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THE FATE OF EVERYTHING THAT IS WRITTEN

Writing, from its origins, up to its last protean techniques, is only something that is articulated as the bone of which language is the flesh.

Jacques Lacan, Seminar XVIII¹

The question of writing occupied Lacan's work from the very beginning to the very end. In his later formulations he maintained that the letter, or the written word, is not reducible to the work of the signifier—which is located in the symbolic—but belongs to the real: “the written word is the limit or shoreline against which the real breaks into the symbolic,”² i.e. the letter for Lacan is considered more explicitly material than the sound. This statement must be understood in relation to his claim that the subject is the answer of the real (*la réponse du réel*) in the symbolic.³ In his later obsession with Joyce as a “literary saint,” we can find a condensed version of Lacan's theory of the subject: one that is split between truth and knowledge, or between *jouissance* and the symptom. Joyce is seen to have introduced a new *symptome*,—or the *sinthome*—that is a compulsive repetition in as far as writing provides, a “linguistic discharge for the structural and inadmissible *jouissance* of the Other.”⁴

In Lacan's elaborations on the *sinthome* literature (as a form of writing) is to be seen as a model of linguistic equivocation in which psychoanalysis finds a new youth. Psychoanalysis forces literary criticism to measure up to it with “the enigma remaining on the latter's side.”⁵ The enigma is the real question though: what is the enigma that is on the side of psychoanalysis? As an artist, Joyce's *savoir-faire* reveals that “there is something we cannot enjoy,” that there is “no other of the other to pass the final judgement.”⁶ That is, the enigma that Joyce reveals is that with writing, bit by bit, we cease to imagine, and we begin to enter the real. Ultimately, Joyce the *sinthome* calls into question the status of the real, the possibility of non-ideological identification in the subject's assumption of the Name-of-the-Father, and the function of repetition in re-symbolizing the lack in the symbolic. Does Joyce, the *saint-homme*, then represent what is ejected from ideological *jouissance* or the enjoyment of the Other. thereby posing the question of a possibility of a new

symbolic and the subversion of a hegemonic master signifier? It is unclear whether the *sinthome* is a repetition of the symptom, or some new form of traversal of the fundamental fantasy that not only generates a new symptom, but moreover an individualized symbolic⁷ that defies the hegemony of a master-signifier.⁸

It cannot be ignored that the saintly posture ascribed to Joyce is that of a modernist egoist, a “radical individualism defined by a refusal to ‘serve’ any other cause than that of the subject’s own [which] entails a rethinking of ‘ownership’ and a desire of owning... the entire world of discourse at least.”⁹ Joyce seems to be at once a “singular individual” or a “littoral fact,” on the one hand, and on the other an incarnation of the ego as symptom. Is Joyce—the *sinthome*—then an answer to the real in as far as he straddles the border between *litureterre* as an erasure of the symbolic, and a *literalization* of the imaginary? Is Joyce, the omniscient God, really a limit, and a breaking point?¹⁰ Or does Joyce bear witness to the limits of the Lacanian subject, not as a lost cause, but as what only emerges from the narrow passageways between the real and the symbolic?

It is well established by now that Lacan wished to maintain a notion of the subject that was in line with Descartes and Hegel. The split subject of the unconscious cannot but be the correlate to the subject of science; that is, a subject that is not the result of ideological interpellation but a “defile”¹¹ of the “rejection of all knowledge”—Cartesian doubt. This defile, this narrow passageway of definition, simultaneously establishes that subject as one which science cannot suture, while at the same time it “is nevertheless claimed to establish for the subject a certain anchoring in being”:

I sustain that this anchoring constitutes the subject of science in its definition, “definition” to be understood in the sense of a narrow doorway [or defile]. This lead [*fil*] did not guide me in vain, for it led me... to formulate our experienced division as subjects as a division between knowledge and truth.¹²

