

GAGNEPAIN AND LACAN

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Introduction

The article “Lonergan and Gagnepain: The Human Sciences in Question”¹ distributed prior to the meeting was not directly concerned with Lacan but if you read it – in particular the section entitled “Who is Jean Gagnepain” which presents a brief overview of Gagnepain's theory – you may have recognized some family resemblances between Gagnepain's thought and that of Lacan.

As a point of departure for my presentation this morning, I will point to some of these family resemblances between Lacan and Gagnepain. That done, I will complete this first, introductory section of my presentation by recalling Gagnepain's conception of the deconstruction of human rationality and the conception of the human sciences which is its corollary, since these must guide any comparison of Gagnepain's positions and those of Lacan.

That introductory section will provide a backdrop for looking more closely, in section two, at some of the differences between Gagnepain and Lacan. Here I am going to concentrate on the dialectic of the person which I will lay out in some detail. There are several reasons for this. This third, socio-historic plane of reason, is the one closest to Lacan (if I can put it that way), the one where Gagnepain most clearly draws upon Lacan, and the one probably most familiar to you. Many of my references earlier, e.g., Lacan's interest in psychosis, his use of Levi-Strauss, etc., principally concern it.

Secondly, all the other planes of reason, though autonomous and independent of the person, nonetheless must also be appropriated by the person socially-historically in the process of moving from infancy to adulthood. For this reason, many of the central psychoanalytic and Lacanian notions show up here at least incidentally so I can comment upon some of them as they arise in discussing the dialectic of the person. And since Gagnepain's theory of mediation is a clinical anthro-

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pology, I will sketch out the main lines of his understanding of the pathologies of the person, notably the psychoses and the perversions.

Finally, in a third, much briefer, section, I will examine another point of difficulty for many Lacanians, namely, the intersection of the glossological plane of reason (speech) and the normative plane of reason (desire) and what is at issue in the whole area of jokes, double entendres, slips of the tongue, as well as in the inhibitions of the neurotics and the lack of same in psychopaths.

In none of this will I be exhaustive, far from it: Lacan is far too complex a thinker to be easily reduced to a few points for the sake of a comparison, and so is Gagnepain. There is inevitably a danger of oversimplifying on both sides of the ledger. It is a danger I accept, confident that, at least insofar as Lacan is concerned, you will be glad to point out how badly I have misunderstood what Lacan says. Meanwhile, though very far from an exhaustive study of the intersections of Gagnepain's thought with that of Lacan (and Freud), I hope I may be able to give you some idea of where and why Gagnepain differs from Lacan and why I think many of the basic Lacanian notions need to be revisited and revised in the light of the theory of mediation, among them: language, sexuality, desire, alterity, discours, castration, the super-ego, law, etc.

1 Some family resemblances between Lacan and Gagnepain²

Perhaps the first thing to emphasize in this group is the importance of the clinic to both thinkers. As others have pointed out, there is a long clinical tradition in France going back to Théodule Ribot who already in 1909 talked about the clinic as “an experiment of the most subtle kind” able to enlighten us on the functioning of “the mechanism of the spirit”. He speaks of pathology as a ‘scalpel’ and a ‘magnifying glass’³. Lacan began his psychiatric career with a deep interest in the psychiatric clinic of the psychoses, the subject of his dissertation, and throughout his career the reference to the clinic, for him as for Freud, remained fundamental. This is also true of Gagnepain. His interest in developing a clinical linguistics and eventually a clinical anthropology also began in the clinic – in his case, the clinic of aphasia. For both Lacan and Gagnepain, as for Freud, the pathologies studied in the clinic can reveal, as Freud put it, “articulations normally present”⁴.

² In this section, I have drawn upon an unpublished paper by Jean-Claude Quentel.

³ Théodule Ribot, *De la méthode dans les sciences* (1909), cited by Guyard and Urien, “Des troubles du langage à la pluralité des raisons”, in *Le Débat*, n°140, mai-août 2006, p. 86.

⁴ Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lessons*, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (hereafter: S.E.), Vol. XXII, p. 57-58 : “On the other hand, we are familiar with the notion that pathology, by making things larger and coarser, can draw our attention to to normal conditions which would otherwise have escaped us. Where it points to a breach or rent, there may normally be an articulation present.”

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But there is a significant difference in their understandings of the clinic. For Lacan and Freud, the clinic, though it has an essential relation to theory, and theory to it, remains nonetheless a place of therapy. For Gagnepain, there is also an essential and reciprocal relation between the clinic and theory, but for Gagnepain the clinic remains a place of theory and experimentation, e.g. a place where the theory can be verified, rather than a place of therapy. In that sense, Lacan's clinic is therapeutic, Gagnepain's experimental. Gagnepain jokes that psychoanalysts want to cure patients whereas he, Gagnepain, wants them to stay sick as long as possible!⁵

Gagnepain shares with Lacan an interest in psychic reality and a rejection of the Bergsonian tradition of *les données immédiates de la conscience*. Like Lacan, Gagnepain recognizes that theoretical explanations are on another level than that of the immediately given. For Freud and Lacan that other level means of course the unconscious. For Gagnepain this is also true in a certain sense, but for him the unconscious, like any human phenomena, must be deconstructed, and he will distinguish four principles of causality, not one, in seeking to elaborate a science of psychic life. In general, though, he shares with Lacan the clear recognition that a science requires, not a comprehension in the sense of Jaspers, but an explanation, that science, as Lacan put it, "seeks behind the phenomena something more consistent which explains it."⁶

Interestingly if also anecdotally, as Jean-Claude Quentel points out, both Lacan and Gagnepain came to Freud relatively late in their intellectual development. Lacan's presentation at Marienbad took place when he was thirty-five. Gagnepain was also thirty-five when he came to Rennes in 1958 and shortly thereafter began to be seriously interested in Freud, initially in function of his interest in the aphasias. His interest in Lacan came a bit later, after the publication of *Écrits* in 1965 and the arrival of Pierre Kaufmann in Rennes in 1967. Kaufmann had been a student of Lacan's and helped introduce Gagnepain to Lacan's work.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that Lacan and Gagnepain share some common philosophic influences, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty – and Thomas Aquinas!

⁵ Jean Gagnepain, *Leçons d'introduction à la théorie de la médiation*, (hereafter: *Leçons*), (Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve 1994), p. 240 : "Pour moi par contre, moins le malade se guérit, plus je suis content, parce que cela me donne le temps d'étudier son trouble." ("For me, on other hand, the less the patient heals, the more pleased I am, because that gives me the time to study his illness.")

⁶ Lacan J., *Le Séminaire*. Livre III. Les Psychoses, (Le Seuil, Paris), 1981, p. 163. cf. also, *ibid.*, p. 216. Cited by Quentel J-C, *op. cit.* Vous connaissez la prétendue opposition de l'Erklären et de la Verstehen. Là, nous devons maintenir qu'il n'y a de structure scientifique que là où il y a Erklären." ("You are aware of the supposed opposition of Erklären and Verstehen. There we need to maintain that there is only a scientific structure there where there is Erklären")

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2 Some things Gagnepain owes to Lacan

Linguistics and the interpretation of Freud

After an early formation in mathematics, philosophy and classical languages, Gagnepain received his doctorate in linguistics, so when he first began to try to understand the clinical phenomena of aphasia he did so in order to develop a clinical linguistics. This work with aphasiacs led to his first important publication in this field, *Vers une approche linguistique des problèmes de l'Aphasie* (1963), published with Sabouraud; it appeared before Gagnepain became seriously interested in Lacan. Let me add that this article also contains a fundamental critique of Jacobson's work in this area.

Nonetheless, Gagnepain owes to Lacan an understanding of how linguistics can be brought to bear on the interpretation of Freud's work, notably in understanding the unconscious as a structure akin to the structures of language (*la langue*) discovered by De Saussure. Lacan was of course greatly influenced by Levi-Strauss in this regard and Gagnepain recognizes his own debt to both of them, especially in his elaboration of the socio-historic plane of rationality, that of the person. But Gagnepain was himself a linguist far more knowledgeable about De Saussure and linguistics than either Levi-Strauss or Lacan; moreover, his linguistics, which owes much to De Saussure, also involves a fundamental critique and revision of De Saussure and so it is not surprising that Gagnepain clearly marked his distance from both Levi-Strauss and Lacan, notably with regard to their over-reliance on phonology and the signifier to the neglect of semiology and the signified, and also with regard to the absence of a true dialectic in their thought, among other things.

Dialectic

Gagnepain was intrigued by Sartre's and the early Lacan's efforts, influenced by Kojève's lectures on Hegel, to understand psychic life in terms of dialectic. But in Levi-Strauss's appropriation of De Saussure's linguistics to structural anthropology and in Lacan's appropriation of Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology to psychoanalysis, the dialectical relation between rationality and nature tends to disappear in favor of a synchronic structure divorced from nature. De Saussure had postulated a rupture between nature and culture, the latter being grounded in the arbitrariness of a symbolic order irreducible to the order of nature. This notion of a fundamental rupture between nature and culture becomes a basic thesis of Levi-Strauss and Lacan. What is important for them is structure, not nature, and not dialectic. As Mettens⁷ points out, from 1945 on, any preoccupation with dialectic disappears, and the question of a dialectical return to nature is no longer raised.

