

ABOUT A DISCOURSE THAT IS NOT MYSTICAL, OR WORSE, STILL

Some notes on the mystical in Lacan, *Seminar XX: Encore*

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Paris, November 21st, 1972. Jacques Lacan, 71, starts his twentieth seminar (Lacan 1998). *Il enseigne encore*; he still teaches. “Still,” maybe despite the fact that he is tired, or bored—the listener at least seems to sense ennui in Lacan’s voice at certain moments in the audio-recording. “Still”, he is teaching.

Is this the reason why he entitled the seminar of that year “still,” “*encore*”? Even if he indeed felt a degree of fatigue while teaching, there was obviously another motivation behind Lacan’s choice of this enigmatic title. “*Encore*” is a way of placing a point—in a both banal and typically Lacanian way. “*Encore*” places a ‘point’ in the sense that it puts an end to a sentence, in this case to the title of the former seminar or, more precisely, seminars.

1. ‘A discourse that might not be a semblance’

For that is what a point in a sentence does, Lacan has explained in his fifth (1957-1958) and sixth (1958-1959) seminar, in which he developed his “*graphe du désir*” (graph of desire) (Lacan 2017 and Lacan 2019).² In a chain of signifiers—the surface on which the libidinal being ‘surfs’ to realize itself—a point functions as a stop, an interruption; and thanks to such a stop, a chain of signifiers can have sense, make sense, form a

¹ This essay goes back to an intervention I presented at the conference *Encore, 50 years later*, organized by *Idesça* in collaboration with *Gezelschap voor Psychoanalyse & Psychotherapie*, Gent, April 19th, 2023.

² In mathematics, graph theory is the study of points and lines that represent mathematical relationships. The aim of Lacan’s theory (which is a theory of the subject of desire) is to come to such a ‘mathematical’ formalization of the way the human libidinal being constitutes itself as the subject of desire.

sentence. A point retroactively changes the flow of signifiers into a signifying sentence making sense, producing a '*signifié*,' a 'signified.'

"Encore" (still) makes a chain of signifiers meaningful, which in this case however means that it destroys the meaning of the chain, since the chain was already a sentence, a chain stopped by a point and, consequently, bearing meaning. Did it have one? The title of the nineteenth seminar was: "... *Ou pire*" (or worse) which is not really a sentence. For that title itself was a point as well, formally similar to the point that '*Encore*' placed. '*Ou pire*' gave sense to a chain of signifiers that, since they already formed a sentence, broke the meaning that sentence had. That sentence was the title of the previous seminar, the eighteenth, entitled: "*D'un discours qui ne sera pas du semblant*," "Of a discourse that might not be a semblance."

"A discourse that might not be a semblance." This may sound strange, but is it all in all not a particularly classical title? Translated in Platonian jargon, it reads: a *logos* that might not be *mimesis*. This is what philosophy—and, more generally, science—since its origin in the 6th century BC intends to do: in a 'cave' full of unreliable semblance, it tries to find a way out, a way to a place where semblance is replaced by truth, where *epistèmè* replaces *mimesis* and *doxa*.³ A classical intention, indeed, were it not that the discourse Lacan puts forward—in the seminar of that title and in the one developed in his theory in general—states explicitly that there is no way out of the cave, that "semblance" has no reverse, something that would be 'true,' something that would not be "semblance."

This is not to say that, to Lacan, there is no such thing as 'truth.' But truth is not the reverse or the real reference of 'semblance.' If there is truth, it lies in the *way* the subject relates to reality, a reality he inevitably relates to as "semblance." In that "semblance," he might be searching for truth, but that truth he will find in the search as such, in the way he is subject of that search, or—more generally—subject of his desire. And a discourse explaining this is what Lacan calls a "discourse that might not be a semblance."

