Towards Barcelona 2018: The Ordinary Psychoses and the Others, Under Transference

Delusions, Certainties and Inventions
How to think madness today?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÉDITO - Ana Lucia Lutterbach - EBP  P 02
3.1 Mónica Wons - EOL  P 06
3.2 Raffaele Calabria - SLP  P 09
3.3 Maria do Rosário Collier do Rêgo Barros - EBP  P 12
3.4 José Fernando Velásquez - NEL  P 16
3.5 Augustin Menard - ECF  P 20
3.6 Mercedes de Francisco - ELP  P 23
3.7 Anne Béraud - NLS  P 26

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Delusions, Certainties and Inventions
How to think madness today?

Ana Lucia Lutterbach – EBP

In previous issues of PAPERS 7.7.7. we have tracked the conditions and principal effects of the birth of what today is almost a concept – Ordinary Psychosis. This is the invention of Jacques-Alain Miller to respond to the questions posed for clinical practice when the Name of the Father no longer operates according to tradition. The emergence of this notion has been described in various ways, demonstrating the ways in which it can be useful in the clinic in those cases, not uncommon today, in which there has been neither a triggering of the psychosis nor a well-defined delusional metaphor. We have explored the continuity and the discontinuity between psychosis and neurosis, the discreet signs that characterise the ordinary psychoses, and what certain cases demonstrate.

The fourth issue of PAPERS 7.7.7. now invites us to investigate the theoretical and political consequences of this practice. From the theoretical point of view, Miller in his text “Ordinary Psychosis Revisited”, widely cited in the previous PAPERS, indicates the best direction for this investigation, that is, the hypothesis of generalised foreclosure. This perspective is present in Miller’s work even before speaking of ordinary psychosis, when he calls the clinic founded on the inexistence of the Other the universal clinic of delusion, the clinic that sets out from the basis that “all our discourses are defences against the real”.

But it was a brief text amongst the last drafted by Lacan, on teaching in the University, from which Miller extracted the phrase “everyone is mad”, recognising here a fundamental
note and making of it a compass to guide us in Lacan’s late teaching and our recent practice: “This is something Freud ventured into. He thought that all is but a dream and that everyone (if one can say such a thing) that everyone is mad, that is, delusional.”\(^3\)

This “everyone is mad” is not oriented by the Name of the Father, nor by a criterion of normality that would be missing in one part of humanity. It is correlative of “there is no sexual relation”. Lacan inaugurates his late teaching with the seminar Encore\(^4\), on the basis of the impasses of feminine jouissance and the impact of the encounter with Joyce: “After all, why shouldn’t Joyce have been mad? All the more so given that this is not a privilege (…) What I am proposing here is that we consider that Joyce’s case corresponds to a way of making up for the knot’s coming undone.”\(^5\) On the basis of feminine jouissance and the sinthome there is a turn, neurosis loses its status as paradigm of normality and psychosis ceases to be a disability; they are different forms of madness, but both are ways of coping with the real.

The very immersion in language carries at its centre a non-relation that is never written, it always has to be invented. The psychoanalysis of deciphering was aimed at discovering a meaning that was already there but veiled, while invention counts on the creation of something new, although making use of existing materials, as Miller indicates\(^6\). Vestiges of previous solutions that had been abandoned, little everyday subtleties or fragments of memory are transformed into material for inventing ways to come to terms with the traumatism of language when typical solutions are not present. In a dialectic between invention and stereotype in psychosis it is up to the analyst to read the singular recourses available for this montage.

From this perspective analysis rather resembles a precarious installation, as Éric Laurent\(^7\) teaches us, like the works of contemporary artists, invented with fragile and mutable materials, remainders, without any intention of meaning. In an analysis, therefore, it is not a question of trying to remake a history that has been lost. The analyst cannot be reduced to the one who gives meaning or the one who restores the lost meaning\(^8\). An analysis is sketched out by way of the insensate, by way of that which exceeds any meaning, by the way of jouissance.

Nonetheless, this clinic of symptomatic inventions is only possible under transference, counting on the desire of the analyst.

The 7 colleagues invited to write on this theme emphasise different aspects of singular invention and find their own ways to explore this theme: In “Inventions”, Mónica Wons makes a brief but rigorous itinerary of psychosis from Freud to Lacan. In this outline she frames psychosis in a clinic of substitution or a clinic of connection, distinguishing between inventions in the extraordinary psychoses and the ordinary psychoses. “The forthcoming Congress will be the occasion to interrogate, starting from our clinic under transference, the variety of these inventions in the field of the
ordinary psychoses that, making use of a CMB, organise a “being in the world” different from the properly neurotic or classically psychotic orders.

In “Inventing the Other” Raffaele Calabria also sketches a trajectory addressed more to the questions of the analyst in the face of the renewed impasses of the practice: “A working hypothesis that I have extracted from my clinical practice is that it is a question of inventing the Other in each instance, oriented of course by the *there is no sexual relation*.

Under the title “From Surprise to Invention” Rosário Collier do Rêgo Barros provides us with valuable clinical indications on the passage from the traumatic encounter with the real to the symptomatic invention. “The material for treating traumatic jouissance may be found in the field of the Other, in the established discourses. But this does not do away with the need to find a way to make it operative. These materials can become operative by means of mortification, keeping the subject attached to suffering, or by means of vivification, which opens the subject up to a new vital impulse that makes the burden of traumatic jouissance bearable.”

In “On Inventions and Consistencies” José Fernando Velásquez brings us inventions but gives pre-eminence to the Borromean knot as an operative novelty proposed by Lacan, a writing of the conditions of the jouissance of the One, autistic jouissance, without the Other, and the consistencies adopted in neurosis as well as in psychosis. “The permanent concern of psychoanalysis is the question of how each one manages in the world, the invention that each speaking being is forced to make, starting from the persistent ex-sistence of an enigmatic autistic state of jouissance; how consistent and singular ways of inhabiting language are invented, of making do with a body and a partner.”

