood in a way that he would explain later: the subject thinks “against” [*contre*] a signifier, in the sense that the subject leans against it and relies on it. This “*contre*” reappears in the proposal to analysts, when Lacan speaks of a “*contre-analyse*,” a “counter-analysis,” which points forward to the pass (the device that he would invent in order to grasp what leads an analysand to become an analyst).<sup>23</sup>

What happens at the end of a psychoanalysis? It brings the analysand, who was led to the couch by a symptom, to the point where the pathological reasons for going through an analysis fall apart. So why does the analysand stick with it? She gets a cause; she discovers that she herself is the very objection to knowledge whose limits the symptom decries (“Tell me what’s wrong with me, what’s happening to me”). She finds that she becomes reduced to a jouissance that is impossible to eradicate because, as a living being, she bears the signifier in the real. What is she to do with that bit of information? Use it to condemn all knowledge as ramshackle and decrepit, and also rely on it to reinvent knowledge through art, poetry, and writing. Or better: by writing in a new way, against [*contre*] writing, by doing poetry against [*contre*] poetry, and by painting against [*contre*] the art of painting itself—always in an effort to try to locate what there is of the singular, and in such a way that others will not find their own respective styles expressed in her works. The analytic discourse is devoted to making this singularity exist, and Lacan his remarks that it is not seeking domination in this way: “in other words, it teaches nothing. There is nothing universal in it; this is why it is not a subject that is taught in schools” (“Lacan pour Vincennes,” 278).

Learning of the fate of the subject-supposed-to-know in analysis—which is reduced, when it is embodied by the psychoanalyst, to any signifier of “disbeing” [*désêtre*]—the analysand may choose to use this discovery about her/his relation to this limit in knowledge (a subjective destitution). S/he does so by becoming an analyst: become a semblance of this limit, which a new analysand does not even know yet that s/he too will be called upon to reach.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, the psychoanalyst pretends to be the waste-object and the excluded object, in order to spare the other, the analysand, from having to incarnate it (whether by doing so her/himself or by bringing in the figure of a “thief of jouissance,” to use Jacques-Alain Miller’s expression).<sup>25</sup> Yet the psychoanalyst must still explain how and why s/he has taken this step; if

this is not done, then becoming an analyst would be a failed act, for all bungled actions are constituted by the refusal of an explanation.<sup>26</sup> Such an explanation can neither already exist nor be supplied by the Other, since it concerns what transforms the subject into the term that goes against knowledge: *s/he is, as it were, condemned to reinvent psychoanalysis, against [contre] psychoanalysis itself.*

At the end of analysis, the subject identifies with a piece of the real; this is the identification with the symptom, which Lacan prefers to write as “*sinthome*,” in order to distinguish it from the symptom that had existed at the entry into analysis. The subject discovers that, except for the *sinthome*, there is no Other—whether theoretical, divine or psychoanalytic—that can answer from its place and make the imaginary (the body, meaning), the symbolic (language) and the real (one’s jouissance-being) cohere. Lacan, indeed, explicitly denounces this Other: “What has a body and does not exist? Answer—the big Other” (*Other Side*, 66). The *sinthome* is the precise response invented by every subject in order to maintain what is singular, with and in the social bond.<sup>27</sup> This prevents us from confusing one singularity with another, which would destroy its most intimate knowledge.

Every accident of the social bond is therefore an accident of the *sinthome* as function. With this hypothesis in mind, we shall conclude by examining the contemporary social bond.

## 7. The Capitalist Discourse

Several times during the seventeenth seminar, Lacan seeks to specify the “nature” of the contemporary social bond by connecting the discourse of the master with capitalism.<sup>28</sup> Yet it is in a lecture given in Milan that he specifies that the contemporary eludes the four basic forms.<sup>29</sup> Dominated by science and the market, this bond is characterized by “the capitalist’s discourse[s]...curious copulation with science” (*Other Side*, 110). It exploits the structure of the desiring subject, making her/him believe that there is no need for any true bond, for science will manufacture the object that is lacking, and this object can then be found on the market—without the aid of any social bond. In a word, capitalism manufactures individuals, who are precisely subjects who have been completed by their surplus-jouissance. Science is thus set to work to manufacture objects, and is approached more as technology than as fundamental science; it constructs objects that flatten the planes of reality and truth against each other, a state that Lacan designates as a “Lathouse” (187).

