

ERIC LAURENT

Institution of the Phantasm, Phantasms of the Institution

In a school that refers to the teaching of Lacan, how can one not set out from his text, *Les complexes familiaux* [Familial Complexes], for an introduction to the familial institution? This text bears news to psychoanalysts, who often have a tendency to think of the family as reduced to the father and the mother. This text awakens us to the extremely opaque character of what one calls a family, especially a modern family. Far from being a contradiction, a reduction to the biological family -- father, mother, child -- which it often appears to be, the modern family is on the contrary essentially complex.

The modern family's multiplicity of forms

The modern family is a holophrase. A holophrase is a phenomenon of language isolated by linguists such as Guillaume, which consists of all the syntactic functions being incarnated in a single word. When one says in English «Fire!»¹ or in French «au feu!» this single word implies a subject, an address, a compliment, a referent and mobilizes, not only a lexical element, but all the more complex functions of grammar. Lacan had spoken of the holophrase in relation to psychosis to point out the function of the One «alone.» The holophrase has other virtues, such as making us perceive the condensation of complex functions into a single element which may seem simple. In 1988, fifty years after Lacan's text, modern families are more and more complex, more holophrastic since the

evolution of the family has ended up in this paradox: the unlikely notion of the «mono-member» family.

Where there is no longer a family, the idea subsists despite everything; it is the family for one alone. The term isn't false in spite of the apparent simplification; the mono-member is equipped with accessories -- references, situations, aids, identifications -- with the signifiers that make a family of him alone. At least, that is what the capitalist discourse demands of a family. It is not at all the same thing that the Roman Empire demanded, the merchant discourse and familial solidarity; not at all the same thing tragedy demands. The capitalist discourse demands a rather complex outfit which makes it so that we now have to deal with extremely diverse forms of family.

In 1938, Lacan indicated that Freud had come into the world and elaborated his theory at a moment when the family was in crisis. The concept of the Oedipus came to him as a response to an institutional recasting of the family:

The sublime hazard of genius alone might not explain that it was in Vienna -- then center of a state which was a melting pot² of the most diverse familial forms, from the most archaic to the most evolved, from the last agnatic groups of slavic peasants to the most reduced forms of petit-bourgeois homes, passing through feudal and mercantile paternalisms, to the most decadent and instable cohabitations -- that the son of a Jewish patriarch had imagined the Oedipus complex.³

Each of the elements of these familial forms has been simplified by history over the last fifty years, and the modern family presents nonetheless a just as complex spread.

The «most decadent forms of instable cohabitation» are now given their rational by mono-member families, permitting the transformation of decadent forms into rational forms, furnishing them with equipment. There are also new forms. What had been decadent is especially well suited to well-known difficulties such as leading two careers, two identities in a single household, with the tensions that this implies and which often leads to each one taking his objects a to go it alone. That has nothing to do with instability anymore. There are also the more varied forms of what Lacan had called delusional familialism: the will to conserve the forms of family at all costs. This produces, at the price of a sort of inauthenticity or even facticity of bonds, those incredible American families in which, after the sixth divorce and the shuffling up of diverse children, one can calculate exactly the

bond between the children of the first marriage and those of the sixth. It is sometimes quite a feat, and it is as complex as a Bororo or Amanda kinship structure, necessitating a calculation so that the subject is situated in the same space declared familial by the laws of the state in which he lives. Obviously these are rather abstract forms which coexist at the heart of the familial space and which merit being studied more closely. Recently, I read a study by a demographer at the C.N.R.S.⁴ who has no relation to psychoanalysis. She pointed out that the multiplicity of familial forms, far from having been perceived as a phenomenon of degradation or deliquescence (as the conservative discourse would have us believe), must be seen rather as the blossoming of the complex structures of the collective family. Much more than a process of decadence, they are like the blooming of those Japanese flowers that immediately open once set in water.