⁷Mettens Pascal, "Freud, socio-biologiste malgré lui ?" in *L'Éthique Hors la Loi. Questions pour la psychanalyse*, Jeanine Le Poupon Pirard and others (De Boeck, Paris-Bruxelles, 1997), p. 68.

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Gagnepain on the other hand regards dialectic, along with structure, as an essential characteristic of human rationality. Gagnepain draws on Hegel and Marx to develop in his own way a dialectical conception of rationality that underlies not only sociology (the social-historic dimension of rationality) but also glossology, technology, and axiology (the grammatical, technical, and ethical dimensions of psychic life). Human rationality for Gagnepain is dialectical in all its modes. Though Gagnepain learned much from Lacan's efforts to understand Freud in terms of linguistics and anthropology, he also recognized that Lacan and Levi-Strauss neglect what is for Gagnepain an essential dimension of human rationality, namely, the dialectic of nature, structure, and performance.

Psychoses and the problems of identity

Lacan's example was especially important for Gagnepain in the case of the psychoses and the problems of identity that had been central to Lacan's doctoral dissertation and later to his efforts to understand psychoanalysis. As you know, Lacan emphasized in a way Freud had not done the importance of the psychoses for understanding psychic life and emphasized that the processes at work in psychosis, e.g. *forclusion*, were fundamentally different than those at work in neuroses, e.g. repression. Lacan also provided a fundamental critique of the evolutionist notion of genesis in Freud and the latter's repeated efforts to account for a beginning in terms of primal scenes and phantasms, primal repression, the primitive horde, etc. Instead of a genesis, Lacan provided a structure in and through which man can confront "the question of his identity (sexuated) and origins (familial)". At the same time Lacan came to interrogate the power of origination of the subject as a presence-absence. Gagnepain gives to this notion of absence a central role not only in his theory of the person but also, analogously, on the other planes of reason as well.

Ecrits appeared about the same time that Gagnepain was grappling with the differences between problems of speech manifest in aphasia and problems of communication manifest in schizophrenia and paranoia. Lacan showed that psychosis marks a radical disruption of our being-in-the-world, notably of our relations to, and identifications with, others. Gagnepain builds on Lacan and develops his own theory of the pathologies of alterity – alienation in the case of the psychoses, alteration in the case of the perversions – in his theory of the person. I will return to this later.

Language and lack

Gagnepain says in a number of places that Lacan understood the nature of language better than almost all the linguists of his generation. Gagnepain was impressed with Lacan's analysis of the "Fort-Da" episode, particularly with Lacan's emphasis on negativity, lack, absence at the heart of language. (Lacan loads up his analysis of "Fort-Da" with a lot of other baggage which, as we will see, Gagnepain does not agree

^s Mettens, *Ibid.*

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with.) Like Lacan and other contemporary philosophers, Gagnepain also emphasizes the notion of an absence, a lack, a negativity, a transcendence at the heart of human being. Nature, Gagnepain likes to point out, abhors a vacuum, but culture requires one as the condition of its own possibility. Another way of saying this is to say that human rationality is essentially abstractive: it abstracts from, or withdraws from, any naturally given reality and imposes its own forms upon it, forms which, in a third, performative moment it negates in referring them back to the concrete reality to be said, made, originated, regulated.

For Gagnepain however, this fundamental lack is not only at the heart of 'language' but at the heart of each of the four modes of human rationality. This fundamental lack is therefore not only constitutive of 'language' in some broad and undeconstructed sense: it is, rather, four-fold. Specifically, it opposes, in the case of the sign, impropriety to the evidence of the percept; in the case of the tool, leisure to the busyness of animal labor; in the case of the person, absence to the presence of life and arbitrariness to the sameness of animal species; in the case of the norm, abstinence or frustration to the appetite to enjoy. So when Gagnepain praises Lacan for his understanding of language, he praises him above all for recognizing the constitutive role of negativity in 'language'. But for Gagnepain 'language' and so also the negativity constitutive of it, must be deconstructed and this marks a – perhaps the – fundamental difference between Gagnepain and Lacan.

So much for a brief evocation of some family resemblances between Lacan and Gagnepain, some things Lacan and Gagnepain share in common, and some things Gagnepain owes to Lacan.

3 Different conceptions of the human sciences

What must inevitably guide any discussion of the differences between Gagnepain and Lacan is Gagnepain's deconstruction of rationality and the conception of the human sciences that is its corollary. The nature of the human sciences was the principal topic of the paper you read before this session so I will be very brief here.

Gagnepain's primary interest is not a new theory of psychoanalysis but, following in the footsteps of De Saussure, Freud, and Marx, a new epistemology of the human sciences grounded in a clinically based deconstruction of rationality. I have explained what that means in my article but let me insist for a moment upon its importance. Gagnepain's deconstruction of human rationality is based upon a clinically-based, four-fold deconstruction of the object of the human sciences, i.e., 'man' or 'human beings'. Just as the object of the natural sciences, 'nature', had earlier been deconstructed into the objects of physics, chemistry, and biology, each with its own causal principles, so Gagnepain deconstructs the object of the human sciences, 'human being' or 'man', into the objects glossology, technology, sociology, and axiology, each with its own causal principles. No one today would try to explain all biological phenomena in terms of physics, much less to explain physics in terms of biology, and for Gagnepain it is no less aberrant to try to account for glossological phenomena, e.g. phenomena of speech, in

terms of sociology, e.g. phenomena of communication; or to try to account for axiological phenomena, e.g. phenomena of desire, willing and norms, in terms of either glossology or sociology.

But this of course is just what Lacan seems to do and the confusions engendered by his efforts to explain all human phenomena in terms of ‘language’ or, alternatively, ‘desire’, are at heart the result of fundamentally flawed notions of ‘language’ and ‘desire’, which themselves result from a fundamentally flawed, ‘unilateralist’, understanding of the nature of the human sciences. By a ‘unilateralist’ understanding of the human sciences I mean an understanding of the human sciences that reduces all causal determinations to one, e.g., in the case of Lacan, Language or Desire, or, in the case of Marxists, History. In other words, any discussion of the differences between Gagnepain and Lacan will sooner or later come back to one fundamental difference between these two thinkers, namely, the fact that Gagnepain deconstructs human rationality and Lacan does not.

On this point, Lacanians are likely to fiercely resist so permit me to insist a bit further. Lacan would have us understand all human phenomena in terms of ‘language’. Texts like the following are familiar to all: “Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of training, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient’s speech”⁹. “If psychoanalysis can become a science (for it is not yet one) and if it is not to degenerate in its technique (and perhaps that has already happened), we must rediscover the sense of its experience”¹⁰. Then, later: “... (the psychoanalyst’s) whole experience must find in speech alone its instrument, its context, its material, and even the background noise of its uncertainties”¹¹.

In general, one might say that this emphasis on reason as ‘speech’, ‘language’ and ‘logos’ has been common since the time of the Greeks and has become a kind of truism in contemporary thought. Hegel said it perhaps best: “... *die Sprache (ist) das Dasein des Geistes*”. In different ways, contemporary thinkers tend to agree that ‘man is language’. Gagnepain contests this root certitude of contemporary – and most Western – thought, and in the process reconceptualizes the nature not only of ‘language’ and ‘the human sciences’ but of rationality itself. For Gagnepain language as speech and logos is no longer the sole criterion of the human. It is only one of four, and no one of them is any more or less important than the others. Human beings are speakers and they are also and just as importantly workers, initiators of their history, and judges. What is specifically human is not only reason as *logos*, but also reason as *tropos*, reason as *nomos*, reason as *dike*. Reason is one but it has four autonomous, analogous modes. This is a radical difference between Gagnepain and other contemporary thinkers and it will show

⁹Lacan J., *Ecrits A Selection*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, (W. W. Norton and Co., New York), 1977, p. 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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up everywhere in our discussion of the differences between Gagnepain and Lacan but especially, of course, with respect to ‘language’.

At the risk of saying it one time too often (except for those of you who may not have done your homework...): ‘Language’ is not only speech. ‘Language’ is also, when artificialized by pencils, pens, or computer programs, writing, which renders speech mute. ‘Language’ is also appropriation and communication. People can obviously speak without being able to communicate, most obviously when they speak different languages, but also when they speak the ‘same’ language (e.g., all our misunderstandings), or when they speak like psychotics. What is at issue here is not speech but communication. And ‘language’ is also ‘moral’, i.e., it is regulated by different norms and these normative regulations of our speaking (and also of our writing and communicating, indeed of all human activity) are neither speech, nor tooling, nor communication: they are exercises of our liberty and our capacity to norm our behavior.

All human phenomena can be deconstructed in this way – the theory of mediation is in that sense powerfully heuristic – but let us stick with ‘language’. This deconstruction of ‘language’ into four distinct registers is the first and probably most important obstacle Lacanians face in trying to understand Gagnepain. They not only need to understand the rationale for this deconstruction, they need to accept it. But, if they do, they will have to fundamentally revise their understanding of Lacan and Freud. Resistance is therefore likely... Freud himself was well aware of the tendency of humans, once they have seized upon an explanation, to hold onto it and resist giving it up. But, Freud says, reality always reveals itself as complex and the realities one encounters are always overdetermined. They result necessarily, he says, “from several convergent causes”¹².