Lacanian theory is a theory of the subject, and its central thesis is that the subject is the subject of desire. Man *is* desire, desire even for being, which is why real being remains hidden behind "semblance," behind what

³ '*Epistèmè*' is Plato's word for 'knowledge' and '*mimesis*' means 'mimicry,' unreliable 'appearance'; '*doxa*' is Plato's word for 'opinion,' 'unverified knowledge.'

seems to be real, but is not. Man does not relate to being on the basis of being itself (his own being or the being of reality), but on the basis of his *desire for being*, desire for real reality. This is the way in which man is basically subject to/of desire, the subject to/of “semblance,” to/of *mimesis*, or, in Lacanian jargon: the subject of signifiers. Human desire (which defines his very human condition) has nothing but signifiers at its disposal. Yet, the desiring subject is not a signifier itself. It is nothing but “what represents a signifier for another signifier” (to quote a decisive definition of the signifier Lacan comes up with in his seminar session of December 6, 1961).⁴

Of course, we have and are a ‘substance’ of our own, but we do not relate to reality on the basis of that substance. We relate to reality as if that reality is a realm of signifiers, and the point where we supposedly stand in that relation must be thought according to the primacy of the signifier. We, so to speak, ‘hang’ on signifiers. And hanging on them, we imaginarily suppose a ‘self,’ i.e. an ‘agent’ or ‘subject’ relating to them.

This said, we must realize that this discourse, explaining that we are the subject of semblance and signifiers, is itself made out of signifiers, of semblance. But is that discourse itself “semblance”? That is at any rate not the intention. It must at least be more than “semblance,” since it must enable the explanation of how the subject of “semblance” can deal with itself—i.e. with the desire of which it is the subject. It must do so in such a way that it is itself not mere “semblance.” Or, as the title of Lacan’s eighteenth seminar reads, it must be a “discourse that might be not be a semblance.” Is this possible at all? And if it is, *how* then? That is what Lacan’s seminar of that title is after.

This is not the occasion to develop a summary of the way Lacan treats that question. Let us simply point out that, in that seminar, Lacan reflects upon the ‘scientific’ status of the discourse he has been developing in all his former seminars—which is basically a topological discourse: a logic pointing to the *topos* (or *topoi*) where the subject, surfing on the surface of signifiers, positions itself in the “dialectics of desire” (to use one of Lacan’s expressions from the fifties, Lacan 2006, 671 ff.).

⁴ That session is part of Lacan’s *Seminar IX: L’identification, 1961-1962* (unpublished, see <http://staferla.free.fr/S9/S9%20L'IDENTIFICATION.pdf>). The quoted words appear on p. 27: «Le signifiant, à l’envers du signe, n’est pas ce qui représente quelque chose pour quelqu’un, c’est ce qui représente précisément le sujet pour un autre signifiant. »

The topic of the twentieth seminar, *Encore*, is to explain to what extent Lacan's own theoretical—'scientific'—discourse is not a conventional one. And this is highlighted by the 'point' placed after that seminar by the title of the subsequent seminar: '*...Ou pire*' (or worse). The suggestion is clear. "A discourse that might not be a semblance" is bad.

What, then, is bad about it? Certainly this: that we might think that our discourse on semblance might itself not be semblance. Do we read this well? What exactly is bad here? What is bad is that such a discourse might be a serious one, one that seriously tries to convey the truth on semblance, tries to change semblance into its opposite. The danger of Lacan's own theoretical discourse is that it might be a *philosophical* or, what amounts to the same thing, a *scientific* one.

To put it differently: a theory of the unconscious might be seen as one that makes the unconscious conscious. And this is precisely what such a theory must avoid. Its primary mission is to not turn the obscure unconscious into its rational clarification, but to clarify the unconscious *as unconscious*. A discourse on semblance must show how it does not escape the semblance itself, being nonetheless able to take position with respect to it and to disclose something about it.

Suppose that such a discourse is possible and that a Freudian or Lacanian theory succeeds in it, even then there is a "still." "*D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant, ou pire encore*"; "of a discourse that might not be a semblance, or worse, still." "*Encore* (still) is the point added to the combined titles of the previous seminars, a point that once again breaks open the combined title and reinforces the "*Ou pire*." For it was already an open title, suggesting that the discourse on semblance might be worse than semblance, which is repeated by the third seminar in this series ("*Ou pire*"), acknowledging this and, by doing so, suggesting that the understanding we had from the former seminar must be suspended once again.

Is it a coincidence that Lacan, in the seminar *Encore*, refers to mysticism? Of all his seminars, this is the one in which the highest number of references to mysticism occur, though, taken all together, there are not that many. Besides a few occasional references, there is one page on which not much more than the names of some of the most well-known mystics of the Christian tradition are given. Besides the direct references to mystics, there is a statement that links "*feminine jouissance*" to the ecstatic experience of those mystics.