There is no child without institution

These collective forms -- which can seem so simple in the petit-bourgeois family modified by science, which is the so-called «normal» state of families -- can exhibit a rich branching out that lets us understand how, regarding the familial complexity, certainly institutions taking the place of the family can also have extremely varied structures, and that each in its own way comes to substitute for an aspect of the function of the family. For there is no child without institution. Even if the child is abandoned, there is an institution of the street that welcomes him. There is no child alone. The child goes with an institution, either the family or what takes its place: the gang, the street, the law of the jungle if necessary. Institutions -- if we take this term in one of its senses as «what is established» -- institutions take up the relay in a multiplicity of forms as complex as those that the family can take.

One might make a topology of institutions exactly like Lacan made of the families of Vienna. One can describe the institutions which are agnatic groups, institutions as unstable cohabitations, one can describe institutions that are like the petit-bourgeois home, one can describe some of them as peasant/slave villages, others as simply the paternal mercantile form, others still as feudal, etc. And if this gives us a description of all the realizations these institutions have had, we can see also the forms the family might take. There are the great totemic institutions such as the Napoleonic lycee. It is known that Napoleon, faced with having to put France in order after the revolution, chose the simplest solution. He put all of France in the barracks, from high school to the Comedie francaise, simply

adapting the barracks to the eccentrics who found themselves there -- more eccentric at the Comedie francaise, less eccentric at the Polytechnique.⁵ But he necessarily put all that in rank, by twos, with a totem and simple rules. This model of an institution has always had a robust consistence throughout the centuries. France, of all Europe, continues to have this barracked character which is part of its charm, along with its agriculture. There are also maternal and maternalizing institutions where one finds those with a will for tenderness, effusive emotions, and palliative care, the most devoted wills which take over where the Napoleonic militarism leaves off, the little sisters of the poor side, which is also a pillar of these institutions. The model of the mother superior has also reigned for a long time over our institutions. Freud gave the model and analyzed the totemic institution in his Totem and Taboo as well as the later Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. It is the model of the church, the army and the single party.

The discontents of the totem: Bion's method

Freud presented what was the necessity of these institutions: their power, their effect, the formidable potential given to equalization through the identification to an ideal. But it fell to a student of Melanie Klein, Winfred Bion, to occupy himself with the discontents of the Totem, those who couldn't identify with a totem. It isn't just the hysteric who wants his or her own place apart from the others, affirming a wish to not be just a number, to not be in the group. There are always those who, especially in emergencies, in the case of war, refuse to be gunho warriors. It had been to Melanie Klein's students to show us what could be done with these discontents of the Totem who refused to identify to the army, even if it was for a noble cause, since it was about fighting the Nazis. Some of them would be sent to the front, and their fear can be understood. But this is not about understanding; it is about what to do to help someone to choose their destiny.

The idea that imposed itself right away in relation to these totem institutions with a view to the waste they produced had been to constitute little groups to gather together those who refused to place themselves under a common ideal. This opposition had struck Lacan: those who refused to place themselves under an Ideal with a capital I, could gather together around an activity, pretext supporting a phantasm of recognition, of being recognized as men. Bion's invention allowed him to fill-in where the ideal was no longer viable and allowed these subjects to choose what they really wanted.

From the analysis of imaginary formations among the Kleinians to the sacralization of the symbolic among the Lacanians

It was this attempt that interested Lacan in a text, «La psychiatrie anglaise dans la guerre» [English Psychiatry during the War]⁶ that I have commented on elsewhere. This text is part of the prehistory of what would later be called the Cartel. The Cartel comes out of an interpretation of what is most interesting and innovative in a certain psychoanalytic tradition.

First of all, institutions for children benefitted from what had been perfected for the army. Children's institutions, which were essentially totemic institutions constructed either around discipline or around the Mother Superior as Ideal, benefitted from what had been perfected in the fight against these maladies. Little groups were organized permitting children to gather around activities and in work-shops.⁷ From then on, one went to work analyzing children's phantasms through the activities.