What Freud calls “our imperious need of causality”¹³ cannot put up with this causal polymorphism; it finds itself constrained by the explanatory account we are used to and above all by the fear of losing it or having to change it. One might think that Freud had read Gagnepain!

Something analogous may be said about pathology – remember that the theory of mediation is a clinical anthropology and that its deconstruction of rationality is based in the clear clinical differences among aphasias, psychoses and perversions, and the neuroses. Pathologies of speech, i.e. aphasias, are not pathologies of communication and appropriation, i.e. psychoses or perversions; nor are pathologies of the norm and desire, e.g. the neuroses and the psychopathic conditions, either of the latter. These must be distinguished clinically and theoretically. They require different principles of interpretation, glossological in the case of the aphasias, socio- historical in the case of the perversions

¹²Freud S, *Moses and Monotheism*, S.E. XXIII, p. 107. “It is enough for our need to discover causes (which, to be sure, is imperative) if each event has one demonstrable cause, But in the reality lying outside us that is scarcely the case; on the contrary each event seems to be over-determined and prove to be the effect of several convergent causes.”

¹³ibid.

and psychoses, axiological in the case of the neuroses. In Lacan there are no systematic grounds for making such distinctions and as a result in Lacan's thought these different dimensions of human rationality and pathology tend to be non-systematically skewed in a bewildering variety of ways.

There is of course much more to be said about this whole matter and I have doubtless shortchanged both Lacan and Gagnepain in my remarks but let this suffice.

I Sexuality and Genitality

Against this backdrop let us consider some of the intersections of these different causal factors and their implications for our comparison. One way to do this would be to offer a series of bullet points on a whole series of psychoanalytic and Lacanian concepts as reinterpreted by Gagnepain. I have chosen not to take this route since it seemed to me likely that such a rapid treatment of such varied material would be hard to follow, would certainly fatigue even this audience, and would risk being too superficial.

What I will do instead (possibly just a lethal?!) is to turn, first, to the dialectic of the person and the acculturation of sexuality and genitality. As I already explained above, there are several reasons for this. The dialectic of the person intersects with many of the key notions in Lacan's thought which Gagnepain contests and/or corrects. As we will see, a common difficulty for many Lacanians concerns the distinction Gagnepain makes between the socio-historic plane of reason and the normative plane. This should get us through the first hour or so.

After that, I will take up: the psychoses and the perversions as pathologies of sexuality and genitality; desire and the norm; the intersections of the first and fourth planes of reason with the third; and, time permitting, discourse as Gagnepain understands it. This is overly ambitious, I know, and I might not get to all of it, but I will try.

I.1 Sexuality and Genitality: Basic Terms

For the sake of clarity, let us begin by contrasting in a general way animal sexuality and genitality with that of human beings.

There are many ways of misunderstanding sexuality, and since the terms we use to speak about sex are inevitably theory-laden and can easily lead us astray if we are not attentive, let us try to be as clear as possible about some of the basic terms we use to talk about sex. And let us begin, not with persons, or animals, or even vegetables, but on the most "elemental" level, that of minerals, and work up from there.

On the mineral level, there is parcellization, not individuation. We speak of iron, water, sulfur, not of an iron, a water, a sulfur. There is no in-dividuation (a-tomos in Greek) on the mineral level. If one cuts up a mineral, one still has the same mineral; nothing changes. But if you cut up a living being, or a family, or a nation, you kill it.

On the vegetal level, there is life, and because there is life, there is individuation. A vegetable can, like us, be segmented – a flower can be

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detached from its branch, just as an appendix can be detached from its body – but its constituent parts cannot be separated without the organism becoming something else. Though one can segment some parts of a vegetable, if one separates its constituent parts, one mineralizes it. Human beings are also vegetables, and so some of their parts can likewise be segmented: we can, for example, cut our finger nails, or take out our appendixes. But if we separate our constituent parts, for example, cut off our heads or take out our hearts, we become minerals. Dust we are and to dust we shall return!

On the animal level, there is something more than vegetative individuation: there is what Gagnepain calls a ‘somasia’, that is, a being-bodily, or, more simply, a body. The animal has a body (soma in Greek). The body is something more than a material individuation. The body gives the animal a certain unity as a subject with an inside and an outside, with two eyes, two ears, four legs, and so on. The body also confers upon the animal organism its abilities to take care of itself and its needs, as well as its natural boundaries – generally called its environment or surroundings.

This latter point is not recognized by some people. Instead of understanding the animal as in-its-environment, and the environment as environment-of-the-animal, they understand the animal and its environment "atomistically", as though they were juxtaposed to, and existed independently of, one another. But this is not the case. The animal's body and the animal's environment are not two things juxtaposed one with the other, they are rather two things conjoined that together make be the relation between them: “The cow and the grass make the pasture”¹⁴. The animal has the environment of its body: the butterfly on the rose is not on the same rose as the bumblebee; the cow and the horse do not live in the same pasture. Still less is the rose or the butterfly or the bumblebee, or the pasture of the cow or the horse, the same as ours. Rather, each of these animals “has”, and lives in, the environment its body confers upon it. If you doubt this, try to fly like a bird, or to swim like a fish, or to suck nectar from a flower.

Now there is among animals a kind of diversity (of sameness and difference), but it is a diversity specific to animals. It is precisely a diversity of species, and of types within a species. Individual animal specimens (that is, members of an animal species) mate with one another and each of specimens contributes to the advent of a type within the species. There is a diversity of types within a given animal species, and a diversity of species within a genus. Breeders of animals are well aware of this and therefore choose individual specimens in order to produce a certain type of horse, cow, dog, within the species. Thoroughbreds are bred for speed, Belgians for strength, and so on.

Within this diversity of types and of species, there is a generic uniformity of nature. No matter what their type or species, dogs are

¹⁴ Jean Gagnepain, *Du Vouloir Dire II. De la personne. De la norme* (hereafter: DVD II), (Paris, Livre et Communication, 1991), p. 25.

everywhere dogs, horses everywhere horses. Such diversity as there is among animals is, precisely, not human. It is merely a diversity of species.

Among human beings there is also a great diversity of type and species: human beings are also animals. But among human beings there is in addition another form of diversity which is not found in the animal world and which is characteristically human. Among human beings there is a diversity of cultures that is lacking elsewhere in the animal world. There is no animal culture -- still less is there a multiplicity of animal cultures. Into the presence or immediacy of animal life the agency of reason introduces an absence; into the regularity of the natural order, the agency of reason introduces an arbitrariness¹⁵. The person is the rational capacity which allows us to institute (bring into being) relations of difference and sameness, divergence and convergence, rupture and reconciliation in the dialectic of ethnics and politics in which the ethnic particularizations and political universalizations remain in dynamic conflict. Barring pathology, the person is the 'am not' at the heart of the dialectic: 'am not' the ethnic particularizations which I also am, 'am not' the political universalizations to which I nonetheless tend. For Gagnepain, these are poles of a dialectic.

In fact human beings introduce cuts of all sorts into their cultural being which are unknown to the animal world -- differences of generation, counties, social classes, professions, etc., such that a number of individuals form groups that exclude others but also a given individual can belong to several groups; likewise, naturally we are only together with those who are co-present with us but culturally we can exclude socially people who live with us and can include people who are physically absent, far off or even dead. But here we are concerned with the differences between natural sexuality and genitality on the one hand, cultural sexuality and genitality on the other. With respect to this topic, we may resume the foregoing remarks by saying that the sexuality and the genitality of the animal subject that we continue to be and the sexuality and the genitality of the human person that we are, are profoundly different in nature. It is by an (implicit) analysis of natural sexuality (sexus) and natural genitality (partus) that we arrive at our

¹⁵ The meaning of 'arbitrary' here is broader than its use in Saussure. For Saussure, the relation of signifier and signified is said to be 'arbitrary'. For Gagnepain, all cultural relations are 'arbitrary', not only those of signs, but those of tools, persons, and norms as well. 'Arbitrary' does not mean 'without reason'; it means, rather, that there is no other reason than itself. Historians are notorious for trying to find 'logical' reasons for social and historical realities but society and history are not matters of 'logic', they are rather matters of 'being'. Things are the way they are because they are the way they are: they are 'arbitrary' and there is no other reason. Why are forks placed on the left, knives on the right? Why do Americans say 'water' and German 'wasser'? Why does the Baroque diverge from the Gothic? Why are there 4000 different languages in the world? Why is Europe divided politically the way it is? The answer to these questions is that it is the nature of person as rational beings to introduce arbitrary fractures and divergences into the regularities of nature. For a fuller discussion of this, see Urien, Jean Yves, "De l'arbitraire saussurien à la dissociation des plans", *Tétralogiques* 5, (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes 2, 1988).

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cultural being. Let us turn now to the relationships of sexuality and genitivity in the dialectic of the person.

I.2 Sexus and Nexus. Partus and Munus

It is the natural, animal relation of specimen to type that provides the foundation for the double articulation of the person in terms of sexuality and genitivity. These terms, so often confused in contemporary discourse, need to be distinguished.

Sexuality designates the natural differentiation of genitors into two sexes capable of sexual coupling. Already on the natural level, sexuality is something more than, and something quite different than, the bare aptitude to contribute to procreation. Sexuality marks the entirety of our animal being, male or female, depending on which half we belong to. In itself it presupposes no primary or secondary characteristics, and no hierarchy of any sort. At the same time that it makes us different from one another, it relates us to one another. As male or female I am related to the sexuated other – the other as alter. Sexuality relates us to a sexual partner who shares an equal status with us. Our sexual partners are sexual peers.