The analytic discourse is not concerned with saving the truth (*salva veritate*)¹³ for it addresses the jouissance of the subject by acting like its *déchet*, the *trashitas* of the subject of the unconscious (here, the analysand’s desire). Most importantly, the analytic discourse is determined in writing: in the *objet (petit) a*—an object which is nevertheless a letter, one whose typographical case is specified—for example, or in the phallus, signified by the letter Φ .¹⁴ All that is produced in discourse, understood as the fantasy structure of the social link, is considered by Lacan to be an effect of the written.¹⁵ The written, here, is not simply equivalent to the “autonomy of the signifier” as it is posited by Saussurean linguistics; rather the dimension of the written has nothing to do with the voice but with the gaze: “What you hear is the signifier. The signified is the effect of the signifier, *la lecture de ce qu’on entend de significant*.”¹⁶ The analytic discourse then gives “a different reading to the signifiers that are enunciated (*ce qui s’enonce de significant*) than what they signify.”¹⁷ It has to assume that the “subject of the unconscious knows how to read” or that it can be taught how to read; however, what the unconscious is taught to read in the

analytic setting is on a different plane from what psychoanalysis as a discourse can write of it.¹⁸

A tale of two deaths: the subject and ideology

Lacan's conception of subjectivity stands in contrast to the structuralist dismissal of the subject at the time in which he was teaching. Althusser for instance, broke with humanism and construed the subject as an effect of structure. The Althusserian interpellated subject is one that is captured in imaginary identification and remains a subject of consciousness at the site(s) where both recognition and misrecognition occur. Žižek and Dolar have both argued that what is eluded in Althusser's account of interpellation is the symbolic itself,¹⁹ while for Lacan, it is the symptom and fantasy (the barred subject and *objet a*) that are beyond interpellation, and connected through the notion of the *sinthome*.²⁰ Lacan's account of the subject, as what emerges at the point of failure of interpellation and the recognition of loss that has to be incurred for entry into the symbolic, challenges Althusser's clear-cut distinction between materiality and subjectivity, in which the subject is only a result of the process of interpellation, and materiality what is asserted as the exterior of ideology.

In contradistinction to this, Lacan's account of the subject posits it as the remainder of interpellation: "the psychoanalytic point of departure is the remainder produced by the operation... the clean cut is always unclean; it cannot produce the flawless interiority of an autonomous subject. The psychoanalytic subject is coextensive with that very flaw in the interior." The Lacanian subject is then one that "emerges at the point of non-recognition: this is not me. I was not there"²¹—that is, there is an alien kernel to subjectivity, one of which the symptom (and the *sinthome*) is the most striking manifestation.

If we consider Lacan's delineation of the emergence of the subject it is possible to map out Althusser's notion of interpellation as what occurs in the register of alienation and not separation.²² In Lacan's dialectic of identification or the confrontation between the subject and the other, the subject drops out of the picture and the subject's own disappearance, *aphanisis*, is the first step towards subjectivity. In the mirror stage, the ego as imaginary identification is what comes to replace a non-existing subject, or the subject only retroactively emerges as an imaginary identification when faced with the other (the mirror image, other child, the Other). Alienation is a process through which the subject appears precisely as a non-being or in the place of a lack in being, there is no subject prior to the Other and the encounter with the Other affirms the subject as an "empty set" or as what is out of place.²³ If the subject is without being and only appears in the field of the Other then what comes back to the subject in imaginary identification is not really his image, i.e. the imago is fundamentally (de)formative.²⁴ Rather, what comes back to the subject is a sign: the sign comes back to "petrify the subject in the same movement by which it calls the subject to speak and function."²⁵ The sign or the signifier

here comes to represent the subject for another and the chain of signification is put into place: the subject is completely submerged by language or by “empty speech” as Lacan calls everyday language—versus the full speech of analysis. The lost object that is to be re-found is a signifier of a missing signifier, and the desire of the Other acts as a stand-in for a structurally missing representation, for representation in the unconscious is not whole, not-all.

The subject is thus inscribed in the field of representation, it features as something represented, and not for whom something is represented. This step was also crucial for Freud in the seminal text negation, *Die Verneinung*, whereby we can detect the two-fold process of alienation in what Freud calls the form of intellectual judgment or “reality testing” where the subject comes to be represented for something else.²⁶ Freud posits reality testing as the process by which “whether something which is in the ego as a representation can now be rediscovered in perception, reality, as well.”²⁷ It is the process through which a foreign body the ego is formed as internal to the subject, as a foreign intruder through which external objective reality is then experienced.