In France, during quite some time, the so-called institutional movement was inspired by the indications Lacan had given on little groups, their use and the systematizations he had proposed. This allowed Lacan's students of this period to take the front-line position and try to convince their colleagues of the interest in signing up on the roster that Bion's method supposed. Each patient was simply asked to sign-up on the lists of activities. The constitution of these systems allowed Lacan's students, at a time when the Kleinian's -- including those in institutions -- were entirely focused on studies of the child's phantasms, to recall the importance of symbolic systems.

Around the end of the Sixties, limits to this sacralization of the symbolic, which seemed deduced from Lacan's teaching, were encountered. More and more, multiple contradictions appeared from which those who were in charge of these institutions couldn't escape. It finished in bizarre ideas like the famous symbolic payment. People put themselves in illegal positions in the institutions in which they worked in the name of making others respect the law. In the name of the law internal to such a communal utopia, they upheld an absurd position regarding all possible regulation of work. This produced institutions where the personnel worked 80 hour weeks and made themselves sick. There was even one member of an institutions who, more persecutive than the social welfare inspectors, called on the ill to make sure they were really sick, for falling ill was a symbolic violation. Similar things took place until the alarm had to be sounded to

explain that confusing utopian rules with law led to impossible contradictions and impasses. Each time a Kleinian said, «I must set limits,» the Lacanian said, «I must respect the law.» This developed another jargon. The Kleinian hope was to obtain with the maternal ideal -- that's what «contain» means -- what one obtains with the paternal function. The famous arguments of maternal persuasion which obtained the limit at the price of «if you do that I'll kill myself» or «if you do that I'll kill you,» produced the idea of the establishment of a certain kinds of limits when the forces of the ideal are occasionally a little too unbridled.

The end of the Sixties saw the flowering of remarkable institutions and institutional utopias, including in private life, in the families. It was a period of remarkable inventions. It no longer stopped at the free marriage of the Sartre-Simone de Beauvoir type. It went all the way to practical inventions which above all allowed one to ignore who is responsible.

The failure of communal utopias, 1969: the other side of psychoanalysis

After these inventions in families, institutions, in the most varied communal utopias in the United States, Israel and even in the countries of Europe, the Sixties were marked for Lacan by a failure. That's the diagnostic he gives in a text from 1969. This was a very rich year since it was both the year he gave his seminar on «L'Envers de la psychanalyse» [The Other Side of Psychoanalysis] which is a reflection on the forms of social bonds and on the institution, as well as the publication of the text of the closing address from the conference on alienated childhood and the Deux notes sur l'enfant [Two Notes on the Child] given to Madame Aubrey, without forgetting Radiophonie and the preface to Madame Anika Riflet Lemaire's dissertation.

In the second of the Notes sur l'enfant, Lacan took the same position he held in Television when he stated that communal utopias failed. Usually, we comment much more on the first note which situates the now canonic opposition between the child as symptom of the family and the child in the mother's phantasm. I would like to consider the second, less frequently commented upon note as Lacan's rereading of his Complexes familiaux. In the notes, Lacan speaks of himself in the third person, addressing himself to someone who, for some time, had not followed his teachings. Lacan says, «...to see the failure of communal utopias the position of Lacan reminds us of the dimension of that which follows. The function of residue

that supports (and at the same time maintains) the conjugal family in the evolution of societies...»

It is written like the text of 1938, but in 1938 Lacan did not present the function of residue of the family in the same way. The premise of *Les complexes familiaux* is that the kinship relations at the interior of the family, in all their complexity, have one meaning in evolution and that the accomplishment of the family is marriage. One grasps the profound rearranging that had conducted the familial institution to its present form, and one recognizes at the same time that it must be attributed to the prevalent influence of marriage, an institution that must be distinguished from that of the family. The English language has two forms for «kinship» and «marriage» that in French are indistinguishable. One says in French «*belle famille*» and this gives rise to a lot of witticisms, but it obscures the question because, in general, it has nothing to do with beauty. The English say «*in laws*»⁸ which is to say family according to the law, and they have two terms which are very useful in ethnology. Thus the systems of kinship oppose the kinship in the family with the law of filiation and marriage insofar as it is by the law of alliance. In 1938, Lacan notes that the meaning of kinship is accomplished in marriage insofar as it is a pure effect of the signifier. What's beautiful about marriage is that it is just an effect of the signifier; it isn't an effect of blood. It is brought about by both a signifying act and an act that only depends on an exchange of words. Don't forget that in complex religions like the Catholic religion, the sacrament of marriage is established by the simple consent of the couple. In the Middle Ages, when canonic law really counted, there were a whole bunch of very interesting cases where precisely the sacrament, the engagement was acquired from the moment when there was a simple agreement before God, summoned by a ritual occasionally, but the consent was enough.

