

XV WAP Congress

**THERE IS NO
SEXUAL
RELATION●**

From April 30 to May 3, 2026, Paris



**BIBLIOGRAPHIC
RESEARCH ON
THE WORKS OF**

**Sigmund Freud
Jacques Lacan
Jacques-Alain Miller**

XV Congress of the WAP

There is no sexual relation

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Editorial

Over the past several months, I had the privilege of working with a team of English-speaking colleagues to prepare the English-language bibliography for the upcoming 2026 Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis, centered on the theme of *There Is No Sexual Relation*. What began as a bibliographic task unfolded, for me, as a formative experience — one that illuminated how the work we do in the School is deeply homologous to the work we do in the clinic.

The first phase of the project was devoted to what Jacques-Alain Miller, in *Analysis Laid Bare*¹, has called amplification². We cast a wide net. We returned to Freud, to Lacan, and Miller, and combed through their work with the theme of the Congress in mind. The guiding principle was not to “prove” the theme, nor to provide a series of theoretical affirmations, but to extract fragments — concepts, formulations, provocations — that touched upon the question of the sexual non-relation, even if only obliquely. This was *not* a work of systematization. It was a work of discovery. And like in the clinic, this phase required desire: a desire to listen, to read anew, and to be surprised by what emerges when one approaches a known text from a different angle.

And then came the second phase, the phase of reduction. Here again, I found myself reflecting on what Miller stated in *Analysis Laid Bare* about what follows the work of amplification -the work of reduction.³ Reduction is not the inverse of amplification, nor is it a “correction” of excess. It is a matter of orienting ourselves toward what is essential — what resonates with the theme in a way that can produce an effect, that can sustain thought and provoke invention. To reduce, in this sense, is not to cut arbitrarily. It is to make a cut that reveals something, a cut that separates the contingent from what insists. We had to let go of many quotes that were rich, fascinating, or even personally meaningful, but that lacked a sufficient link to help us elaborate on what the theme of the congress has provoked.⁴

The experience taught me something about how our work in the School and our work in the clinic are not merely parallel, but structurally similar. In both cases, there is a movement between openness and closure, between the richness of what appears and the rigor of what counts. In the clinic, we listen widely, we allow the subject to amplify, to wander, to circle the thing. But then, at the right moment, *we act*. A cut must be introduced. Something must be reduced — not to silence, but to signification. And not to the already-known, but to the singular.

¹ Miller, J.-A. *Analysis Laid Bare*. Trans. A. Duncan, New York: Lacanian Press, 2023.

² *Ibid*, pp. 23-26.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 23-35, 42-51.

⁴ Miller, J.-A. “Five Variations on the Theme of ‘Provoked Elaboration.’” Trans. L. Clarke and F. Shanahan. *4 + One: The NLS Cartels’ Newsletter*, no. 5 (February 2018).

To curate a bibliography, one might think, is a scholarly task. But to do so in a School such as ours, under a theme such as this, is to be drawn into the real of psychoanalysis. The sexual non-relation is not a doctrine, but a fault-line — an absence that conditions the very possibility of speech and desire. To produce a bibliography around it is, paradoxically, to brush up against what resists documentation. We work not to define it, but to circumscribe it—to write around it, as Lacan might say.

This is why the work was not only demanding but exhilarating. It reminded me that even in the so-called administrative or intellectual tasks of the School, we are doing psychoanalysis. We are engaging with texts, with concepts, and above all with our own relation to the real.⁵ We are amplifying and reducing, discovering, cutting, speaking, listening, and elaborating new knowledge that allows us to renew our desire to continue our work.

If the bibliography we produced offers something useful to the Congress, it is because it came not only from our reading, but from our desire — informed by the School and shaped by the clinic.

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⁵ Miller, Jacques-Alain. 2000. *The Turin Theory of the Subject of the School*. Presentation at the 1st Scientific Conference of the Scuola Lacaniana di Psicoanalisi, Turin, May 21, 2000. Translated by Heather Menzies and Vincent Dachy. *Psychoanalytic Notebooks*, no. 33 (June 2019): 87–112. Accessed July 30, 2025. <https://www.amp-nls.org/orientation/turin-theory-of-the-subject-of-the-school/>.

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Sigmund Freud

Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. VII, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 125–245. London: Hogarth Press, 1953.

[...] libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women, and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman. (p. 219)

“On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love” (1912). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. XI, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 179–190. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.

The whole sphere of love in such people remains divided in the two directions personified in art as sacred and profane love. Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love. (p. 183)

[...] we must reckon with the possibility that something in the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavourable to the realization of complete satisfaction. (p. 188-189)

“The Taboo of Virginity” (1918). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. XI, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 193–208. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.

Woman is different from man, strange and therefore apparently hostile. (p. 198)

“Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. XIX, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 243–258. London: Hogarth Press, 1961.

This impulse [against masturbation] is clearly a forerunner of the wave of repression which at puberty will do away with a large amount of the girl’s masculine sexuality in order to make room for the development of her femininity. (p. 255)

Women oppose change, receive passively, and add nothing of their own. (p. 257)

Civilization and Its Discontents (1930). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. XXI, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 59–145. London: Hogarth Press, 1961.

Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life; the work of civilization has become more and more men's business; it confronts them with ever harder tasks, compels them to sublimations of instinct that women are not easily able to achieve. (p. 80)

“Lecture XXIII: Femininity,” *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933). In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. XXII, edited by James Strachey, et. al., 112–135. London: Hogarth Press, 1964.

[I]f the wish for a penis is replaced by one for a baby [...] the doll-baby becomes a baby from the girl's father, and thereafter the aim of the most powerful feminine wish. Her happiness is great if later on this wish for a baby finds fulfillment in reality. (p. 132)

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Jacques Lacan

Seminars

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique (1953-1954). New York: Norton, 1998.

What makes genital love* different from primary love* is acceding to the reality of the other as a subject. The subject takes into account the existence of the other subject as such. He concerns himself, not only with the enjoyment [*jouissance*] of his partner, but with many other requirements which are associated with it. (p. 212–213, *English in the original)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis (1954-1955). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Let us try to overcome the romantic illusion, that it is perfect love, the ideal value which each of the partners acquires for the other, which upholds human commitment. (p. 260)

The most naked rivalry between men and women is eternal, and its style is laid down in conjugal relations. (p. 263)

There is an inertia in the imaginary which we find making itself felt in the discourse of the subject, sowing discord in the discourse, making it such that I do not realise that when I mean someone well, I mean him ill, that when I love him, it is myself that I love, or when I think I love myself, it is precisely at this moment that I love an other. (p. 306)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, The Psychoses (1955-1956). London: Routledge, 1993.

In every relationship with the other, even an erotic one, there is some echo of this relation of exclusion, *it's either him or me*, because, on the imaginary plane. (p. 93)

The object of our love is only ourselves, it's the *tu es celui qui me lues, thou art the one who kilst me*. (p. 303)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV, The Object Relation (1956-1957). Cambridge: Polity, 2020.