Genitivity, on the other hand, designates the act of producing offspring and it also includes all the care necessary to sustain the extra-uterine life of the offspring during the more or less long period between birth and sexual maturation. We not only give birth to our children, we nurture and provide for them. Strictly speaking, then, genitivity does not relate parent to parent – parent is related to parent as sexual partner to sexual partner; rather, genitivity relates both of the parents to the child. Together, the parents are the genitors of the child.

Let us examine these relations more attentively, beginning with sexuality. The (sexual) equality of the differently sexuated partners on the animal level gives rise to (that is, is acculturated as) the social and cultural differentiation of the sexuated partners on the human level. Into the promiscuity of the animal world in which any male can couple with any female and vice versa, the instance of reason introduces a differentiation of sexual partners in terms of (what Gagnepain calls) class. Class effaces and redistributes the natural states and orders in which we nonetheless continue to share. Class introduces new, arbitrary, cultural boundaries that henceforth will mediate the natural differences of sexuality. These cultural boundaries 'class' us. Brother and sister of the same family, male and female members of the same kinship group, or clan, or caste, we are all of the same sex sociologically and therefore cannot marry one another. The instance of reason introduces 'ethnically' social and cultural differences and boundaries that are unknown in the animal world. From the beginning, the person is in relation (as John Macmurray put it in the title of his Gifford Lectures).

Along with differences of class come other differences of status which appertain to the class to which we belong. If you are a Brahmin and I an Untouchable, we are marked not only by a difference of class

but by a complex web of other status differences. For example, I have to avert my gaze when you pass by; I clean the sewers and you are a judge. Like class differences, these status differences are socially and historically arbitrary – they could have been otherwise – even though they also partake of a social and legal 'necessity' in the society which is ours. The 'necessity', of course, is not natural but 'legal', or cultural.

The concept of 'class' here is a formal one: it is the formal differentiation that counts, not the content which may well vary from one culture to another (which kinship structures? how far does the clan, or class, extend? and so on). As Gagnepain puts it, "we can escape from our class, but we cannot escape from being classed"¹⁶.

The relations of inclusion and exclusion which the instance of reason institutes are immensely complex in their contents, as the studies of the different kinship structures show. But underlying them all is the person as a principle of origination: it is the person that originates the boundaries that are constitutive of the relations of identity and difference (not only sexual identity and sexual difference but all identities and all differences) on all levels of 'the body politic'. The person is never only the same or other, never only male or female, never only inside or outside, never only friend or foe; the person is rather the capacity we have to make be at one and the same time: same and other, male and female, inside and outside, friend and foe. The person is a formal principle of arbitrariness and its effects are nothing less than our modes of being persons socially and historically. Sexuality cannot be reduced to the desires it engenders, as many Lacanians appear to think. It is rather concerned with the 'properties', whether of being or having, that we appropriate in our conflictual and dialectical relations with others. In itself, Gagnepain says, sexuality has no more to do with desires than the stomach has to do with what one puts in it. We need to distinguish sexuality as institution and sexuality as desire. Sexual desire is only one of many desires, no more or less important than the others, and all human desires are subject to the norm.

In other words, the laws regarding incest and the exchange of marital partners are themselves but an instantiation of the capacity of the person to break with natural life and to originate itself in terms of time, space, and milieu – the fundamental parameters of our personal being – whereby we classify ourselves socially and historically. Incest laws do not come from the outside, nor from the inside; they are in fact constitutive of relations of inside and outside and all other relations of "between" as well. Incest laws are an effect of our fundamental capacity as persons origination of our own beings. These laws define, that is, set boundaries to, our sexual class and establish the contracts that bind us together as persons. In themselves, laws against incest are a matter of definition, not of prohibition. (Laws against incest institute and define social limits: social sexuality is never biological sexuality. Prohibitions, on the other hand, involve a repression of desire.) As Freud clearly saw, human sexuality, thus understood, is a fundamental 'perversion' of animal sexuality. In other words, one can say, as Gagnepain does, that

¹⁶ Gagnepain J., DVD II, p. 41.

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the nature of man consists in his capacity to transform himself, in other words to denaturalize itself¹⁷.

This acculturation of our natural sexuality as cultural class accomplishes the passage from *sexus* (sex) to *nexus* (literally: a tying or binding together). It brings about, we might say, 'the ties that bind'. The person is connected to other persons, not in function of natural qualities of one sort or another, e.g., sexual differences seen as more or less 'attractive', but in function of his or her connections or bonds or 'social belongings'. In this sense, marriage is never merely a question of an animal attraction of male to female, female to male. On the contrary, all marriages are "arranged", that is, they are culturally mediated, more "a function of the justice of the peace than of intercourse"¹⁸. Marriage for the theory of mediation is a political reality, one of the forms that the implicit sexual bonds can take.

By the same token, the man or woman who takes a sexual partner, even of the same sex, from the other group is culturally related to a person of the other sex. In this sense, 'homosexuality' is itself a misnomer since it tends to reduce cultural sexuality to natural sexuality. The theory of mediation makes it possible to understand how human beings can find their sexual partners among those of the same physiological sex which seems clearly to go against the law of nature. The example of transsexualism even better illustrates the point I am making here. As Quentel and Laisis put it: "Transsexuals defy not only the natural distribution of the sexes but the natural attribution of the sexes". Thanks to surgical interventions, "nature can be 'corrected' so that it takes on the form – psychic if one wishes but certainly social – of the identity the person claims for herself"¹⁹. The general point is that the acculturation of natural sexuality involves a 'death' of natural sexuality, i.e. contradicts it, goes beyond it, and introduces all sorts of other possible groupings, not only of our sexuality but of all of our belongings.

So much for the institutors of our sexuality. But just as signifiers cannot be separated from signifieds, so institutors cannot be separated from instituteds. Rather, the relation between the acculturation of our sexuality and the acculturation of our genitality is a reciprocal one, as is the relation between signifiers and signifieds. The acculturation of our genitality gives rise to what Gagnepain calls *métier* (kind of manual or mechanical occupation which finds its utility in society and which is ordinarily rendered by the English 'trade' or 'occupation' or 'job' but which he intends in its root sense of 'mistier', that is, 'service' or 'ministry' or 'office' from 10th C. Latin *ministerium*). It is difficult to find an accurate English translation for *métier* as Gagnepain understands it. We need a word that combines the notion of job and the notion of

¹⁷ Gagnepain J., "Discussion suite aux exposés de J.-Y. Guillaume, J.-C. Quentel, R. Pirard", *Anthropologiques* 2, (Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve), 1989), p. 286.

¹⁸ Gagnepain, J., DVD II, p. 41

¹⁹ Quentel Jean-Claude and Laisis Jacques, "Le lien social et ses fondements", *Le Débat*, mai-août, 2006, p. 133.

service. 'Service jobs' or 'jobs of service and ministry' might do it but I prefer 'ministry' and 'ministries'. In our work and our jobs we 'minister' to one another.

In effect, our genitivity is less a matter of producing offspring, though it is also that, than it is one of providing all of the care and nurture the offspring require from birth to maturity. This is why, much as they might wish it otherwise, most parents discover that their "jobs" as parents have much more to do with the joys of parenting than they do with the joys of procreating.

The acculturation of our sexuality – the transition from sexus to nexus – accounts for our social being. Gagnepain will speak of this relation as 'ontological'. The acculturation of our genitivity – the transition from partus (bearing, bringing forth, birth, whence young or offspring) to munus (service, office, post, employment, function, duty) accounts for our social responsibility, that is the obligation or duty we have for others. Gagnepain will speak of this relation as 'deontological'. For Gagnepain, 'deontological' and 'ontological' are not metaphysical categories, but social and historical realities. They correspond, on the level of the person, to phonological and semiological on the level of the sign. They are, if you will, the dimensions of our sexuality and genitivity revealed by the theoretic analysis.

Our genitivity encompasses the duty we have to others – and, to begin with, the duty parents have to provide for their young. It is the duty of the parents to raise their children that is the source of our mutual obligations towards one another. Genitivity institutes the relationships of paternity and maternity. Paternity cannot be restricted to males. What is at issue here is rather a division, not so much of labor, as of munus (that is, of a shared office or duty); that is why Gagnepain prefers to speak of 'ministry' rather than 'paternity'. It is this parental ministry to their children (and eventually to the children of others) that provides the grounds for the obligations that tie the parents and their children to the city as citizens 'who care for one another'.

The father and the mother are less the ones who give life – though they also give that – than they are the ones who give status, that is who give their names. And this 'naming' is not so much an act of speech, that is a 'speaking for the other', as it is a taking charge of the other, an assumption of responsibilities for the other. The act of the father and mother who name their child makes the child to be son or daughter, that is, institutes the child as a member of a family. This assumption of parental responsibility requires a 'castration': the parents must renounce their natural genital relation to their child as offspring in order to institute their cultural genital relation as father and mother. This, Gagnepain reminds us, is the point of the story of Abraham and Isaac in the Old Testament²⁰. Put differently, the father and mother must 'kill' their proles in order to make be the *famiglia*. By the same token, the child must renounce its natural reality as male or female offspring and

²⁰ Gagnepain J., *Leçons*, p. 131.