What Lacan takes up again in 1969, thirty years later, is this:

the function of the residue that supports (and at the same time maintains) the conjugal family in the evolution of societies, brings out the irreducible of a transmission -- which is of another order than that of life according to the satisfaction of needs -- but which comes of a subjective constitution implying a relation to a desire that would not be anonymous.⁹

He puts the accent less on marriage than on the establishment of a name for the child. The child is constituted as subject in a reference to the name of a desire that must not be without name. He adds:

It is according to such a necessity that are judged the function of mother and father. Of the mother: insofar as her care bears the mark of a

particularized interest, be it by the path of her own lacks. Of the father: insofar as his name is the vector of an incarnation of the Law in desire.

What does this mean?

A mother is essential insofar as she is an obstacle to the ideal mother

Lacan notes that the mother's care must bear the mark of a particularized interest. The particularity of the mother's care echoes the Name-of-the-father. Lacan doesn't retreat before the question of what makes the mother a bad mother when he says, «be it by the path of her own lacks.» It isn't that the mother is good enough, after Winnicott's formula, but bad enough. Lacan is more lucid. Madame Winnicott herself said of Winnicott that he suffered from a delusion of kindness. This isn't necessarily false, especially when one sees the way in which he occasionally marks the place of the mother. This formula of a «good enough mother» is coined from English realism, incontestably, but one more step must be taken to conceive of the fact that the mother also transmits something in being bad enough.

Bad enough for what? Bad enough to not be ideal. The worst is the ideal mother. The ideal mother -- there are plenty of examples; indeed there are too many. There are examples in literature which had been analyzed by Lacan: the mother of Andre Gide, impeccable, dressed in black, completely devoted to her son, who had supported on her own the household when her husband died, who remained with her babes in arms. What did this produce? A child with a disgust for desire and the search for an exit which, as we know, was complicated face to face with this ideal mother. Everything that might reduce the mother to an ideal function produces catastrophic effects. What must be grasped is the particularity of the child, not in his relation to the ideal mother, but in the way he had been an object for her. Lacan said that A mother is necessary for that. A mother is essential insofar as she is an obstacle to the ideal mother. What is dangerous to all communities -- whether or not they are institutions, whether or not they see themselves as ideological in character, whether they see themselves as ideologically progressive or reactionary -- is that they function under ideals and that one tries precisely to perfect mothers insofar as they might be everything for everyone.

One sees this occasionally in totalitarian utopias such as that of Sri Aurobindo. The only thing Hindu about him is the name. He is European, had been a concentration camp, then found peace in India and founded communities that he baptized «ashrams.» It's pure importation, India having never known communities of this sort. He placed at the head of them a woman who had supported him a great deal and whom he called «the mother.» They organized this according to a sort of unbridled «Jungo-Hinduism» that had fantastic success with young Americans who were persuaded that they had found the most authentic form of Buddhism. It was very interesting to see, in a case presentation as Saint Anne's Hospital, a subject that had spent some time in one of these «ashrams.» The subject, psychotic, produced a delusion on the topic and gave us an idea of what they tried to do in this community to make this subject who hasn't a body, believe he has one. It was an undertaking that necessitated at least a universal mother.

What psychoanalysis must give as the goal of an institution is surely to install the particular everywhere to counter the ideal.