It is within this ambivalent relationship [...] that the subject experiences these relationships that always imply [...] his identification with the partner of this relationship. That is to say, these relations are lived through in a *reciprocity* – the term is acceptable in this instance – of ambivalence between the subject's position and the partner's position. (p. 9)

Freud's contribution here is that the idea of a harmonious object that of its very nature would bring about the subject-object relationship is at absolute variance with experience. I won't even say analytic experience, but the common experience of relations between man and woman. If harmony in this realm were not a problematic thing, there would be no analysis at all. (p. 18–19)

So, the notion that there is no pre-set harmony between object and drive tendency is spelt out [in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*]. (p. 52)

The error is to start off from the idea that because there are, as one says, needle and thread, so there are also girl and boy [...]. When one imagines that the unconscious means that whatever lies in one subject is designed to perceive what must respond to it in another, one is simply presupposing the notion of a primitive harmony. (p. 41)

At this extreme, in the most idealised love, what is sought in the woman is what she lacks. (p. 102)

What is loved in love is what lies beyond the subject. It is literally what the beloved subject does not have. (p. 120)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book V, Formations of the Unconscious (1957-1958). Cambridge: Polity, 2018.

Precisely as a result of [a girl] having been introduced into the woman's castration complex in the form of a symbolic substitute, the penis is the source in the woman of all sorts of conflicts of the conflicts-of-jealousy type. The partner's infidelity is experienced in her as a real privation. The emphasis is quite different here from the same conflict seen from the side of the man. (p. 328–329)

Sexual desire presents itself in a problematic manner from the perspective of the demand for love, whatever one says, whatever holy water one tries to cover it with in the name of "oblation." (p. 362)

The fate of a human subject is essentially tied to his relationship with his sign of being [...]. (p. 239)

Since everything depends on the Other, the solution is to have an Other of one's own. This is what we call love. In the dialectic of desire it's about having an Other of one's own. (p. 120)

As an image of the message it is typically constituted by, I have given you "You are my master" and "You are my woman." "You, the other, are my woman." I would therefore say to you that this is the form in which a man gives an example of the full speech in which he commits himself as subject, founds himself as the man of the woman to whom he is speaking and declares it to her in an inverted form. (p. 120)

And it's inasmuch as [man] is not himself either, insofar as he satisfies, that is, insofar as he obtains the Other's satisfaction, but only perceives himself as the instrument of that satisfaction, that the man finds himself in love outside his Other. (p. 330)

The problem of love is the problem of the profound division it introduces into the subject's activities. What is at issue for a man, following the very definition of love, "to give what one does not have," is to give what he does not have, the phallus, to a being who is not it. (p. 330)

But there is discordance between what there is that is absolute in the subjectivity of the Other who gives or doesn't give love and the fact that, to gain access to the Other as object of desire, it is necessary for it totally to become an object. It's in this vertiginous or nauseous, to call it by its name, gap that the difficulty of accessing sexual desire is located. (p. 364)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VI, Desire and Its Interpretation (1958-1959). Cambridge: Polity, 2019.

I mean that, if instead of speaking about "libido" or the "genital object," we speak about "genital desire," it may seem harder to take for granted that the development of this desire automatically implies the possibility of opening oneself up to love, or the possibility of a total actualization of love. (p. 4)

Freud argued that, whereas desire seems in fact to bring with it a certain quantum of love, it is very often a love that leads to conflict within oneself, a love that is not owned, a love that refuses to be owned. (p. 5)

The subject both is and is not the phallus. He is it, because it is the signifier with which language designates him, and he is not it inasmuch as language and the law of language take it away from him. (p. 214)

For women, relations to the phallus and to the phallic phase, which has an essential function in the development of female sexuality, must be formulated in the exact opposite manner. This suffices to indicate that, when it comes to sexuality, male subjects and female subjects begin from different points. (p. 214–215)

It is this "being without having it" that gives a woman's position its transcendence and that will later allow us to theorize the relationship between a woman and the phallus, a relationship that is highly specific and permanent, whose irreducible nature was insistently underscored by Freud, and that is psychologically translated by him in the form of *Penisneid* [penis envy]. (p. 215)

A man can truly love a woman with all the affection and devotion we can imagine, but the fact remains that if he desires another woman – even if the first woman knows that what he desires in this other woman is her shoe, the hem of her dress, or the makeup she wears on her face – his homage to being thus goes to the other woman. (p. 450)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis (1959-1960). New York: Norton, 1992.

The world of our experience, the Freudian world, assumes that it is this object, *das Ding*, as the absolute Other of the subject, that one is supposed to find again. It is to be found at the most as something missed. One doesn't find it, but only its pleasurable associations. (p. 52)

Between the object as it is structured by the narcissistic relation and *das Ding*, there is a difference, and it is precisely on the slope of that difference that the problem of sublimation is situated for us. (p. 98)

The object involved, the feminine object, is introduced oddly enough through the door of privation or of inaccessibility. [...] It is impossible to serenade one's Lady in her poetic role in the absence of the given that she is surrounded and isolated by a barrier. (p. 149)

[...] there is a beyond of nudity that nudity hides. (p. 227)

I have often shown you that in, so to speak, constructing the instincts, in making them the natural law of the realization of harmony, psychoanalysis takes on the guise of a rather disturbing alibi, of a moralizing hustle or a bluff, whose dangers cannot be exaggerated. (p. 312)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII, Transference (1960-1961). Cambridge: Polity, 2015.

[...] transference involves much more than the simple notion of a dissymmetry between subjects. (p. 3)

Note that the two terms that, in their essence, constitute the lover and the beloved in no way coincide. What the one is missing is not what is hidden in the other. This is the whole problem of love. (p. 39–40)

Love as a signifier – for to us it is a signifier and nothing else – is a metaphor, assuming that we have come to understand metaphor as substitution. (p. 40)

The structure in question [in love] is not one of symmetry and reciprocity [*retour*]. For this symmetry is not symmetrical, since insofar as the hand extends, it extends toward an object. (p. 52)

[...] love can but lack what it desires. (p. 124)

The space occupied by not understanding [*la marge de l'incompréhension*] is the space occupied by desire [*la marge du désir*]. (p. 207–208)

[Regarding the praying mantis as a model of oral cannibalism and primordial eroticism]: Whatever is at work, synchrony implies that it will never be anything but copulatory *jouissance*, even if it is indirect. (p. 212)

[The crux of what constitutes the dead end and problem of love]: [...] the subject can only satisfy the Other's demand by demeaning the Other, turning this Other into the object of his desire. (p. 219)

What analytic practice reveals to us is that it is more precious to hold onto desire's symbol – the phallus – than to hold onto desire itself. (p. 229)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X, Anxiety (1962-1963). Cambridge: Polity, 2016.

The more the object of [the knight's] love moves in the opposite direction to what might be termed reward, the more he overestimates this object of eminent dignity. (p. 109)

"Only love allows jouissance to condescend to desire. (p. 179.)

To the extent that *jouissance* is involved, that is, that she has my Being in her sights, woman can only reach it by castrating me. (p. 181)

Hence the myth, a very male one, that makes the woman the equivalent of one of his ribs. One of his ribs was removed, we don't know which, and besides, he's not missing any, but

it's clear that in this myth of the rib the lost object is what's involved. For man, woman is an object fashioned therefrom. (p. 189)

In [man's fantasy of women's masochism], it is by proxy and in relation to the masochistic structure that is imagined in woman that man sustains his jouissance through something that is his own anxiety. This is what the object covers over. In men, the object is the condition of desire. (p. 190)

Don Juan is a man who would lack nothing. [...], but Don Juan's relation to the image of the father qua un-castrated is a pure feminine image. (p. 192)

Her anxiety is only anxiety faced with the desire of the Other and, at the end of the day, she doesn't really know what it covers over. To go further into my formulas, I will say that in man's realm there is always the presence of some imposture. In the woman's, if something corresponds to this, then it's the masquerade, [...]. (p. 191)

Now, when courtly love appears outside the field of strictly cultural and ritualistic references, where clearly it is addressed to something other than the Lady, it is on the contrary the sign of some shortcoming, some shirking, faced with the difficult paths that gaining access to a true love implies. (p. 334)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1964). New York: Norton, 1978.