In “Knotting and Unknotting” Augustin Menard deals with two clinical cases that allow us to identify the triggering as well as the different modalities of mooring that each has made use of: “In these two cases we have to respect the defence invented by the subject. In others, on the contrary, we must disturb the defences of the subject to untangle or even unknot what constitutes the complaint of the *parlêtre* in order to enable it to be written differently.”

Mercedes de Francisco will make use of the novel “A Little Life” by Yanagihara in order to transmit to us by way of the protagonist some fundamental questions posed by the Lacanian orientation today which according to Mercedes we can sum up in the expression “everyone is mad”. She also extracts a political incidence from “A Little Life”: “Its reading evoked for me images of the children from Syria or any other location, abandoned and going about alone in these absolutely empty plains of “refugee camps”. What destiny, what future will there be for these children that are treated by the social Other only as waste objects?”

Anne Béraud indicates the paradoxical consequence of “everyone is mad” in proposing, with reference to Miller’s teaching, “the mismatched” as norm and identifying this type of normality in the youth of today, sustained by singular invention. “As regards sexual orientation, for example, young subjects do not find themselves in any category (gay, hetero,
bi), creating new ones all the time. They practice “poly-amory”, distinct from the customary cycle of disputes with the previous generations.”

Good reading!

7. Ibid.
Inventions

Mónica Wons – eol

There is a structural relation between the symptom and invention. Lacan emphasises this very early on when he articulates the formal envelope of the symptom and the effects of creation.¹ The formal envelope covers over the fundamental separation between the subject and jouissance, which is always presented without mediation, traumatically, as a pure hole. To invent when confronted with what does not exist is the symptom’s function, although invention – in contrast with creation, which is ex nihilo – works with existing materials.²

In the field of the psychoses, just as much as in that the neuroses, the subject invents a meaning for a real jouissance that presents itself as separate from all meaning. In the neuroses, the fantasmatic and symptomatic responses are invented on the basis of a shared belief: the Name of the Father. But the Name of the Father is not the only element that a subject has at its disposal in order to interpret the real of jouissance. The psychoses teach us how a subject can invent a connection, a knot, a sinthome, which is not sustained by the Name of the Father. The trajectory of Lacan’s teaching leads us to a point at which it is verified that “the Name of the Father in the system of lalangue does not fulfil the function of the only guarantee of phallic jouissance, but rather that, in its function of nomination, it is one symptom amongst others.”³

The work towards the forthcoming Congress, as we read in the text presenting its theme, invites us to question precisely this living concern of the contemporary psychoanalytical clinic: the symptomatic repairs and disruptions, the singular inventions in the face of the non-existence of the sexual relation; especially in those cases in which psychosis has not been triggered, in which “a subject invents a knot with the imaginary, the symbolic and the real that is sustained without the help of the Name of the Father.”⁵

Reading the Case of Joyce in “On a Question Prior…”⁶

Throughout Lacan’s vast elaboration concerning psychosis, we find the trace of a permanent interest in the localisation and specification of the differential element that fulfils the
function of supplementation, connection, knotting, although the theoretical elaboration of the status of this element also changes throughout his teaching.

The Schreber case, as the paradigm of the extraordinary psychoses, that is, of the triggered psychoses, teaches us the function of the delusional metaphor as a construction that compensates for the foreclosed paternal metaphor. As Lacan explains, “unable to be the phallus the mother is missing, there remained the solution of being the woman that men are missing.” To be the woman of God is his singular sinthomatic invention, which domesticates a nameless jouissance and functions for a time as the stabilising apparatus of a new world order.

In Seminar III, Lacan is interested in the situation prior to the triggering of the psychosis. He calls it pre-psychosis, including in this both the moment of imaginarily compensated psychosis and that of perplexity – a moment of “confusion and panic.” He stresses that “there is nothing that more closely resembles a neurotic symptomatology than a pre-psychotic symptomatology.” He takes up a case of Katan and comments that, for this adolescent, everything was lacking, there was nothing “of the order of accession to anything that would realize in him the virile type.” However, the subject makes do for a certain period, before the delusional triggering, “by means of an identification, of a connection, following the example of one of his friends.” In this way, he invents a response confronted by a jouissance that questions him on the plane of virility: how to be a man.

This connection describes the mechanism of the “as if”, emphasised by Helene Deutsch, which Lacan defines as the imaginary compensation of the absent Oedipus. This imaginary identification allowed the subject to maintain a certain relation with the Other for a certain time. This mechanism reduces the paternal function to an image “which isn’t inscribed in any triangular dialectic, but whose function as model, as specular alienation, nevertheless gives the subject a fastening point and enables him to apprehend himself on the imaginary plane.”

The two previous examples sit together well with the supplementary classification of the clinic of the psychoses that J.-A. Miller introduces in The Unclassifiables…: the clinic of substitution and the clinic of connection. In the first case, the delusional metaphor substitutes for the foreclosed paternal metaphor, according to the paradigm of metaphoric functioning in the extraordinary psychoses. In the clinic of connection, by contrast, we stress what Lacan calls points of connection – identifications, for example. Starting from Miller’s developments concerning the ordinary psychoses, we can understand these points as “metonymic indices with respect to the lacking element”, “at times minimal signs of foreclosure”.
“A Being in the World”

Lacan emphasises that these points of connection allow psychotics to “live compensated lives with apparently ordinary behaviour considered to be normally virile, and then all of a sudden, mysteriously, God only knows why, [they] become decompensated.” These ordinary behaviours, with a semblance of normality, can be sustained for a long time, he tells us. In other cases, as in the example from Seminar III, the imaginary crutches are demonstrated to be an insufficient compensatory element in the face of the encounter with One-father.