In the position of the command—but placed there by the capitalist-master, by the market itself—comes the subject, which shows the primacy of narcissism by claiming to be master of itself as of the universe:

$$\downarrow \frac{S}{S_1} \times \frac{S_2}{a} \downarrow$$

This formalization is obtained by inverting the left side of the discourse of the master. As a result,  $\mathcal{S}$ , is in the position of agent, just as it is in the discourse of the hysteric, and  $\mathcal{S}_1$  is in that of truth, as it is in the discourse of the university. Indeed, *the only discourse that is not represented here* (by one of the terms in place) *is the discourse of the analyst* (while the discourse of the master is represented by two terms). Lacan will say that the capitalist discourse forecloses castration by promising to restore jouissance to the subject; the subject loses nothing through speech, and instead, gets what is coming to it. This foreclosure can be read in the fact that, in order to respect the order of the terms, the first arrow has to be inverted:

$$\downarrow \frac{\mathcal{S}}{\mathcal{S}_1} \frac{\mathcal{S}_2}{a}$$

This discourse “makes” truth accessible, precisely because the logic that underlies the four discourses is not respected here. It is not marked by any impossibility of symbolization—an impossibility that inscribes something the real; this is what defines the foreclosure of castration; this castration, which is a part of the other discourses, but has been rejected by this one. This discourse thus contradicts the theory of the four discourses. By following the path of the vectors, we can see that it goes around in a “circle”:  $\mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}_1 \rightarrow \mathcal{S}_2 \rightarrow a \rightarrow \mathcal{S}$ . There is no longer a stopping-point in the sequence. It is true that the arrow,  $(a \rightarrow)$ , appears in both the analytic and the capitalist discourses, but it is found in different places: in the discourse of the analyst, it is located between the agent and the other, while in the capitalist discourse, it is between the *product* and the *agent*. As a result, the capitalist discourse promises that a real surplus-jouissance can be restored, at precisely the place where the analytic discourse places a *semblance* of the object as cause of desire. In the analytic discourse, this vector writes the impossibility of this restoration.

We can guess what Lacan means when he speaks of psychoanalysis as an exit from capitalism.<sup>30</sup> It does so by bringing back the consideration of castration, a change that results from the analyst’s incarnation of surplus-jouissance, which reintroduces the incompatibility between the signifier and jouissance.

We should bear in mind that the “foreclosure of castration” is equivalent to the “rejection of the signifier of castration” (or of the symbolic operation); this means that the signifier of castration would, first, have been ascribed to subjects, before being “sent back” into the real. In any case, this is the way in which Lacan introduced foreclosure in his discussion of psychosis: a subject who forecloses the Name-of-the-Father has “sen[t] packing (*Verwerfe*) the whale of imposture.”<sup>31</sup> This comparison may suggest a possible connection (the equal impossibility of relying on castration) between the capitalist discourse and psychosis, which would have to be examined.

In any case, we can guess that a society in which psychoanalysis is impossible would create another problem: it would substitute a general utilitarianism for the treatment of jouissance. Perhaps such a society would prevent any emergence of

the analytic discourse and therefore any possible changing of discourses. I say “perhaps” because the advent of such a situation is far from certain; after all, there were many irruptions of analytic discourse even before the invention of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis was destroyed under Nazism and Stalinism and sometimes slept at the feet of tyrants in Brazil<sup>32</sup> or Italy<sup>33</sup> and is probably impossible under any of the “fundamentalist” monotheisms. On the other hand, psychoanalysts were also able to protest against the Argentinian military dictatorship, which led to the expansion of psychoanalysis throughout the world. Argentinian psychoanalysts continued to receive patients, even when police spies were infiltrating the ranks of their analysands; some of them had to change their offices regularly in order to avoid the risk of being tortured, and of being forced to confess what they had learned during their analytic sessions. Many preferred to continue to practice in Spanish-speaking countries, but Argentinian psychoanalysts are now found in immigrant communities throughout the world. In conformity with the laws of Argentina and of several other Latin-American countries, they are able to hold a double nationality. We know that this American and European double nationality can be advantageous for professional football players...and can help people to get around the regulations of the Schengen Area!