What is inaugurated in this process, or the first signifier as such, is the inaugural point of the Ego-Ideal [S1] what Lacan will call “the unary trait,” the trait of oneness, but this One-ness is only possible in relation to another S2, through which the chain of signification is put into place. Separation is *to be put in the world* in the field of the Other whereby the other is revealed as also lacking. The example Lacan gives is of the child’s question: *why are you telling me this?*

The desire of the other is apprehended by the subject in that which does not work, in the lacks of the discourse of the Other, the child’s questioning, the why’s of children, are about securing a place for themselves in the desire of the Other whereby the question posed is: can you lose me?²⁸

The subject now devotes himself to the lack of the Other: desire is the desire of the Other, i.e. man’s desire is for the Other to desire him. This is the (lost) “cause” of his desire: the *objet a* emerges here precisely because the Other’s desire is elusive, it is (always already) lost and cannot be squared with the subject’s desire: “desire crawls, slips, escapes, like a ferret.”²⁹ For instance, the child cannot decipher the desire of the mother—there is something about her desire which escapes him. We can think of Hamlet here and his mother’s desire, for which Ophelia acts as a stand in, as *objet a* or O-phelia.³⁰ Where the rift is introduced between the child (subject) and the mother’s (other) desire, *objet a* emerges, and this is no longer the realm of the demand to be desired by the Other—instead, the subject is now in desire proper: “it is a repetition based on a lack engendered from the previous time that seems to reply to the lack raised by the following time.”³¹ The subject’s symptom or the “silent point in the speaking subject” is a site of conflict in which *objet a* is kept alive, and the *objet a* in turn reveals that the object of the drive is independent of any other (real) object.

It is difficult to designate that subject anywhere as subject of a statement—and therefore as articulating it—when he does not even know he is speaking. Hence the concept of the drive, in which the subject is designated on the basis of a pinpointing that is organic, oral, anal, and so on, which satisfies the requirement that the more he speaks, the further he is from speaking.³²

The symptom is then what ideological interpellation cannot account for and to which analysis is directed for the purpose of locating the subject's position in fantasy. The symptom escapes the chain of signification and brings forth a lack in the signifying chain, a (-1), that is due to the fact that *jouissance* has no signifier and abuts the real. It is in listening to the “sym that bols and the sym that toms,” that the analytic discourse tunes in to the subject as a response to the real. Mladen Dolar's formulations on the voice as *objet a*, as what disrupts the division between the internal and external and exposes them as irreconcilable domains, are important here: “only insofar as there is a real as an impossibility of presence is there a subject. The voice may well be the key to the presence of the present and to an unalloyed interiority, but it conceals in its bosom that inaudible object voice which disrupts both.”³³

Is this object voice then the written or the function of the letter that underlies any reality? Is it the bone (sym that bols) for which language is the flesh (sym that toms)? Further, is the object voice, the bone, the same as that which resists *aufhebung* or sublation, the death drive that cannot die?³⁴ In Dolar's reading, Beckett's—and not Joyce's—voice is deemed as *incredible*, as un-killable, or as what cannot die even as it keeps trying.

[The death drive] is not a drive towards death but quite the opposite—despite some confusion in Freud—a drive which itself cannot die. It is a pure thrust of persistence which cannot be annihilated, but it can merely be destroyed from without as a pure life in the loop of death that emerges on the verge of nothing, as an “unnullable least” which inextricably brings together the stone, that epitome of death and exteriority, and the voice, the epitome of life and interiority.³⁵

Dolar renames the death drive as *becketable*, in a parallel move to Lacan's renaming of the symptom as *Sinthome* via Joyce. For with Joyce, the Saint, we have a “refuse of *jouissance*” or a “man devoured by letters,”³⁶ only to emerge as saintly individual, a scribe of a stream of consciousness or a Saint-homme while with Beckett, “the voice maintains itself as unplaceable, as something at the very edge of the mind and the world or of speech and the body; it therefore cuts into both and is cut by both.”³⁷

In contrast, Joyce stands in for the pretense of *jouissance* and exposes the *objet a* as a lack in the real, for is this not the ultimate task of psychoanalysis? If Joyce reveals the automatism of *jouissance* then with Beckett we seem to be already on the side of repetition, of reaching the end at the very beginning only to repeat it again: with Beckett we have a “a pure thrust of persistence”³⁸ of the voice as a crack in a pure nothing, as a repetition of a death that can never be terminal. The distance between

Joyce and Beckett is then one that can be read as a tale between two deaths or between *objet a* and the compulsion to repeat.

