

## Anxiety Between Desire and Jouissance

### Anxiety: A Central Concept

The theme of this year's NLS Congress is "Malaise and Anxiety in the Clinic and in Civilization." It is a theme that includes various aspects and interpretations. I have decided to address just one aspect of this theme, which concerns anxiety in its very structure. For this, it will be indispensable to dissociate anxiety from malaise and to treat it as an affect that is **necessary** for the constitution of the subject. So today, I won't be talking about the rise of the object  $\alpha$  and the consequences of discomfort that provokes in civilization, but of anxiety as an irreducible element of the human experience.

In *Seminar XVII*, Lacan gives anxiety an essential place. He considers anxiety to be a fundamental affect and he argues that it is "the central affect, the one around which everything is organized."<sup>1</sup> I draw your attention to this quotation because, it seems to me, to say that **everything** revolves around anxiety has enormous clinical as well as theoretical consequences. Anxiety in this sense is not only a central affect, but also a central concept of the Lacanian orientation.

Lacan dedicates a year of his seminar to the study of anxiety. *Seminar X* is the seminar that creates a 'before' and an 'after' in his teaching. After this seminar he turned decisively towards the foundations of psychoanalysis and the real. Then he introduces the pluralisation of the Name-of-the-Father with the consequences that we all know: his excommunication from the IPA and the foundation of his School.

At the end of *Seminar X*, he states: "If everything happens next year in a way that will allow me to pursue my Seminar in accordance with the path foreseen, I'll be making you an appointment with not only the Name, but the Names-of-the-Father." He adds, "And this is not for nothing."<sup>2</sup> He then introduces a version of the father not only as a normaliser of desire but also as a subject whose desire refers to an object  $\alpha$ .

In *Seminar X* we observe an important turning point. Castration anxiety is disassociated from its Oedipal references so that it can be linked to the body. In his introductory reading of the seminar on anxiety, Jacques-Alain Miller maintains that from this moment onwards castration no longer refers to the Oedipus but to the disappearance of the phallic organ during orgasm.<sup>3</sup>

"Anxiety is to be placed elsewhere than in the threat of ... castration," says Lacan on page 167 (196f) of the seminar. He then recalls that Freud's first intuition was to locate a

---

<sup>1</sup> Lacan, J, *Seminar XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (1969-70), text established by J.-A. Miller, trans. R. Grigg, London/New York Norton, 2007, p. 144 (168f).

<sup>2</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X, Anxiety*, text established by J.-A. Miller, trans A.R. Price, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2014, p. 337 (389f).

<sup>3</sup> Miller, J.-A., "Introduction to Reading Jacques Lacan's Seminar on Anxiety" (2004), trans. B. Fulks, Lacanian Ink 26, 2006. p. (92f).

certain source of anxiety in coitus interruptus. Anxiety is provoked when the instrument is put out of play in jouissance. And it is a fall that exists as well when the orgasm is accomplished normally.

Lacan states: "Detumescence in copulation deserves to hold our attention as a way of highlighting one of the dimensions of castration. The fact that the phallus is more significant in human experience through its possibility of being a fallen object than through its presence is what distinguishes the possibility of the place of castration in the history of desire."<sup>4</sup>

Lacan makes the detumescence of the organ the principle of castration anxiety. Miller explains that if we take the principle term seriously, the Oedipal dramaturgy is erased. That is, the principle of castration anxiety is not inscribed in the Oedipus, it is not at the level of any agent of castration, any threatening Other.<sup>5</sup>

It is then important to know that when Lacan speaks of anxiety, he decisively loses, it seems to me, his Freudian identity. Lacan until the end of his life he stated that he was Freudian. And he was in the sense that he focused psychoanalysis on Freud's greatest invention, the unconscious, unlike the post-Freudians who focused psychoanalysis on the Ego. I say that he loses his Freudian identity in the sense that he distances himself from Freudian myths and especially from Freud's love for the father. Anxiety allows Lacan to make a passage from truth to the real and thus to reorient psychoanalysis. It is a passage from the symbolic to the real. And we should not forget that truth puts us to sleep, so does the signifier, whereas anxiety and the real have a waking effect.