A father who doesn't take himself for a father

The position of the father, «insofar as his name is the vector of an incarnation of the law in desire» is that he be reduced to a name. This is very important because too often Lacan's teaching has been interpreted as an appeal to make fathers who truly take themselves to be fathers. On the contrary, the place of the father only makes sense if it is left empty. The father who takes himself for a father is, in the worst case scenario, the father of President Schreber. He knew how to keep order in his house, and it wasn't a joke. He had a solution for everything and a rule for everything. In the end, everybody felt suffocated and, above all, had the feeling that the source of the law was irremediably soiled. This was the case for Daniel Paul Schreber, who felt that the source of the law was soiled forevermore and that he had perceived the paternal imposture.

The paternal imposture, for Lacan, consists in taking oneself rather for a Jewish father (in the sense that he is burdened with such a number of rules that he cannot take himself as being very important) or a Catholic father (who is always like St. Joseph, knowing that he must care for the child while knowing that he is not the cause). The advantage of the name is to be an index designating a place. It is the vector of an «incarnation of the law in desire,» a phrase that must be meditated upon, for the law can

be incarnated in books and not in desire. This is what is characteristic of the Jewish people, people of the book throughout the centuries. If one is Catholic, the law is incarnated in love, concept which hoped to replace all those heavy rules with a single commandment: love your neighbor. Freud, with the ravaging irony to which he held the key, showed how the massacres had never flourished so well as when the commandment to love your neighbor was emitted in the heart of the Roman Empire at a bad moment in its history.

The phrase «incarnation of the law in desire» also means this: incarnation of the law in what must under no circumstance be an ideal. The phrase «incarnate the law in desire» means «do not incarnate it in an ideal.» This has far reaching implications, for all laws are made in the name of ideals. The master discourse, politics, only functions with ideals. There are laws «in the name of» a certain number of ideals -- liberty, equality, fraternity -- in the name of human rights. Human rights are not human desire. Desire is exactly that which is conceived of as being the other side of or beyond the ideal.

Lacan wrote, in his schema I, that in psychosis an ideal brutally took the place of the father. This is what makes the distortion between neurosis and psychosis. In place of the father in his particularity, in his flaws and sins, an ideal appears.

The Sittlichkeit: an ethic as morality incarnated against utopia

The paradox of any ethic of psychoanalysis is to found an incarnated morality. It isn't a matter of masking the fact that the ethic is moral, but not in the sense of the morality of a catechism. It is, according to the word Hegel used, *sittlichkeit*, the effective incarnation of a moral. The father can only be judged by that. Lacan said he is judged in that he can humanize desire, which is to say that he can incarnate or not a mode of effective treatment of jouissance. He does not sustain himself in being the father-of-prudery, the father-of-morality or the father-domestic-tyrant. He sustains his position from one thing alone: does he know of his jouissance to be responsible in relation to his children. And it would be better if his jouissance took a turn toward a woman whom he makes the cause of his desire. The paradox of the analytic discourse is to try to found a morality in act which, however, doesn't claim an ideal.

This is one way of saying that psychoanalysis proposes to go beyond the Oedipus, including for the neurotic. The father of Oedipus, the father of Thebes, is still too ideal. Better the one of Oedipus at Colonus, who takes responsibility to the bitter end for his acts. This responsibility can go so far as refusing reconciliation with his son, as in Oedipus at Colonus. Remember that Sophocles wrote this admirable and moving play when he was old and accused of being unsound of mind by his son, who wanted to get ahold of his inheritance. Sophocles defended himself before the tribune by reciting from memory the choruses of the play he had just written. At least that is what comes down to us according to tradition and gives a context and tone in which to inscribe the non-reconciliation between father and son.

Lacan gives the father the function of incarnating the law which goes against utopia. At the end of *Les complexes familiaux*, Lacan uses precise and hard words to designate what happens when what he calls the «utopian veering of the ideals of a culture» is produced.¹⁰ The father, according to Lacan's definition, is there to watch over and not to be the repressive or executive arm of maternal power. He is there to guard against taking a utopian turn.