Both in the ordinary and the extraordinary psychoses, there is a hole in the place of the Name of the Father. Starting from the ordinary psychoses, Miller shows that in the psychoses there can be something in this place, a supplementary apparatus called CMB, Compensatory Make-Believe. This is what the function of the Name of the Father is finally reduced to: to an “as if” in which one believes. Any element can function in its place. Now, the constitution of a CMB demands from the subject an invention. The forthcoming Congress will be the occasion to interrogate, starting from our clinic under transference, the variety of these inventions in the field of the ordinary psychoses that, making use of a CMB, organise a “being in the world” different from the properly neurotic or classically psychotic orders.

_Translated by Howard Rouse_

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 191.
11 Ibid., p. 192.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., pp. 192-3.
14 Ibid., p. 204.
16 Ibid., p. 412.
17 Ibid., p. 414.
20 In this moment of his teaching, Lacan conceives the three registers in terms of a structure in which each one of them is defined by its relations with the others. We are still a long way from the Borromean elaboration, in which the real, the symbolic and the imaginary are independent from one another, homogeneous and equivalent, with a fourth element being necessary to distinguish and knot them.
22 Ibid., p. 41.
Inventing the Other

Raffaele Calabria – SLP

An important theoretical achievement in my clinical practice has been that of coming to realize to what degree my quest, for a long while, has been increasingly oriented to making the Other exist. I have dedicated all my efforts to ensuring that the locus of the treatment would be a place ethically worthy of being called Other. I have employed multiple modalities to make this tangible time and again with whoever I was speaking to, faithful to the various articulations and signifieds that Lacan has passed down to us on this question. If we look in the Écrits we find the Other declined in different modes (as “locus of speech’s deployment” or “the signifier itself must be articulated... in its quaternary topology” as “transcendental locus” in its anteriority and exteriority to the subject, etc.) These are modes that, following Miller, can be summed up simply in the definition of “the big Other of the symbolic”. We have been taught by the Lacan of the classic period, at least, to make this the axis around which the direction of the treatment should be constructed - “and if... by opening up the dialectic of transference, we must establish the notion of the Other with a capital O as being the locus of speech’s deployment (the other scene, ein anderer Schauplatz, of which Freud speaks in the Traumdeutung)” - and the indispensable instrument for installing the third face of the pyramid that protects us from the regressive and stagnant illusion of the dual relation.

The point of inflection, in my view, is produced by Miller when he chooses to call “the current regime of functioning of civilisation the era of the Other that does not exist”. This is an affirmation that we can approach from two angles. On one hand, the general evacuation of tradition and of social values, which can be observed in the way in which modernity has shattered the “consistency” on which each one had constructed their own ideals and way of life. The subject is thus left alone in the search for points of anchoring for pacifying identifications. The development of the new mass symptoms is the clearest example of this. On the other hand, the idea that “the big Other is an invention”, overturning the idea that the subject would simply be the effect of the signifier, subjected to the Other and its inventions. This is an idea that in my view does not in any way nullify the anteriority of the Other in relation to the subject, nor disqualify its vital importance in the psychic history of the subject itself.
Affirming that the Other does not exist and that it is an invention constitutes a profound conceptual mutation for psychoanalysis. It indicates not only that the subject itself “is conditioned to become an inventor”, given the disintegration of the function of the Other, but also that despite inhabiting language the subject has to “find the function of the language-organ”. Language determines the subject but at the same time is grafted onto the subject like an organ, as an instrument for which a use must be found. It could be said, in other words, that if the Other is “the locus of the treasure trove of signifiers”, to which the speaking being is subjected, in the sense of having to be traversed by language in order to become human, at the same time the subject has to come to terms with language itself. The function of language is not an absolute given and needs to be sought out anew, given that over time it has become an external organ for which each one has to acquire a use.

In support of this Miller reminds us of the Lacanian notion of extimacy – that which is the most interior, the most intimate, of the subject passes to the exterior, giving value to having more than to being. If language makes man human, at the same time it reveals itself as an instrument that ex-sists to him. As such language “erodes the organs of the body (...) it significantizes them and makes them problematic, that is, it gives rise to the question of what to do with them”. One thus passes from being determined by the Other to making of the Other an instrument of the subject. No longer and not only a being of language but having language. And no longer and not only being a body but having a body. Hence the illuminating deduction that having is articulated in a “know-how”.

These are some of the theoretical co-ordinates that allow us to grasp the crucial questions that the current epoch poses for psychoanalysis. We experience in the modern discontent of civilisation just how much the nature of madness has changed and to what degree the innovative concept of ordinary psychosis explains the new relationship that has been established between human being and madness. Madness is no longer the limit to the freedom of human being but is rather appealed to and pursued in the name of a coveted mortifying freedom.

What we today call demand is often situated more between invocation and appeal, denouncing the void of signification that grips the subject and the absence of a quilting point that would serve as a point of connection and reference. How to respond to this enigma that makes a sign to the subject and reveals an unbearable enjoyment beyond the reach of any meaning? How to limit the desperation that accompanies the irremediable void that opens up as a result of the ineffectiveness of the “established discourses”? “My body is screaming!” shouts an analysand in an attempt to free herself from the vice-like grip of a lacerating mutism. “It is absence that I have come to be treated for!” states another patient, recounting the abuse that she has suffered during her life. Trying to sum up the sense of confusion that she is still plagued with at the age of fifty she adds: “The crumbling of complacency has matured in virilisation!” (her father had obliged her to have only adult male company).
A working hypothesis that I have extracted from my clinical practice is that it is a question of inventing the Other in each instance, of course oriented by “there is no sexual relation” (“...the third term is characterised precisely by the fact that there really is no medium”), in the attempt to offer or to make space for a network of signifiers, from which the subject could take those that are most suitable for establishing a possible dialogue. The aim is to ensure that jouissance finds a limit in the invention that the subject produces. Inventing the Other, in my hypothesis, does not involve giving everything a meaning or trying to restore lost meaning, nor reifying the already inconsistent Other of the subject. Inventing the Other not in order to determine the destiny of a subject but rather to offer a symbolic space within which to encourage the inventions that are best suited to the subject’s survival.