#### 8. The Current State of the Discourses

If the *sinthome* supposes the existence of castration, we can find a confirmation of Lacan’s thesis in contemporary pathologies that seek to do without castration.<sup>34</sup> The list can start with drug addiction, which provides a sort of paradigm of the subject completed by its surplus-jouissance; in its most extreme form, such addiction has been rejected by the capitalist discourse, because it makes us incapable not so much of loving, as of working. On the one hand, addiction is disconcerting for capitalists, although they make billions from it, and on the other, there is an element of protest in both drug addiction<sup>35</sup> and alcoholism.<sup>36</sup> This list would also include depression, which is the biggest cause of the health-care deficit in France, and which, on this scale, can be interpreted as a refusal to let the objects of the market save one’s desire.<sup>37</sup> The increase in cases of anorexia and bulimia is also striking; perhaps patients with bulimia short-circuit the relation between the objects of desire and of oral demand. Through the satisfaction of eating, they are seeking what has not been given to them by love, thus making use of a confusion induced by the contemporary social bond. Once full, they vomit in order to hollow out the void that would be the place of lack, which is necessary for desire. Those who doubt that there is a connection between anorexia and contemporary forms of the social bond should think of the “pro-ana” movement, in which young women (and some men) come together in order to campaign in favor of anorexia and support each other. Surrounded by all the objects of information technology and advertising, and adopting the pretext of trying to have a model’s idealized body, people suffering from anorexia find in it (despite its justified condemnation) not only an identification but a

way of saving their desire; through oral frustration, they prevent their desire from serving commercial consumption.

Drug addiction, bulimia, anorexia, polyphagia, alcoholism, binge drinking and other addictions, snacking, compulsive buying, kleptomania, some forms of obesity, detachment, depression: these are illnesses of accumulation (the subject dies either from accumulation or from the refusal to consume). It is difficult not to associate such symptoms with certain current ideological tendencies present in psychology, such as biopsychosocial conceptions. The latter seek, like other ideologies, to *naturalize* the subject by reducing desire to need.<sup>38</sup>

In France, suicide is the highest cause of mortality among young adults and the second-highest in children (behind accidents, which could well mask suicide). At the very moment when they are supposed to situate what is most particular about themselves in a social bond, subjects prefer to exclude themselves from it by dying. How can we not judge such actions to be the fault of our social bond? In this context, the large increase in suicides among young people in Eastern Europe is particularly interesting, for it has accompanied these countries' adherence to the neoliberal project.<sup>39</sup> The capitalist social bond sometimes seems to suggest that the alternative to this radical "Durkheimian" exclusion through suicide is to be included as an object on the market. Not only is there adoption trafficking, but in Latin America, children are being brought up so that their organs can be harvested for North-American clinics. Transplantable organs of people who have been condemned to death in China are systematically being marketed. Corneas collected from European war zones are being transplanted in European clinics. Corpses are being recycled for "artistic" uses.<sup>40</sup>

If suicide can be considered as the act of a subject who deserts a society that constructs itself without subjects, then this ultimate protest raises the subject to the level of the real, which then interprets society. Some of the pathologies mentioned above could also be considered as protests. If this is the case, then the subject is not—yet—dead.

In this context, we can even consider the fate of the proletarian—who was defined as "Human material"—to be enviable; in such a case, all that happened was the extraction of surplus-value (*Other Side*, 32). Now, with the production of surplus-jouissance as the general equivalent of commodities, humans are being included in the series of interchangeable objects. As Lacan exclaimed to protesting students:

Everything, credit points—to have the makings of culture, of a hell of a general, in your rucksack, plus some medals besides, just like an agricultural show, that will pin on you what people dare call mastery, or at least a master's degree! (*Other Side*, 183, translation modified).