But is “feminine *jouissance*” the only motive of Lacan’s references to mysticism? My intuition is that his reference to mysticism must be related to the core subject of his seminar, more precisely to that of his three seminars. “Of a discourse that might not be a semblance, or worse, still”—with all the aporias that title contains— not only characterizes the discourse of Lacan’s theory, it also typifies the mystical discourse—the mystical as discourse.

2. A discourse that might not be mystical

What is Lacan’s view on the mystical, on mysticism? Later on, I will quote the passage in which Lacan describes the mystical experience as one of *jouissance*, of feminine *jouissance* even (a passage that is reproduced on the back side of the French edition). Yet, from a Lacanian point of view, mysticism must primarily be considered as a matter of desire rather than as one of experience. Mystics *desire*, and they do so—so to speak—in an exquisite way. They love God, but since the divine lover remains absent, their love reveals the very basis of what, according to Lacan, loving is: desire. To love God is to cultivate an unsatisfied desire, a desire that is not lived as ‘covered up’ by the desire of the other (which is Lacan’s definition of love in his eighth seminar, Lacan 2015, 51-52). God’s desire remains an enigma, an inaccessible object throwing the human lovers we are over and again back on our desire, on a reflection of what or who it is we desire and, even more basically, what desire exactly is.

This is why mysticism is in fact inevitably a matter of discourse, as well as of text. And this is also why, to acquire real understanding of mysticism, one has to read *corpus mysticum*, its huge textual tradition. Each of these texts boundlessly testifies to a desire that never stops clinging to words and phrases, explaining how the mystic keeps on burning out of love, burning out of desire, burning without his/her love-fire ever getting quenched, extinguished—except in some rare, fleeting ecstatic moments. From sentence to sentence, from word to word, or, as Lacan would put it, from signifier to signifier, their desire keeps on running after the divine beloved. So it is no surprise that each of those mystics has a proper ‘theory of desire’ and, even, a proper ‘theory of the subject of desire.’ In the seventeenth century, the subject theories of spiritual authors like Benoît de

Canfield, François de Sales, Madame Guyon, or François de Fénelon can be considered, each in a particular way, as an attempt to ‘deconstruct’ the new, modern subject that recently had been put forward by Descartes’s *cogito*. And even the work of sixteenth-century mystics like Juan dela Cruz or Teresa of Avila can be considered in that way.

Mysticism is a discourse establishing a theory of the subject of desire. Who, according to that discourse, is longing for God? Of course it is the mystic herself—longing for the ultimate object of desire which is God. However, in accordance with what Augustine and all other Church Fathers write, the mystic believes that, at the end of the day, it is God who is the subject of her desire. Ultimately, it is He who is the ground, the *subiectum*, the *hupokeimeon*, of her longing for Him.⁵ The desire she has with respect to God has been instilled in her by no one else but God Himself. Longing for God, she turns back to the origin of longing, to the *subiectum* of her desire. Lovingly desiring God is basically looking for what in her has always already been longing for the divine *subiectum*.

Yet, if the mystic is not the subject of her desire, she is still the subject of the drama her desire is in. For a drama it is: she longs for God and therefore she has to fight herself; she has to fight the self in her which thinks it is she who longs for God. That “self” is an obstacle on her way to God. So, to love God coincides with fighting herself. And of that fight, no one else than she herself is the subject.

To put it into more abstract, but perhaps more clear terms: in his devout desire, the mystic (specifically the many seventeenth-century spiritual authors mentioned before) intends to reach God in the old, medieval sense of the term, God being the real *subiectum*—author and ground of all that is, including even of the mystic’s love for God. Yet, while doing so, the mystic meets herself as the obstacle of that goal. And that obstacle is nothing but the modern, cartesian *subiectum*.

This is why it is not totally nonsense to perceive those seventeenth-century mystics as some sort of ‘Lacanian’ *avant la lettre*. Burning of desire for the ultimate object that is God—whom they consider to be their

⁵ The word “subject” derives from “subiectum,” the Latin translation of the Greek “hupokeimenon,” a term used in the logic of Aristotle. The term is to be taken in its original sense: that what underlies something. In the sentence “the tree is green,” “tree” is the subject of the attribute “green.” Of the mystic’s desires, the underlying and supporting *subiectum* is supposed not to be the mystic himself, but God (De Kesel 2023, 43, 46, 48-51).

real subject—they are blocked by the human subject of desire they themselves are. And so they are condemned to linger in the realm of that human, all too human, subject of desire. What they consider to be their real subject remains the *object* of their desire, an object stubbornly escaping their desire, except in moments in which, reaching that ultimate object that is God, they lose themselves as subject and wake up from those moments with the distressing feeling of unfortunately still being in the mode of ‘desire.’ They describe their ecstatic moment as genuine *jouissance*, in the Lacanian sense of the word. This precisely is one of the reasons why Lacan refers to these mystics in *Encore*.