In my reference to the unconscious [...] It is not a question of the relation to sexuality, or even to the sex, if it is possible to give any specific reference to this term. It is a question rather of the relation to the phallus, in as much as it is lacking in the real that might be attained in the sexual goal. (p. 102)

It is this that comes into play, quite obviously, both in sexual union and in the struggle to death. In both situations, the being breaks up, in an extraordinary way, between its being and its semblance, between itself and that paper tiger it shows to the other. (p. 107)

The reality of the unconscious is sexual reality – an untenable truth. (p. 150)

We now know a little more about sex. We know that sexual division, in so far as it reigns over most living beings, is that which ensures the survival of a species. (p. 150)

[T]here comes a moment, with the sexual initiation [...], when the moorings are broken. (p. 152)

There are really two major aspects of desire as it may emerge in the fall of sexualization – on the one hand, disgust produced by the reduction of the sexual partner to a function of reality, whatever it may be, and, on the other hand, what I have called, in relation to the scopic function, *invidia*, envy. (p. 172–173)

The legibility of sex in the interpretation of the unconscious mechanisms is always retroactive. (p. 176)

There is no other. Only there is the relation of the sexes represented at the level of the unconscious. As for the rest, the sexual relation is handed over to the hazards of the field of the Other. It is handed over to the explanations that are given of it. (p. 199)

Aristophanes' myth pictures the pursuit of the complement for us in a moving and misleading way, by articulating that it is the other, one's sexual other half, that the living being seeks in love. To this mythical representation of the mystery of love, analytic experience substitutes the search by the subject, not of the sexual complement, but of the part of himself, lost forever, that is constituted by the fact that he is only a sexed living being, and that he is no longer immortal. You will now understand that – for the same reason that it is through the lure that the sexed living being is induced into his sexual realization – the drive, the partial drive, is profoundly a death drive and represents in itself the portion of the death in the sexed living being (p. 205)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVI: From an Other to the other (1968-1969). Cambridge: Polity, 2024.

Psychoanalysis tells us that there is no union of man and woman: without castration determining, at the level of fantasy, the reality of the [female] partner for whom castration is impossible; and without castration playing its part in a sort of concealment that posits castration as truth in the [male] partner to whom it is spared in reality . . . This reminder alone implies that, at least in the field that appears to be ours, there is no harmony, no matter how we designate it. (p. 4)

We shouldn't, for example, confuse the status of relationships [*rapport*] – this term being taken in the logical sense – with relations [*relation*] that establish the conjoining function of the two sexes. (p. 191)

In fantasies that have stemmed from the improbable broaching of sexual relationships. [...] suffice for us to think that sex and its fundamental relationship are that of order, namely two poles, and that some sort of spherical framework gets established between them? (p. 192–193)

[P]rior to stating something about sexual relationships, we would do well to pay attention to the fact that they have nothing to do with what completely replaces the, especially in psychoanalysis – namely, identifications with what we call [...] male or female models [or: stereotypes or standards, *types*]. (p. 192)

In fantasies that have stemmed from the improbable broaching of sexual relationships, other modes than that of yes or no come into play. (p. 192)

As I told you, there is no such thing as a sexual relationship. And if there is a point where that is asserted, and quite calmly, in psychoanalysis, it is in the fact that we don't know what Woman is. She is an unknown in a [black] box – except, thank God, through representations. [...] we only know her through one or more representative of representation. (p. 195–196)

We cannot begin from any trace whatsoever to forge the signifier of sexual relationships. Everything is reduced to the phallus, the signifier that is not, in fact, part of the subject's system, since it is not the subject that represents it but, as it were, sexual jouissance qua outside of the system. (p. 278)

Sexual jouissance is distinguished from all other forms of jouissance [...] There is no subject of sexual jouissance. (p. 278)

[K]nowledge of sexual relations such as they are perceived only on the basis of the apprehension of the point at infinity, which constitutes an impasse and an aporia, certainly, but which also constitutes a limit. (p. 292)

[T]he sexual relationship is missing – namely, a relation [*relation*] that is definable as such between the sign of the male and the sign of the female. The sexual relationship, referring

here to what is commonly known by that term, can only be constructed on the basis of an act [or action, *acte*]. This is what allowed me to propose the notions: that there is *no* such things a sexual act, in the sense in what that act is based on a true relationship, and conversely, that there are nothing but sexual acts [*actes*], in the sense in which the relationship can only be created through acts. Psychoanalysis reveals to us that the true dimension of action, the true dimension of the sexual act, for sure, but of all other acts as well, and this has been obvious for a long time – is failure [*l'échec*]. Which is why, at the heart of the sexual relationship, there is what is known in psychoanalysis as castration. (299–300)

Object *a* takes the place of the gap that is designated by the impasse of the sexual relationship. (p. 300)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (1969-1970). New York: Norton, 2007).

Since we have the signifier, we must understand one another, and this is precisely why we don't understand one another. Signifiers are not made for sexual relations. (p. 3)

When we say “sex.” The stress, of course, is not at all on this biological reference. (p. 75)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVIII, On a Discourse that Might not Be a Semblance (1971). Cambridge: Polity, 2025.

[...] people have not noticed the huge gap that exists between the term “sexuality” [...] and what Freud enunciates about the relations revealed by the unconscious. Regardless of Freud's own stumblings regarding this topic, what he revealed about the functioning of the unconscious has nothing biological about it. It is only owing to what is known as a “sexual relationship” [or: “the relationship between the sexes,” *rapport sexual*] that something can be called “sexuality.” This was, moreover, completely legitimate, until people began using the term “sexuality” to designate something else – namely, what is studied in biology, the chromosomes and their XY, XX, or XXY combinations. They have absolutely nothing to do with what is at issue, which has a perfectly pronounceable name: the relations between man and woman. We should take those two terms – in their fullest meanings, along with what they involve by way of a relation – as our point of departure. (p. 12–22.)

[T]here is no need to wait for the phallic phase to begin [...] to distinguish a little girl from a little boy; they are not at all the same long before that. (p. 22.)

It is clear that the question about what facet of gender identity appears before the phallic phase arises only because speaking beings are fated to be divided between men and women once they arrive at adulthood. (p. 23.)

Sexual identification does not consist in believing oneself to be a man or a woman, but in the boy taking into account the fact that there are women, and the girl taking into account the fact that there are men. (p. 23.)

It is far easier for a man to meet any rival on the battlefield than to confront a woman insofar as she is the medium [or: prop, support] the medium of what there is by way of semblance in the relationship between man and woman. (p. 25–26.)

[...] the relationship between the sexes [*rapport sexual*], like any other relationship, subsists, in the final analysis, only on the basis of writing. [...] This colossal fact would already suffice to render, let us say, conceivable that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship, but would in no wise determine whether one can or cannot manage to write it. (p. 52–53.)

