

The 2020 Congress of the NLS

Interpretation: From Truth to Event

27 and 28 June 2020 in Ghent

Argument by Bernard Seynhaeve, President of the NLS

Towards Ghent 2020

Interpretation: From Truth to Event

This will be the title of the next Congress of the NLS that will take place in Ghent, Belgium on June 27th and 28th, 2020.

This title logically follows the themes of the previous Congresses that treated the unconscious and transference, as well as the theme of our Congress this year entitled, *Urgent!*

I spoke to **Éric Laurent** in order to reflect upon the follow-up to the next Congress with him. I asked if he would accept to write our next orientation text. He accepted. During the Congress in Tel Aviv, he succinctly pronounced the main lines [of his orientation text \(PDF here\)](#).

This text is the compass that will guide us towards the Congress in Ghent. [1] You will read about what interpretation gradually becomes as we progress through Jacques Lacan's teaching. This compass is based on many references from Lacan and Jacques-Alain Miller; we must refer to them as we study this psychoanalytic concept and what it becomes at the end of Lacan's teaching.

Building on this compass myself, I would like to stop and comment on a citation from Lacan that Éric Laurent highlights:

In the Seminar on *The Object of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan repeats the first sentences from his first Seminar on the action of the Zen master: "Everyone knows, though one does not know what it means, that a Zen exercise has something to do with the subjective realization of a void [...] the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and which would be obtained, this singular moment, in

an abruptness following a period of waiting, sometimes provoked by a word, a sentence, a jaculation, even a rude remark, a snub, a kick in the ass”. [2]

What drives me to point out this citation that Éric Laurent highlights here is the debate we had in Tel Aviv on the use of virtual devices in the analytic cure.

This quote allows us to grasp how an analysis that is brought to its end necessitates the presence of bodies – that of the analysand, but also of the analyst.

The analyst brings his body into play. The analytic interpretation is in itself **a knotting of language and the body of the analyst**. This is what I’d like to develop as we go towards the next Congress.

This is supported by what Miller said about interpretation in a text published in *Hurly-Burly*, No. 5.

Miller specifies that, “Everything comes down to the event, to an event that must be **embodied**, which is a body-event – the definition that Lacan gave of the sinthome. Let’s come out with it, the rest is window dressing. Window dressing that is necessary in most cases. But the kernel, [...] is this instant of embodiment.” [3]

“Two phases can be distinguished,” says Miller. “There is the phase of the exploration of the unconscious and its formations, the principle of which is that [...] everything that goes to make up the symptom – the slip of the tongue, the bungled action, and the rest – possesses a meaning that can be deciphered. How could one possibly avoid passing through this phase for those who have not cancelled their subscription to the unconscious? [...]

The orientation towards the singular doesn’t mean that the unconscious cannot be deciphered. It means that this exploration necessarily comes up against an end-stop, that interpretation comes to a stop on the outside-meaning of *jouissance*, and that, alongside the unconscious, where *id speaks* – where it speaks to each of us, because the unconscious is always commonplace meaning – there is the singular of the sinthome, where it doesn’t speak to anyone. This is why Lacan qualified it as a body-event. It is not a thought-event, it’s not a language-event [...] it is an event of the substantial body, the body that possesses a consistency of *jouissance*.” [4]

I’d like to point out how Miller shows that the decisive place that Lacan gives to presence is precisely the body of the analyst:

“The point of view of the sinthome consists in thinking through the unconscious on the basis of *jouissance*. Well, that has consequences on practice, in particular on the practice of interpretation. Interpretation is not merely the deciphering of a knowledge. It is also to show, to shed light on the unconscious’s *nature of defense*. Without doubt, where *id speaks*, *id enjoys*, but the orientation

towards the *sinthome* lays the accent on: id enjoys where id doesn't speak, it enjoys where id makes no sense. Just as Lacan had invited the analyst to hold the place of the object *a*, in his Seminar on *The Sinthome* he formulates that the analyst is a *sinthome*. He is supported by non-meaning, so one avoids going into his motivations, he won't be made to explain himself. Rather **he will play at the body-event, at the semblance of trauma**. And he will have to sacrifice a great deal in order to deserve to be, or to be taken for, one of the odds and ends of the real.” [5]

The analyst puts his own body into play. He makes use of his own body while relying on the *lalangue* of the analysand. It is his body that he puts in the balance. He works hard to embody the semblant of trauma, by incarnating the *sinthome* of the analysand. This is how he makes the defense of the subject vacillate.

In this respect, Miller says that the analyst “keeps tabs on the signifiers that have appeared, he makes correlations, he links them up, he ascertains repetitions. This work of a memorialist, of secretary to the patient, allows him to ascertain the zone his interpretation will be able to bear on. Sometimes he harbors this knowledge for a long time, until the timely moment arises when he can speak up and surprise the analysand with his own productions [...] by re-representing them unexpectedly.” [6]

Éric Laurent concludes the orientation by citing Miller: “Jacques-Alain Miller has linked the question of interpretation in Lacan's last teaching to that of the symptom in a decisive way: ‘This definition of the symptom as a body event makes the status of the interpretation that could respond to it much more problematic.’ [7] From this moment on, the symptom becomes linked to the impact of language on the body. ‘This will be picked up in a way that is perhaps too much on the side of the logician in the formula, “the signifier is the cause of *jouissance*,” but this is pertains to the notion of the fundamental body event which is the incidence of language [*la langue*].’ [8]” [9]

What I am emphasizing here is that the analyst interprets with his body.

Bernard Seynhaeve

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[1] Cf. Laurent, É., “Interpretation: From Truth to Event”, Argument of the 2020 NLS Congress in Ghent, delivered at the 2019 NLS Congress in Tel Aviv, available on-line:

<https://www.nlscongress2019.com/speeches/interpretation-from-truth-to-event-argument-of-the-2020-nls-congress-in-ghent-by-eric-laurent>

[2] Lacan, J., *The Seminar XIII*, “L'objet de la psychanalyse,” lesson of 1 December 1965, unpublished.

[3] Miller, J.-A., “The Unconscious and the *Sinthome*”, tr. A. R. Price, *Hurly-Burly*, Issue 5, NLS, Paris, 2011, p. 45.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

[7] Miller, J.-A., “Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body”, *Lacanian Ink*, Issue 18, 2001, pp. 6-29.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Laurent, É., “Interpretation: From Truth to Event”, Argument of the 2020 NLS Congress in Ghent, *op. cit.*