Littoral as pure erasure

Erasure of no trace whatsoever that is prior: this is what constitutes the land [terre] of the littoral. Pure *litura* that is the literal. To produce this erasure is the reproduction of this half without complement of which the subject subsists.³⁹

If we read Lacan closely, Joyce reveals the “virus of the signifier” or the ceaseless work of *jouissance* against which psychoanalysis must put together the pieces of the real, here and there, and provide it with its *lucubrations*. The *sinthome* writes what it cannot read. That is why Joyce is more of an artist than a poet, he does not realize he is making a *sinthome* but is “a pure artificer [...] a man of know-how.”⁴⁰ Joyce is an artist because the master signifier has not managed to steal his know-how, his enjoyment, which gradually erodes the master and gnaws away at it.⁴¹ The terms that Lacan uses, *Lituraterre* and *gulying*, for describing the function of writing carry the meanings of passageways in a landscape: a shoreline, stream, and shimmering course describe the cut into a landscape or stone instilled by the slow yet persistent work of water. The “gulying of the signifier” is meant to be an interruption of the signifying chain or the repetition automatism of the symbolic passageway through which the *sinthome* emerges, in other words, the *sinthome* is not caught up in intersubjectivity. The written work is to be treated as the testimony given by an obsessional subject on the structure that determines her, by which sexual rapport appears impossible to formulate in discourse.

The littoral or the written is a shoreline, a border between center and absence or between knowledge and *jouissance*. Further, the void that is carved out by writing is distinct from *objet a* because it is not always ready to welcome *jouissance*. Joyce cannot simply be the object of a psychoanalysis that seeks knowledge in the symptom and psychoanalysis cannot be conceived as a science of a nagging object since “*objet a* is not peaceful [...] it doesn’t leave you in peace?”⁴² The *sinthome* then is a pure know-how that does not know itself, and is the site in which writing makes a name for itself, a site whereby literature approaches the status of science or the status of a “littoral fact.” Language is only possible because of the impossibility of symbolizing the sexual relation and the “littoral fact,” as Lacan argues in *Seminar XXIII*, is a fact because it does not feign the sexual relation but exposes it as a non-relation. The *sinthome* then is distinct because it approaches the truth of non-relation by being a “defile” of knowledge.

We can now understand how it is that literature ultimately exposes the “illiteracy of the symbolic,” as Dany Nobus has put it.⁴³ The relationship then between psychoanalysis and literature is complicated: it is one of a measuring against each other. Lacan’s replacement of *Litura* for *littera* replaces writing with the notion of erasure, deletion, and correction. Joyce’s writing does something different to *Litera-*

ture for it makes a litter out of the letter: if the letter is a litter then culture and “civilization is a sewer.”⁴⁴ It is only by admitting this that Lacan says a position can be made from which “to save the honor of literature.” Literature uses up the leftovers of society and in fact becomes a piece of trash: Joyce “slips from *a letter* to *a litter*, from *a lettre* to a piece of trash,”⁴⁵ and psychoanalysis in its understanding of waste as surplus *jouissance* carries the key to discern in literature what is more than the endless repetition of symptomatic compensations for the lack of knowledge. The endless cycle of repetition is halted only to be replaced by an acknowledgement of ignorance, of the ignorance of *savoir-faire*. This ignorance is nothing but the ignorance of knowledge itself.

The task of psychoanalysis, then, is not to simply interpret the literary text but to insist on the “weapon of equivocation” against the *sinthome*. As Lacan puts it in *Seminar XXIII*: “it is uniquely by equivocation that interpretation works. There must be something in the signifier that resonates.”⁴⁶ Words have an effect, and drives are the echo in the body of the fact that there is speech. The letter always arrives at its destination without recourse to any content, it outlines a hole in the edge of knowledge, it isn’t simply a frontier between the *Umwelt* and *Innenwelt*, but a limit, a point that exposes the two as non-reciprocal frontiers. In other words, writing is not an impression on the mystic writing pad, but functions in an economy of language as that which is *Littoral*: that by which *langue*, language, is affected. The *Littoral* functions as an erasure on the “shimmering course” of “the bouquet of the first trait [unary trait] and of what effaces it,”⁴⁷ and it is from this conjunction that the subject is made.

However, erasure does not simply conjoin with a presence: it is “as erasure of no trace whatsoever that constitutes the land, *terre*, of the *littoral*.”⁴⁸ The literal is pure *litura*: *pure erasure, pure deletion*. The *littoral* can only turn into literal if in the rupture between knowledge and truth, between presence and absence, an expulsion of what may constitute *jouissance* is possible. Lacan insists that it is a turn that is possible at every moment for the subject. From the *littoral* to the literal and finally to *litter-al*. From knowledge in failure to a failure in knowledge, this is what psychoanalysis can make of literature.

