The remainder of the parlêtre is the body it has – Lecture on Seminar XXIII

Class Five – Eric Laurent

Marcelo Veras

In the fifth class, Eric Laurent commences by reminding us of some points of the previous lecture. Initially, he begins with the stepladder (escabeau) as a sinthome, that is, the padding of the speaking being (parlêtre), later separating the two through the register of jouissance that is proper to each. Thus, as the stepladder is the speaking being in its phase of jouissance of speech, the sinthome is the jouissance that excludes meaning. Speaking with the body-stepladder is to pass through the defiles of words, maintaining them in the dimension of meaning. Meaning, in this case, is defined in the last teachings of Lacan as jouissance of speech. And speaking with the body-stepladder is speaking with a jouissance that is experienced in the body.
Laurent then dedicates all of his fifth lecture to the analysis of the last lesson of Seminar XXIII, The Writing of the Ego. His commentary highlights the way Lacan in that chapter defines the body as a product of an operation that results from the impact of speech. To go back to Miller's presentation of the 10th WAP Congress, the body or the being that is referred to, did not precede the word, on the contrary, the word gives the being to the animal as an effect *après coup*. Indeed, it is a time in which there is no “I” before the mirror phase.

Laurent stops at the end of Lacan’s 10th lesson to analyze the distinction between the unconscious subject and the body as mobile for man. The body that dances (that is why it is mobile) and that is a condensation - or a “con-dance-ation” - as opposed to a displacement.

Laurent analyzes the relationship between the real and the knot, which brings him to the point of distinguishing between the real and the world. Lacan supportsthis with the fact that Freud describes a phase in primary narcissism that is characterized precisely by the abolition of the relationship between interior and exterior[1].

Another fundamental point of that lesson is that it takes writing not as a transcript, but rather as the writing of an equivocation of the knot, of a lack. It is because of that lack that the unconscious and the real are linked. In the case of Joyce, he speaks in his own way with his body, because for him the unconscious is real.

Laurent comments that the writing defines a particular regime in the last lesson. It treats the disjunction between writing and representation. This could be a support for thought but cannot be confused with it. What is written is what is not thought. We cannot represent what we are going to write, we write first and think immediately after.

That which supports thought is defined as a novel form of writing, a precedent mode of writing. That changes completely the sense of what is written, giving it autonomy. For Lacan writing is not an impression, although it writes something, the most important thing is that it surrounds a hole, an emptiness. He also says that writing is not an instrument, a tool, at the service of the transcription of speech. Writing always goes to the side. The most important point is that writing brings out what is not said, what is between the lines. What is between the lines is the first mode in which writing defines the hole.

Writing from three consistencies, the RSI knot, permits Lacan to go a step further in the 23rd Seminar. Even though he still keeps the signifier theory, he separates in writing what modulates in the voice – the phonetic word – and what is written affixed to the signifier, hence, the importance of writing as the support of four thoughts. The thoughts are on the side of representation, of the
image, while writing denotes that which does not have representation, but is tied with the signifier.

In this first moment, it is necessary that writing be radically separated from the perspective of transcription, in order to attach all the signifiers we wish, like all the clothes we hang on a rack. When writing is separated from the dimension of the signifier and from discourse, it begins to take on a life of its own (autonomous). It separates from what would be the truth; it ceases to serve as writing the truth. The new writing is on the side of the letter and of jouissance, to which all the signifier circuits in their fundamental contingency will be attached.

Writing the knot is what Lacan calls the metaphorization. Joyce metaphorizes his relationship with the body. The paradox is that the metaphor from the signifier side makes a plus of meaning, yet here emerges a new object, but from a loss, the product of a loss. Lacan highlights that in Joyce there was no knowledge of what occurs in the body prior to this metaphorization of the body. Knowledge is not of the body but rather from of the unconscious. The body is the place of the trauma and not knowledge; only the hysterical subject has a body made of evidence, giving meaning to the unconscious.

**Translated by Alejandro Betancur-Velez**