## Anxiety as Function

Anxiety is not then an affect like the others, it is the affect par excellence. If the other affects deceive, anxiety is the one that does not deceive. We can then ask ourselves the question, what is it that deceives? The symbolic only tells lies when it speaks, while the imaginary is always wrong, says Lacan.<sup>6</sup> Everything that is of the order of the imaginary is deceptive, whereas the symbolic reveals itself in its dimension of fiction and lying truth. In the symbolic we can only find myths. Anxiety does not lie in the sense that it constitutes a way of accessing what is prior to the object of desire. And Miller tells us that what is prior to the object of desire is the object as real. "As every real is inaccessible, it is signalled by what does not deceive: anxiety,"<sup>7</sup> Lacan states.

Lacanian anxiety is a way of accessing the real, a way of accessing what cannot be resolved by the signifier. In this sense, it is far from being a disorder. Lacan asks on page 38

---

<sup>4</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X*, *op. cit.*, p.168 (197f).

<sup>5</sup> Miller, J.-A., "Introduction ...", *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Lacan, J., *L'insu que sait de l'Une-bévue s'aile à mourre*, séminaire (1976-1977), unpublished, lesson of 15 February 1977.

<sup>7</sup> Lacan, J., "Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father" (1963), *On the Names-of-the-Father*, text established by J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, Cambridge, Polity, 2013, p. 80 (92f).

(49f) of *Seminar X*, “Why do we want to preserve the dimension of anxiety so much? There must be a reason for this.” It is almost a paradox to want to preserve anxiety.

So I’m going to approach anxiety not as a disorder to be eradicated, but as a function. And, we know well, the notion of function is always essential for psychoanalysis. Everything that has a function is to be preserved. In a world where everybody is traumatized, Lacan says everyone must find a solution, must find a way to do with what is not symbolized. So, what is the function of anxiety? It is to this question that I will try to respond today.

In his argument, Daniel Roy states: “It is through anxiety that, for a subject, his malaise in civilization—his groups: human, family, work etc—can be read by him as a symptom in his singularity.” So, a first track is the relationship of anxiety to the symptom. The second concerns the place of anxiety in the subject’s psychic reality. Daniel Roy argues that in anxiety the subject is affected not only “by the desire of the Other”, but also “by the direct transformation of the libido,” where the signifier fails to inscribe it.

I will begin with this second track which is the place of anxiety between desire and jouissance. Desire and jouissance are two different structures. Desire includes the Other, jouissance is autistic, without Other. The first is rather located in the symbolic, the second in the real. On the one hand, we have anxiety as a sign of the desire of the Other and on the other hand, anxiety as a signal of the real.

In *Seminar X*, Lacan situates anxiety between desire and jouissance. I quote: “Anxiety is ~~thus~~ an intermediary term between jouissance and desire, insofar as **desire is constituted and founded upon the anxiety phase**, once anxiety has been got through.”<sup>8</sup> Anxiety precedes desire, it is logically anterior, it appears before desire. It is even essential for the appearance of desire.

Anxiety constitutes a logically necessary moment for the constitution of the subject. So, **without anxiety, no subject**. This is enormous. You are perhaps beginning to understand why anxiety is a central affect, around which everything revolves. As early as *Seminar I*, Lacan had stated that anxiety constitutes “a subjective colouration.”<sup>9</sup> I will come back to this. When anxiety emerges, something subjective also emerges. And this gives anxiety a great clinical value.