“It is insofar as the unconscious knots itself into a , which is what there is singularly in each individual, that one can say that Joyce, as it is written somewhere, identifies with the individual. He has made himself privileged enough to have, at the extreme point, incarnated in himself the symptom, that by which he escapes any possible death, by reducing himself to a structure that is precisely that of LOM [*l’homme*, man], if you will permit me to write it quite simply as l.o.m.”⁴⁹

If the *sinthome* exposes the illiteracy of the symbolic order then the interpretation of literature is premised on decimating it to the rubble, to the remainders of gullying, that it really is. Literature then can act as a violent intruder that takes away something from culture, it is “a ruthless excavator,”⁵⁰ that introduces a rup-

ture in knowledge, a hole in knowledge. This invasive function of literature does not puncture a hole in what was full before, but introduces a rupture in knowledge that has the ability to continuously repeat only if allowed to retrospectively create the illusion of an absolute *jouissance* that has been lost. This is what we could call idiotic enjoyment—Joyce’s enjoyment?—the *jouissance* of *objet a* in the fundamental fantasy that has to be traversed: it is ultimately an ideological function when considered from the standpoint of structure rather than from the standpoint of the subject failing to be interpellated by it.

In the *Seminar* on “The Purloined Letter,” Lacan argues that the signifier’s *caput mortuum* or worthless remains takes effect through a repetition compulsion that departs from the Freudian understanding of the notion of existence as reminiscence. With regards to the question of repetition, Dolar has placed Lacan on the side of Kierkegaard in this debate, and repetition is pitted against memory and reminiscence Lacan indeed moves beyond Freud and reinterprets Freud’s discussion of the child’s *Fort-Da* game: the modulation of the alternation of presence and absence through syllables in the game is the direct manifestation of the determination that the subject receives from the symbolic order. It is not however a question of genesis for Lacan but of structure: “it is at the moment of their essential conjunction [presence and absence] and, so to speak, at the zero point of desire that the human *object* comes under the sway of the grip which, cancelling out its natural property, submits it henceforth to the symbol’s conditions.”⁵² The autonomy of the symbolic is evidenced in repetition, in the indestructible persistence of unconscious desire and not in some scholastic understanding of an imaginary inertia of free associations. Lacan argues that his own understanding of *insistence* as the essential characteristic of repetition is beholden to Freud’s suggestion in *beyond the pleasure principle*, of it as “pre-ital and transbiological” and is not in any sense spiritualistic. Thus, if man comes to think about the symbolic order, it is because it is a forced choice that curtails his being. The illusion that he has formed this by his consciousness itself stems from a gap in his imaginary relationship which allowed his entrance into the symbolic only via the “radical defile of speech” that is not a moment of genesis (although is a genetic moment in the child’s entry into speech) but a structural determination: one that is “reproduced each time the subject addresses the Other as absolute, as the Other who can annul him himself, just as he can act accordingly with the Other, that is by making himself into an object in order to deceive the Other.”⁵³

If, as Dolar argues with regards to this point, “repetition is pitted against the law, regularity and causality, and it poses the problem of the impossibility of spelling out the identity of what is repeated. It appears in a discontinuity, a break in the causal chain,”⁵⁴ then how does this structural determination link back to the *caput mortuum* of the signifier? Here it is important to consider Lacan’s argument that literature is what makes a claim about the meaninglessness of the written and its destiny to function despite its meaninglessness:

The essence of the latter [Purloined Letter] is that the letter was able to have its effects on the inside—on the tale’s actors, including the narrator—just as much as on the outside—on us, its readers and also its author—without anyone having had to worry about what it meant. That is the usual fate of everything that is written.⁵⁵

Everything that is written functions according to a limitation embedded within it: this limitation is what Lacan calls “the role of the possibility of representation” that governs the relation between metaphor and metonymy, the former being in the field of condensation or *Verdichtung* (poetic) and the latter in the field of displacement or *Verschiebung* (the unconscious’s method of foiling censorship). Again here it is not genesis that is the question: the limitation inherent in writing is not to be understood as a limitation of ‘natural expression’ or figurative semiology, rather it is a limitation that is constitutive of writing itself.