[...] It has seemed for a while now – that however meiotic the process may be by which so-called gonadal cells provide a model of fertilization from which reproduction stems – is something in fact grounded there that allows us to situate the relationship between the sexes, however complex it may be, at a level said to be biological. (p. 53.)

It is enough to have a tiny bit of experience with psychoanalysis to be convinced of this. Man's desire [...] is linked to its cause, which is surplus jouissance. Or, as I have put it many times before, it finds its source in the field from which everything, every linguistic effect, begins – in other words, in the Other's desire. We realize that, in this case, Woman is the Other. Except that she is an Other of a totally different type . . . (p. 57.)

The relationship between the sexes is speech itself. (p. 69)

Sexual jouissance turns out to be unwritable, which is what gives rise to structural multiplicity [...] in which something is sketched out that situates it, but which remains inseparable from a certain number of functions that have, in short, nothing to do with what can generally specify the sexual partner. (p. 90.)

What forms an obstacle to the sexual relationship when we try to structure it and make it function by means of symbols? The fact that *jouissance* gets involved. (p. 90)

But it is crystal clear – first of all, and it stems from experience – that a well-bred man is one who, [...], could never feel slighted by a liaison on his wife's part, assuming it is carried out with propriety. (p. 112.)

We can obviously admit that this need – this irreducible thing in the relationship between the sexes – always exists, and Freud said as much. What is clear is that it is not measurable – at least, it can only be measured in the artifact, the artifact of the relation to the Other with a capital O. It is not measurable, and it is clearly this indeterminacy that indicates what is fundamental – namely, that the sexual relationship cannot be inscribed or *grounded* qua relationship. (p. 112–113)

I suspect that certain people will think that this third term [the phallus] takes care of everything [...] People will say that there must be a relationship between the sexes because there is a third term. (p. 122).

I mean that what is indicated here is merely that the limit imposed on discourse when what is at issue is the relationship between the sexes [...] has to do with its failure at the level of a logic that is propped up by what props up any and every logic – namely, writing. (p. 146)

A truth that can be stated as follows: a relationship between the sexes, such as it occurs in any sexual act, is based on the compromise between [...] *jouissance* and semblance that is known as castration. (p. 146)

[A] huge number of works we can find in all fields – even if the catalogs aren't always well constructed, whether those produced in ethnology or psychopathology, [...] force us to face the fact that there is no such thing as a sexual relationship. (p. 147)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XIX, ...or Worse (1971-1972). Cambridge: Polity, 2018.

When I say that there is no such thing as sexual relation, I'm asserting precisely the truth that sex does not define any relation in speaking beings. (p. 5.)

Since psychoanalysts haven't yet noticed that there is no such thing as sexual relation, they are haunted by playing the role of Providence in couples. (p. 10.)

By constituting a question, sexual relation, which is no such thing, in the sense that one cannot write it, determines everything that is developed in terms of a discourse the nature of which is to be a ruptured discourse. (p. 14.)

[...] there can be no such thing as sexual relation, meaning that nothing written, as a product of language, can account for it in a satisfactory way. (p. 19.)

It's engaging to see someone so sharp, so learned, so alert, and so lucid, starting to flounder in this way. Why does he flounder? Because he wonders about the principle. Naturally, he hasn't the faintest idea that the principle is that there is no such thing as sexual relation. (p. 19–20.)

Man, woman, these are what are called sexual values. That man and woman should be there at the outset is first and foremost a matter of Language. [...] Language is such that the speaking being is either *he* or *she*. This exists in all the languages of the world. It is the principle behind the functioning of gender, feminine or masculine. (p. 28.)

It is in itself extraordinary that it doesn't seem farcical to state the myth in terms of an originary man who is purported to enjoy precisely what does not exist, namely all the women. This is not possible, not simply because clearly one has one's limits, but because there is no such thing as all the women. (p. 34.)

It is in so far as woman presents herself to the phallic function by way of an argument in contingency that what is involved in the sexual value *woman* can be articulated. (p. 36.)

Oedipus had no other woman but the very one who, for him, should not have existed. (p. 88.)

When I say that our *jouissance* is derived only from the Other, what is important is not the relation between what enjoys and what we might think of as our Being. What is important is that we do not derive *jouissance* from it sexually – there is no such thing as sexual relation – nor is *jouissance* derived from us in this way. (p. 98.)

It is by speaking that one makes love. (p. 133.)

You just have to break up the wording. In order to say this, it can only say either *y en a*, *there is*, and, as I say, *Yad'lun*, or else, *pas deux*, *not twain*, which for us is immediately interpreted – there is no such thing as sexual relation. (p. 162)

[...] speech was an effect of filling in the open gap that I've been articulating as – there is no such thing as sexual relation. That can be rattled off smoothly just like that, a subjectivist interpretation, because it cannot be brought round to the fact that it requires some spiel. It's all quite straightforward. (p. 163.)

This is what Freud tells us in the cock-and-bull story of *Totem and Total Bull*. What does castration mean? It means that it leaves everything to be desired. It means nothing but that. To think this through, that is to say, to think this through on the basis of woman, there has to be one who leaves nothing to be desired. This is the story of the Oedipus myth. (p. 184.)

There is no such thing as a sexual relationship. (p. 184.)

It is with *objet a* that we are in relation. There is no such thing as a sexual relationship. (p. 185–186.)

There's no such thing as a sexual relationship because one's *jouissance* of the Other taken as a body is always inadequate – perverse, on the one hand, insofar as the Other is reduced to object *a*, and crazy and enigmatic, on the other. (p. 202.)

Bluntly to tell the truth that is inscribed by dint of Freud's statements on sexuality, there is no such thing as sexual relation. (p. 217.)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge (1972-1973).

[...] love demands love. It never stops (*ne cesse pas*) demanding it. It demands it. . . *encore*. "Encore" is the proper name of the gap (*faille*) in the Other from which the demand for love stems. (p. 4)

The intersection I am talking about is the same one I put forward earlier as being that which covers or poses an obstacle to the supposed sexual relationship. Only “supposed,” since I state that analytic discourse is premised solely on the statement that there is no such thing, that it is impossible to found (*poser*) a sexual relationship. [...] Named here is the point that covers the impossibility of sexual relationship as such. Jouissance, qua sexual, is phallic – in other words, it is not related to the Other as such. (p. 9)

The only truth that can be indisputable because it is not, that there’s no such thing as a sexual relationship – perhaps doesn’t allow one in any way to judge what is and what is not stupidity. (p. 12)

When one loves, it has nothing to do with sex. (p. 25)

What constitutes the basis of life, in effect, is that for everything having to do with the relations between men and women, what is called collectivity, it’s not working out (*ça ne va pas*). It’s not working out, and the whole world talks about it, and a large part of our activity is taken up with saying so. (p. 32)

Everything that is written stems from the fact that it will forever be impossible to write, as *such*, the sexual relationship. (p. 35)

Man and a woman, [...] are nothing but signifiers. (p. 39)

I posit, there’s no such thing as a sexual relationship. To say, thus, that everything succeeds does not stop us from saying “not-everything succeeds” (*pas-tout réussit*), for it is in the same manner – it fails (*ça rate*). It’s not a matter of analyzing how it succeeds. It’s a matter of repeating until you’re blue in the face why it fails. (p. 58)

Now, if there’s no such thing as a sexual relationship, we must see in what respect the jouissance of the body can serve a purpose here. (p. 71)

