

Joyce the Symptom II¹

Jacques Lacan

Joyce the Symptom, to be heard like Jesus the Quail:² it's his name. Could you expect anything else from 'inmee: I name. That naming should make a young man³ is a consequence from which I don't want to shrink except in one way. Namely, that we're al'men.⁴

D'MAN [LOM]:⁵ in French, that says pretty well what that means. It suffices to write it phonetically: that fauneticizes him (faun . . .), in his own way: the o-beau-scene. Write that with *beau* . . . to recall that the beau-tiful is nothing but. He-thinks-he's-beau [*Hissecroibeau*] is to be written he's-nothing-but-beau [*hessecabeau*], without which he who hee-haw-s'nt da name o'da man would really be some-thing! D'MAN is manized by what betters better. We tell him that he must get sappy: for without being sappy, there's no he's-nothing-but-beau.

D'MAN. Basic MAN. D'MAN has-a-body and haz'only-one. It has to be said like this: he has'un . . . and not: he iz'un . . . (know/est).⁶ It's the having and not the being that characterizes him. There's a have-owal in the "What do you have?" about which he fictionally wonders about always having the answer. "I have it," that's his only being. Putting being before

¹ This "Joyce the Symptom" is the written version of the talk that Lacan gave at the fifth International Joyce Symposium in Paris on 16 June 1975 at the invitation of Jacques Aubert. The oral version is sometimes referred to as "Joyce the Symptom I" and the written version as "Joyce the Symptom II." The text translated here is from *Autres Écrits*, where it's simply called "Joyce the Symptom."

² A reference to François Carco's 1914 novel, *Jésus-la-Caille*.

³ A reference to Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

⁴ *Nous sommes z'hommes*.

⁵ Lacan's LOM is an orthographic condensation of *l'homme*. For this coinage, I've used the English colloquial, *d'MAN*, as in "You d'MAN." The connotations of pride and identification should probably be kept, but not the authoritarian connotations that attach to "the man."

⁶ Lacan's French text has here "(cor/niché)," which is obscure and admits of many possible readings. *Cor* is "horn." The verb *nicher* is literally "to nest" or figuratively "to hang out." *Corniche* is "ledge" or "cornice." I'm assuming a pun on *connaissez*.

having is what makes the eff-ing mess called epistemic when it sets about jostling the world, such that the truth is that d'MAN *has*, in principle. Why? It is felt, and once felt, it's proved.

He has (even his body) because he belongs all at once to three . . . call them, orders. Witness the fact that he yammers to busy himself with the sphere out of which he makes his soapbox.⁷

I say that in order to make one out of it, and precisely to make the sphere fall from it, which was until now unshakable on the supreme throne of its soapbox. That's why I demonstrate that the soap-beau-x [*S.K.beau*] comes first, because it presides over the production of the sphere.

In man, the soap-beau-x is what determines the fact that he lives by being (= that he loses by being) to the extent that he has—his body: moreover, he doesn't have one except starting from that. Thus my expression *speaking-being*, which will substitute for Freud's Ucs. (read: unconscious): so then move on to where I insert myself into it. Which is to say that the unconscious in Freud, when he discovered it (it was discovered in one stroke, but still the invention had to be inventoried after), was a knowledge as spoken knowledge that constituted d'MAN. Speech being defined as being the only place where being could have meaning. The meaning of being to preside over having, which explains the epistemic babbling.

What's important is from which point—it's called "of view" (shouldn't that be discussed?) which thus suggests without specifying from where, that an account is going to be given that d'MAN has a body—and that the expression remains correct—even though from that d'MAN deduced that he *was* a soul, which, of course, in "view" of his short-sightedness, he translated from this that he *had* a soul too.

To have is to be able to do something with. For one, among other unseen things called

⁷ Tom Svolos has suggested the translation "soapbox" for *escabeau*. What's being invoked is the sense of "getting up on one's soapbox."

possible “to be able to” always being suspended. The sole definition of possible being that it has *not* “taken place”: which we take in the opposite sense, given the general reversal of what we call thought.

Aristotle, a Peacock as opposed to the B name that rhymes with it,⁸ wrote that man thinks with his soul. By which is proved that d'MAN has one, and also, what Aristotle translates as *voũç*. I content myself with saying: knot, without any further ado.⁹ Knotting of what to what I don't say, from lack of knowing, but I do exploit as a trinity that da'MAN isn't able to stop writing it since he became so ugly. Without the preference of Victor Cousin for triplicity added to it: but headed for it, if he wants, since sense is triple; common sense, I mean.