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assume its position in the family as son or daughter of this father and this mother. Castration establishes a reciprocal debt between parents and children. In itself, castration is not a regulation of desire but an institution of the person. It institutes the law, that is, the social ties that bind us together as members of a family. Here Gagnepain provides a fundamental corrective to Lacan's 'law of the father' which not only fails to clearly distinguish law and norm, institution and regulation, being and desire, but conflates all of these with speech and 'language'. Idem with respect to the ambiguities of the *nom du père*. The '*nom*' can be understood as a '*non*', that is, a prohibition or interdiction, not a definition. The '*nom*' can be understood as 'name' and so naming of the child. Lacan saw well the importance of all this but does not distinguish carefully enough the speaking of the name, on the one hand, and the act of social communication, that is, the act of appropriation, of taking charge of the child and accepting responsibility for it, on the other. Nor does he distinguish the social definition and moral interdiction.

Fathers and mothers care for their sons and daughters as, later, sons and daughters care for their fathers and mothers. In Gagnepain's conception, this 'altruism' – that is, the mutual obligations that each of us has to care for the other – is what the acculturation of our genitality engenders and it is this ministry-to-others that constitutes the veritable power of the person: the power we have as persons to make ourselves and others be. We are, as the Jesuits like to put it, persons-for-others. Our genitality relates us to the other, not as alter but as *aliud*, not as *autre*, but as *autrui*. Psychosis marks a breach in this relation, either on the side of the "I", as in schizophrenia, or the side of the other, as in paranoia.

I.3 Perversion and Psychosis

The theory of mediation is a clinical anthropology and claims that its basic theoretic statements can be verified in the clinic. Reciprocally, the clinic can reveal, in their absence, implicit structurations of psychic life which are not open to direct observation. Thus, to better understand human sexuality and genitality, we may look to the clinic of the perversions and the psychoses, just as we look to the aphasia to help us better understand our speaking, or to the neuroses to help us better understand the regulations of our desires. As we saw earlier, perversion and psychosis affect, not our capacity to speak, nor our capacity to regulate our desires, but our capacity to connect to and to communicate with others. In them, we may find revealed, albeit pathologically something of the complexity of our relations to others²¹.

²¹ 'Perversion' as it is used here has no moral significance. Its meaning is rather 'ontological' in the sense that it refers to a pathological alteration in our relation to the sexual other. By the same token, the meaning of 'psychosis' here is 'deontological', not in a moral sense but rather in the sense of a pathological alienation in our relation to other people. In both cases there is a trouble or perturbation in the legal bonds or obligations, i.e., the legal rights and responsibilities, that are constitutive of us as socio-historical beings. When Freud pointed out that institutions replace instincts for human beings he spoke of "a of mutual obligations (*italics in Freud*), pronounced inviolable (*holy*) —

Recall that the theory of mediation understands the person as the rational capacity which allows us to institute relations of difference and sameness, divergence and convergence, rupture and reconciliation. It allows us both to distance ourselves from others and to relate to others. We are not the others and that is why we can be related to them. It is because each of us is not the other, is other than all the others, that we try to establish bonds of communication with them, and they with us. As persons, we ethnically make our own the myriad differences of sex, class, profession, religion, city, nation, etc., that mark us and individualize us as human beings and that we constantly try to overcome, never fully successfully, in our political institutions. Thus do husbands and wives fight and make up, political parties compete and compromise, nations go to war and sue for peace; thus are our conversations a mix of shared understandings and misunderstandings; thus are the Hatfields and the McCoys found throughout the world; thus is each of us in conflict with him or her self. The person is precisely this rational capacity of implicit 'ethnic' divergence and explicit 'politic' convergence.

Marx was right to see conflict as essential to human beings; he was wrong to think that it was only a conflict of classes. The tower of Babel is a mark of the human condition – and it is not only our languages that mark us as different, but our modes of fabrication, our artistic styles, our legal systems, our core ethical values – in short, all the marks that constitute what we call our 'identities'. Our identities are never only our own; they are rather shared with (some) others, e.g. fellow Americans, Catholics, drum players, etc., and not with (some) others, e.g. French, Huguenots, flutists, etc.

Clearly, if there is to be communication there must first be individualization; if there is to be exchange there must first be appropriation; if there is to be contract or convention or social bond there must first be a radical distinction of self and others, of what belongs to oneself and what belongs to others. The person is the rational capacity that makes possible this dialectical relation of 'ethnic' singularization or divergence and 'political' universalization or convergence. As Gagnepain puts it, human beings spend their lives "jumping over ditches they have themselves dug". Human social reality is dynamic, ongoing, dialectic: on the one hand, our singularity is normally transcended in our political agreements, on the other hand our political agreements are always subject to rupture. Think of friendships that go bad, of political alliances

that is to say, the beginnings of morality and justice." (Freud S., *Moses and Monotheism*, S.E. XXII, p. 82) What, we may ask, is the binding force of these 'legally' binding social laws and customs? They are clearly not laws of nature that necessarily determine the ways we act. On the contrary, we ourselves institute them. Nor are they moral laws that bind us 'absolutely' or 'unconditionally' in the sense that we are morally bound to do good and avoid evil. Rather, we may say that these laws determine us, i.e., they limit us, set properly human boundaries to our animal natures. That is the root sense of 'determine' from the Latin 'determinare', to limit: de + terminus, boundary. These laws are constitutive of us as persons and structurally inform the myriad ways we enact ourselves as persons. Similarly, the laws of phonology and semiology structurally inform the myriad things we say.

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that break apart, of conversations that turn into ‘dialogues of the deaf’, of cities and states that succumb to civil war. Normally, this power of singularization and rupture is ‘kept within the bounds’ of our social institutions, e.g., the ways we make ourselves be and sustain ourselves in our friendships, our alliances, our conversations, our cities and our states. In other words, normally there is a conflictual, dialectical relation and tension between the self and the other – whether ‘self’ and ‘other’ are individual persons, families, cities, states, religions, etc., but we nonetheless ‘go along and get along’, we overcome our conflicts in the numberless negotiated agreements that are the stuff of daily life, and we live in (an always precarious) negotiated peace with one another.

When the person is troubled, this dialectic ceases to function normally. It ‘breaks down’. But it does not break down in just any old way. On the contrary, these ‘break downs’ or pathologies follow common fault lines in the human psyche and give rise to well-known pathologies. These modes of abnormal or pathological functioning of the person are, here, the psychoses and the perversions, to which we now turn.

As already mentioned, the psychoses and the perversions put in evidence – and indeed allow us to see more clearly – something of the complexity of our relations to alterity. In particular, these pathologies reveal a breakdown in the dialectic of the person, usually manifested as a kind of exaggerated overemphasis of one pole of the dialectic or a dramatic diminishment or quasi-abolition of the other pole.

Consider, for instance, the best known of the *psychoses*, schizophrenia and paranoia. The first, schizophrenia, puts in evidence a kind of exacerbation – a kind of reification – of our particularity as persons. The schizophrenic is, as it were, stalled (or installed) in the moment of rupture, of difference, of singularity. The schizophrenic’s trouble reveals itself in the extreme idiomaticity of his speech and his bizarre behavior. The schizophrenic cordons himself off from others, invents his own idiom, acts in eccentric and bizarre ways, and is generally unable to invest himself in any stable communication or exchange with others. At the limit, the schizophrenic puts in evidence our ineluctable (and for the schizophrenic often terrifying) singularity, our contingency in being, an ineluctable loneliness, which the schizophrenic often experiences in a paroxysmal fashion and expresses as the end-of-the-world, the shadow of death.

Inversely, paranoia puts in evidence, not a separation from others, but a kind of continual fusion with others – be those others neighbors, voices, rays, dreams. If the schizophrenic establishes an impassable boundary between self and others, in the paranoid the boundaries tend to disappear and the paranoid to meld with his world. If the speech of the schizophrenic is marked by an extreme idiomaticity, that of the paranoid is marked by an extreme allocentricity: it is not his voice but the voices of others that speak in him, it is not his actions but those of others whose instrument he is. The paranoid, so to speak, is given up to the other: “I am another”, Rousseau (who was paranoid) said.

The schizophrenic reveals a kind of reified identity, the paranoid a dissolution of identity. Each puts in evidence, as separate and unrelated, one pole of a process constitutive of the human condition, but a process

in which there is, normally, 'an articulation normally present', that is, a continual conjunction and dialectical tension between the two poles. Lacan speaks of "the permanent virtuality (in human beings) of a fault-line opened in (their) essence." He is right: this is where the psychotic break occurs when it occurs.

What is at issue here is the contradictory dialectic, constitutive of the person. In Sartre's terms, we are not what we are, and we are what we are not: we are persons in relation to others who are both the same as and different from us. Our rational capacity as persons capable of instituting social and historical relations is characterized by a dialectic of particularization, of differentiation, of divergence on the one hand, and of identification, of convergence, of universalization, on the other. In schizophrenia and paranoia these two poles are separated: schizophrenia is the apotheosis of particularity ('I am not the other'), paranoia of otherness ('I am the other'). What is lacking in both is the dialectic that normally conjoins and differentiates both identity and alterity. Psychosis reveals a disruption of our being as persons-in-relation to other persons who are both other than and the same as we are.

