

THE BODY STUNNING FOR OUR TIME

The times we live in are truly unique. We realize with surprise that progress has allied itself with barbarism¹

As psychoanalysts we are not used to associating the significant "treatment" with the body, being more inclined to that of "cure" which, with the link to the *logos*, in fact ties the body to the symptom that acts as the navel of the speaking-being and of language.

In the etymology of treatment, which derives from *trahere*, we find a reference to the way of behaving with someone², to the way of treating and to the proposed practices. In our time, the dominant discourses prefer treatment to cure, where the body in question oscillates between biological-organicism and the robotic techniques of science that dehumanize the body. Of the languages that speak it, of the practices that treat it, of the ideas that invest it, of the senses that touch it, of the genetic engineering that duplicates it, the body is not only nothing immediate, but is even forgotten. Certainly the body of psychoanalysis is not the body that is the object of other discourses, because the body is not equivalent to the organism, it is not a constituted, natural datum, established once and for all, because between the subject and the body is the word.

With Lacan we know that the body is the Other and that it is a field in which the significant is inscribed until the formulation of the speaking body. It is only from these premises that we can think that with psychoanalysis the treatment of the body is an opportunity for the subject to try to counteract the drift of *jouissance*. Never like today we witness a body stunned by our time. In the midst of the mirages of practices, in the midst of the promises of the virtual and the social, in the midst of the continuous *imaginificent³* identifications and neo-identities of the postmodern, all of them diverse and non-symbolizable effects of capitalist discourse, the body is stunned. The subject is confused with his own body and, therefore, is lost. In the 1975 North American Universities Conference, Lacan will say: "Man could say that he is a body, and he would be very sensible, since it is evident that the fact that he consists of a body is what

¹ Freud, S. (1939). Moses and Monotheism. Completes Works.

² Pianigiani O. (1937). *Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana*, Milano, Sonzogno.

³ The author uses here a neologism made up of the words "images" and "magnificent". The original versión is *immaginifiche*.

is more sure"⁴, and in the Seminar on the *Sinthome*, also from 1975, he will maintain: "of course, the body does not evaporate, and in this sense it is consistent", that is, man can say that he is a body because it consists of a body; but what does the body consist of, and particularly in our time? The body is a substance that does not evaporate, and this is the condition of its consistency, says Lacan, and this is a nodal point for psychoanalysis. Therefore, starting from this inescapable consistency, the articulation of S1 with S2 completes multiple turns, tying and untying multiple meanings that, precisely from the body, take a direction, and we go from these: high-low, right-left, inside- outside, to these others: empty-full, soul-body, masculine-feminine. So, and this is what I'm trying to say here, the body is *étourdi-l'étourdite*⁵ by our time.

So, "what is said is forgotten behind what is said in what is heard"⁶, could it concern the treatment of the body? Certainly, in this new time of war it is a question first and foremost of the body and only if the saying passes into the saying, through the turns of the saying, what is meant by the speaking body is grasped. The saying is forgotten behind the saying and because of the turns of the saying, the body speaks without knowing it. Psychoanalysis is a commitment to the subject, leading him to inhabit his own exile as a condition of *dire* and of the body. On the other hand, the drive is reduced to a certain way of *dire*, hidden behind the saying, a saying that is marginal in relation to what is intended to be said. And so it is that the echo of the word in the body is the real and the drives are the echo in the body of the fact that there is a *dire*. Between *dire* and saying, we can grasp a polarity between extension and something that remains extimate. The scope of psychoanalysis –and we have proof of this in our clinic– always rests on this inside-outside, internal-external polarity, a beyond that is otherness that we can define: *extime*. This neologism that Lacan used for the first time in Seminar XVI: "[...] The term *extime*, conjugating the intimate with the radical exteriority [...] to the extent that the object *a* is *extime*"⁷. It is precisely about "an intimate heterogeneity" -as Colette Soler affirms-: the body and the Other are each internal and external, this internal strangeness is what emerges explicitly, not veiled, in clinical listening. Even saying runs the risk of becoming extinct in relation to the sayings that circulate in our time. There is

⁴ Lacan J. (1975).