It's in order not to lose it, this bond to meaning, that I stated just now that it's necessary to maintain that man has a body, being that he speaks with his body, in other words, that he speaks-being [*parlêtre*] naturally. Thus having emerged as art-headed, he is denatured at the same time, in exchange for what he takes as a goal, the goal of art being the natural, such as he naively imagines it. Unfortunately, that's the heart of what's natural: hardly surprising that it barely touches it except through the symptom. In his art, Joyce the Symptom pushes things to the point that one wonders if he isn't a Saint, a *saint homme*, with no more pt'ing.¹⁰ Thank God, because it's to him that we owe it, given the good will that we attribute to him (from which one can tell in one's heart that he doesn't ex-ist) Joyce isn't a saint. He en-joyce himself too much from his soapbox for that, he gets art-gulous¹¹ from his art, to the point of excess.

⁸ The French word for peacock is *paon*. Lacan makes this *Pacon* to rhyme with Bacon, that is, Sir Francis. Another possible meaning for *Pacon* is *pas con*, “not an idiot.”

⁹ The French word for knot, *noeud*, is a rough homophone for the Greek *nous*, “mind.”

¹⁰ *Saint homme*, “holy man,” sounds like Lacan's term *sinthome*, that is *symptom*, without the *pt*.

¹¹ *Orgueil* is the French word for pride. Lacan makes a pun of it by spelling it *art-gueil*. The English word *orgulous*, of the same etymology, is much rarer, but allows for the same pun.

Actually, there is no Saint-as-such, there's only the desire for putting the finishing touches on what we call the way, the canonical way. From which one occasionally ptoms¹² in the canonization of the Church, those who get to the end of it by which it is recanognized [*reconique*], or those, in all other cases, who f . . . a thumb up their eye. For there is no canonical way to holiness, despite the will of Saints, no way that specifies them, that makes Saints a species. There's only soapboxstration, but the castration of the soapbox isn't completed without the escape.¹³ There's no Saint but not wanting to be one, no holiness but in renouncing it.

This is what Joyce maintains strictly through art-headedness: for it's by art that he brings out the head in this Bloom who is alienated in order to play his pranks as the Flower, as Henry (as Henry on the spot, as Henry the ladies' man).¹⁴ For in fact there were only these ladies to laugh at them, that proves well enough that Bloom was a saint. That a saint laughs about things, that says it all. Bloom will enbloom [*enbloomera*] after his death though he won't laugh from the grave. Since that's his destination, he finds with shitterness [*amèredante*], that knowing it, he can do nothing about it.

Joyce himself would have none of it, except the magisterial soapbox of saying, and that sufficed to make of him not just a simple saint, but a ptypical symptom [*symptôme ptypé*].

If he Henrydriculed the Bloom of his fantasy [*fantasie*],¹⁵ it was to show that what he gained in the end by having so much to do with the publicity shovel wasn't worth very much. By doing such good business with his own body, he showed that "d'MAN has a body" doesn't mean anything, unless you can get others to pay the price for it.

¹² Lacan's word *ptôme* duplicates the ending of the word *symptôme*, but perhaps recalls the verb *tomer*, "to divide into volumes."

¹³ *Escabeau* and *escapade* are, of course, much closer in French.

¹⁴ In the "Lotus Eaters" chapter of *Ulysses*, Bloom receives a letter from Martha Clifford addressed to him as Henry Flower, the name he uses to communicate secretly with women.

¹⁵ Spelled this way, *fantasie* means "whim" or "caprice."

The path laid out by the mendicant friars: they recover from it by the public charity that has to pay for their upkeep. Nothing of it remaining except that d'MAN have his body, to be taken up among other cares. The hopeless attempt that society makes for d'MAN not to have a body is surely another slope: committed to failure, certainly, to make manifest that if he has'un, he won't have any other of them in spite of the fact that by his speaking-being, he uses another one, but without being able to make it his.

Which he wouldn't dream of, I suppose, if the body that he had really were the body that he was. That only implies a farcical theory that could never get the reality of the body into the idea that it creates of it. We recognize the Aristotelian refrain. What experience, put to death in the imaginary, has been able to create an obstacle for him to what he Platonized, that is, challenge death like everyone by maintaining the idea that it was sufficient that the body would reproduce itself. "Met him pike hoses," asks Molly Bloom,¹⁶ for whom it was all the less brought to bear that she hadn't said it to herself. Like a heap of things that we believe without adhering to them: soapboxes form the reserve from which each of us draws.