It is nonetheless and invention “on the basis of existing materials”. And what are the existing materials? Lalangue, the subject’s private libidinised language, the language with which only the subject is connected and which detaches him from the social bond. As Eric Laurent opportunely reminds us: “We should always ask ourselves what language the subject is speaking, knowing that it always involves a particular bricolage.”

Translated by Carlo Zuccarini

6 Ibid., p. 263-264.
7 Ibid., p. 265.
10 Ibid., p. 263.
11 Ibid., p. 261.
From Surprise to Invention

Maria do Rosário Collier do Rêgo Barros – EBP

At the Conciliabule of Angers the psychoanalysts of the Clinical Sections sought out the effects of surprise in the clinic of psychosis. They were expected to testify to the privileged moments in which they had learned something new in the form of a surprise, as Jacques-Alain Miller remarked in his opening presentation.

Those who act as psychoanalysts cannot engage in this practice without allowing themselves to be surprised and without daring to surprise. However, in this opening presentation Jacques-Alain Miller, citing Lacan, reminds us that “what we have to surprise is something whose original incidence was marked as trauma.”

From Angers to Antibes, and in the subsequent clinical conversations in the Freudian Field, we have a broad range of clinical cases by way of which it is possible to question the traumatic nucleus as the incidence of speech upon the body, producing an opaque and deregulated jouissance that requires some form of treatment in order not to go adrift with “imposed speech”.

In 1975, in his Seminar on The Sinthome, Lacan makes reference to “imposed speech” as “a parasite…a veneer…a form of cancer that afflicts the human being.”. Not everyone is aware of this dimension of speech, but everyone has to deal with it in order not to be completely at the mercy of an opaque and deregulated jouissance, floating along the devastating effects that imposed speech can provoke. Having to cope with these traumatic marks is our condition as speaking-beings, in order to go from the jouissance of the One to the social bond.

Surprising the original incidence of the marks left by the trauma of language allows us to locate the form of treatment that each one uses to deal with them and to connect to others.
It is at the very moment there is an open rupture, or small successive disruptions of this connection to the Other and from the body itself, that it is possible to locate what tools were available to treat jouissance. From the encounter with a real that erupts, revealing either the nonsense of the solution or the rigidity that does not allow it to become socialized, there emerges the need for an invention. The invention is thus considered not as a creation *ex-nihilo*, but rather as a relocation of existing elements, a bricolage that allows for a new use of what was already there.

The question that interests us in this work about the passage from surprise to invention arises at this point: how to surprise the traumatic nucleus, or how to make room for those moments of raw surprise, provoking ruptures, so as to give opportunity for invention? This is a trans-clinical question that deserves our full attention. It comes into special focus in the cases in which we can only locate the modality of treatment used by the subject following an intervention which had unpredictable effects, destabilizing the solutions previously found. Those moments are difficult to go through, but they allow for the emergence of the materials that can give rise to invention, in other words, a new way of making use of them or producing something new from them.

The material for treating traumatic jouissance may be found in the field of the Other, in the established discourses. But this does not do away with the need to find a way to make it operative. These materials can become operative by means of mortification, keeping the subject attached to suffering, or by means of vivification, which opens the subject up to a new vital impulse that makes the burden of traumatic jouissance bearable.

**From mortification to vivification requires an effect of invention**

In his opening presentation at Angers, Jacques-Alain Miller explored the path from surprise to enigma. For our purpose in this text, we may conclude that to go from surprise to invention one has to pass via the enigma, in so far as the enigma highlights the non-relation between the signifier and the signified when this relation has been put to the test.

The enigma lies in the relation with a signifier that indicated the opacity of the Other’s desire. It means something, but one does not know what. In the place of significance there appears a void, which Lacan designates as the signification of signification, the sheer intentionality of the signifier whose meaning remains unknown. Hence the kinship between certainty and anxiety, which is the affect that does not deceive. There is the certainty of a lack, but there is no reference to interpret the object at stake because this cannot be articulated to phallic signification. It is precisely at this point of a void without any reference to an interpretable lack that an invention is required that would have the function of constructing edges to this void, of circumscribing it, so that it becomes less threatening and less invasive.
It is by way of surprise that the distance between signifier and signified can be glimpsed, that delusion can be socialized and develop social bonds. Signifiers speak amongst themselves on their own, they conspire, they affect the body, imposing upon it an opaque jouissance that cannot be deciphered, except by the production of one's own particular delusion. Hence Lacan's remark that everyone is delusional. However, not every delusion forms a social bond or can be socialized. Our hypothesis is that to go from delusion to the social bond requires the use of the *santhome* as a singular way of including a hole in the invasive jouissance produced by imposed speech, which can neither be assumed nor represent the subject in a discourse that constitutes a social bond.

By inventing the expression “ordinary psychosis” at the Convention of Antibes, Jacques-Alain Miller offers us a Lacanian category for thinking the cases in which we do not locate the co-ordinates proper to neurosis to establish the relation between the *lack* and the object, requiring the invention of their own particular ways of making a hole. In this way the path is opened to free the clinic from restriction to a binary opposition - neurosis or psychosis - allowing for singular diagnoses in the field of contemporary psychoses and neuroses.

After this period of research opened up by the expression “ordinary psychosis”, what is it that keeps on surprising us? This question connects us directly to that which opens onto invention, which instead of surrendering to imposed speech, makes use of the most varied resources for devising a way to construct limits, to make a hole in an imposition, in order to create from it a production of one’s own, engendering that which works only for oneself, in one’s own way.

This is what psychotics teach us, but our interest must go beyond them because the neurotics of our current times have to find a way to make do with what is opened up before them by the inexistence of the Other in such a wild manner. This shows even more clearly that the Name of the Father is an invention for everyone and is part of one’s own delusion.