Further to this, the symptom is determined by the mechanism of metaphor—between the signifier of sexual trauma, sexual non-relation and the term that comes to replace it in the signifying chain—while desire is “caught in the rails of metonymy eternally extending toward the *desire for something else*.” To recall Lacan’s known formulation: “it is the truth of what this desire has been in his history that the subject cries out through his symptom.”⁵⁶ But it is not about giving the truth its rightful place, but about taking up our place in the truth: the conflictual truth of social relations. And this is where Marx becomes Lacan’s main reference as the inventor of the social symptom. The symptom is what manifests the incompatibility between truth and knowledge and the *sinthome* is what produces a discourse that is not one of semblance, not one of *objet a*. Could Marx perhaps be considered a *sinthome* as well?⁵⁷

The traversal of the fundamental fantasy is about re-signifierizing the symbolic by assuming temporarily the real of the symbolic: its constitutive lack or jouissance, i.e. it is an assumption of a new fantasy and not a remembrance. It is a repetition that cuts into continuity and installs a break that is irreducible to the continuity of memory, one that cannot be captured by symbols and signs. It is in this sense that the unconscious is fundamentally an arche-writing (and not meta-language), what predates both speech and writing or what ante-dates *lalangue* but also poses the very question of the relationship between language and world. Contra Freud, Lacan argues that the symptom does not simply emerge where there is a lacking signifier, a lacking representation, which upon repression becomes the grounds for repetition. Further to this he posits the *sinthome* as a marker for a possibility of repetition that does not simply re-instill the symptom. And this is why *lituraterre* is a smearing of a surface, or perhaps torsion in the surface, a negativity that is constitutive of the real. Lacan resorts to Joyce to enlighten the enigmas of psychoanalysis: the letter in the case of Joyce no longer insists but becomes a breaking point, i.e. Joyce introduces a limit of the real. The *sinthome* in this sense is not a tragic repetition, but names the real. Joyce the writer, the *sinthome*, is already separated from the symptom: writing allows the subject to be relocated in the meaning that he lacked.

The question is if the symptom is a non-linguistic symbol, then is the *sinthome* a new social concept? Or is it the virus of identification, from an interpreted symptom, to a traversed fantasy back to an insistence on identification only to fail and reproduce a symbolic again?

The *sinthome* shows that there is nothing opposite the symbolic or that the real is the support of the symbolic:

what is at stake in jouissance, the jouissance not of the Other [because there is no other of the other] is that there is nothing opposite the symbolic [which is the locus of the Other as such]. And that there exists a hole within the symbolic itself based on the division of the symptom: into symptom and symbol—the sym that toms and the sym that bols. But this division of the symptom which puts the chain of signifiers into work, the shift from S1 to S2 is a false hole.⁵⁸

The consistency of the real, symbolic, and imaginary is like the consistency of a circle and a circle presupposes a hole. But the logic of the hole, or one could venture to say the void of the symptom, is that it is not simply a matter of turning around continuing, a return to a point of origin, to a repressed origin, rather the hole of the symptom generates a new origin, a form of *ex nihilo* creation. The *sinthome* is introduced into the Borromean knot as its forth element: the written—or writing as a symptom—allows an entry into the real only because the letter does not in any way represent sensible nature, but literally replaces it.⁵⁹

It is not simply that the written is pitted against the presence of a subject of enunciation, but the written emerges as a remainder of the gap between nature and culture, between the rock and the voice as Dolar has argued:

that dead letter which disrupts the living voice, the supplement which usurps its subsidiary place to tarnish presence. And ultimately, it is not writing in its positive and empirical appearance that is at stake, but more fundamentally the trace, the trace of alterity which has “always-already” dislocated the origin.⁶⁰

Writing as the staineath, the border, and *terre* instils a temporal thrust: the written text has a futurity to it, in as much as nothing *really* happens in it. This dislocation of an origin that was not there to begin with is the function of writing as “the stuffing of the signified by the signifier.” Its no coincidence that Lacan resorts to the example of stuffing to describe the function of the written in Joyce: for why would Joyce believe “that there is a book of himself? What an idea to make oneself be a book! This could only come to a stunted poet, a pig of a poet!”⁶¹ It may as well be that only with Pozzo’s injunction to Lucky in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*—“Think Pig!”—that we can illuminate the statement that Joyce is a pig of poet. But then, what is the distance between thinking like an animal and being a *Saint-homme*, a *trashitas* of jouissance? Could Lucky’s beastly existence be read as the repetition of

God's jouissance in Joyce the saint? In other words, could it be that God's jouissance is nothing more—nor any less—than thinking like a pig?