“When the subject is anxious, little object  $\alpha$  falls away,”<sup>10</sup> says Lacan in the only session of the seminar *The-Names-of-the-Father*. The *object little  $\alpha$*  as support of desire cannot be situated in the field of the Other without anxiety. **If there is no anxiety, there is no production of the object  $\alpha$** . Anxiety produces the object little  $\alpha$ . And it produces it as lost object that causes desire. On page 175 (204f) of *Seminar X* we read: “This is so definite that the anxiety phase will not be absent from the constitution of desire, even if this phase is elided and cannot be concretely ascertained.” Lacan will elaborate the constitution of desire in *Seminar XI*. I will try to comment on the two times of its constitution in order to grasp the importance of anxiety.

## Alienation and Separation

---

<sup>8</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X*, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>9</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar I*, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Lacan, J., “Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father” (1963) text established by J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, in *On the Names-of-the-Father*, Cambridge, Polity, 2013, p. 65 (71f).

In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan's starting point is that the subject is secondary to the signifier, "the subject constitutes himself out of the effects of the signifier."<sup>11</sup> He tries to account for the constitution of the subject through two mechanisms, alienation and separation. These are the mechanisms of the causation of the subject.

Before its reunion with the Other, the subject is nothing, an empty set. He or she is nothing, if not a subject to come. The signifier is situated in the field of the Other. The subject springs from his reunion with the field of the Other. When the Other and the subject intersect we have on the one hand 'being' and on the other hand 'meaning'. This is the operation of alienation, that is, the inscription of the subject in the Other. In the scheme of alienation, the subject has the choice between being and meaning. He has therefore the choice between remaining petrified under this  $S_1$  or going towards meaning.

If the subject chooses meaning, he alienates himself in the Other since, in order to try to make sense of his questions, he will draw an  $S_2$  from the Other's treasury of signifiers. This  $S_2$  will cling to the initial  $S_1$  and consequently the subject will fade away under the new signification produced by the  $S_1$ - $S_2$  articulation.

Alienation does not consist in the fact that the subject sees him or herself emerging initially in the field of the Other, Lacan explains. It is this *vel* which makes the subject appear only in his or her division: on the one side the subject appears as meaning, on the other as *aphanisis*. The subject appears in the field of the Other insofar as the  $S_1$  represents him or her for another signifier, the  $S_2$ , which has the effect of *aphanisis* for the subject. This is the subject's division: somewhere he or she appears as meaning, elsewhere as *fading*. The *aphanisis* of the subject is an indispensable condition for the institution of the dialectic of the subject. Without *aphanisis*, there is no subject.

By choosing meaning, the subject loses his  $S_1$ , which falls out of meaning, he loses the master signifier that determines him. Whatever the subject does, the result is always a dehorning. As soon as we speak, we support meaning against being. In the dilemma of "your money or your life," if the subject chooses money, he loses both life and money: he dies. If he chooses life, he has life without money: i.e. a dehorned life.

By choosing to receive an  $S_2$ , the subject will give a meaning to his being but he will have lost the  $S_1$  which will no longer be available to him. It will be repressed. This second signifier gives meaning to the subject's being but at the same time makes him or her disappear. The subject will then be represented between two signifiers. He or she can only exist in the interval between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ .

Separation consists in separation from the binary signifier, the  $S_2$ . "What the subject has to free himself from is the aphanistic effect of the binary signifier and, if we look at it more closely, we shall see that in fact it is a question of nothing else in the function of freedom,"<sup>12</sup> says Lacan. In other words, a subject must first alienate himself in the Other, lose his freedom in a way, so that he can then separate himself. If the subject does not consent to the alienation and chooses to be a free subject, he will be petrified under the  $S_1$ .

---

<sup>11</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar XI*, p. 126. (116f)

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. p. 219 (200f).

If alienation concerns the signifier, separation has to do with jouissance. Lacan, via alienation and separation, articulates the subject in relation to the signifier and the object  $\alpha$ . Alienation translates the inscription of the subject in the place of the Other, while separation concerns the separation of the subject from the signifying chain  $S_1$ - $S_2$ . Separating from the discourse of the Other, the subject will have the possibility of encountering the singularity of his or her position, that is, his or her existence beyond his or her inscription in the Other.