The question that follows from this is why that which one has had to invent, under certain circumstances, becomes so standardized that one forgets the effort of invention involved in order to be able to make use of the father before being able to do without him. It is through one’s own invention, whether we call it father, symptom or *santhome*, that one has access to the social bond. How can one enter into the social bond, allowing the absorption of one’s singularity, without becoming it banalized, disconnected from one’s own singular invention? We can say that an analysis, or the encounter with an analyst, allows one to reconnect with one’s own invention, providing support for one’s own idiosyncrasy in the access to the social bond.

*Translated by Beatriz Caldas*

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1. In making reference to Lacan’s proposal, Jacques-Alain Miller invents a denomination that is not reduced to being surprised or to surprising: the analyst as “surpreneur du reel”, which can be rendered as “the analyst as surpriser of the real”.

On Inventions and Consistencies

José Fernando Velásquez — NEL

The Lacanian invention

The coordinates of clinical practice come from the metalanguage there is in the culture. The problem that arises from this practice comes from supposing all consistency to the jouissance of meaning, to the phallus, to therapeutic ideals, or results from giving primacy to the symbolic as organizer of the bond. It goes astray even more when it tries to find a ‘psychogenesis’, which is worth no more than a unicorn or a squared circle.

Psychoanalytic practice has been renewed, it now has the tools. The analyst directing the experience invents a position that allows him or her to localize and to highlight those nodal elements that have been a pure creation of the One of this speaking being and which provide a consistent solution when faced with a hole. The innovation consists in maneuvering, getting to grips with, confronting those pieces of jouissance that remain loose, unknotted, and those bits of the real that resist in order to sustain the structure, as a pure there is, there exists, which appears and repeats. This was the discovery that Lacan left us with: his materialist-topological conception with respect to the ‘structural’ of any speaking being, taking enjoying substance into account, its precipitates or topological edges facing the hole, and the knotting of the three dimensions of existence, RSi.

The most intimate juncture in the sense of life, the condition of consistency as One of jouissance, is organized in the form of a knotting of dimensions around a void, with which the ‘There is something of the One’ of jouissance operates by itself and not from the Other. The Lacanian invention was to read this knotting as a writing of jouissance, which has a surprising operative value: “The Borromean knot is the best metaphor of the fact that we proceed only on the basis of the One”. Lacan demonstrated the character of the cut and the edge facing the hole presented by the consistencies adopted by the semblant, the fantasy, psychical reality, the truth in its variety, lalangue, the object of the partial drive, the event of the body, the reigning image. All have memory, which is why the analyst finds them solid at times, even at times anticipating them. Or we can perceive that there is
nothing there but supplement, an ‘as if…’ Each subject is sustained in the knot with these consistencies, singular inventions that ground his sense of life around a hole.

**Inventions on the enjoying substance and its role in the encounter with the analyst**

The permanent concern of psychoanalysis is the question of how each one manages in the world, the invention that each speaking being is forced to make, starting from the persistent ex-sistence of an enigmatic autistic state of jouissance; how consistent and singular ways of inhabiting language are invented, of making do with a body and a partner. The analyst in his ethical wager projects the conditions for including what Kant calls “the thing in itself”, “which is impossible to know, which does not pass through representation”; he discovers the forms that enjoying substance adopts, that which tends, like a pendulum, as much towards the One – inhibition, symptom and anxiety – as to unknotting – crises, inconsistencies, impossibilities, eruptions of the real, supplementations.

These interrupted phrases, these spare part, these events of the body, these rigid identifications, these letters of jouissance, those truths, are the formations that give account of the edges or the cuts of the un-nameable that is the constitutive hole, impossible to know. Pieces of the “There is something of the One” that in a given moment consist in an invention that allows the crossing of an impasse. The psychotic subject can obtain the solution that gives a certain consistency as effect of redoubling of an edge or introducing a connector. It is a question of different types of stability, some more resistant than others, sensational, extraordinary and singular forms of integrating this enigmatic jouissance in the body and in the social bond.

Lacan says in *RSI* that the consistency of the knot is imaginary, for which reason the work of analytic reading falls back on a supplement to narcissism, which “does not cease not to write itself”, as Lacan demonstrates in the episode of Joyce’s beating. “The Ego is said to be narcissistic because, at a certain level, there is something that supports the body as an image. In the case of Joyce, however, isn’t the fact that the image is not involved on this occasion the sign that the Ego has an extremely particular function for him?”

Joyce makes use of the imaginary mimicry of the mirror as supplement. What would the other do? He works it out, he documents it in order to be able to write it, he even provokes it as if it were an experiment, as when wanting to write about jealousy he pushes Nora, who writes to him “My dear cuckold”, to go with other men with the objective of refining the writing. He tried to approach other women in the same place that he found himself the first time sexually with Nora, with the misfortune of having been beaten and maltreated. These inventions based on imaginary mechanisms do not in themselves suffice to provide a knotting. The work of knotting requires an incessant reinvention in order to achieve something close to this “intimate juncture” with the One.
There are small inventions, subtle and transitory, that do not knot in the name of the *sinthome*. The consistency achieved by Joyce with the “work in progress” realized throughout his life was the ego which enjoyed its object in a way freed from the commands of the Other: Finnegans Wake and the relation with Nora.

The psychotic teaches us that there are forms of creating knotting of the pieces of jouissance under nominations which have a use value independent of meaning and ideals, “out of the common”; valid forms of knotting that do not touch on signifying knowledge; mathemes that come to account for the status of the edge of jouissance as text, as letter without guarantee in the Other.

The desire of the analyst needs to take support in the topology of these edges that mark the hole of being, edges that make a text conducive to reading, to interpretation, to resonance without signification. We have to catch them, assess them, present them, name them, operate with them. These are the hooks, the charms, with which the analyst maneuvers and from this reading one obtains a transferential yield. The “There is something of the One” under transference supposes a certain invention and nodal consistency.