There’s no such thing as Woman, Woman with a capital *W* indicating the universal. There’s no such thing as Woman because, in her essence – I’ve already risked using that term, so why should I think twice about using it again? – she is not-whole. (p. 72)

[Woman] being not-whole, she has a supplementary jouissance compared to what the phallic function designates by way of jouissance. (p. 73)

[...] there's no such thing as a sexual relation. It's only speaking bodies, as I said, that come up with an idea of the world as such. The world, the world of being, full of knowledge, is but a dream, a dream of the body insofar as it speaks, for there's no such thing as a knowing subject (*il n'y a pas de sujet connaissant*). (p. 129)

That's why, in any relationship of man with a woman – she who is in question (*en cause*) – it is from the perspective of the One-missing (*l'Une-en-moins*) that she must be taken up. (p. 129)

There's no such thing as a sexual relationship because one's jouissance of the Other taken as a body is always inadequate – perverse, on the one hand, insofar as the Other is reduced to object *a*, and crazy and enigmatic, on the other [...] Regarding one's partner, love can only actualize what, in a sort of poetic flight, in order to make myself understood, I called courage – courage with respect to this fatal destiny. But is it courage that is at stake or pathways of recognition? That recognition is nothing other than the way in which the relationship said to be sexual – that has now become a subject-to-subject relationship, the subject being but the effect of unconscious knowledge – stops not being written. (p. 144)

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIII, The Sinthome (1975-1976). Cambridge: Polity, 2016).

S of barred A is something altogether different from Φ . It is not that with which man makes love. In the end, he makes love with his unconscious, and nothing more. (p. 107–108)

Écrits

“A Theoretical Introduction to the Functions of Psychoanalysis in Criminology” (1950). In: *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 102–122. New York: Norton, 2006.

On the basis of the confession we hear from the neurotic or pervert of the ineffable jouissance he finds in losing himself in the fascinating image, we can gauge the power of a hedonism that introduces us to the ambiguous relations between reality and pleasure. If, in referring to these two grand principles, we are tracing out the direction of normative development, how can we not but be struck by the importance of fantasmatic functions in the grounds for this progression, and by how captive human life remains to the narcissistic illusion with which it weaves, as we know, life’s “realest” coordinates? And, on the other hand, isn’t everything already weighed out next to the cradle in the incommensurable scales of Strife and Love? (p. 122)

“Guiding Remarks for a Convention of Female Sexuality” (1960). In: *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 610–620. New York: Norton, 2006.

The passivity of the act does not at all correspond to this desire; female sexuality appears, instead, as the effort of a jouissance enveloped in its own contiguity (of which any circumcision perhaps indicates the symbolic break) in order to be realised in competition with the desire that castration liberates in the male in giving him the phallus as its signifier. (p. 619)

“The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” (1960). In: *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 671–702. New York: Norton, 2006.

We must keep in mind that jouissance is prohibited [*interdite*] to whoever speaks, as such—or, put differently, it can only be said [*dite*] between the lines by whoever is a subject of the Law, since the Law is founded on that very prohibition. (p. 696)

The shift of $(-\varphi)$ as phallic image from one side to the other of the equation between the imaginary and the symbolic renders it positive in any case, even if it fills a lack. Although it props up $(-\varphi)$, it becomes Φ there, the symbolic phallus that cannot be negativized, the signifier of jouissance. And it is this characteristic of Φ that explains both the particularities of women's approach to sexuality, and what makes the male sex the weaker sex with regard to perversion. (p. 697)

Castration means that jouissance has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire. (p. 700)

“Kant with Sade” (1963). In: *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 645–668. New York: Norton, 2006.

But this discourse is no less determinant for the subject of the statement, giving rise to him with each addressing of its equivocal content: since jouissance, shamelessly avowed in its very purpose, becomes one pole in a couple, the other pole being in the hole that jouissance already drills in the Other's locus in order to erect the cross of Sadean experience in it. (p. 650)

Pleasure, a rival of the will in Kant's system that provides a stimulus, is thus in Sade's work no more than a flagging [defaillant] accomplice. At the moment of climax [jouissance], it would simply be out of the picture if fantasy did not intervene to sustain it with the very discord to which it succumbs. (p. 652)

Were the right to jouissance recognized, it would consign the domination of the pleasure principle to an obsolete era. In enunciating this right, Sade imperceptibly displaces for each of us the ancient axis of ethics, which is but the egoism of happiness. (p. 663)

“Discourse to Catholics” (1960). In: *The Triumph of Religion*, p. 3–52. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

Man is ever more impotent to meet up anew with his own desire, and this impotence can go so far that he loses its carnal triggering. Even when the latter remains available, this man no longer knows how to find the object of his desire and no longer encounters anything but unhappiness in his search, living in an anguish that progressively shrinks what one might call his chance to invent. (p. 10)

The Thing is thus that which – in any living being that discourse comes to inhabit and that offers itself up in speech – marks the place where he suffers from the fact that language manifests itself in the world. In this way, being appears everywhere that the Eros of life encounters the limit of its unitive impulse [*tendance*]. (p. 41–42)

The singular – I am searching here for a French equivalent of the English term «odd» – role of the phallus in the fundamental disparity of its function, the virile function, is situated in the two ways of surmounting the Other’s castration. Its dialectic [in masculinity] seems to have to involve the formulation «He is not without having it,» whereas femininity is subject to an early experience of deprivation in order to wind up wishing to make the phallus be symbolically in the product of childbirth, whether this product turns out to have it or not. (p. 45)

This is why, whereas a woman may be secretly content deep down with the person who satisfies both her need and this lack, a man, seeking his want-to-be beyond his need – which is nevertheless so much better assured than a woman’s – is inclined toward inconstancy, or, more exactly, toward a duplicating of the object, whose affinities with what there is by way of fetishism in homosexuality have been very curiously explored in analytic practice, if not always correctly and well put together in psychoanalytic theory. (p. 46–47)

“The Triumph of Religion” (1974). In: *The Triumph of Religion*, p. 55–85. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

I don’t know if you are aware of this, but psychoanalysis is concerned especially with what doesn’t work. Because of this, it concerns itself with what we must call by its name – I must say that I am still the only one who has called it by this name – the real. (p. 61)

We will never get to the bottom of the relationship between speaking beings that we sexuate [sexuons] as male and the speaking beings we sexuate as woman. Here we get into a serious muddle. This is even what specifies what we call human beings. (p. 78)

Talking to Brick Walls (1971-1972). Cambridge: Polity, 2017.