Psychosis, we saw earlier, is rooted in (a deficit in) the relations of human genitality, and so in the relations of parenthood and the responsibility to others.

In schizophrenia, this parental responsibility is often pushed to the extreme. The schizophrenic, as it were, gives birth to himself as a kind of all-father, responsible for everyone and everything on earth. It is not uncommon for schizophrenics to think they are God the Father or some other, all-powerful person, e.g., the President, the Prime Minister, the Pope; or, alternatively, in the case of women, to think they are the Queen Mother or the Blessed Mother or Mother Theresa or a 'grand' mother with an infinite number of children. In their delusions, they become the absolute and unlimited parents of others, responsible for every lost child, for every leaf that falls.

In paranoia and in sado-masochism²², on the other hand, parenthood and the responsibility to care for and minister to others is strangely subverted. Relations of love and hate are experienced as inexplicable and irresistible coercions. The paranoid is persecuted by others who have invaded his world and threaten him with destruction and that is why he must be on guard against these others or attack them and do away with them. The other is the mirror image of the self, and the paranoid, lost in an imaginary back and forth without fixed boundaries, unknowingly projects his hostilities or his amorous desires upon the other, from whom they return as persecutions or unwonted erotic intrusions. The paranoid either exercises an unconditional control over the other or subjects himself totally to her.

This relation of domination and/or subjection is patent in sado-masochistic behaviors. Either the sadist exercises total control over the other or the masochist submits totally to the other. Masters and slave

²²Sadomasochism is often classified as a perversion. The theory of mediation sees it rather as a form of psychosis.

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boys. There are no limits to the ‘degradations’ that can take place. Instead of a caring for and a ministering to others, there is rather a descent to an ‘animal’ world of force and physical coercion, where the most extreme tortures, even murder, ‘are of no concern’. The world of parental concern and care is overturned, the Oedipal prohibitions against incest and murder are no longer operative: the other is at my mercy, or I at his. Stalin, who served as a model for Saddam Hussein, enjoyed repeating, “there where there is a man there is a problem; there where there is no longer a man, there is no longer a problem”²³. In times of war, where the others are reduced to enemies and often are no longer experienced in their humanity as mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, who care for one other and are bound by the same human ties as we are, it is not unusual that they become simple objects whom we are free to violate, rape, and kill at our sovereign discretion. In the well-known My-Lai episode of the Vietnam War, an American officer ordered his troops to kill all the men, women, and children in a captured village: “Waste ‘em,” he ordered. More recently, in Iraq, we have learned of the degradations of Iraqi prisoners at the hands of their American ‘guardians’ at Abu Ghraib or, more recently still, at the hands of the CIA.

Let us turn to the *perversions*.

In perversions there is also a breakdown of the dialectic of the person, not on the side of the ‘deontological’ relation of paternity but on the side of the ‘ontological’ relation of parity. What is at issue here is not the acculturation of genitality but the acculturation of sexuality, not communication but connection, not munus but nexus. In human beings, natural sexual coupling is acculturated as a connection or social bond among sexually differentiated equals who, as we saw, share the same sexual class and are thus sexual peers. Parity means an equality of status that ‘belongs’ to peers as proper to them; it means therefore the ‘properties’ that peers share as members of a class, properties that belong to them as a right and that do not belong to others.

No need here to consider all the different forms of perversion which psychiatry has at various times distinguished. Rather, we will limit ourselves to the perversions that put especially in evidence troubles of parity, that is, of the bonds that link us together socially: fetishism and homosexuality on the one hand, voyeurism/exhibitionism and don juanism/exchangism (partner exchanges) on the other. In fetishism and homosexuality the breakdown will manifest itself in an exaggerated overemphasis on the sociality of the sexual relation to the detriment of the sexually differentiated nature of that relation. In the case of voyeurism/exhibitionism and don juanism/exchangism there will be a dramatic downplaying of the sociality of the sexual relation and a fixation on the brute sexuality of the other.

Let us briefly examine these relationships.

²³ Sokoloff G., *La Puissance Pauvre. Une Histoire de la Russie de 1813 à nos jours*, (Fayard, Paris) p. 500. Cited by Le Bot, op. cit., p. 110.

Fetishism, as Freud showed, is the result of a disavowal of the difference of the sexes. The young child, confronted with the fact of sexual difference and the phantasms of castration that it provokes, creates the fetish as a substitute for the phallus which the child imagined the mother to have. As the material of the fetish, the fetishist takes something – anything – that belongs to his beloved and that can represent her, become her emblem, and serve in her place. A stocking, a handkerchief, a garter, a pet... anything at all incarnates, even as it masks the denial of sexual difference and becomes the cherished love object to which the fetishist attaches, keeps near him, even sleeps with.

What the homosexual denies is not so much the difference of sex as the duality and natural complementarity of the sexes. For the homosexual what counts is not the complementarity of two different sexes but the social bond or alliance established with the other. As we saw earlier, homosexuality presupposes a distinction between biological sex and sociological sex (recall that, sociologically, we are all members of the same sex, i.e., same sexual class), but there remains the imperative (natural impetus? ontological orientation? natural orientation?) to find a sexual partner who is biologically complementary and with whom it is possible to couple reproductively.

Cultural sexuality does not do away with biological sexuality, or with ‘the anatomical difference between the sexes’ which, to paraphrase Freud, continues to have “psychical consequences”²⁴. The homosexual denies the natural complementarity of the sexes and gives an exaggerated importance to social relations, to friendship rather than heterosexual love, to ‘platonic’ relations with others who are the same.

Voyeurs, exhibitionists, Don Juans, echangists, on the other hand, do not deny sexual difference: they are rather preoccupied with it. What they deny or ignore are the acculturations of sexual difference, the social frontiers which culturally delimit our sexuated selves, set boundaries to what is ‘appropriate’, separate what is mine and belongs to me and what is yours and belongs to you. In other words, these people do not deny the fact of sexual difference but rather the cultural significance of sexual difference and the boundaries of decency, modesty, privacy, and intimacy with which we normally enshroud it.

Thus the voyeur seeks to see what he should not see, what properly belongs to another, the most intimate, private parts of the sexually differentiated body. Inversely, the exhibitionist seeks to show to the other (‘to flash’) what should be hidden and what the other should not see. Voyeur and exhibitionist alike deny the boundaries that normally separate men and women, do away with the bonds of modesty and decency, intrude upon the intimacy of others, obliterate the differences between his and hers, mine and yours.

In similar fashion, the Don Juans and echangists are not interested in social niceties, or in respecting the mystery and intimacy of another. They are rather crudely interested in the sexuality of the other and

²⁴cf. the title of Freud’s article: “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes”, S.E. XIX.

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sexual relations with the other, nothing else. Like pornographers, they care only for sexual coupling to which they reduce all 'social' relations. Porn shows have no plot, they don't need one. In fact, as Gagnepain shrewdly points out, here too it is a matter less of sex, sexual organs, and sexual coupling than it is of property and of taking what properly belongs to another. Don Juan seeks to seduce the wife of another; exchangists give up their partners for the partners of another. In all of these cases, there is a more or less profound perturbation of the social demarcations that separate the private and the public, the intimate and the common. All these social bonds are denigrated if not in fact destroyed. (These remarks may remind some of you of Lacan's notorious interest in other people's wives, and his even more notorious interest in other people's money. He was, one might say, a snatcher!).

In one case, then, a disavowal of sexual difference and of the sexual complementarity of the sexes is conjoined with an exaggerated, sometimes overly solicitous, even precious, cultivation of social connections. In the other case, a denial and disruption of the social 'proprieties' and a relentless effort to appropriate sexually what belongs to another. In both cases, a deeply troubled relation to the sexual other.

Let this suffice as a brief review of the psychoses and the perversions as seen from the perspective of the theory of mediation.

II Desire and Norm

The price for having developed at such length the third plane of rationality, that of the person, and the pathologies characteristic of this plane, is that there is almost no time left for the fourth plane of rationality, that of the norm, that is, the rational capacity we have to regulate our desires. What follows, therefore, is a very brief of matters that deserve a much fuller development. Still I would like to give you some idea of how Gagnepain treats such important issues as the nature of desire and the intersections of the fourth and the first and third planes of rationality. As already suggested, at issue here are Lacanian understandings of the law of the father, the Oedipus complex, the other, the super-ego, among other notions.

I will take up in turn: desire and the dialectic of ethical limitation and moral habilitation that acculturates our desires and transforms them from from what Aquinas (and Ricoeur) call *voluntas ut natura* to *voluntas ut ratio*; the intersections of I and IV with III; and especially the intersection of the norm and the sign, that is what Gagnepain calls 'discourse'.

