

Postface to Seminar 11
Jacques Lacan

So, this book'll get read, I bet.

It won't be like my *Écrits*, which get bought, as they say, in order not to be read.

It shouldn't be taken as accidental that they're difficult. This is what I understood myself to expect from them by putting *Écrits* on the cover of the collection: an *écrit* in my sense is made not to be read.

The fact is that it's saying something else.

What?

Since this is where I'm at in my present statement, I'll take this case as an illustration, in my own sense.

So what you've just read, at least I assume you did insofar as I am postfacing it, is not an *écrit*.

A transcription—there's a word that I've discovered thanks to the modesty of JAM, that is, Jacques-Alain Miller. What gets read passes through writing—while remaining in writing—unscathed.

So I'm speaking of what gets read, since what I say is devoted to the unconscious, that which gets read above all else.

Do I have to insist? Naturally: since here I'm not writing. To do that, I would have to post-efface my seminar, not postface it.

I will insist, since I have to get it read.

But I still have to recognize the author of this work for having convinced me—by witnessing to it throughout its course—that what gets read of what I say isn't read the less than that I say it. The emphasis there being placed on the saying, for the *I* could still very well go running off.

In short, there could be some profit in making the analytic discourse consistent, insofar as I'm relying on getting re-read. Setting it at the time of my arrival at the École Normale being nothing other than a recognition of the end of my time in the wilderness.

One can hardly doubt, from the time that I put into it, that the outcome I call *publi-trashcan* (*poubelliciation*) displeases me. It's well worth marking out the incompatibility of it since since people have consigned what I say to *publivion* to the extent of turning it on the university lathe.

By situating the written as I do, the point is made such that one could even make a rule of it. That I went at it for a bit doesn't preclude that it was established well before my findings. It was Joyce who introduced it. I can put it even better: intraduced it, for making up words deals with the beyond of languages, for it can barely be translated, being equally little read everywhere.

Seeing who I speak to, I, however, I have to get out of their heads what they think that they got from their time in nursery school, doubtless called nursery (*maternalle*) because of what

one achieves there of dematernalization: namely that one learns to read by being “alphabetized.” As if a child, by knowing how to read from one picture that he says “giraffe” and from another that he says “gorilla,” didn’t just learn that the G that they’re both written with has nothing to do with reading since he doesn’t deal with it.

What we gain from this gradual cobbling together (*bricolage*) is what emerges from then on as *anorthography* that can only be judged as taking the function of the written as another mode of speaking the language, though it could go more quickly if we knew what was up with it.

It wouldn’t be such a bad thing if being read were understood appropriately in that situation where one has a duty to interpret. It’s speech—in which what gets said isn’t read—that the analyst still uses to leap past the moment to which he pushes himself, past the tipping point, insofar as he’s devoted entirely to listening until he can’t stand it anymore.

Intention defied is intention deferred. And defied, it is defended against, repressed, shirked. Any excuse will be good enough not to hear that the “why are you lying to tell me the truth?”—which comes from a joke that’s supposedly Jewish insofar as it’s the one who’s less stupid who speaks—indicates nothing less than the fact that that it’s not by being a reading book that the railway timetable is the mechanism by which Lemberg is read in place of Cracow—or at least what in any case settles the question is the ticket that the station issues.

The function of the written, though, doesn’t make the timetable, but rather the very path of the tracks. And the object (*a*) as I write it is itself the rail by which that which inhabits or even shelters the demand to interpret arrives at surplus-jouissance.

If from honeybees gathering nectar I read their part in the fertility of phanerogamous plants, if from a low-flying flock of swallows I predict the chance of a storm, then I speak precisely of what carries them to the signifier of this fact. I have to give an account of it.

Remember the impudence that was imputed to me on account of these *écrits* for having taken my bearings from the word. One Japanese woman was quite beside herself because of it, which astonished me.

It’s because I wasn’t aware—even though I was propelled, precisely by her concerns, to the place where her language was inhabited—that I was only testing the ground of this place. It’s only since then that I’ve come to understand what sensation gets from this writing that transmits it from the *on-yomi* to *kun-yomi* such that it is torn away from it by so many refractions, which the most insignificant newspaper or crossroads roadsign fulfills and supports. Nothing helps so much to reconstruct from the rays that shine from so many gates that which from their source comes to light of day through Amaterasu.

This is the point at which I told myself that by this means the speaking being could escape from the devices of the unconscious, which never reach him insofar as they are closed up thereby. A limit-case will corroborate me.

You don’t understand ’swriting [*stécriture*]. So much the better. It’ll give you a reason to explain it. And if it’s left in a lurch, you’ll get out of it with difficulty. See, whatever of it remains left to me, I survive it.

Still, the difficulty must be serious for it to count. But you could follow me in that: don’t forget that I gave this word its due in my seminar on anxiety, that being the year before the one that’s presented here. That’s to say that it’s not so easy to get rid of as it is to get rid of me.

Meanwhile, let this be for you the suitable ladder for what gets read here: I'm not making you climb it only to come back down again.

What strikes me when I reread what used to be my speech is the soundness that kept me from fucking up what has come to me since then.

Each time it seems to me to be full of risks, and and that's what tires me out. That JAM spared me this leads me to think that it will be nothing to you, but also really makes me believe that if I get out of it again, it's because I have more wridding on it than I thought (*c'est que d'écrit j'ai plus que je n'écrois*).

Remember what the text of Genesis impresses upon us, who have less wridding on it than they do in Japan: nothing gets created *ex nihilo* except the signifier. That's obvious since, in fact, it's not worth much.

The drawback is that existence depends on it, a fact to which only speaking (*dire*) can testify.

The idea that God is proved by it should have long ago been put back in its place. That this is the place that the Bible insists is not a myth but actual history has been noted, and that's how the gospel according to Marx can't be distinguished from the others.

What's awful is that the relation from which everything emerges, having to do with nothing but jouissance, and the prohibition that religion projects on it, taking part in the panic from which philosophy proceeds, a crowd of substances surges forth from it as substitutes for the only proper one, that of the impossible to speak of, being the real.

Couldn't this under-stanza have been rendered more accessible in a form in which the already-written of a poem makes the least-stupid statement (*dire*)?

Isn't it worth taking the trouble to construct this if it really is what I assume to be the promised land of the new discourse that is analysis?

Not that one could ever expect from it the relation that I'm referring to, namely that it's absence that gives the speaker access to the real

But you'll have to admit that the artifice of those channels by which jouissance comes to cause what gets read as the world is what makes that which gets read of it avoid the onto- (Dick and Jane take note), even the ontotautology.

And no less than here.

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Translated by Dan Collins