⁵ Word game for which we cannot find a translation that generates the same effect as *étourdi-l'étourdite* (French), *aturdido-aturdicho* (Spanish) or the original written by the author in *aturdetto* (Italian).

⁶ Lacan J. (1972/2012). *L'Étourdit. Others writings*. English translation by Jack W. Stone et al.

⁷ Lacan J. (1968-1969/2016). *The Seminars. Book XVI: From and Other to the other*.

a passage from Freud relevant to these questions. We find it in "Results, Ideas, Problems": «The psyche is *extensa* and knows nothing about it». We find this quote in one of the notes that have been collected in the last volume of Freud's writings. They date from the summer of 1938, a year before Freud's death, and constitute his definitive legacy –Freud entrusted nothing else to writing. To affirm that the "psyche is *extensa*" is to close - as Nancy reminds in *Corpus*⁸ - the ancient reference of the question of meaning and experience to the dimension of the psychic, of the subjective, of the interior that looks at the exterior, of the enigma to mystery; but the psyche knows nothing about this because the unconscious is the unknown of the subject.

There is another place that the speaking body indicates to us, and it indicates it to us above all from the logic of sexuation and the choice of the subject, which concerns him both with respect to the body and jouissance, to the formula of the body as "jouissance substance."⁹ In this sense, if Freud did not hesitate to take up and personalize the phrase attributed to Napoleon "anatomy is destiny", for Lacan the guarantee of sexual identity does not come from the Other but from the act. "There is no sexual act that has weight to affirm in the subject the certainty of belonging to a sex"¹⁰ and returns to the etymological sense of anatomy, which is the function of the cut. "Everything we know of anatomy is in fact related to dissection. Destiny, that is, man's relation to that function called desire, assumes all its animation only to the extent that the fragmentation of his own body is conceivable, that cut that is the site of the chosen moments of its performance."¹¹ What is valid for the subject is an unconscious choice linked to a singular saying that does not depend on anatomy and is decisive. The Lacanian perspective shows us that sexual identity does not consist in believing oneself to be a man or a woman, but to take into account the Other, since the man and the woman as signifiers are only worth one in relation to the other.

These considerations find confirmation when listening to a transsexual patient who found himself having to conjugate his masculine voice when he came to the session with masculine or mostly unisex clothes, alternating with a voice perfectly configured as feminine when he came with feminine clothes. Often, in the first phase of the

⁸ Nancy J.L. (1992/2003). *Corpus*. Madrid: Arena.

⁹ Lacan J. (1972-1973/1989). *The Seminars. Book XX: Encore*.

¹⁰ Lacan J. (1967). La logica della fantasia. *Recensione seminario*.

¹¹ Lacan J. (1962-1963/2018). *Il seminario. L'angoscia*.

analysis, she returned to her favorite video game *Path of Exil*, literally the way to exile. And so, in his condition of exile, the transsexual lives far from the body he desires, perhaps aspiring to another jouissance, just as the exile aspires to a return to his homeland. There is a trace - as Lacan affirms - of an exile from the sexual relationship: each one finds in the Other "the trace of his own exile"¹². Exile from the body of another, even more than in another body. In the transsexuality clinic, it seems to me that the recurrent expression "the dress makes the monk" applies more than in other clinics, which aims to make up for the lack of support of the body with the dress, veiling the truth (of the body and the) that strives to reveal itself. "Enjoying a body when the dress is no longer there leaves intact the question of what makes the One, which is that of identification"¹³. The small object a comes to cover the hole of the subject, but even more, the a is writing: it writes that cavity of the subject, that void bordered by the signifying chain that constitutes the singular real of the subject.

Hence a series of questions for our Rendez-vous¹⁴: what remains of the body in the turns of the saying? What does the analytical treatment of the body consist of in our time? What happens to the body in the face of the barbarities of our time? Is there any chance of waking up from the daze of our time?

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¹² Lacan J. (1975). *Il Seminario. Libro XX. Ancora (1972-1973)*. Torino: Einaudi, pág. 139, 2011.

¹³ Ibid. p. 7

¹⁴ Obviously the author refers to the Meeting and the Appointment of the IF-EPFCL Buenos Aires 2022.