Freud's text is an exceedingly fine one. [...] He picks up the scent. He senses that there is something to be dealt with in depth. Indeed, what stands to be gone into in depth – and this is the fifth point, which I've been setting out this year in my Seminar – is stated thus – *there is no sexual relation*. (p. 26)

One would just have to get down to some good fucking to demonstrate to me the contrary (that there is sexual relation). Unfortunately, this is something that demonstrates absolutely nothing of the sort because the notion of relation does not altogether coincide with the metaphorical use that is made of the unqualified word relation, as in they had sexual relations. (p. 26–27)

One can only speak seriously in terms of relation, not simply when a discourse establishes relation, but when relation is stated. The real is there before we think about it, but relation is far more doubtful. Not only do you have to think it through, but also you have to write it down. If you're not bloody capable of writing it down, there's no relation. (p. 27)

It would perhaps be quite remarkable if it were borne out, long enough for it to start to be clarified a little, that it is impossible to write down what would be involved in sexual relation. (p. 27)

In speaking beings there is a range that is altogether admirable in its spread around this relation, inasmuch as this relation is grounded on jouissance. (p. 28)

Everything that can be done to treat a body, particularly one's own body, in a suitable way partakes to some degree of sexual jouissance. However, sexual jouissance itself, when you want to put your finger on it, if I can express it like that, is no longer sexual in the least. It has been lost. (p. 28)

Jouissance is in no sense absolute because, first of all, as such it is doomed to these different forms of failure constituted by castration for male jouissance and by division for female jouissance. On the other hand, what jouissance leads to has strictly nothing to do with copulation in so far as the latter is, let's say, the usual manner – this is going to change – by which reproduction occurs in the species of speaking beings. (p. 29)

In other words, there is a thesis – there is no sexual relation. I'm speaking about the speaking being. There is an antithesis, which is the reproduction of life. This is a well-known theme, and is the current banner of the Catholic Church, for which we should salute its stamina. The Catholic Church asserts that there is a sexual relation, the one that culminates in producing little children. (p. 29–30)

But there is certainly no sexual relation because speech functions on a level that happens to have been uncovered, by way of the psychoanalytic discourse, as specifying the speaking being, namely the pre-eminence of everything that will turn sex into semblance, the semblance of blokes and of *bonnes femmes*, as people used to say after the last war. (p. 56)

It turns out that sexual jouissance may be articulated in a coupling of duration, or even one that is momentary, solely if it involves an encounter with castration, which possesses no dimension except in lalingua [*lalangua*]. (p. 57)

No one seems to have noticed that the question lies at the level of the entire dimension of jouissance, namely, the speaking being's relation to his body, for there is no other possible definition of jouissance. (p. 57–58)

It's quite clear that the only question, the very interesting question, is how lalingua, which for the moment we can say is correlative to the disjunction of sexual jouissance, bears an evident relation to something of the real. (p. 69)

Entre l'homme et la femme / Il y a l'amour. [Between man and woman / There is love.] Why, of course! There is but that. And, *Entre l'homme et l'amour / Il y a un monde.* [Between man and love / There is a world.] When one says *there is a world*, it means, *as for you, you'll never get there*. Even so, at the start it says, *Entre l'homme et la femme / Il y a l'amour*. Between man and woman, there is love. This means that it bonds. A world, meanwhile, floats. Yet when it comes to *Il y a un mur* [there is a wall], you will have understood that *entre* [between] means interposition, because it's very ambiguous, this *entre*. (p. 93)

Between man and the world – this world that is substituted for the volatilization of the sexual partner – *there is a wall*. The wall is the site at which the turning back occurs, which the other day I introduced as the signifier of the junction between truth and knowledge. (p. 96–97)

“Television” (1973). In: *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, edited by Joan Copjec

It is striking that this meaning reduces to non-sense: the non-sense of the sexual relation, something that love stories have, throughout time, made obvious. (p. 8)

Freud also stumbles on this point [of the real Father]: because his allegation with respect to Eros, insofar as he opposes it to Thanatos, as the principle of “life,” is that of unifying, as if, apart from a brief coiteration, one had ever seen two bodies unite into one. (p. 23)

The sexual impasse [*impasse*] exudes the fictions that rationalize the impossible within which it originates. I don’t say they are imagined; like Freud, I read in them the invitation to the real that underwrites them. (p. 30)

“The Place, Origin and End of My Teaching” (year). In: *My Teaching*, p. 3–55. London: Verso, 2008.

What is within reach is the fact that sexuality makes a hole in truth. (p. 21)

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Jacques-Alain Miller

Hurly-Burly

“When the Cure Stops and When it Does Not Stop” (2009). *Hurly-Burly*, n. 2 (2009): 67–71.

As a matter of fact, later on Lacan accepted the Freudian dead end in his own way when he said “there is no sexual relation” or better said, “there are no sexual formulae”. There he just encounters in his way what Freud is saying at the end of his famous text [*Analysis Terminable and Interminable*]. What kind of ending is that? He just says that you have to accept that you are not powerless because you are not totally a man or a woman; that it is impossible to be correctly a man for a woman or a woman for a man, so you should accept it. (p.

“Towards a Demonstration of the Absence of Knowledge in the Real” (2012). *Hurly-Burly*, n. 7 (2012): 107-117.

That is to say that, at this level, there is nothing of what is known as instinct, instinct that typically and invariably directs each member of a species towards its partner. Desire can in no way stand in for it, because desire is a question. Desire is the perplexity over the question. Nor does the drive stand in for it, because it gives no assurance whatsoever about the Other at the sexual level. (p. 115)

If there is a symptom, then there is no knowledge in the real concerning sexuality. (p. 115)

In other words, the specific constancy that we can always spot in the analytic experience is precisely *contingency*. What we spot as a constancy is this very variability. Variability means something. It means precisely that, in this respect, there is no knowledge pre-inscribed in the real, and this contingency determines the subject’s mode of jouissance. (p. 115)

This is how it brings to the fore the absence of knowledge in the real, what sexuality and jouissance are at issue. It brings to the fore a certain *it wasn’t written, it just happens*. (p. 116)

“The Other Without the Other” (2013). *Hurly-Burly*, n. 10 (2013): 15–29.

[...] in a certain way, the paternal metaphor writes the sexual relation in the form of virile predominance over the feminine maternal position, and he refuted it with the theorem “there is no sexual relation”. This theorem shatters the notion of the symbolic order. (p. 23)

“The Unconscious and the Speaking Body” (2014). *Hurly-Burly*, n. 12 (2015): 119–132.

There is no better indicator of the absence of sexual relation *in the real* than the imaginary profusion of the body as it devotes itself to being given and being taken. (p. 121)

The Lacanian Review

“Truth is Coupled with Meaning” (2009). *The Lacanian Review*, issue 2 (2016) 9–20.

Making jouissance into a master signifier is also to neglect the opposition (which still applies, of course) between sexual jouissance, the jouissance that stems from the relationship with another sexuated being, and autistic jouissance, the jouissance of the body proper. (p. 19)

“Extimate enemies” (year). *The Lacanian Review*, issue 3 (2017): p. 30–42.

The efficiency of the discourse of science also seems to explain the current resurgence of the discourse of tradition. The rise of Islam, for example. It is one solution. As is Catholicism which, by the way, is also finding a second wind. This is because all of these traditions include prescriptions on what the sexual relation should be. Therein lies the root of their power, of their contemporary efficiency in relation to the discourse of science. (p. 38)

“The Signature of the Symptoms” (2017). *The Lacanian Review*, issue 11 (2021): 27–47.