## Anxiety and Repression

The idea that anxiety is constitutive of the subject, distances us from any psychological conception of anxiety. In *Seminar X*, anxiety is not a disorder –it is not a question of treating it, but of giving it its place. We need only go back to Freud and what he says in “Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety”: Anxiety is the motor of repression. What induces repression is castration anxiety. We repress because something provokes us anxiety. And Lacan, Miller tells us, translates the motor of repression as the cause of desire. Desire is always repressed desire, it is a desire that does not know the object that causes it.<sup>13</sup>

Éric Laurent specifies that if anxiety does not deceive, it is because it asks the right question, that of desire. Anxiety arises when we do not know what the Other wants from us. Anxiety is the presence of the desire of the Other. “It is in this sense that anxiety is not without an object, says Laurent. The presence of the Other as such is at stake.”<sup>14</sup>

In Freud’s first theory of anxiety, it is repression that creates anxiety. But later on, Freud will argue the opposite. It is anxiety that causes repression. We repress what makes us anxious. And the symptom is the subject’s defence against anxiety. Lacan also attributes to the fantasy this same function of defence against anxiety. The fantasy is a defence against anxiety, the fantasy covers anxiety, Lacan tells us on pages 49-50 (p. 62f) of *Seminar X*. To this, I will add what he brings later in this same seminar, namely that the defence is not against anxiety, but against that which anxiety is signalling.<sup>15</sup> We have heard about the fantasy as a defence against the real in certain testimonies of the Analysts of the School. The function of the fantasy is to veil the real. It constitutes a screen to the real and at the same time it’s a window to the real in the sense that fantasy points something of the real.

If any encounter with the real is traumatic, the subject’s response depends on the clinical structure in which he is inscribed. In this sense, neurosis and psychosis are simply two different responses to the danger signalled by anxiety. Neurosis and psychosis are simply defences against the real. In this sense, what must be the fate of anxiety? If it is not a question of eradicating it, is it a question of significantising it, of symptomatising it, or of leaving it as a nomination of the real that protects the subject from imminent danger?

We are faced here with two perspectives. The first aims at tempering anxiety by means of the symptom. In this case, the signal tries to become a message that addresses the Other, and the real is blocked through a signifying articulation. In the second perspective, anxiety is a compass that points to the real and signals to the subject what to avoid.

---

<sup>13</sup> Miller, J.-A., “Introduction...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Laurent, É., “Désangoisser,” *Mental* no 13, 12/2003, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X*, p. 138 (163f).

## Anxiety and Lack

I suppose you have already heard that anxiety arises not when the object is missing but when it appears. According to Lacan, anxiety arises when the lack is missing, that is, when the object  $\alpha$  arises in place of the  $-\phi$ . "The object falls away from the subject in his relation to desire,"<sup>16</sup> says Lacan. On the one hand, it can be argued that there is anxiety where desire fails, and on the other, that anxiety arises when something of the order of the real appears in the field of the subject. You should always keep in mind that lack is indispensable for the appearance of desire. If there is no lack, there is no desire.

Anxiety is linked to everything that can appear in the place of the  $-\phi$ . What provokes anxiety then appears in the place where the object  $\alpha$  is normally subtracted. "The  $\alpha$ , the support of desire in fantasy, is not visible in what constitutes for man the image of his desire,"<sup>17</sup> Lacan tells us. The  $\alpha$  is not a specularisable object. And the scopic level is the level at which the subject is most secure with respect to anxiety. The scopic level is the level where the object  $\alpha$  is the most masked. I remind you here that in a footnote to his writing on psychosis, Lacan specifies that it is the extraction of the object  $\alpha$  that gives reality its frame. For the field of reality to be constituted, the object  $\alpha$  must be subtracted.