II.1 Desire and the dialectic of ethical limitation and moral habilitation: From *voluntas ut natura* to *voluntas ut ratio*

In a general way, we are here on the level of *libido* in most basic Latin sense of everything that pushes animals and human beings to want, all the cravings of desire, the natural appetites or volitions or emotions that move us in various ways, the full range of our 'feelings for' and 'feelings against'. It is important to note that these affects are

always oriented to goods, i.e. pleasures. In other words, there is an intimate solidarity of the animal body and its environment and, in the animal as in human beings, these affective movements take the form of 'projects'. By this I mean that these affective movements are transformed in an essentially 'elective', immediately discriminating, search for enjoyments fitting to the nature of the animal in question. This 'gestaltisation' of affects as projects, this giving a form to our 'feelings for', is what Gagnepain means by 'pulsion' or 'drive'. Pulsions give a certain direction. Gagnepain rejects the psychoanalytic classification of pulsions as well as the notion of stages of maturation. It seems to him evident that *Triebe* do not fundamentally change their nature according to which of the multiple tensions they provoke or according to the internal or external pressures that may be put upon them. Rather, their plasticity is a function of their indetermination. Gagnepain sees pulsions as a wide open sort of *vouloir vivre*, a wanting-to-live, and it is in this sense that pulsion is the basis of his axiology.

Just as the animal can put together index and sense on the level of animal *gnosia* (symbol), means and end on the level of animal *praxia* (instrument), individual specimens in creating a type on the level of animal *somasia* (species), so on the level of animal *boulia* can animals put together a 'price' and a 'good' (value). They can differ one satisfaction for another, that is, they can sacrifice one satisfaction for a superior one and can orient their desire in terms of that valuation. The fox, for example, can pay the 'price' of the chase to achieve the 'good' of catching and eating the rabbit, the squirrel can put off the immediate satisfaction of eating the acorn and store it away to achieve the good of having food in winter. The relationship between a price and a good Gagnepain calls a value, or valuing behavior.

Human beings can also do this too of course. But without leaving behind our natural propensities and the whole game of our feelings for, we can also accede to another order of pleasures/goods than those accessible to animals. Animals differ merely natural desire and its satisfaction. Human beings have a capacity to regulate and to restrain their desires, to say 'no' to the immediate satisfaction of desire, and to accede to another Pleasure/Good.

The agency of reason introduces here on the fourth plane of reason a contradiction of natural desire, it installs an abstinence, a '*nolo*' (term Gagnepain takes from Spinoza), a not-willing, into our desire and this '*nolunte*' (this noluntary) is fundamental. On the level of human desire, the noluntary is the '*spaltung*', the negativity, the nothing, the lack, that empties natural desire, says 'no' to its satisfactions, allows natural desire to frustrate itself. The contradiction here "creates in us an abstinence which cannot be reduced to a differed satisfaction but implies a refusal of enjoyment (*jouissance*)"²⁵.

²⁵ Gagnepain J., *Leçons*, p. 162. "Celui-ci crée en nous une abstinence qui ne se réduit pas à la satisfaction différée mais implique un refus de jouissance." ("This creates in us an abstinence which cannot be reduced to the differed satisfaction but implies a refusal of enjoyment.")

Abstinence abstracts us from the pulsional processes of natural desire where what is good is what pleases (*quod libet*) and gives us access to another Good, namely a properly human order where what is good is what is permitted (*quod licet*), an order therefore where what is good is determined by the Norm. By 'norm' here is meant that which is authorized – authorized not by some agency outside ourselves but by our capacity for self-authorization, for self-control, for self-determination, for self-norming. The Good for us, Gagnepain says, is always 'rationed', that is, measured in terms of a norm of what I permit, what not²⁶.

Analogous to the way the agency of reason on the level of speech – and, more specifically, of grammar – negates sounds and makes of them signifiers which it organizes phonologically and negates sense-meanings and makes of them signifieds which it organizes semiologically, the agency of reason here on the level of the norm – and, more specifically, of ethics – negates the natural 'prices' and makes of them regulators which it organizes 'timologically'²⁷ in terms of guarantees or warrants and it negates natural 'goods' and makes of them reglementors which it organizes chrematologically²⁸ in terms of restrictions. These ethical restrictions and limitations are in turn negated and gone beyond in our moral performances.

This abstinence or prohibition that the agency of reason inscribes in our natural desires does not annul natural desires and their satisfactions so that we have to abstain from everything (this would be an inhibition of the most extreme sort like one finds in some obsessionals); rather it introduces a rational principle which 'measures' or 'rations' or 'regulates' our desires and satisfactions. The agency of reason installs a lack at the heart of our desire and structures it ethically in terms of reglementors (understood as 'expiation': guarantees or warrants, values sacrificed to obtain a superior value) and reglementeds (understood as restrictions; not just any value but only this value and no more); and these structures of regulation will themselves be contradicted and gone beyond in our moral performances of our liberty. At the heart of our libido, then, we introduce an abstinence that installs the ethico-moral dialectic of ethical reglementation and moral 'habilitation'. ('Habilitation' is obsolete in English. I translate it by 'empowerment'. It means to impart an ability or capacity to qualify oneself for something, in this case to authorize oneself to satisfy oneself while respecting the rules).

So human desire is curbed by a renunciation, a non-satisfaction, a lack which structures desire in terms abstract interdictions (themselves structured in terms of 'expiations', i.e. a value sacrificed for a superior value, so a guarantee or warrant, and 'restrictions', i.e. a limited

26 *ibid*, p. 163.

²⁷ From the Greek 'timè', esteemed, honored, valued.

²⁸ From the Greek 'chrèma', things one needs, goods.

satisfaction) which allow us to accede to something other than natural satisfactions. We accede, Gagnepain says, to another Pleasure, to another Good, namely, the Norm, which is nothing else than our liberty. For Gagnepain liberty is the liberty we have with respect to the ensemble of our drives and immediate desires: liberty is, precisely, the capacity we have to self-control ourselves, to regulate ourselves, to norm our action. Ethics constrains us to submit our desire to abstinence but morality seeks to satisfy our desires in spite of the interdictions. Just as rhetoric allows us to say the world despite the impropriety that the structures of signification install (grammar), so morality empowers us to satisfy ourselves despite the sacrifices and restrictions the structures of regulation install (ethics).

The neuroses will mark a break on the side of the regulators (timologically the obsessional and the phobics, chrematologically the hysterics), the psychopaths a break on the side of the regulateds (timologically the *fugueurs* and the reluctants, chrematologically the libertines and the monomaniacs). In these pathological disturbances of the norm there are two extremes with respect to desire: either they slam on the breaks or they floor it. Obsessionals and hysterics, in different ways, accentuate the break, the 'do not', the noluntary – it is as though they reify the negativity of the agency of reason. The psychopath ignores the break altogether, transgresses all limitations, and goes full speed ahead. (Incidentally, Gagnepain notes that psychoanalysis doesn't have much to do with psychopathic personalities but he thinks psychoanalysts should pay more attention to them, especially since, with the decline of the Christian religion and strict moral norms, there is a kind of laxness and licentiousness in the culture which is a fertile terrain for the psychopaths. Those of you who are having trouble paying the rent may want to consider exploiting this potential clientele...).

I apologize for this very truncated, overly condensed, very abstract sketch of the dialectic of nature, structure, performance on the fourth plane of reason. But I hope it may allow us, if only barely, to suggest some clarifications of basic Lacanian theses in the next section. One has to do with the relation of desire with alterity; the other with the nature of 'discourse', that is, the interaction of the fourth level of reason with the first level.

II.2 The relation of desire and alterity

In theorizing desire, Freud and also Lacan put a great emphasis on what Freud called the experience of satisfaction. As you know, the experience of satisfaction is the locus of a whole series of never fully resolved tensions in Freud's thought between biological and psychological explanations intended to explain primary process and the earliest stage of infant development²⁹. In his shifting accounts of the experience of satisfaction one is never certain where the boundaries lie between fictional and real, between absence and hallucinated presence,

²⁹ cf Ewens T., "Desire and the Loss of Object", *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1987, pp. 302 - 308.

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between solipsistic, self-enclosed system and what Freud once called the “renunciation demanded by reality... which is itself part of reality”³⁰; or between hallucinated satisfaction and the “loss which reality affirms”³¹. Suffice it to say, for our purposes, that Freud treats the experience of satisfaction as a kind of theoretic fiction but also says that if one takes account of the care provided by the mother it is a ‘reality’. Freud is in fact fundamentally ambivalent on this point.

From the beginning, in Freud’s account, the satisfaction of desire comes from the (m)other and when that satisfaction fades it is the Other, i.e. the Mother, that one seeks. But the M/Other of the original satisfaction is lost. In its place, Lacan tells us, is a lack that opens the desire of the infant to the other. Whence the oft repeated thesis of Lacan that ‘desire is desire of the Other.’ No need to insist here on the ambiguity of that expression: is desire the desire of the other? Or is it desire of, i.e. for, the other? Or is it the desire to be recognized by the other? However that may be, the whole matter of desire is immediately placed in the context of a relation to the other, eventually understood in Hegelian terms of rivalry and the desire for recognition. Desire comes from and depends upon the other.

In Gagnepain’s view, Lacan’s account, and also Freud’s, leaves completely open the question of where desire itself comes from. The theoretic impasse that characterizes the experience of satisfaction in which alterity and lack are both involved at the same time without being able to be distinguished lies in this: the experience of satisfaction which is supposed to account for desire in fact presupposes it.