From the paternal metaphor to the p}re-version¹¹

I would like to finish this rereading of the father's role in *Les complexes familiaux* by taking up a later seminar, R.S.I. (1974 - 75). In his seminar of January 21, 1975, Lacan says: «A father only has right to respect, if not to love, if the said respect is, and you're not going to believe your ears, p}re-versely oriented, which is to say, making of a woman object a cause of his desire.»¹² Try to put ourselves in the shoes of those for whom Lacan takes the precaution of saying «you aren't going to believe your ears.» I think there are lots of things that we haven't yet gotten out of the concept of *pere-version* which replaces the paternal metaphor from this point on. These three lines by Lacan in a way comment on what had been the formula in 1969 in the notes on the child:

...the distance between identification to the Ideal Ego and the role of the mother's desire -- the distance between ideal and object --, if there isn't any mediation, which is normally performed by the function of the father, leaves the child open to phantasmatic capture.

In 1969, the father takes the position of mediation, of middle term, of means between the Ideal Ego and the role played in the mother's desire that we can inscribe as «object little a.»

From 1974 on, Lacan will show how it is possible to open up a solution for the subject by other means than the father. This doesn't simply mean that «the father is dead, everything is permitted.» Since Lacan tempers this with one of his aphorisms: «It is possible to bypass the father, on condition that one makes use of him.» It is difficult to see how one can get along without the father if one must make use of him. The phrase brings us back to the fact that the father is above all someone that one uses, who incarnates insofar as he is effective. Lacan goes beyond the ideal father and his name in trying to found, as he notes January 21st, the respect and love for the father setting out from the cause of his desire. The father is no longer mediator between ideal and object of desire, but he is caught, caused from what he embraces of the cause of desire. At the same time, it is a new way of defining paternal mediation and love which would render it compatible with the cause of desire. The place of the father is not deduced from what he transmits of the phallus -- which defined the paternal metaphor -- but insofar as he provides a solution, insofar as he presents a semblant, a version of what is the object a.

The position of the Freudian father is to incarnate castration for the child, thus promoting the use of the organ. All the mechanical problems with the organ -- which range from enuresis to premature ejaculation, from absence of ejaculation to absence of erection -- are related to an operation of castration which did not take place, and the subject refuses afterward to be castrated by the woman of his choice. Hence the paradox that it is the subject castrated by the father who would be more at his ease afterward. Freudian castration is that in which the ideal is incarnated by circumcision: an organ which has been consecrated to God according to whether the rules function correctly. If not, between discourse and organ something doesn't work, and the subject attaches himself to something that he doesn't want to give up, thinking that it is his. It is another thing to say that the father is not only the one who transmits castration, but also the one who is defined in giving a version of the object cause. He doesn't make of a woman the phallus of his desire. He doesn't make her the object of his desire in the sense that the phallus sustains it. He makes of her strictly the cause. Lacan proposes to approach the father not as the mythic father who guarantees that one can take pleasure from all, but as the father who guarantees that pleasure can be taken from one, outside of any universal, without having criteria.

From then on, one can deduce all the forms that institutions might take in their will to fill-in for all the forms of the family and all the

crises they will go through regularly either because of the master signifier or because of science.

A space for residual particularity

The combat to find shelter in an institution is to be envisioned as a paradox. It seems to me that the path of the utopian institution with its regulations has given us an untenable regime, a utopian impasse corresponding to the spirit of the era. It produces an ideal with the will to try to absorb the particularity of the symptom or the particularity of jouissance. This perspective is not absent from conceptions which see themselves as the hope for social democracy. Habermas, in his *Theory of the Communication Act*,¹³ tried to absorb in universal reason -- not the state as power, but as reason -- the symptom in what is particular to it and what is most sick in it. He takes communication as ill and proposes to transform it. Habermas does not say *sittlichkeit*, morality incarnated; he says communication act. It is communication incarnated, desperate to tell the truth about the truth of jouissance in large communication structures and little groups of speech, everywhere so that this does not remain in silence, that everything talks.