~~If speech is lacking in relation to anxiety, it is because it cannot designate who speaks, "it cannot refer to this point of  $i(\alpha)$  the / of discourse itself,"<sup>18</sup> Lacan asserts. What he argues is that anxiety is triggered when the  $i(\alpha)$  is missing, i.e. when the mediation of the imaginary is failing. This says that the imaginary protects the subject from the emergence of the object. When the veil of the imaginary is torn, when the imaginary fails, this is precisely the moment when anxiety arises. The imaginary plays an important role here since it is the one that masks the real. Anxiety arises when the enveloping function of the specular image fails, it arises when the veil of the imaginary is torn. When the image is missing, anxiety begins. Lacan argues: "The *Unheimlich* is what appears in the place where the minus-phi should be. What everything starts from, in fact, is the imaginary castration, because there is no image of lack, and for good reason. When something appears there, it is therefore, if I may put it this way, that the lack comes to be lacking."<sup>19</sup> Where it should be  $-\phi$ , the object  $\alpha$  appears. We have a +, where we should have -~~

Anxiety is the signal for the intervention of the object  $\alpha$ . In fact, the object  $\alpha$  intervenes and functions in correlation with anxiety. When the  $\alpha$  is not lost, the specular image becomes invasive. To have  $i(\alpha)$ , one must first have lost  $\alpha$ . When the subject is too captive of the specular image, it is because of this specular relation that he is dispossessed of his relation to the big Other. This feeling of dispossession, Lacan notes, has been emphasised by clinicians in psychosis. Thus, he notes: "If what is seen in the mirror is anguishing, it is insofar as it cannot be proposed to the Other's acknowledgement."<sup>20</sup>

To preserve desire, lack is necessary. To preserve the place of desire, it is necessary to preserve a certain void. If the void is completely filled, it is there that anxiety arises. Lacan

---

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 175 (205f)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Lacan, J., *Séminaire IX* (1961-1962), *L'identification*, unpublished, lesson of 2 May 1962

<sup>19</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X*, *op. cit.*, p. 42. (53f).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120 (142f).

illustrates this by saying: “The most anguishing thing for the infant is precisely the moment when the relationship upon which he has established himself, of the lack that turns him into desire, is disrupted, and this relationship is most disrupted when there’s no possibility of any lack, when the mother is on his back all the while, and especially when she’s wiping his backside. This is one model of demand, of the demand that will never let up.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Anxiety Produces the Object $\alpha$ as lost**

Anxiety is the median between jouissance and desire. Miller tells us that “**only anxiety transforms jouissance into the object that causes desire.**”<sup>22</sup> Lacanian anxiety is a productive anxiety since it produces the object-cause. In an intervention at the ECF in 2006, which has also been translated into English,<sup>23</sup> he explains that when we say “de-anguishing”—relieving anxiety—we are not talking about a cure or an erasure of anxiety. It is not a question of arriving at the zero point of anxiety, but at a transformation of anxiety.

We can do without anxiety as long as we use it as a sign of the real. This anxiety is not the constituted anxiety taken up in the fantasy, which is unlimited, repetitive and leads to the passage to the act. The anxiety that I am talking about today, and what Miller calls “constituent”, is an anxiety that is not conscious and that produces the object  $\alpha$  as a lost object. “This is why it can only be designated as the object of anxiety through the negation: ‘it is not without an object.’ What needs to be seen is that there isn’t first an object and then its loss, but that the object  $\alpha$  is constituted in its very loss.”<sup>24</sup> **Without lost object, no desire**, says Miller.

As early as *Seminar VIII*, Lacan emphasises that anxiety has a necessary link with the object of desire. In anxiety, the subject is affected in an immediate and non-dialectisable way by the desire of the Other. It is also in this that anxiety is the only affect that does not deceive. Its object, the small  $\alpha$ , which is also the object cause of desire, is what falls from the subject in anxiety.