What is this universal rule? A very particular universal, to be specific, the absence of a rule. It is an implicit universal, an unwritten formula, let's say the absence of a program, of a sexual software. It is what Lacan called the sexual non-rapport, that is to say the negative universal, unwritten, applicable to the human species. (p. 41)

This expression translates, ultimately, the fact that differing from the other animal species, the mode of sexual rapport between members of the human species is especially open to variation, to truth and to lying, to contingency and to invention. This is also something evident that results from the Freudian experience. The subject is always forced to invent his mode of relation to sex, without being guided by any natural programming. (p. 41)

This invented mode of relation, always particular, intrinsically wonky, is the symptom, which comes at the place of this natural relation that is not there. The sexual liaison is always established symptomatically. (p. 41)

[“Lacan Clinician” \(2022\). *The Lacanian Review*, issue 12 \(2022\): 100–137.](#)

There are certainly sexual relations between men and women. But the problem, what Lacan meant with his aphorism *There is no sexual relation*, is that there is no fixed, invariable relation in the human species that can be written down, by which a woman or a man would recognize the other as being his necessary complement. This is why there is room for invention. Countless social practices have been invented throughout history to enable men and women to have relationships in the absence of a fixed, invariable relation. It should also be noted that humans are not very inventive in this area. (p. 125)

As for the perversions, if they come in place of the sexual relationship, which is neither written nor pre-established, their catalogue is no less extremely limited. Lacan said more than once (I don't know if his audience understood him, but it's consistent with what I'm saying now): *one might expect psychoanalysis to invent a new perversion*, that is to say, a new way of approaching relations between man and woman. Clinically, this relationship, which is anything but fixed and invariable, is not the subject of any *How To* guide. Our scientific age tries to deal with it in a purely technical way. But the recipes and recommendations of sexology appear rather as a renewed form of what was once expected from the ancient and oriental wisdoms (which had their hour of glory), i.e. a certain know-how concerning sexual jouissance. (p. 125)

[“Salvation Through Waste” \(2010\). *The Lacanian Review*, n. 14 \(2023\): 39–51.](#)

For what Lacan designates as the Thing is already a sublimated version of jouissance. This sublimation is already designated by two words: the verb to *raise* and the substantive *dignity*. Now, jouissance as such does not raise anything up. It is naked, it is raw (i.e. the opposite of cooked), it has no dignity to drape itself in. The Thing aimed at by Lacan is the idealized jouissance, cleaned, emptied, reduced to lack, to castration, to the absence of sexual relation.

Psychoanalytical Notebooks

“The Seminar of Barcelona” (1996). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 1 (1998): 11–65.

The sexual sense of symptoms, which Freud makes an effort in this lecture to demonstrate, can be located as the navel of every symptom, 'the initial material' from which the symptom is nourished. It is, what Freud calls the 'sexual as traumatic'. In this Seminar, Lacan calls this 'the sexual relation which does not exist' (Ornicar? 17 / 18, p.8) and qualifies it as a truth. This would be a *verité* (truth) from which a *verité, variable*, will be constructed: that of the symptoms in the radicalness of sexual meaning. (p. 41)

“Return from Granada: Knowledge and Satisfaction” (1989). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 2 (1999): 75–90.

Well, the replies that the unconscious invents, and which can be classed as neurosis, perversion and psychosis, constitute a knowledge invented in the place of the knowledge that there is no sexual relation. It is obviously because there is no sexual relation that one can invent it in diverse ways, just as with the Temple of Solomon. One can always say to oneself – would that not be it, the sexual relation, by any chance? (p. 87)

“Of Semblants in Relation Between the Sexes” (1992). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 3 (1999): 9–25.

The 'Lacanian' man, as he is depicted throughout the seminars and the *Écrits*, is, on the contrary, a heavily clogged being, burdened and embarrassed by having. Having is for him a burden, and, since he has something to lose, he is condemned to prudence. The Lacanian man is fundamentally fearful. And, if he goes to war, it is to escape from women, to escape from the hole. Thus, men are not without semblants but they are there in order to protect their little having. This is not the case with the semblant properly speaking, the feminine semblant, which is, *stricto sensu*, the mask of the lack. (p. 17)

“The Semblant and the Real” (1998). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 9 (2002): 9–28.

This means that concerning access to the other sex (as I translate it), there is no programme inscribed in the real. The proposition according to which sexuality makes a hole in the real is what radicalises what Lacan uncovers on the basis of the latency period, and it is the principle of a new universal proposition, such as, for example, if it fails in sexuality, it fails for each one of us. Or again, nobody has it easy, which implies a universal failure. (p. 23)

[The formulation] ‘there is no sexual relation’, which designates, targets the real where there is no knowledge, in other words a real which resists signifierisation, the signifying *Aufhebung*, and that the phallic *Aufhebung* leaves precisely to one side. (p. 23)

“Lacan with Joyce” (1996). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 13 (2005): 7–32.

When Lacan remarked that Freud ‘imagined that truth was the traumatic kernel’, it is in order to contradict him on this point: this so called kernel, which is the key to Lecture XXIII, has no existence. ‘There is (...) nothing but the apprenticeship which the subject has been subjected to of one language amongst others.’ What does he want to say by this? That the true traumatic kernel is not the seduction, the threat of castration, the observation of coitus, nor even the transformation of the status of all this into a fantasy, it is not the Oedipus or castration. The true traumatic kernel is the relation to language. This is what Joyce brings to light. Nobody could read Joyce saying: we are going to account for this text through Joyce’s infantile images. On the contrary Joyce’s work shows that the true traumatic kernel for each one of us is the relation to language. (p. 15)

“Theory of Caprice” (2000). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, issue 21 (2010): 17–31.

It’s precisely in so far as the place of the master is a make-believe place that, contrary to what is thought, it suits a woman perfectly, precisely because there are affinities between woman and make-believe due to a certain number of small difficulties of being which are particular to her. (p. 30)

“From the Neurone to the Knot” (2008). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, issue 22 (2011): 109–120.

He thought that he was thereby pitting the real proper to psychoanalysis, in the shape of a real that would not contain a knowledge and that would carry the knowledge of the unconscious, against the real of science which does contain a knowledge. But it would specifically carry the absence of law, it would precisely carry the hole of this knowledge. There is no sexual relation is the notion of an absence of law. Sexual law cannot be written. (p. 119)

This was when the term 'contingency' became a watchword instead of the word 'cause'. Lacan placed this contingency at the level of observation, which is confirmed by the analysand's discourse, by the analytic experience, and by the multiplicity of modes that vouch for the way in which the two sexes enter into relation. There is a clinical multiplicity, and let's say that in its synthetic form, by virtue of the fact that contingency never flags, it allows us to take it as demonstrating the impossibility of writing a law in this place. (p. 119)

What could be considered here as an impotence of the analytic discourse to formulate the sexual relation is treated by Lacan as an impossibility. Analysis becomes the very locus at which the unconscious attests to this real, a real, if you will, without knowledge. (p. 120)

“Spare Parts” (2004). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 27 (2013): 87–117.

The Borromean real, the real that is exterior to the symbolic, is the generalisation of the hole that Lacan first approached at the level of sexuality. It is this generalisation that is included in the surprising statement to be found in the Seminar *Le Sinthome*: «The real is [...] lawless» or «the real [...] doesn't tie up with anything». It is a real in which there is no relation whatsoever. This is the amplification of what had first been broached, in this tearing, at the sexual level. This is how what Lacan formulates back in the opening lines of this Seminar needs to be heard: “Nature [is] a potpourri of what lies outside nature». This is the very formula for the generalisation of the absence of sexual relation. (p. 104)

“Six Paradigms of Jouissance” (1999). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 34 (2019): 11–77.