Notes

1. Jacques Lacan, *Seminar XVIII, On a Discourse that Might Not Be a Semblance*, trans. Cormac Gallagher, session of Wednesday 9 June 1971, <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-XVIII.pdf>.
2. Jacques Lacan, "Lituraterre," *Continental Philosophy Review* 46 (2013): 327–334.
3. Jacques Lacan, "L'etourdit," *Scilicet* 4 (1972): 15.
4. Lorenzo Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness, A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007) 190 n287.
5. Jacques Lacan, *Seminar XXIII: Le Sinthome*, trans. Cormac Gallagher, session of Wednesday 18 November 1975. <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-XXIII.pdf>. References to this text will be to "Seminar XXIII" followed by session date.
6. Lacan, *Le Sinthome*, Wednesday, 13 January 1976.
7. Lorenzo Chiesa, "Lacan Le-sinthome," *Journal of Lacanian Studies* 2 (2005): 157-170. Review of *Re-inventing the Symptom—Essays on the Final Lacan* ed. Luke Thurston (New York: Other Press, 2002). Chiesa argues: "Joyce is 'the individual' for Lacan, that is, Joyce succeeds in subjectivizing himself by (partially) individualizing *objet a*: the individual is not the ideological One, it stands for another modality of One, another (non-psychotic) way of inhabiting the symbolic 'starting' from its real lack" (168).
8. Chiesa's discussion of Miller's reading of the *sinthome* is important here. See *Subjectivity and Otherness*, 189-192.
9. Jean Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Rabaté's discussion is important because it brings forth the centrality of egoism in the modernist movement in which he places Joyce, cf 40.
10. Mladen Dolar makes a distinction between Joyce's omniscient additions and Beckett's subtractive impotence in "The Voice and the Stone: From Hegel to Beckett," *Theory@Buffalo: Revisions of Excess* 12 (2008): 140-168, Also available at http://www.ibrarian.net/navon/paper/The_Voice_and_the_Stone_from_Hegel_to_Beckett.pdf?paperid=12013052 – page numbers will be from the latter document.
11. This unusual term, deriving from and here translating the French *défilé*, is a noun in English (and not the more common verb) which has an archaic, military definition, meaning a narrow way or passage through which an army has to pass in single file. Translator Bruce Fink notes that "[d]éfilé (defile) should perhaps be understood in the sense of a narrow, difficult path; since the French also means procession [such as that of an army] or succession, however, it could perhaps imply consequence or aftermath. See Freud's "defile of consciousness" in the *Standard Edition vol.2: Studies on Hysteria*, 291, and Kant's notion of science as a "narrow gate" in *Critique of Practical Reason*." Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, in collaboration with Héroïse Fink and Russell Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006) 844 (Notes to "Science and Truth").

12. Lacan, "Science and Truth," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition*, 727. For Lacan the subject of science, the Cartesian *cogito*, is constituted in a "rejection of all knowledge": this does not simply anchor the subject in being, but crucially does so by introducing the subject as the split or crack in being itself.
13. Even the modern scientific or Copernican revolution, for Lacan, maintained this position of saving the truth, since revolution is about a constant return to an origin, while psychoanalysis is concerned with a constant work of decentering, through which a worldview can never be formulated.
14. Lacan, *Encore, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: WW. Norton & Co., 1995) 28.
15. This is not simply a matter of mechanical causality but has a temporal structure of retroaction. Lorenzo Chiesa in *The Not-Two: Logic and God in Lacan*, in his discussion of the question of what comes first, writing or discourse, poses that "discourse, without exception, gives itself as a semblance" while also being "an effect of truth, the truth of incompleteness that is not pre-given in opposition to what is false, but becomes true through discourse's repression of it" (83). This is essential for understanding the link between writing and speech in psychoanalysis, by which writing does not simply represent speech but is a "*literal* element that resists signification, and puts into play the real not as an after-all meaningful deficit of meaning... but as the *meaninglessness* from which meaning qua deficit of meaning originates" (85). Lorenzo Chiesa, *The Not-Two: Logic and God in Lacan* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).
16. Lacan, *Encore*, 33. A better translation that is suggested in the footnote by Bruce Fink is "the reading of what one hears qua signifier."
17. Lacan, *Encore*, 37.
18. Lacan, *Encore*, 37.
19. Another dangerously close approach which misconstrues imaginary identification at the expense of a total lack of understanding of ideology is Jungian psychology and its notion of the archetype, which does not go beyond the narcissistic enrapture in imaginary identification and ends up effectively substantializing the imaginary and mis-apprehending the subject as one that is construed through an authentic intuition or an immanent essence: a subject full of being rather than one that is a subjectivized lack in Lacan's account. With Jung we see the elevation of the symbolic's void of meaning into a sublime object (this is, of ideology).
20. Mladen Dolar, "Beyond Interpellation," *Qui Parle* 6.2 (Spring/Summer 1993): 92.
21. Dolar, "Beyond Interpellation," 80.
22. Jacques Lacan, "The Subject and the Other," *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: WW. Norton and Co., 1998) 203-216.
23. Lacan, *Écrits*, 207.
24. Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness*, 14-19.
25. Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness*, 14-19.