If, therefore, “desire is a remedy for anxiety,”<sup>25</sup> we understand why in psychosis the constituted anxiety is more radical. Where desire cannot introduce the dimension of lack to calm the subject’s relationship with the emergence of the object, anxiety overwhelms the subject. Moreover, if anxiety is an index of the real and poses for the subject the question of the desire of the Other, in psychosis the question of the desire of the Other is transformed into the certainty of jouissance of the Other in terms of persecution, erotomania or waste.

When the symptom can no longer regulate the subject’s relation to the Other, the subject, who then finds himself confronted with the unspeakable and with a jouissance that he cannot significantise, is invaded by anxiety. On the one hand, anxiety is an inhibiting and even disruptive factor, but on the other hand, it is an index that orients the subject in existence since it points to what must be avoided. Anxiety warns the subject of the emergence of the real and protects him.

---

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 53-4 (67f).

<sup>22</sup> Miller, J.-A., “Introduction...” *op. cit.*, p.

<sup>23</sup> Miller, J.-A., “Anxiety Constituent and Constituted” (2006), trans. Kieran O’Meara, *Scríobh* 1, Irish Circle of Lacanian Orientation, February 2017, pp. 1-3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar VIII* (1960-61), *Transference*, Cambridge, Polity, 2015, p. 370 (434f).

## Anxiety and the Real

Jacques-Alain Miller, in his introduction to the reading of the seminar on anxiety, maintains that the essential function of anxiety is not its link to desire, but its link to the real. He then refers to two sentences of Lacan in *Seminar X*: “Anxiety is a signal of the real” and “Anxiety[...] designates the Thing.”<sup>26</sup> To these two sentences from *Seminar X*, I will add two later remarks by Lacan in relation to anxiety. The first concerns the nomination of the real operated by anxiety,<sup>27</sup> while in the second remark, anxiety acquires the status of the symbolically real, that is to say “that of the real which connotes itself within the symbolic.”<sup>28</sup> In the RSI seminar Lacan refers to three nominations. The nomination of the imaginary as inhibition, the nomination of the real as anxiety and the nomination of the symbolic as symptom. In *Seminar XXIV*, anxiety is the presence of the real in the symbolic and therefore does not lie, whereas the presence of the symbolic in the real, which is the symptom, is a lie, in the sense that the real is completely separate from meaning. Of course, this is a construction because one could say that the symptom is non all symbolic, it has a side that is real and it is the most important side of the symptom the one that has to do with jouissance and repetition. But if the symptom has a symbolic side which is lying truth and fiction, anxiety has only one side, that of the real and does not deceive.

## The Case of Dick

Pierre Skriabine, commenting on Melanie Klein’s case of Little Dick,<sup>29</sup> a case also commented on by Lacan in his first seminar, gives an interesting perspective on the beneficial function of anxiety in psychosis.

Dick is four years old but has a very limited and incorrect vocabulary. He distorts words and mostly misuses them. Melanie Klein insists on the fact that this child has no desire to be understood, the Other is indifferent to him, he does not seek to communicate. His only activities are to emit sounds and to indulge in meaningless sounds. Yet he has something of language. “He has certain elements of the symbolic apparatus,”<sup>30</sup> says Lacan.

Dick experiences a lack of contact, his ego is not formed, it is absent and what characterises him is apathy. He looks at Melanie Klein as he would look at a limb. His imaginary world is poor, but he is not without orientation, he is not an idiot. Lacan considers, in the terms he had in 1954, that reality is not symbolised in him and that he lives in an unconstituted, undifferentiated, inhuman reality in the sense that what constitutes a human world is the interest in objects as distinct.