These bits and pieces of the ‘There is something of the One’ not only give stability but can also manage to add themselves in a singular and innovative way to the Other of culture, in a way that Lacan called “sinthomatic”. The *sinthome* was Lacan’s last invention, a possible writing for each analysand to operate in their own world, in disjunction from their neighbour. Seneca said that no genius was great without a mixture of madness. This is what a case like that of Joyce teaches us, Joyce for whom art took the form of the *sinthome* because it included his singular form of jouissance. “[I]sn’t his desire to be an artist who would keep the whole world busy, (…) what compensates exactly for the fact that, let’s say, his father was never a father for him? […] It is to this name that he wanted homage to be paid, a homage that he refused to anyone else.”

With psychotics we at times find this incomparable spark, this brilliant thought, this talent that goes beyond, this marvelous touch that transforms into a common piece into a work of art. Here is the lesson that can be obtained from any treatment with a psychotic, if the analyst is less immobilized in meaning and works more with the act that renders the jouissance of the symptom operative; that is, finding a good way to use this jouissance of the symptom in order to introduce it into the matrices of the Other of civilization. Inventing for oneself a use of this real jouissance, and naming it, are a pair of acts that make up part of a ‘know how’ that redoubles the value of consistency in any creation.

*Translated by Roger Litten*

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3 "What I proposed in my Borromean knot about the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real led me to distinguish these three spheres, these balls, and then to retie them. I announced the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real in '54 by titling an inaugural lecture that established these three terms as what Frege calls proper names. To found a proper name is something that elevates your own name a little bit. The only proper name in all this is my own. It’s the extension of Lacan to the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real that allows these three terms to consist. And I’m not especially proud of that.” Lacan J.,


7 Lacan asks: “So, what is Joyce’s relationship to Nora? Oddly enough, I would say that it’s a sexual relation, even though I say that such a thing doesn’t exist, but it’s a funny old sexual relation.” *The Seminar*, book XXIII, *The Sinthome*, op. cit., p. 68.

Knotting and Unknotting

Augustin Menard – ECF

The “fundamental clinical equality between parlêtres” that J.A. Miller affirms, beyond the opposition neurosis/psychosis, can be understood only on the basis of Lacan’s later clinic supported in the writing of the Borromean knots. Centred on the singularity of the case, this clinic does not annul but rather relativises the structural particularity in which the history of the subject has been written.

In no longer giving priority to the symbolic, Oedipus becomes a “ready-made” supplement that is offered by a culture dominated by the signifier of the Name of the Father, but this supplement is not exclusive. The imaginary can itself be its support, as can the real. Jacques-Alain Miller has extracted for us from Lacan’s texts the concept of a fundamental (generalized) foreclosure behind the restricted foreclosure of the Name of the Father (P₀) or of the phallus (Φ₀). Its cause is the impact of the signifier on the organism of the speaking animal that man is (parlêtre). Confronting the impossible to bear of the real imposes on each one of us the necessity of inventing a knotting between the three registers: this is the function of the sinthome, the modality proper to the parlêtre of “enjoying their unconscious”.

If “knotting and unknotting are not metaphors,” we have to locate on a case-by-case basis what was ruptured in the triggering and what was previously knotted, as well as what has been re-knotted or could be knotted again. Mr. M., accountant by profession, presents as a meticulous obsessional, invaded by doubts that encumber his thoughts and put a dampener upon his acts. Disgruntled with his work, he does not seek anything better. He has a daughter with a first partner and has been living in a new relationship, difficult for the past two years. He cannot tolerate the chattering of this woman, and she cannot tolerate his behaviour. They have found “the right distance” while living separately: “I restrict myself,” he says. It is his mode of defence. The mood is not sad but atonal.
Evoking his family he says: “I have three brothers,” whereas he has only two. He has had several typical manic crises followed by episodes of melancholia. According to him they are all triggered by the consumption of hashish. In fact it is the sexual encounter that is their cause, and the drug is used by him to escape the intolerable with which he finds himself confronted. During these acute episodes he imagines that Adam, Eve and the animals have arrived on the earth in the form of frozen embryos, coming from another world. He has written a book about it but has not addressed it to an editor so as not to risk a refusal. Despite his interest for music and literature, he has stopped his studies. “I have messed up everything that I wanted,” he says.

The first crisis was triggered, according to him, by romantic disappointment. This woman had all the required physical and mental qualities. “We matched each other perfectly”. (It is himself that he loved in her). He then provokes the rupture and triggers a crisis by an excessive consumption of drugs, as already mentioned. He preserves the idealized image of the woman who had all the qualities but of whom he cannot describe any particular trait. It is a total image with which he compares all his partners. The sexual encounter has smashed it into bits and he does everything to maintain it in his thoughts.

His psychiatrists have diagnosed him “bipolar” with a background of obsessional neurosis, there where the classical clinic would have said manic-depressive psychosis.

This case is invaluable for us for two reasons. It teaches us about the discourse which sustained the subject before the crises and which is re-found afterwards. It illustrates the particularity of the imaginary supplement, which he makes use of in a singular manner. This matters to us because certain subjects are struck by amnesia concerning the contents of the acute episode; only the nostalgia for the euphoria and the fear of the mental pain which succeeded it persist.

Here, the Lacanian clinic allows us, beyond the obsessional symptomatology, to evoke a psychosis which could be qualified as ordinary if we did not have information about the delusion. The externality is manifested in the subjective domain in the sentence, “I have three brothers,” which excludes him as subject of desire. The social externality is situated in the passive acceptance of a work that does not suit him and the refusal of what would valorise him. On the side of the body, the externality is expressed in the mental domain but also in the refusal of what could satisfy him.