For Gagnepain the abstinence (Lacan says absence) – the lack – which reason introduces into our natural appetites and their immediate satisfaction accounts for desire and it does not come from another. It comes from the noluntary that the agency of reason itself introduces and that lack or unwilling or emptiness does not have or presuppose any object, much less one from which it is supposed to derive. Our rational capacity to regulate our desires cannot come from another any more than can our other rational capacities. No one can give us our capacity to speak or our capacity to limit and control our desires. They are given – innate if you will. For Gagnepain, paradoxical as it may seem to some Lacanians, the register of desire owes nothing to the other. From the standpoint of the theory of mediation, all the ambiguous and convoluted things Lacan says about desire being the desire of the M/Other need to be revisited and revised. The lack affects all registers of human rationality, not only the register of desire, and in each of these registers the lack (I: impropriety; II: leisure; III: arbitrariness, absence; IV: abstinence) comes from us. We are ourselves *le manque à être dans l’être*.

³⁰ Freud S., “Two Principles of Mental Functioning, S.E. XII, p. 224.

³¹ Freud S., “The Metapsychology of Dreams”, S.E. XIV, p. 231.

The other does, of course, provide me the occasions to put my rational capacities to work socio-historically, for example, in teaching me how to speak English or in teaching me what is right and wrong according to the code of a given society. Parents and their surrogates educate me and, in that sense, I am obviously dependent on them. But, as we saw earlier, the child could not learn to speak English or French if he did not already have the capacity to speak, nor could he learn to accept the laws of a given society ('legal' but also artistic, linguistic, moral) if he did not already have the capacity to regulate his own behavior. For Gagnepain this is essential.

Freud did not recognize this which is why, in the context of his developmentalism, he imagined a fantastic myth to account for what he calls the super-ego and there is still some echo of this in Lacan's theory of the super-ego and of the law of the father. That is why his account of castration and the Oedipal complex involves indistinguishably elements of both the social (law) and the ethical (moral prohibition). For Gagnepain, it is crucial to distinguish the level of the norm and the level of the socio-historical appropriation of the norm. With regard to the super-ego one needs to distinguish the super-ego as moral law or right which corresponds to Gagnepain's fourth level and the ego ideals which correspond to the third level in which a given society at a given time and in a given milieu incarnates (appropriates) the norm. This obviously needs to be worked out in much more detail but maybe this will give you some idea of how the theory of mediation goes about treating these issues.

II.3 Discourse: the intersection of the norm and the sign

The fourth plane of reason, the norm, and the first plane of reason, the sign, are typically conflated in Western thought. Thus, as Gagnepain likes to point out, the terminological and often conceptual confusions of psychological consciousness and moral consciousness (conscience), judgments of existence and judgments of value, sentence (statement) and sentence (judgment), where the rhetorical and the moral are confounded. In Lacan, this is the domain where metaphor and metonymy, indeed tropes of all sorts, and along with them jokes, puns, lapsi, all of which are typically understood as the rhetorical effects of an unconscious play of signifiers incarnating the processes of condensations and displacement. For Gagnepain, this ancient tradition of reducing all language to speech is an illustration of the failure to recognize that the spoken message is not only said (understood), but it is also written (read), communicated (transmitted), expressed (deciphered). Here too there needs to be a deconstruction.

In particular, we need to distinguish here the message as said and the message as expressed. To speak (or to make, or to do anything else that characterizes us as human) is also to have something that we desire to say (to make, etc.) because our affectivity is engaged: we want to express ourselves. Our speaking is never only just speaking, it is always also a wanting to speak, a *vouloir dire*. On the level of language, abstinence from immediate satisfaction manifests itself as a reticence:

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Do I speak? Do I remain silent? How much can I say? What I say always has to negotiate a series of detours. What is said never fully captures what I want to say – what I really mean (*vouloir dire*). Language always announces (announces) more than it enunciates (enounces) (Ricoeur), always intends more than it says, and much of what it intends is ‘unconscious’, implicit. Our speech carries with it the heavy cargo of what we cannot say or do not want to say or are forbidden or afraid to say but these barriers we somehow get around in our speaking.

This is the domain of what Gagnepain calls ‘discourse’. Discourse for Gagnepain is the result of the interference between language as speech and the capacity we have to auto-control our desire to speak. Speech as discourse is speech insofar as it is marked by the dialectic not of grammar and rhetoric (the first plane of reason, that of the sign) but by the dialectic of reticence (implicit self-regulations or regulations I have accepted from the other and thus made my own) and allegory, that is, ‘what is said otherwise’, said without saying, expressed but not said (the fourth plane of reason, that of the norm)³².

There are of course examples of this on almost every page in Freud. Consider only one famous one. “An Italian lady is said to have revenged herself for a tactless remark of the first Napoleon with a joke having this same technique of the double use of a word. At a court ball, he said to her pointing to her fellow countrymen: *tutti gli Italiani danzano si male*. To which she made the quick repartee: *Non tutti, ma buona parte*”. Freud tells us that “The technique of this joke lies in the fact that one and the same word – the name – appears in it used in two ways, once as a whole, and again cut up into its separate syllables like a charade”³³.

We interpret the countess’s discourse easily (we get the joke!). The countess cannot permit herself the impoliteness of the kind of sharp remark she might like to make. Nor does she want to fall into a morose and disapproving silence. The play on the homophony of *buona(-)parte* permits her to lie, i.e. to not say what she means, and thus to continue to converse politely and at the same time not to lie, that is, to say the interdiction.

Discourse is not ‘the discourse of the other’ or ‘an other discourse’ (II, 254) but discourse simply, that is, the detour around an obstacle we can never completely get around, namely the reticences and restrictions of all sorts which control our speech implicitly. Not only is our speech marked by the grammatical impropriety which it tries to overcome, never fully, in its performances, but it is also marked by the ethical

³²Gagnepain J., *Leçons*, p. 175 ff. “Le discours, dans l’exploitation que nous faisons du mot, est restreint à cet aspect particulier du langage en tant qu’il est soumis à la dialectique ethico-morale, c’est à dire à cette faculté qu’a l’homme, étant homme, de rationaliser son désir de dire.” (“Discourse, in our use of the word, is restricted to language insofar as it is submitted to the ethico-moral dialectic, that is, to the faculty human beings, as human beings, have to rationalize their desire to speak.”)

³³Freud S., “Jokes and their Relationship to the Unconscious”, S.E. VIII, p. 31.

reticence (in the neuroses, Gagnepain will speak not of reticence but of inhibition) which makes it impossible for us to say everything we want and which we nonetheless try to get around. Every discourse conceals as much as it reveals. Discourse, as Gagnepain put it in a wonderful pun, concerns not the *sens* of the message but the *cens*, the censorship which the message both reveals and hides. To the grammatical ordering of the sense is added the ethical ordering of the censor (i.e. our capacity to freely decide what is permitted, what not). That ethical ordering of the censor that appears, so to speak, indirectly or between the words in speech Gagnepain calls *propos*, a kind of orientation of the saying that breaks through in spite of all the reticences which weigh upon our desire to express ourselves³⁴.

A concluding Paragraph

Freud and Lacan have masterfully revealed this domain of language and Gagnepain clearly owes a great deal to them. But Freud and Lacan, given their undeconstructed notion of language and misled by the linguists of their time, failed to adequately grasp what was at issue, namely the *cens* hidden in the *sens*. Gagnepain's basic critique is that they interpret jokes and witticisms and lapsi and puns as tropes, especially as metaphors and metonymies. But tropes for Gagnepain are simply the result of grammar and the structure of impropriety which means that all our words always mean something else than what they say. We exploit these different meanings in our speech in different figures of speech and certainly the implicit (glossological) comes to play there in what is said. These however explain only the sense. But there is another determination at work, not the *sens* but the *cens*, not the explicit meaning but the censored meaning, and this has to do with axiology, not glossology. Instead of tropes, Gagnepain speaks of allegories. What counts is not what is said but what the enunciation carries with it of a satisfaction and at the same times a blockage of satisfaction. This is what is at play in jokes, slips of the tongue, *double sens et sous-entendus*, puns, and all the rest. The same 'techniques', notice, are also in play in parapraxes which have nothing to do with speech and also in dreams which involve not only words but representations. Gagnepain feels that Freud was trying all his life to find a proper explanation of the *cens* – the censor. He failed to find it for reasons we have already seen. Gagnepain says he can accept almost everything that Freud wrote on jokes and so on, except his explanation. This Gagnepain provides. In that sense, some argue that he has radicalized Lacan's return to Freud and given it a theoretic foundation which it lacks in Lacan. At the same time, Gagnepain acknowledges that without Freud and Lacan there would be no Gagnepain.

Nine years ago... a colleague remarked, echoing Descartes, – 'I lack, therefore I desire'. That is true. But it needs correction and amplification. The lack, we saw, does not come from another, nor is it the other that lacks. The lack is our doing, the work of the agency of reason in us without us, the nolunary that we oppose to the immediate (animal) satisfaction of desire. That is the correction. Here is the

³⁴ Gagnepain J., *Leçons*, p. 180.

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amplification (and another sense of 'Cartesianism'...): we must say not only 'I lack, therefore I desire' but also and at the same time: 'I lack, and therefore I speak'; 'I lack, and therefore I make things'; 'I lack, and therefore I make myself be socially and historically'. In other words, 'I lack and therefore I create meaning in manifold ways'. This is what '*vouloir dire*', to mean, means. *Vouloir Dire*, you may recall, is the title Jean Gagnepain gave to his three volumes masterwork: *Du Vouloir Dire*.