For Dick, everything is equally real, equally indifferent. The significant point, according to Lacan, is that Dick makes no appeal. And although he is a master of language, he does not

---

<sup>26</sup> Miller, J.-A., “Introduction ...”, *op.cit.*, The two sentences of Lacan are : We can already say that this etwas, faced with which anxiety operates as a signal, belongs to the real of the real’s irreducibility.” (Seminar X (1962-1963), *Anxiety*, *op.cit.*, p. 160 (188f), and “Not only is it not without object, but it very likely designates the most, as it were, profound object, the ultimate object, the Thing.” (*ibid.*, p. 311 (360f)).

<sup>27</sup> Lacan, J., *Séminaire XXII* (1974-1975), *RSI, unpublished*, lesson of 13 May 1975.

<sup>28</sup> Lacan, J., *Séminaire XXIV* (1976-1977), *L’insu que sait de l’une-bévue s’aile à mourre*, unpublished, lesson of 15 March 1977.

<sup>29</sup> The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego.

<sup>30</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar I*, *op. cit.*, p. 131f



speak. He is a child who is there but who does not respond. To try to link Dick's subjective position to the causal mechanisms of the subject, alienation and separation, we can say this: Dick is not alienated in the Other. He lacks the  $S_2$ . He is petrified under the  $S_1$  and in this position he is spared the anxiety that arises from any new identification. Pierre Skriabine specifies that "Dick loses nothing in the signifying chain; he freezes his being in this  $S_1$  of primordial identification. What did not happen for him was precisely the fall of this  $S_1$ , that is to say, the original repression."<sup>31</sup> In short, **without anxiety, no repression**.

Lacan states in *Seminar I*: "Anxiety is a connotation, a signal, as Freud has always formulated it very well, a quality, a subjective colouring."<sup>32</sup> And he continues: "Now this anxiety is precisely what does not occur in the subject in question. Dick cannot even arrive at the first kind of identification, which would already be an outline of symbolism." For Dick there is neither other nor self. He is in a non-anxiety relationship with reality.

Dick does not play. When he takes the little train, he behaves as if everything were invisible to him. And Melanie Klein tells him: Dick little train, big train Daddy-train. At this moment, Dick starts to play and says the word station. This is a crucial moment, since it marks the beginning of the attachment of language to the imaginary of the subject. Melanie Klein sends this back to him: The station is Mummy, Dick enters Mummy. From this moment, everything is triggered and the child progresses. Melanie Klein brought verbalization, she grafted the symbolization of the Oedipal myth.

After this grafting, Dick verbalizes a first call, he asks for his nanny, to whom he was previously indifferent. It is a first communication. From then on, Dick will welcome his nurse with open arms. Lacan comments that the external world, the humanised, symbolised world, can only be constituted after a series of encounters.

Although Lacan criticises the brutality with which Melanie Klein whacks Dick with interpretations, he recognises that something happens as a result. By talking to him and giving him names, Melanie Klein grafts the symbolic onto him, she names the real. From this moment on, Dick makes an appeal to the Other.

Through the symbolisation of the real, an anxiety is produced in Dick which allows for a minimal alienation of the subject in the Other. Skriabine emphasises that anxiety is strictly correlative to the advent of the subject in the Other and he notes that "by the conjunction of the Oedipal symbolisation as a primary nomination on the ring of the real, anxiety as a supplement, as the nomination of a real, makes a hole in the undifferentiated real in which Dick lives."<sup>33</sup> The nomination of the real functions as a graft of the symbolic, that is, as a symbolisation of the real. The subject, who until then had been petrified under the  $S_1$ , emerges in the Other and gains access to the signifying chain. Dick can make an appeal to the Other, he can produce an  $S_2$ . We cannot go so far as to say that there is an appearance of desire, but there is the appearance of the Other as *heteros* or at least of another and Dick addresses him.

---

<sup>31</sup> Skriabine Pierre, « La clinique différentielle du sinthome », *Quarto*, n° 86, 2006, p.62.

<sup>32</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar I*, *op. cit.*, p. 114f

<sup>33</sup> Skriabine, P., *op.cit.*, p. 62.