The second reason is the particular modality linked to the unknotting of the imaginary ($\Phi_0$) and to its re-knotting in a total mode that excludes any symbolic trait. The identification is narcissistic, and this image breaks down when faced with the intolerable irruption of the sexual real. The re-knotting is carried out in the mode of an imaginary nomination: this mental image of the idealized woman. We recognize here the inhibition that characterizes him: “I restrict myself”. He has found his “knowing how to do with it” and is sustained by it with the help of this other knotting which is the transference.

Very different is the modality of knotting for Mrs. D, prey since childhood to the hallucinatory injunctions of a malevolent Other that intimates her to prostitute herself or to kill her
children. She has found her supplement by making it her profession to raise Bengal cats which she sells over the Internet. This race comes from a cross-breeding of cats and tigers. The successive cross-breeding would attenuate their aggressiveness while maintaining the tiger-like qualities. Here we have a feature which was taken from the Other. It serves as support in the elaboration of a delusional metaphor that supplements for the (P0). Moreover, the Internet enables her to keep at a distance the potentially aggressive others.

In these two cases we have to respect the defence invented by the subject. In others, on the contrary, we must disturb the defences of the subject to untangle or even unknot what constitutes the complaint of the parlêtre in order to enable it to be written differently. 

Translated by Samya Seth

For this contribution I want to make use of an artistic creation: the novel “A Little Life”. I find in the characterization of its protagonist, Jude, a magnificent example of some of the fundamental questions elaborated by Jacques-Alain Miller with respect to the clinic of discontinuity sustained in the difference between neurosis and psychosis and the clinic of continuity that responds to the late teaching of Jacques Lacan, which we could condense in the expression “everyone is mad”.

Faced with the meaninglessness of life, which the character in the novel calls axiom zero, there only remains to us the meaning that we construct and which, whether it is linked to the established discourses or responds to a private invention, involves a delusion with which we make our way through life. Including Oedipus and the reference to the Name of the Father in this delusion was a momentous step in Lacan’s teaching, in which we have been oriented by Jacques-Alain Miller.

In an interview the author tells us that “love, empathy, compassion and even horror are exaggerated”, excess rules over our lives. She had to fight with her editor to give an account of this in her novel. But despite the editorial concerns the author does not wallow in this but rather makes use of fiction in order to transmit a truth.

Jude and his three friends make their way through life after University keeping up their bonds of friendship. Although three of them have family more or less at hand, the voice and the protagonist of the novel was “an abandoned child”; it would be better to say thrown into the dustbin of a monastery. This origin will be emphasized by the sayings of these “men of religion”. The only place that they grant him is that of waste object.

As subject these are the words that he will find himself immersed in from the beginning. But for a while in his childhood one of these “monks” will offer him the “light” of tenderness, pleasant words and some care… as ruses of a perverse soul. From a dismal childhood, which turns out to be comparable with those suffered by characters in Dickens, this subject will have as legacy a mistrust of erotic love and injuries to the body. Some of these were provoked by others and some are the cuts that he inflicts on himself. The pain, above
all is moral, by way of those insulting voices that torment him and will be his most faithful companions. The voices are not related as hallucinations, but have the injuring power that presides in melancholy and make his life hell. When the writer relates these passages we see a magnificent instance of Lacan's affirmation “…a disturbance at the inmost juncture of the subject’s sense of life”.

It is not a question of the tale of a death foretold, but rather of the inventions that a subject can make with his life. The “bricolage” that Miller speaks of is not a creation ex nihilo but rather an invention with the materials that the subject has available to him.

Jude has this “hope of something else” that emerges in his childhood breast and the sentiment of tenderness that he experienced as a child in relation to the perverse monk. Not only did this leave him with the legacy of mistrust but also the embers of love that he could develop first with his friends and later in a love based on tenderness and the exclusion of sexuality, given that sex submerges him in the cesspit of indignity. Words show themselves, at the same time, in their harmful and healing versions and we witness the emergence of love as an invention, as a “miracle” that serves to support him in life.

The ambition of this author is “realist” in the Lacanian sense and she does not back off or convert the story into a fairy tale which would not be very credible. The same love that serves to counteract the version of the bad Other becomes an invention which is not definitive and which leaves the subject defenseless when confronted with a disastrous mishap and the coincidence of two losses.

If the miracle of love brings him “a little life”, work is for Jude a source of dignity that the presence of the body in the amorous bond always puts at risk. When abuses and vexations are encountered “he abandoned his body and pretended that he was something inanimate, a dispassionate and insensible witness of the scene…” His body becomes strange to him and in the novel we observe that this body is this heavy load that he has to carry and with which he is seldom comfortable except when he cuts himself. Nonetheless it is this same body which serves his best friend, the painter J.B., as inspiration for completing his best works.

Work as a fundamental point of anchoring in the face of indignity, love as the miracle that allows him to continue living in spite of everything, the body as this heavy load that the subject carries. A therapy sustained by speech would not be of any use to the character in the novel since for him the relating of events leads to an interior atrophy impossible to halt except by way of unchecked cutting. Friendship standing in for family and loyalty will on this occasion be the best treatment for the pathological of this life. A treatment that will not cease to show its “real” limits.

I have chosen this author because we can make use of her creations to help us advance in our work. I also consider her narration, along with that of other authors, as an example of the novel of the 21st century in harmony with what has been shown by Lacan. I could not also help seeing in the thematic of “A Little Life”, apparently so intimate and “psycholo-
gical", a political incidence. Its reading evoked for me images of the children from Syria or any other location, abandoned and going about alone in these absolutely empty plains of "refugee camps". What destiny, what future will there be for these children that are treated by the social Other only as waste objects?

I will finish with a story that I heard the French singer Zaz tell in his performance in a Buenos Aires kitchen for homeless people: “There was an enormous forest fire. All the animals were terrified and helpless. A hummingbird applied himself to carrying drops of water in his beak to put the fire out. An armadillo overwhelmed by the situation said to the hummingbird: You’re crazy, do you think you are going to put the fire out? And the hummingbird answered: I’m doing my bit.” Hanya Yanagihara is doing her bit with this novel. Are we psychoanalyst’s doing ours?