We should be sensitive to the places where the subject tries to make itself heard, but we should also be aware of the difficulties inherent in each of these places: in a certain kind of clinical psychology, advice columns, religious cults and humani-

tarian and alterglobalization movements. Psychology tries to make itself scientific without realizing that there is a contradiction between science and the subject; in this context, it defines the subject exclusively through its ability to accumulate knowledge (“mental age” or “intelligence quotient”) or through its pathologies of accumulation (the addictions). Some approaches to psychoanalysis even fall prey to this difficulty, when they consider it to be a sort of cognitivism.<sup>41</sup> Religious cults, in turn, are not a part of the religion that existed before science, and which was constructed on belief: the knowledge that the object of belief does not exist and calls for faith and love to prove that God exists.<sup>42</sup> After all, the three most important events related to peace in the last twenty years have been carried out in the name of God: the end of apartheid, the end of the civil war between protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, and the small steps—which we hesitate even to mention—in favor of a peace that never stops not arriving, between Israel and the Palestinians. Religion is not a cult, but “fundamentalisms” seem to be supplanting it.

Both the modern cult and modern fundamentalism are inventions of the age of science; sectarians search on the Internet to find out how to make bombs, study how to manipulate people’s laptops at institutes of technology, and learn to fly supersonic jets. Perhaps more importantly, fundamentalist doctrine recreates the Other in opposition to (the treatment of *jouissance* by) the social bond. Fundamentalists’ pronouncements tell us who we are and what we must do in order to deserve salvation. Crimes committed in this context are directed not only against writers (journalists, authors, poets) but also against women and children: those who, as *sinthome*, renew the social bond.<sup>43</sup> The capitalist discourse provides with a new race of outsiders: those who are useless to it, and who become a sort of “homeless” people, with no relation to the social bond. *Jouissance* returns in the real as what is to be “cleansed”....

These various examples cannot, of course, be located in the same place in the capitalist discourse; a fuller analysis would relate them in more subtle ways. Capitalism revives a preoccupation of Lacan’s: society and discourse should not be confused with each other. The setting-up of a discourse is conditioned by what prevents it from running smoothly, by what stops structure from working autonomously: *jouissance* as the impossible. As a result, the capitalism that seeks to cleanse and decontaminate the world of *jouissance* accentuates the fierceness, cruelty and domination of structure, which isolates its elements and separates them from each other. We re-find this situation in the modern pathologies, which can be associated with particular terms of the discourse. Psychosomatic phenomena, borderlines, pathological narcissism and addictions may not correspond term-by-term to  $S_1$ , but are related to it; they are a swarm, which divides the body into bits and pieces, splinters it and leaves it in the grips of an unregulated return of *jouissance*.  $S_2$  appears as the new knowledge that will shut the hysteric up. The has been supplanted by the ego or the “I.” In the place of the *a*, a consumer product confuses need, demand and desire. Only the symptom—the *sinthome*—enables us to hope that discourse can

be refounded, and the survival of psychoanalysis testifies to the persistence of the symptom.

As I write these words during the financial crisis of 2008, I would like, more than ever, to adopt the following statement of Lacan's, although current events lead to a slight modification of the final statement:

I am caught up in a movement that deserves to be called progressive, since it is progressive to see the psychoanalytic discourse founded, insofar as the latter completes the circle that could perhaps enable you to locate what it is exactly that you are rebelling against—which doesn't stop the thing from continuing incredibly well (*Other Side*, 208).