Referring to the last session of the RSI seminar, Skriabine evokes anxiety as a substitute, as one of the Names-of-the-Father, as the fourth ring that holds together the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. "It is anxiety insofar as it makes a subject hold on to reality,"<sup>34</sup> says Skriabine. In this case, anxiety acquires the function of the sinthome.

## To Conclude

There are two approaches to anxiety: the anxiety that arises when there is an excess, when the lack comes to be lacking, and the anxiety that produces the loss of the object.<sup>35</sup> The question that arises is how to approach anxiety in the clinic, that is, the anxiety that arises when there is excess. As I have already mentioned—is it a question of significantising it, of symptomatising it or of leaving it as a nomination of the real? The answer depends on the particularity of each subject in analysis.

When the object  $\alpha$  is not extracted but the subject has it in his pocket, the subject is constantly confronted with the lack of the lack of the object, unlimited anxiety, the death drive and its consequences. But in some cases, anxiety constitutes a precious index since it protects the subject from the hole of the symbolic, it shows him what to avoid, while in some other cases it is the affect that verifies to the subject that he is alive. However, you have understood that there is also anxiety which is not a subjective colouring, but the return of jouissance to the body. In this sense, anxiety can be a danger and at the same time the announcement of danger.

In the approach to anxiety, Lacan discerns a difficulty correlative to that of joining the subject with the real. He considers anxiety to be a crucial term of reference precisely because it does not deceive. But he adds that "in experience, it is necessary to channel it and [...] to measure it, so as not to be overwhelmed by it."<sup>36</sup> How to channel jouissance?

And how to help a psychotic subject to dialectise anxiety if it means introducing a question about desire and interpreting this desire? According to Éric Laurent, de-anguishing consists in making the question of desire emerge. The royal road to interpreting desire,<sup>37</sup> he stresses, is the consistency of the symptom. It is only when a symptom is consistent that anxiety can be stapled. This already gives us an orientation. One of the possible ways then is to go from anxiety to the symptom. It is a question of setting the symptom in motion to make the anxiety recede. A classic way is the phobia. For Lacan, the true function of the phobia "is to substitute for the object of anxiety a signifier that frightens, because, with regard to the enigma of anxiety, the signalled relation of danger is reassuring."<sup>38</sup> Of course, the phobic symptom is not the only solution.

Various other symptoms can have the same function, which take on the value of a sinthome in the sense that they allow the real, the symbolic and the imaginary to hold together. For example, a subject in the grip of an invasive anxiety may find appeasement in pseudo-obsessional rituals.

---

<sup>34</sup> Skriabine, P., « La peur et l'angoisse chez Tchekhov », *La Cause freudienne, Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse*, n° 59, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>35</sup> Miller, J.-A., "Introduction ..." *op. cit.*, (59/101)

<sup>36</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar XI*, *op. cit.*, p. 41f

<sup>37</sup> Laurent, É., "Désangoisser" *op. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar XVI* (1968-69), *D'un autre à l'Autre*, Paris, Seuil, 2006, p.307.

We know that in certain cases, separation from the object is impossible. But we can encourage the subject to take a certain distance from the object, just as we try to divert the subject from identifying with the object as waste and encourage his efforts to dialectise his anxiety. We had the opportunity this morning to discuss two very interesting clinical cases where the direction of the cure was focused to this very points. Et with great results.

In this sense, one possible direction would be to support the subject in his defensive inventions in the face of a real that overwhelms him. The possibilities are endless. A symptom that affects the body can frame the anxiety, as can a delusional metaphor or an imaginary construction that will replace the fundamental fantasy, or even a perverse symptom or the analyst himself. In this way, the subject protects himself not only from the invasion of anxiety but also from the passage to the act which would have aimed at tearing away from anxiety its certainty.<sup>39</sup>

Verified Translation from French by Janet Haney

---

<sup>39</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminar X, op. cit.*, p. 77 (93f), translation modified.