If there has ever been a man who dreamed of making the rounds of this reserve and giving the soapbox its general formula it's the one I call Joyce the Symptom. He couldn't be said to have the slightest suspicion of this formula. The formula's already dragged everywhere under the form of the UCS that I pinned to the speakingbeing.

Predestined by his name, Joyce left a no less consonant place to Freud. It required the passion of Ellmann to cross out Freud: *pace tua*,¹⁷ I'm not going to tell you the page, for time presses upon me [*me pressantifie*]. The function of haste is obvious in Joyce. What he doesn't

¹⁶ In the "Lestrygonians" chapter of *Ulysses*, Molly Bloom confuses the word "metempsychosis" with the phrase, "met him pike hoses." What Lacan actually writes here is the phrase from the French translation of Auguste Morel, "Mes tempes si choses."

¹⁷ Latin, "with your permission," or "by your leave."

see is the logic that determines it.

But he deserves all the more credit for making it compatible with being made only for his art, as a 'beau-jet d'art, like *Ulysses*, a jet d'art on the o-beau-scene¹⁸ of logic itself, which is to be read not as imitating the unconscious, but giving it a model by Father-timing it [*en temps-pèrant*], Phloom ballic, Sinbad the Phailor, which comes down to the symbad of the symptom through which¹⁹ in Stephen's Deedalus Joyce saw himself as the necessary son who didn't stop writing how he conceives (of) himself, without, however, the he-thinks-he's-beau [*hissecroibeau*], and about the hystorette of Hamlet—hystericized in his Saint-Dad the Cuckold, who was poisoned by ear'zeugma, and by his wife-symptom²⁰—without being able to do more than to kill in Claudius the escapetom in order to give way to the alternate who Fort-embraces his pa-ternity.²¹

Joyce refuses to accept anything that happens in what the history of historians is supposed to have as its object.

He's right—history being nothing more than a flight, about which only the exoduses are retold. By his exile, Joyce affirms the seriousness of his judgment. Only deportees participate in history: since man *has* a body, it's by the body that one *has* him. It's the reverse of *habeas*

¹⁸ In both of these puns, Lacan uses a near anagram of *beau*, *eaube*, as the first syllable of object and obscene. Lacan's pun "*jet d'art sur l'eaube scène*" may be meant to suggest *jet d'eau*, "fountain."

¹⁹ Reading *où* for the *ou* of the *Autres Écrits* text.

²⁰ *Oreille zeugma* may be meant to suggest *orgasme*, "orgasm." Zeugma is a figure of speech in which two phrases are "yoked" together by sharing a verb. One classic example is Tennyson's "He works his work, I mine." Lacan's own phrase, "poisoned by ear and by wife," is a kind of zeugma.

²¹ This paragraph includes many puns (presumably in imitation of Joyce), and Lacan's intentions aren't always clear. Some can be guessed at, such as a Phallic Bloom or a Sinbad the Phallus. "Stephen's Deedalus" seems to be a pun in English and doesn't need translation. The reflexive verb *se conçoit* may mean "understood himself" or "saw himself," but as in English, may include the suggestion of one's "conception." Claudius's *escaptôme* may refer to "escape" or the French noun *escapade*, but may also be a combination of *escabeau* and *symptôme*.

corpus.

Reread your history: this is all there is of truth in it. Those who think they're causing all the commotion are without a doubt those who are displaced in the exile that they planned, but being turned into a soapbox by it blinds them.

Joyce is the first to know how to soap-box away²² in order to have brought the soapbox to the degree of logical consistency in which he maintained it, art-gulously, as I just said.

Let the symptom be what it is: an event of the body, linked to this: *l'on l'a, l'on l'a de l'air, l'on l'aire, de l'on l'a* (one has it, one gets wind if it, one airs it out, by having it).²³ That gets sung on occasion, and Joyce never deprives himself of it.

So, those individuals that Aristotle takes for bodies could be nothing but symptoms themselves relative to other bodies. A woman, for example is a symptom for another body.

If this isn't the case, there still remains the symptom called hysterical, which is what we mean by this last. That is, it's paradoxically interested only in another symptom: so it ranks just before the last, and what's more, isn't the privilege of a woman, though one well understands the fate of d'MAN as a speaking-being, by which she is symptomized. It's from hysterics, hysteric symptoms of women (not all are like that of course, since it's from not being all (like that) that they're noted for being women by d'MAN, provided that one has one),²⁴ it's from hysteric symptoms of women that analysis was able to get a foothold in experience.