In giving you this schema, I thematise as such the concept of non-rapport that Lacan puts to work with regard to the sexual, making us repeat: *There is no sexual rapport*. The surprise on reading his seminar *Encore*, when one was acquainted with Lacan, when one got into the spirit of his teaching, comes with the evident extension of this concept of non-rapport, which needs to be set against that of structure. (p. 66)

The seminar *Encore* introduces another kind of relation that limits the empire of structure. This other type of relation needs to be generalized. It is the non-rapport which shakes up everything that we were mistakenly inclined to consider as given under the banner of structure: the articulation S1-S2 in so far as it has signifying effects, the Other as prescribing the condition of all experience, and also the paternal metaphor, the nodal articulation of the Freudian Oedipus, which is part of the structural order, that is to say, of a relation that is taken as given, a given relation that, of necessity, never ceases to be written. (p. 67)

[W]ould it not rather be a case of non-rapport, that is to say, a relation made up of routine or invention? (p. 67)

The empire of the non-rapport, in Lacan’s final teaching, goes on to question the pertinence of trying to operate on jouissance on the basis of speech and meaning. This indication is like the summit of what the empire of the non-rapport is capable of, and, in this respect, the invention of the psychoanalytic discourse as well. (p. 67–68)

This reinvention is what we are invited to by this sixth paradigm, that based on the non-rapport. The starting point for this perspective is not ‘there is no sexual rapport’ but on the contrary a ‘there is’ – there is jouissance. (p. 68)

It is quite another thing to start from the evidence that ‘there is jouissance’. There is jouissance as the property of a living body. This is a definition which brings back jouissance exclusively to a living body. All there is for psychoanalysis is a living body – one that speaks, of course. (p.69)

This point of departure which privileges jouissance is by itself enough to establish the non-rapport between jouissance and Other. (p.69)

“*There is no sexual rapport*” means that jouissance as such comes under the sway of the One, that it is jouissance One, whilst sexual jouissance, the jouissance of the body of the Other sex, has the distinction of being specified by an impasse, by a disjunction and by a non-rapport. This is what allows Lacan to say that jouissance has nothing to do with a sexual relationship. (p.75–76)

Jouissance as such is One, it falls under the One, and it does not, of itself, set up a relation to the Other. “*There is no sexual rapport*” means that jouissance is basically idiotic and solitary. (p. 76)

“**Milanese Intuitions**” (2002). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, issue 34 (2019): 81–134.

It is above all a question of the end of analysis at the level of the drive. And drive satisfaction has no opposite. And so the reference here is not to a crossing but to the passage from one operating regime to another. The famous formula “there is no sexual rapport” is inscribed within this framework. This formula signals the definitive erasure of the norm that secretly ruled psychoanalysis, which was precisely the norm of the sexual rapport. The exit from what kept psychoanalysis in the disciplinary era is achieved through the formula: “there is no sexual rapport”. And we must complete this formula: “there is nothing but jouissance”. (p. 103)

“The unconscious is politics” is related to what bonds and opposes “men”, in quotation marks, to one another, that is to say the unconscious is of the order of the social bond. It is this conception that, a few years later in the teaching of Lacan, will be put into matheme by the cycle of discourses. The unconscious is of the order of the social bond – let’s introduce this gloss – precisely because there is no sexual relation. We could go so far as to say that where there is sexual relation, where the sexual bond is programmed, well then, there is no society. (p. 111)

“**A Fantasy**” (2004). *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, n. 34 (2019): 139–173.

So is Lacanian practice playing [is] playing its part in relation to the new reals that the discourse of hypermodern civilisation gives evidence of. It is playing its part in the dimension of a real that fails, in such a way that the relation between the two sexes is going to become more and more impossible. (p. 158)

[...] sexuality makes a hole in this knowledge. This is a transformation of Freud, probably, and it means forming a new alliance between science and psychoanalysis that rests on the non-relation. (p. 167)

That the sexual rapport makes a hole in the real can be expressed simply like this: the software fails at this point. This is the principle of a practice or of a clinic in which the symptoms are not troubles or disorders, because at that point there is no order. That means that the knowledge in the real does not dictate its law and we cannot intervene at that point starting from the knowledge in the real. This is a negative statement that calls for positive statements, and I will have to make a choice, because I am at the end of my talk. (p. 168)

First, symptoms are symptoms of the sexual non-rapport. This means that they are no doubt articulated into signifiers, but that is secondary, it is their chitter-chatter. Symptoms are not essentially messages. They are above all signs of the sexual non-rapport, possibly punctuation marks. Lacan spoke of symptoms as question marks in the sexual non-rapport. Yesterday, I heard a patient say that what remained for her of anxiety was linked to her body like a comma, like a pause in respiration. So, symptoms are signs. That is an approach other than the one that treats them as messages. (p. 169)

Lacanian Ink

[“The Economics of Jouissance” \(2009\). *Lacanian Ink*, n. 38 \(2011\): 6–63.](#)

Love remains. Love, which Lacan does not tear from its imaginary root when he says that it is love that creates the illusion of a sexual relationship. This is what properly distinguishes jouissance and love. There is a jouissance in talking about love, in experiencing love, in writing love letters – or emails, obviously. This jouissance is at the same time the most distant and the closest one, topologically, to the sexual relation which does not exist. (p. 48)

“Today, Without Lacan, It’s Dead Calm” (2023). Interview with Jacques-Alain Miller, originally published in *Libération*. March 2, 2023. Available on the NLS website.

So, Lacan begins by putting emphasis on the sexual act, its quality as an act. It would reveal the essence of what it is to be a man, to be a woman. It would be the moment when both would be fully what they are. Now, to everyone’s surprise – I attended this seminar – there comes a sudden reversal! Here Lacan exclaims: “There is no sexual act”. This means that, contrary to what he previously thought, he was led to conclude that the sexual act did not have the characteristic properties of an act, that in no way does it assure that the woman and the man each possess a determined essence, even if at the level of gametes and chromosomes, there are two sexes, perfectly differentiated.

The real in the sense of psychoanalysis, is something else totally: it is that the feminine and the masculine can never be defined in a univocal way at the level of the unconscious. Their definitions are indeed blurred by plural, contingent and contradictory identifications. Unlike animals, the partner is never specified, and copulation always consists of some failure. The common experience of sexuality – torn, often guilty, capricious and sometimes “fluid” as we would say today – does not show anything equivalent to biological binarism, which is immutable and inert. Lacan underlines in the seminar the abyss between the two.

In summary, he says, the speaking being has a fundamentally disturbed relationship with his own body. All norms are lacking here, there is a radical discontinuity between the subject and the body; no native harmony. In short, in my opinion, and however surprising it may seem, it is impossible to conceptualize transition without going through Lacan. It’s in the hole hollowed out by the absence of the sexual act that genders proliferate.

Analysis Laid Bare [L’Os d’une Cure]. New York: Lacanian Press, 2023.

At the sexual level, there is precisely no necessary signifying rapport between one and the other, but there are relations established in contingency (p. 70)

As for what is established at the sexual level, we are not talking about rapport or proportion (a mathematical term implying necessity) that we will keep for what concerns the level of the signifier, but about relation. This relation pertains to jouissance, that of the body and that of language. It pertains to the symptom. (p. 70)

Let us now enter the dimension of the partner-symptom as the bone of an analysis. Not being able to rely on a signifying rapport at the sexual level, the couple relies on a relation at the level of jouissance. (p. 70)

The formula *There is no sexual rapport* means that parlêtres as sexuated beings make a couple not at the level of the pure signifier, but at the level of jouissance, and this liaison is always symptomatic. (p. 72)