Translated by Roger Litten

3 Yanagihara H., “A little life”, op. cit., “Life in itself is the axiom of the empty set. It begins with zero and it ends with zero. We know that both states exist, but we are conscious of neither experience: they are states that constitute a necessary part of life even though they cannot be experienced as life.”
From Certainty to the Not-All

Anne Béraud – NLS

Certainties? Are these not the certainties of the analyst, those that are shaken up by the phrase *ordinary psychosis*? Is this phrase not the logical consequence of the assertion by Lacan in 1978: “Everyone is mad, that is, delusional”?

Certainty, taken from this angle, concerns rather the *a priori*, and these are thereby disturbed. There are now no ready-made categories, but rather an exigency to read the discrete signs that give us the index of foreclosure. After the segregation implied by classes, the push to absolute singularity, even if each One can lodge themselves under the same insignia. Indeed, “Everyone is mad” is not oriented by the Name of the Father, but is rather articulated to the “sexual non-rapport”. Against the backdrop of this impossible, how does one go about obtaining something that can act as a stand-in, and that will allow one to get by? How does one get by with the impossible?”

Well, one is crazy! “… that is, delusional” – which is the same as: to each his own way of recounting his world, his relationship with the Other, and by diverse means. Nobody makes for an exception there. The subject is thus constrained to invent.

And it falls to the analyst to make the invention come about. For this, he is oriented to locating the solutions that the subject has been able to make use of for knotting the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary. It is thus also up to the analyst to invent, starting from the search for the detail, for the trait of singularity that will allow the subject to construct a solution more durable, more solid, more flexible, an invention in his measure.

But what solutions, faced with the certainty of the psychotic which comes from an unshakeable conviction linked to the delusional belief? The psychotic has the certainty that it concerns him. He is targeted by a signification whose meaning remains enigmatic to him. This certainty which emerges in the real is a signification which does not refer to anything but itself. The degree of certainty is proportional to the enigmatic void that is initially presented in the place of signification itself. This certainty, sometimes discreet, which presents itself as a fixed non-dialectical point in response to what happens to the
subject, does it not come to the place where the fantasy could not be constituted? Is not the fantasy itself a certain construction that also contains its own certainty? More dialecticizable, certainly, but not so easy to loosen.

Each one has to hold on tight here because faced with the real hole, madness, i.e. delusion, seems necessary. Freud attested to it: “In a psychosis, a loss of reality would necessarily be present, whereas in a neurosis, it would seem, this loss would be avoided.” He continues: “But this does not at all agree with the observation [...] that every neurosis [...] in its severe forms [...] actually signifies a flight from real life.” The sharp distinction between neurosis and psychosis [...] is weakened by the circumstance that in neurosis, too, there is no lack of attempts to replace a disagreeable reality by one which is more in keeping with the subject’s wishes. This is made possible by the existence of a world of fantasy. Thus, each responds, through different modalities, to the disturbance that jouissance introduces. But no more normal, no more pathological. Lacan, attributing it to Freud, deduces from this that “everyone is mad, that is, delusional.” “This formula [...] poses as radical the inadequation of the real and the mental.” Delusion begins with the articulation S₁-S₂, which produces an effect of signification. Thus, it begins with language itself.

Nevertheless, “the madness in question here is general, or rather, universal. It’s not psychosis.” The certainty is related to the unbelief by which Freud defines the position of the psychotic. Lacan states: “One can believe only that about which one is not sure. Those who are sure [...] do not believe. They do not believe in the Other, they are sure of the Thing. These are the psychotics.”

Faced with the certainty of the psychotic, the search, with an analyst, for singular solutions, bears fruit. Interpretation aims to produce an edge, an act which bears upon a limit of jouissance, rather than to rattle the certainty that will remain.

The work consists in finding a quilting point, to reinforce “a little identification” for arresting the slope that sucks such a subject into the abyss of I am worth nothing. The sessions serve to reassemble what has been shaken, seeking some formulas which can reinforce the subject’s original solution. The analyst makes himself partner, at the same time active and docile, of a subject who can easily be triggered. The analysis aims to allow the melancholic subject to introduce some modulations so that the subject is able to pass to the more-or-less of the relative, and counter his slope towards infinitude.

Paradoxically, the consequence of the sentence “everyone is mad” which is stated as a universal proposition, is the not-all. Everyone is mad excludes the exception and produces an effect of a push-to-the-woman. This implies that psychoanalysis “takes mismatched subjects on a one-by-one basis.”

Our civilisation is the paradigm of this principle. On the one hand, mismatched subjects can seek to lodge themselves there in a kind of normality, since to be mismatched has become the norm. As regards sexual orientation, for example, young subjects do not find themselves in any category (gay, hetero, bi), creating new ones all the time. They practice
“poly-amory,” distinct from the customary cycle of disputes with the previous generations. Rather, this goes by trial and error, by inventions, to the one-by-one, which can leave these subjects just as much without compass and alone as sustained by a singular invention.

They are the true seekers. They mark their body: as many tattoos as there are ways of inscribing oneself in the social bond. The sects multiply: as many beliefs as there are *parlêtres*. Montreal is the place par excellence where each subject can find a solution that will be welcomed and accepted, as much in families as in society. But not without recoil, because, at the same time, a machine has been put to work to recreate something of the universal norm with its systems of evaluation and formatting of all sorts. Faced with the push-to-the-woman that, as Prévert inventoried, gives rise to mismatched subjects, an attempt that could be described as securitarian seeks to order subjects by fitting them out with new norms, fomenting new segregations. Quebec is on the front lines under both these aspects.

*Translated by Samya Seth*

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6 Ibid., p. 187.