²² The French verb here is a coinage and a pun: *escaboter*. It makes a verb out of *escabeau*, but also plays on *escamoter* which can mean "to make disappear," "to fold away," or "to steal." The English here is meant to suggest "boxing away," as in "packing up."

²³ Lacan's French achieves a sign-song effect here.

²⁴ The French phrase here is *l'on l'a*, the same phrase used above to indicate that one has a body. Here it suggests that d'MAN has a woman, but we should probably avoid using a gendered pronoun for LOM, as if it unambiguously referred to *l'homme*—Lacan's pronoun is *on*. And since the pronoun *la* appears before a vowel, it is abbreviated *l'* and isn't gendered either.

Not without recognizing right away that everyman has a right to one.²⁵ Not only a right to, but superiority over, rendered evident by Socrates at a time when d'common MAN was not yet reduced, and for good reason, to cannon fodder, though already taken up by the sympto-MAN-tic deportation of the body. Socrates, the perfect hysteric, was fascinated by the symptom alone, grasped from the other in flight. This lead him to practice a kind of prefiguration of analysis. Had he demanded money for it, instead of breaking with those he delivered, then he would have been an analyst before the Freudian fact. What a genius!

The hysterical symptom, to sum up, is the symptom by which d'MAN is interested in the symptom of the other as such: which doesn't require body-to-body combat.²⁶ The case of Socrates confirms that in an exemplary way.

Forgive all this, which is only to put Joyce in his proper context.

Joyce holds himself up as a woman on occasion, but only to find fulfillment as a symptom. An well-oriented idea, though a failure in execution. I would say that it is a symptomatology. This would avoid having to call it by the name that corresponds to his wish, which he calls a *tour de farce* in *Finnegans Wake*, page 162 (and 509), where he states it strictly by the strong “farce of dustiny”²⁷ that he had from Verdi before hitting us with it.

That Joyce enjoyed writing *Finnegans Wake* can be felt. That he had it published leaves me perplexed since—I owe this to someone who mentioned to me—it leaves all literature in the

²⁵ *Tout homme* in French means “every person,” “every man.” Lacan transforms it, like LOM, into one word, *toutom*.

²⁶ The French phrase for *hand-to-hand combat* is simply *corp à corps*. The translation here is a compromise between the French and the English.

²⁷ The French phrase here is *l'astuce du destin*, which can mean “shrewdness or cleverness of fate,” but *astuce* also means “pun” or “trick.” Lacan’s “*tour de farce*” seems to be his allusion to “farce of dustiny,” which actually appears on page 162 of *Finnegans Wake*. Page 509 includes the lines, “he could lump all his lot through the half of her play, but he jest couldn’t laugh through the whole of her farce becorgse he warn’t billed that way.”

same mold. To wake it up is to signal that he wanted it all to end. He takes our breath away with the dream, which will affect us for a time. The time that we perceive is nothing but the function of haste in logic. A point that I've emphasized, probably from what remains of the Joyce whom I met at twenty years old, something to work into the toilet paper where the letters stand out, when one takes care to scribble for the corps-rection of the body, about which he said the last known day-signed²⁸ word, a meaning brought to light by the literary symptom finally brought to count-pletion [*concomption*]. There, the height of unintelligibility is henceforth the sopbox onto which the master climbs. I am enough of a master of language, the one called French, to ascend to climb onto it myself and to dazzle with testimony of the jouissance proper to the symptom. An opaque jouissance that excludes meaning.

We suspected this for a long time. To be post-Joycean is to know it. There is no awakening except by this jouissance, which is devalued by the fact that analysis, which resorts to meaning in order to figure it out [*résoudre*], has no other chance of achieving it than to become a dupe . . . a *du père*, as I've indicated.²⁹

The extraordinary thing is that Joyce achieved it not without Freud (though it wasn't enough just to have read him) but without recourse to the experience of analysis (which perhaps would have lured him to some dull end).

Draft translation by Dan Collins

²⁸ The French has *day-sens*. The "day" is borrowed from English. My guess is that it's a pun on the noun *design* or the verb *dessin*.

²⁹ An allusion to *les Noms-du-Père*, "the Names-of-the-Father." The title of Lacan's twenty-first seminar, *Les Non-dupes Errent*, is a pun on this earlier phrase. The seminar's title is roughly translated into English (without the pun) as *The Non-Dupes Wander* or *Those Who Think They Are Not Fooled Are in Error*.