But there is, I think, still another reason. What Lacan has in mind is also the mystical *discourse*. For mysticism is first of all a discursive practice, extensively covering the drama of desire. It follows the ways in which the (human) subject of desire is an obstacle for the satisfaction of desire for God; and how, subsequently, that desire can only be satisfied if its (human) subject fades away. But what is the status of that discourse? That discourse itself drives on desire. Is that desire satisfied once the discourse has said what it has to say? Of course not. In order to say what it has to say, the discourse must somehow express its inherent failure, the unsatisfied and unsatiable condition of its discourse—a discourse precisely expressing *this*. It is in this sense that the mystical discourse must be “a discourse which is not mystical.” It must avoid a kind of ‘full circle.’

Now that we understand why mystical discourses are so boundless, why, in those texts, does the author never tire of, over and again, retaking the problematic, aporetic situations his desire for God is in. Every time the author succeeds in adequately expressing the impossibility of being the subject of that desire’s satisfaction, she must at the same time express the impossibility of this expression (however inadequate) itself.

Her discourse should be “not semblant,” but it only does so by acknowledging that it does itself not escape the “semblant.” Yet, a discourse that does so and pretends, by doing so, that it is finally OK, is “worse,” for there is always a “still” that must undo the ‘OK,’ inherently woven into the discourse. The discourse is never OK and has to express this by expressing, over and again, that a discourse pretending to have expressed all this, is “worse” “still.” A discourse on mysticism must acknowledge that it is not mystical, that it does not make, so to speak, ‘full

circle.' Yet when it pretends that, then, it is OK, it must realize that it is worse than its opposite, and that there is always a "worse," "still.". And that, regardless, it remains a fact that "Les non-dupes errent," "the non-dupes wander" (the non-deceived are wrong) to quote the title of Lacan's seminar XXI, the next one after *Encore*.

3. Other *jouissance*

Does Lacan himself discuss the abysmal condition of the mystical discourse as I just sketched it? Not exactly. This is not to say that he does not allude to it. In *Encore*, he explicitly advises the reading of mystical texts. At the end of his seminar of February 20, 1973, he states:

These mystical jaculations are neither idle chatter nor empty verbiage; they provide, all in all, some of the best reading one can find – at the bottom of the page, drop a footnote, 'Add to that list Jacques Lacan's *Écrits*' because it's of the same order. (Lacan 1998, 76)

His own '*Écrits*' are to be considered as figuring in the list of mystical texts. They are "of the same order," words that contend that both mystical texts and the *Écrits* are "neither idle chatter nor empty verbiage."

Are they not? If they are not "empty verbiage," they are nonetheless "verbiage" about a kind of emptiness, about what no word is able to fill in, about what no signifier can include in a theory considering all as being of the order of the signifier. And, to be more precise, Lacan's *Écrits*—his theory—considers really all that is from the perspective of the signifier, even that which only exists as being represented by a signifier to another signifier, which is the "emptiness" coinciding with the subject of the signifier, the subject of desire. Yet ultimately, Lacan's "verbiage" is there to indicate what even escapes the latter, what even escapes the emptiness included in the signifying system. This is why Lacan's "verbiage" is not a "verbiage," but a "writing," "*Écriture*" being the term Lacan uses for the set of "mathemes" to indicate the topological co-ordinates necessary to

understand the way in which the subject of desire operates in the field of signifiers.⁶ That “*écriture*” is a “discourse that might not be a semblance.”

What is it that escapes the universe as perceived by us as libidinally-conditioned human beings? Or, what amounts to the same thing: what escapes the totality—“the all”⁷—of signifiers, including the subject of the signifiers, i.e. the ‘emptiness’ included in—for represented by—the signifiers? Is it *jouissance*, which is the concept defining the moment when the subject ‘gets’ the object of its desire, an experience that makes the subject fade away and therefore, despite the subject’s satisfaction, keeps desire ongoing?⁸ Lacan typifies this kind of *jouissance* as “phallic,” a *jouissance* in which desire, although constituted by a lack (conceptualized as “Phallus”) makes ‘full circle.’