Lacan gives an alternative to correct treatment of what he calls in his text *L'Étourdit*, «the real of the group»¹⁴ which one never succeeds in absorbing into little groups of speech. Lacan did not want to make a psychoanalytic university. However, very early on, Lacan had had the idea that to transmit psychoanalysis it needed to find shelter in the *Universitas Liberarum* as he said in the interview he gave to *L'Express* which has been reprinted in *L'An* «special Lacan» which came out for the «Rencontre Lacan.» He had the idea that one mustn't try to make psychoanalytic institutes cut-off from everything, extra-territorial, but to absorb this in what is the transmission of universal culture. But this implies finding a shelter there, his logic when he says, «I have found shelter in the university, inside the hospitals...» It's a little like the practice of the Cookoo bird: you take a nest, you sit in it and you make a horrible cookoo inside it, you make someone who is not part of the family. Taking shelter in a discourse is a logic that does not want an absorption of everything in the universal discourse. It is knowing that psychoanalysis has the political function of reminding us that the universal will never resolves the questions, that jouissance in its most abominable particularity is there to protest against the ideal. And the more one manufactures ideals, the more one manufactures evil, what Lacan would call the «exalted representation of

evil.» Our shelter is in institutions such as they are defined by the existing laws of the state which are in no way thrilling, nor exalted. Hence the fact that the institutions of the Eighties were much less utopian than in the preceding years. It is also in line with the general movement of society to weave a network from the point of view of a master who wishes to be ever more effective at an ever lower price. To find shelter for psychoanalysis in this is to introduce the paradox of fighting to extract the particularity in each case, without trying to deliver it to the next case in an application of ideals. To render his particularity to each subject is the opposite of intolerance or segregation. This, however, does not mean that the subject can tyrannize the entire world in the name of his particularity, but that the elaboration of an effective morality is judged case by case. This implies neither fascination, nor paralysis in the name of «what authorizes me to do this?» which would only be impotence summoned to the bedside of the impossible.

It is a form of paradox, but it is also a decent way to approach *jouissance* in a way that is not a charity. This supposes that one put into question again the ideal of the familial institution. The family itself is only worthy and respectable insofar as it can be a place where each one finds space for what is his or her residual particularity.

¹ In English in the original. [trans. note].

² In English in the original. [trans. note].

³ Jacques Lacan. *Les complexes familiaux*. Bibliotheque des Analytica, Navarin: Paris, 1984; p. 73.

⁴ Centre Nationale de Recherches Scientifiques; National Scientific Research Center. [trans. note].

⁵ The lycee in French refers to the secondary education system, now the high schools and trade schools. The Comedie francaise is the famous, national theatre, and the Polytechnique is the engineering school.

⁶ Jacques Lacan. «La psychiatrie anglaise dans la guerre (1945).» *La querelle des diagnostics*. Navarin: Paris, 1986.

⁷ In English in the original. [trans. note].

⁸ In English in the original. [trans. note].

⁹ Jacques Lacan. «Deux notes sur l'enfant.» in Jenny Aubray, *Enfance abandonnee*, Metaille: Paris, 1973. Reprinted in *Ornicar?* #3; pp. 107 - 108.

¹⁰ Jacques Lacan. *Les complexes familiaux*; p. 111.

¹¹ I have left the French word for father, *p}re*, in place in this case because Lacan is playing on the relation between father-version and perversion. I am hoping that it will not be too much of a leap for Anglo-phone readers to go from «pater» to «p}re» in the interest of accessing some of the richness in Lacan's use of language. [trans. note].

¹² Jacques Lacan. «R.S.I., leçon du 21 janvier 1975.» *Ornicar?* #3; pp. 107 - 108.

¹³ J. Habermas. *Theorie de l'agir communicationnel*, 2 vols. Fayard: Paris, 1987.

¹⁴ Jacques Lacan. «L'Etourdit.» *Scilicet IV*; pp. 5 - 52.