

DREAM, DEATH, DRIVE¹

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In their form as nightmares, dreams opened the field of the death drive in psychoanalysis. They were one of several clinical phenomena that compelled Freud to push his theory beyond the pleasure principle. One hundred years later, following Lacan, Miller, and testimonies of Analysts of the School, what can be said about the relation between these three terms: dream, death, drive?

In *Seminars VII to VIII*, Lacan charts two deaths and the space in between them. There is a *real* death that marks the end of the jouissance of life that animates the body. A second death, the death of the subject is an annihilation, an exile from the order of the semblant. Oriented by early Lacan, we can also recognize another death, the death of the thing that gives life to the speaking subject, the subject of the signifier. It is a necessary life-giving death part and parcel of the signifying operation itself that implies the very constitution of the subject. So we have death all over the place in psychoanalysis. Where could we situate dreams amidst these deaths?

For Freud, death was a master, death as the master signifier. It was named for him as *signorelli* through his parapraxis and the dream of the Other. Does the master's discourse taken at its limit insist upon death, and what about desire in that dialectic? Several testimonies of the pass have shown the way in which the subject can be enslaved to a master signifier, like "mother," which installs a jouissance regime of mortification along the axis of the drive. What kind of mortification is this, which death?

When we go to sleep and dream, we attempt to lay to rest the unbearable real that we encounter as jouissance with the intricate deceptions of the embroidery of the unconscious, the semblant stitched with the signifying weave of language. It never works totally, at least in the analytic discourse, because there is a real remainder, a real encounter, the navel of the dream. The real we tried to inter, wakes us up. Absolute awakening is death.² So we have two deaths: symbolic and real. The mortifying function

of the symbolic pacifies some of the jouissance of the thing. However, this one only continues to fuel the death drive regime of the master signifier. The real is still there in its ex-sistence, and so death is a real which ex-sists to the dream itself. If we lay to rest a deadly jouissance when we sleep, death dies a bit, and we find a way with the real of life, until the absolute awakening. The dream as a formation of semblant can be both a treatment and a cause of jouissance. At night we seek a little bit of mortification, to live, just enough to hide the ineluctable real of death. Jouissance is the price we pay. The royal road is useful for narrowly averting the collision course of death just enough to live, to keep the dreaming subject of the unconscious a-life. It's not so bad this little rehearsal of the encounter with the impossible of the real that we are lucky enough to call a bedfellow. In fact, the dream is our partner for contending with all the deaths of the life of the speaking being.

1. Cartel Title "Of, From and To the Dream".

2. Laurent, E. (2019). The réveil (awakening) from the rêve (dream) or th'esp of a rev. *Orientation Texts of the XII WAP Congress*. Available at: <https://www.congresoamp2020.com>