In *Encore*, however, Lacan conceptualizes the finitude of that infinite totality by means of a *jouissance* conceived as going beyond all that. He introduces a *jouissance* that escapes the phallic order (the order making full circle in its lack, in its openness). That kind of *jouissance* escapes the order *as such*, the order of the “all,” since “all” is signifier and the “all of signifiers” makes full circle on the very place of the lack in which the signifier finds its ground, its *subiectum*. That is why the “all of signifiers” is an open, infinite totality. And yet, that “all” is “not all.” There is a ‘rest,’ escaping that ‘all,’ even its openness. Which is the ‘real’. In no way, this can be the signified.

A discourse of signifiers of which the totality is open and receptive to all that is and yet confronted with what escapes that “all”: this is how mysticism can be described as well, Lacan states in *Encore*. The impossible happening in mysticism—more precisely in the satisfaction of the mystical

⁶ Already early in 30-year seminar project, Lacan had shown a preference for algebraic and mathematical notations and schemes. Think of the “Graphe du désir” mentioned above (see Lacan 2006, 692). In *Encore*, he developed the “sexuation formulas” to “algebraically” indicate the finitude of the infinite order of signifiers the libidinal being deals with. See Lacan 1998, 73.

⁷ In the late seminars, upon the titles of which I am commenting here, Lacan’s term for totality is “tout” (all) or “le tout” (the all). To indicate the finitude of “the all”, he introduces the term “pas tout” (not all) of “le pas tout” (the not all). Lacan 1998, *passim*.

⁸ We coincide with—we *are*—desire, *unsatisfiable* desire. Yet, we do have experiences of full satisfaction of our desire. Lacan calls such experiences floating moments *jouissance*. Full satisfaction of the subject’s desire is possible because the lack that is the basis and motor of desire (conceptualized by Lacan as ‘Phallus’) persists in (and despite) the satisfaction of desire, because in the moment of *jouissance*, the subject itself fades away. In moments of *jouissance*, the subject itself *lacks*. This is to say that the subject of desire is not able to be present in the moment of full satisfaction of its desire. That experience has been countless expressed in the poetic tradition, when the poet/lover sings about ‘la petite mort’ (‘the little death’) accompanying the enjoyment of his beloved. For an extensive explanation and contextualization of the Lacanian concept of *jouissance*, see Marc De Kesel 2009, 121-161..

desire, in his or her mystical *jouissance*—is what he conceptualizes as non-phallic (“non-male,” “not-all”) *jouissance*, as a *jouissance* that in no way exists—yet happens. Its being there, its surprising mystic desire, its appearance on Bernini’s statue of Teresa of Avila: all this cannot be said, although it is the only thing the mystic desires to get said in his discourse. It is what that discourse ultimately is about.

Lacanianism ‘writes’ it by means of its “mathemes” and its ‘logical formulas.’ Mysticism covers it in its discourse that endlessly gets lost in the variety of its self-deconstructive gestures. It is mysticism’s way of showing that “a discourse that is mystical” is wrong, while a discourse that is not mystical is wrong as well, certainly when it is not aware that it risks to become a discourse even “worse,” “still.”

4. Not a matter of “cum”

This is, among others, Lacan’s way of dissociating himself from the widespread interpretation of mysticism as revolving around sexual orgasm. On the same page, a few lines farther than the passage already quoted, we read:

What was attempted at the end of the last century, in Freud's time, what all sorts of decent souls around Charcot and others were trying to do, was to reduce mysticism to questions of cum [affaires de foutre]. If you look closely, that's not it at all. Doesn't this *jouissance* one experiences and yet knows nothing about put us on the path of ex-sistence? And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as based on feminine *jouissance*? (Lacan 1998, 77)

No doubt that, according to Lacan, the ecstatic experience of mystics is highly erotic and sexual, but the point he makes is that this does not mean that the mystic longs for a sexual experience in the common sense of the term. It is not a matter of “cum” (“*une affaire de foutre*”). It is not the “*foutre*” (cum, fuck) that shows us the truth of—and behind—mysticism. It is rather the other way round: the truth of “*foutre*” is revealed in the mystical experience. Mysticism shows what *jouissance* is about. Mysticism shows that we don’t know anything about what happens there. If *jouissance* shows us anything, it is that it shows nothing, that we see and

know nothing while gazing at its appearance. If something appears at all, it is a kind of not-knowing *as such*—or, to quote the title of a fourteenth-century mystic classic, a “cloud of unknowing” (Anonymous 2001). The mystic experience is one of “*ex-sistence*,” of ecstasy: it goes beyond all that is, it leaves the order of the ‘all’ and in that sense, it shows the “not-all” (Lacan 1998, 102-119-121) But it shows that the ‘not-all’ is not knowable and, consequently, not even showable, except logically.

