

THE SYMPTOM - MESSAGE AND BODY EVENT¹

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The mystery of the body and how language affects the body aroused both Freud's and Lacan's interest, but from different angles.

With psychoanalysis one can formulate that to have a body is not a given – the body is rather an effect of language, it has to be constructed in order for one to be able to have it.²

Freud's symptom concerns speaking the language of the father and is organized around the axis of the love for the father; the identification with the symptom presupposes a preceding symptom in the Other.³ The body of the hysteric therefore carries a hidden message that can be deciphered, "there is hysteria when there is a symptom of the symptom, when you form a symptom from 'someone else's symptom', that is to say, a symptom raised to the second power."⁴ Here, the symptom is a formation of the unconscious, an unconscious that is structured like a language.⁵

With Lacan, it is possible to add to this speaking symptom the symptom that writes itself in silence. Outside of meaning and prior to sense, he places the body event, as an event that cannot be deciphered.⁶ An event is always connected to a moment of surprise, something of *tyche*.

What role does the body play in this new definition of the symptom?

The precondition for *jouissance* to appear is a living body. It is a body as "surface of inscribing *jouissance*".⁷ It needs the act of speaking in order to touch something of the silence of the writing. The silence can thus only appear after there had been a previous act of speaking. Laurent writes, "to speak the *lalangue* of the body is, with Lacan, to try to find out how the symptom of the One-all-alone [*Un-tout-seul*] who does not speak could reach the status of a symptom addressed to the Other, to the Two."⁸ With that definition we have a bridge from Freud's speaking symptom to the silent symptom of the late Lacan. Laurent writes, "the hysteric symptom speaks, because it goes through the Other, through speaking, although it is based on the writing of one trait."⁹

If we read Freud with Lacan, we may consider that there is in every symptom a part that is speaking to the Other and another part, which is silent. A body that is enjoying and at the same time a body that is enjoying of itself [*se jouit*].¹⁰

1. Product cartel work towards the Study Day *Bodily Effects and Hysteria*, Vienna.

2. Laurent, É. (2016). *L'envers de la biopolitique*. Paris: Le champ freudien, Navarin.

3. Laurent, É. (2016). *L'envers de la biopolitique*. Paris: Le champ freudien, Navarin. p. 43.

4. Miller, J.-A. (2016). «The Unconscious and the Speaking Body». *Presentation of the theme for the Xth WAP Congress*. Available at: <http://ampblog2006.blogspot.com/2014/07/jacques-alain-miller-unconscious-and.html>.

5. Lacan J., (1973)/ *Le séminaire, livre XI, les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*. Paris, Seuil, p. 23.

6. Stevens, A. (2020). *The Bodily Effects of Language. Argument for the NLS-Congress 2021*. Available at: <https://amp-nls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Alexandre-Stevens-Argument-NLS-Congress.pdf>

7. Laurent, É. (2016). *L'envers de la biopolitique*, Paris: Le champ freudien, Navarin, p. 16.

8. Laurent, É., *L'envers de la biopolitique*, Paris: Le champ freudien, Navarin p. 46.

9. Laurent, É. (2016). *L'envers de la biopolitique*. Paris: Le champ freudien, Navarin, p. 45.

10. Lacan, J. (1975). *Encore, le séminaire, livre XX*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, p. 26.