### Notes

1. [This article is the translation of a text entitled "*Fracture du lien social et psychologie*," which was published as the second chapter of Marie-Jean Sauret's book, *Malaise dans le capitalisme, Psychanalyse & series* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2009), 43–75. The term "*lien social*," translated here as "social bond," is frequently translated as "social link," as in Bruce Fink's translation of *Encore*. For example, "discourse should be taken as a social link...founded on language." See Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 1998), 17. In further references, this text will be cited as *Encore*. (Translator's note.)]
2. The text was originally written for a conference sponsored by the Master's program in Psychopathology at the University of Brest, which was entitled, "From Myth to Structure, from Structure to Discourse, from Language to Speech, from Speech to Logic, from Logic to Ethics," and which was held on February 16-17, 2001, on the basis of a joint Franco-Colombian research project, in response to a call for papers from ECOS-Nord. I have modified several details (2008).
3. Other presentations of Lacan's theory of discourse can be found in Jean Clavreul, *L'ordre médical* (Paris: Seuil, 1978); Michel Lapeyre and Marie-Jean Sauret, *Lacan: le retour à Freud* (Toulouse: Milan, 2000); Serge Lesourd, *Comment taire le sujet?: des discours aux parlottes libérales* (Toulouse: Érès, 2006); Gérard Wajcman, "The Hysteric's Discourse," *The Symptom: Online Journal for Lacan.com*, 4 (2003). Retrieved from <<http://www.lacan.com/hysteric-discf.htm>>
4. Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, ed. by George Simpson, trans. by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
5. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), XIII (1955): "Totem and Taboo," 1–161.
6. Sigmund Freud, XXI (1961): "Civilization and Its Discontents," 57–146.
7. Freud explains the constitution of society through an identification with a trait of the leader's (who is the dead father's heir) and the sharing of a way of relating to the object of jouissance. Perhaps Freud's conception (if one sets aside the reference to the object, which may be too much to ask) may be homogeneous with what Volckrick refers to as a second level of interaction and names the "'generalized-third party,' a pragmatic restraint on the second level, which supposes a 'reflexive third-party' on the third level, which would

enable us to speak of a social bond in the strict sense." See Élisabeth Volckrick, "Les dispositifs de médiation et la question du tiers," in *Avons-nous encore besoin d'un tiers?*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Lebrun and Élisabeth Volckrick (Toulouse: Érès, 2005), 151.

8. Sigmund Freud, XVIII (1955): "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 3–66.

9. Sigmund Freud, IX (1959): "Family Romances," 235–42.

10. Jacques Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 2007), 71. Henceforth cited in the text as *Other Side*.

11. See *Malaise dans le capitalisme*, 29–30.

12. Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," in *Écrits: The First Complete Translation in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink, Héroïse Fink, and Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 2006), 683.

13. *Encore*, 48–49; Jacques Lacan, "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, 161–175.

14. [In consultation with the author, I have indicated the notion of impossibility by means of a double slash or solidus, rather than by the barred arrow that appears in the original French (Translator's note.)]

15. Before adopting this terminology, Lacan designates these places in other ways (*Other Side*, 93):

$\frac{\text{desire}}{\text{truth}}$      $\frac{\text{other}}{\text{loss}}$  We also find:  $\frac{\text{work}}{\text{production}}$  on the right side of this *mathème*.

16. Sidi Askofaré and Marie-Jean Sauret, "The Question of the Father: Father and Symptom," *Journal of Lacanian Studies* 1:1 (2003): 38–65.

17. Paule Giron, *La mère empêchée* (Paris, France: Éditions du Seuil, 1978).

18. This comparison is borrowed from a remark by Pierre Bruno.

19. See Christian Meier, *The Political Art of Greek Tragedy*, trans. by Andrew Webber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

20. Jacques Aubert and Jacques Lacan, *Joyce avec Lacan* (Paris: Navarin, 1987).

21. Lacan writes the four discourses on the four corners of a square, with the discourses of the master and of the analyst placed at a diagonal.

22. Jacques Lacan, "Lacan pour Vincennes!," *Ornicar* 17:18 (1979): 278.

23. "Thus, 'man thinks with his soul' means that man thinks with Aristotle's thought," *Encore*, 111. For "counter-psychoanalysis," see Jacques Lacan, "*Le séminaire, livre XXIV: L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*" 1977-1976, 16. Retrieved from: < <http://staferla.free.fr/S24/S24%20L'INSU....pdf> >

24. "The analyst...here has to represent...the discourse's reject-producing effect [*effet de rejet*], that is, the object *a*" (*Other Side*, 44).

25. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimité" (*L'orientation lacanienne* 1985-1986, n.d.).

26. Jacques Lacan, "Discours à l'Ecole freudienne de Paris," in *Autres écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 261–281.
27. The reader will have understood that what is singular, which stands apart from every generalization, is not to be confused with the particular, which can always be evaluated, whether quantitatively or qualitatively. See Marie-Jean Sauret and Olivier Douville, "À props de la démarche clinique et de son rapport aux singulier," in *Les Méthodes cliniques en psychologie*, ed. by Olivier Douville (Paris: Dunod, 2006).
28. See, for example, the following statements found in *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: The modern master is the one "whom we call capitalist" and the proletarian "is characterizable by this term 'dispossessed'"* (31-32). "'Consumer society' derives its meaning from the fact that what makes it the 'element,' in inverted commas, described as human is made the homogeneous equivalent of whatever surplus *jouissance* is produced by our industry—an imitation surplus *jouissance*, in a word" (81). "[T]his capital mutation...gives the master's discourse its capitalist style" (168).
29. Jacques Lacan, "Du discours psychanalytique," in *Lacan in Italia 1953 - 1978* (Milan: La Salamandra, 1978) 32-55.
30. Jacques Lacan, *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. by Joan Copjec, trans. by Denis Hollier, Rosalind Krauss, and Annette Michelson (New York: Norton, 1990) 16.
31. Jacques Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, 484.
32. In Brazil, some analysts from the I.P.A. chose to collaborate with torturers and allowed colleagues who accused them to be directly threatened. See Helena Besserman Vianna, *Politique de la psychanalyse face à la dictature et à la torture: "n'en parlez à personne"* (Paris: l'Harmattan 1997).
33. See the "astonishing" testimony of Panayotis Kantzas, who as psychoanalyst, served in the ministry of defense in Silvio Berlusconi's first government. "Des choses merveilleuses et terrifiantes," *La Cause Freudienne* 33 (1996): 44–47.
34. Antonio Quinet, "Les nouvelles formes du symptôme en médecine," *Barca!* 13 (1999): 121–130.
35. Sidi Askofaré, Michel Lapeyre, and Marie-Jean Sauret, "Symptôme, sexualité, lien social: L'enjeu de la toxicomanie," *Analysis, Publication sobre problemas asociados con el uso de drogas*, 1 (2000).
36. This is one of Anna Cywinska's findings in her Master's thesis "L'alcoolisme: l'en-verre du capitalisme ? L'alcoolisme et le lien social contemporain: l'exemple de la Pologne" (Toulouse II Le Mirail, 2006).
37. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Why Psychoanalysis?*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2003).
38. [For more on biopsychosocial conceptions, see Sidi Askofaré, Marie-Jean Sauret, and Pascale Macary-Garipuy, "Current Controversies in the Treatment of Autism in France," trans. by John Holland, *S: Journal of the Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique* 5 (2012): 129 (Translator's note).]

39. Especially the young members of “Generation T,” the transition generation, according to Martyna Bunda, as cited in Cywinska.
40. In this context, we should remember the polemic that was occasioned by the exposition of human bodies by the anatomist and artist, Gunther von Hagens, the inventor of the technique of “plastination.” The scandal that led to his being indicted for trafficking in the corpses of people who had been condemned to death in China had hardly been forgotten when his new exposition *Body Worlds* opened, under the pretext that it was a pedagogical, rather than an artistic project.
41. See the dossier of this debate in Pascal Mettens, *Psychanalyse et sciences cognitives: un même paradigme ?* (Brussels: De Boeck, 2006); Daniel Widlöcher and Émile Noël, *La psyché carrefour* (Geneva: Georg, 1997).
42. See Marie-Jean Sauret, *Croire?: approche psychanalytique de la croyance* (Paris, France: Privat, 1982).
43. Perhaps this is the reason for the disappearance of a certain kind of journalism, for the loss of interest in poetry, and for the success of the literature that requires the least from us.