When we look at Bernini’s Santa Teresa, according to Lacan, it is clear that we see her coming. But the coming we see is something of which we know absolutely nothing. Of course, we know what we see: she’s coming; and, good Lacanians as we are, we know that we don’t know what we see—which, don’t forget, is knowledge anyway. This is what Lacan calls “phallic jouissance”: a cloud of unknowing, in an opening way concluding, so to speak, the “all” of our knowing—a “conclusion” fully aware of its finitude, of the fact that the “all” that is desired is *as such* out of reach of that very desire and that this is, indeed, all there is. But to that knowledge—that is really all it can be, including the awareness of its finitude — there is an outside, an outside that, with respect to “all” that is, has no place, not even the one of a non-place. It can only be indicated in “writing,” in “*écriture*,” with a ‘mathematical’ letter. If it were possible to express it in the shape of discourse (which is absolutely not possible, not even in a discourse that concerns the ‘impossible’, this “not all” would be what is experienced in the mystical experience—in the *sexual* mystical experience, in the ‘sexual relation’ which in principle ‘does not take place’ and cannot take place.⁹ This is the experience of God. This is what happens as the mystic sees the face of God: she enjoys in a non-phallic way, she falls out of “all” that is.

In the passage quoted, I left one sentence non-cited. After Lacan has positioned his own *Écrits* among the mystical writings “in footnote,” he adds:

[‘Add to that list Jacques Lacan’s *Écrits*’ because it’s of the same order.] Thanks to which, naturally, you are all going to be convinced that I believe in God. I believe in the jouissance of woman insofar as it is extra (*en plus*), as long as you put a screen in front of this ‘extra’

⁹ Or, as Lacan puts it, “there is no such thing as a sexual relationship”; Lacan 1998, 34-35, 57-63.

until I have been able to properly explain it. (Jacques Lacan 1998, 76-77)

The mystic loves a Beloved that simply does not exist. God is dead. Lacan has no doubts about that. That is, however, what makes the mystic's love so interesting. For what no doubt does exist is the mystic's love, his desire. And that desire desires to "ex-sist,," to leave the "all" of desire and to reach what is beyond that "all." But to us, libidinal humans, that kind of "all" is indeed "all" there is; there is nothing not touched by desire, not touched by (phallic) lack, not shaped in the shape of a signifier. To us, there is nothing that is not desired. Which is to say that the ultimate object of our desire is not touched by desire and, consequently, does not exist—except as object of desire, as the imaginary object holding together the phantasm that ultimately sustains the desire we are.

And our desire can have the experience of reaching and getting that object, yet not without the subject of that (inherently fleeting) experience fading away. That experience shows itself only when it simultaneously reveals its absolute impossibility. For instance, when a woman like Teresa of Avila, making love to the non-existing God, comes, enjoys, then we don't know what we see. This way, our not-knowing is revealed—if we at least look with a Lacanian eye. To stress that dimension of not-knowing, Lacan takes that *jouissance* out of the category even of *jouissance*—of phallic *jouissance*, which is the "all" of *jouissance* ("there is no *jouissance* which is not phallic"; Lacan 1998, 73 ff.). That kind of *jouissance* is what, in a universe where all is "phallic,," including *jouissance*, in no way belongs to that universe, to the "all" that nonetheless is indeed all there is. Here we meet the "truth" of coming, the truth of desire and *jouissance*: a "cloud of unknowing": a "cloud" that is no cloud and an "unknowing" that evaporates the moment you suppose you have said something by uttering that word.

How to talk about that, how to have a discourse on that "which is not a semblance." The moment you think you have that discourse, you are in a cloud which is even worse than what you tried to avoid with that discourse. And the same accounts for *that* discourse, "still." "encore."

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