26. Sigmund Freud, "Negation" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1925), vol.19, 235-239.
27. Freud, "Negation," 235-239.
28. Lacan, *Écrits*, 214.
29. Lacan, *Écrits*, 214.
30. Jacques Lacan, Jacques-Alain Miller; James Hulbert, "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet," *Yale French Studies*, Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise, 55/56, (1977): 11-52.
31. Lacan, *Écrits*, 225.
32. Lacan, *Écrits*, 691-2.
33. Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006) 41.
34. Dolar, "The Voice and the Stone," 11. Dolar's reading of the relationship between the voice and the stone, Beckett and Hegel, elucidates the indistinction of life and death in Beckett, his subtractive effort versus the omniscience of Joyce: "Both are placed alongside each other—the stone only in one iconic scene, the voice constantly—in a region which is precisely neither outside nor inside. They are placed on the dividing line, at the intersection of incorporation and expulsion. This region of the extimate that modernity has come to explore could serve as its definition: the stone speaks, but only if you put it in your mouth, the voice speaks, but only if you deprive it of interiority and its expression, if you chew it as a stone. This is the voice which does not come from within, i.e., it does not express interiority nor does it point to it. What is cracked is neither the stone nor the voice, but the very division inside/outside, and both the stone and the voice come to inhabit this crack" (11).
35. Dolar, "The Voice and the Stone," 11.
36. Jean Michel Rabaté, "A Space of Dumbbillsilly: When Joyce Translates Lacan," *Critical Quarterly* 48.1 (2006): 26-42, 36.
37. Dolar, "The Voice and the Stone," 11.
38. Dolar, "The Voice and the Stone," 11.
39. Dolar, "The Voice and the Stone," 11.
40. Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIII*, trans. Adrian Price, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Cambridge, UK & Walden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2016) 99.
41. Dolar reads the Master slave dialectic through Lacan as one which involves a theft of enjoyment, what the master takes from the slave is surplus enjoyment and what the slave works to recuperate is a pure enjoyment which fetishizes the master as a subject supposed to enjoy. Mladen Dolar, "Hegel as the Other Side of Psychoanalysis," in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflections on Seminar XVII*, ed. Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 129-155.
42. Lacan, *Écrits*, 733
43. Dany Nobus, "Illiterature," in *Re-Inventing the Symptom*, ed. Luke Thurston (New York: Other Press, 2002) 30.

44. Lacan, *Lituraterre*, 328.
45. Lacan, *Lituraterre*, 331.
46. Lacan, *Seminar XXIII*, Wednesday 18, November 1975.
47. Lacan, *Seminar XXIII*, Wednesday 18, November 1975.
48. Lacan, *Lituraterre*, 331.
49. Lacan, *The Sinthome*, 141-148.
50. Dany Nobus, "Illiterature," 30.
51. Mladen Dolar, "Which Repetition?" (Unpublished) 14.
52. Lacan, *Écrits*, 35.
53. Lacan, *Écrits*, 54.
54. Dolar, "Which Repetition?," 14.
55. Lacan, *Écrits*, 53.
56. Lacan, *Écrits*, 431.
57. Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness*, 191-192.
58. Lacan, *Seminar XXIII*, Wednesday 18 November 1975.
59. Lacan *Seminar XXIII*, Wednesday 18 November 1975.
60. Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 37.
61. Lacan, *Seminar XXIII*, Wednesday 13 January 1976.