

A Portrait of Baudelaire as a “Man of Genius”: Ordinary Psychosis within the Age of Modernity

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“Je te donne ces vers afin que si mon nom ...”

—Charles Baudelaire

Unary Trait

This essay began as an exploration of the literary productions of Charles Baudelaire. Modernity was discovered as a moment of subjective emergence within the immersive crowd of signifiers. This emergence arranged for the stabilization of an underlying structure of psychosis.¹ The psychosis became ‘ordinary’ by means of an identification with beauty, against the symbolic’s collusion with the real. For example, “d’une main fastueuse” operated against “la rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait”, demonstrating that the former was a means of identification with what Lacan named the unary trait. The collapse of the symbolic paternal function, that is, the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father, inspires a return to that function precisely within the real. It was for this reason that Lacan Lacan. (1977 pp. 37–8) repeated the following formulation: “what is rejected from the symbolic reappears in the real”. The Schreberian delusion of a castrating god is rendered equal in function with the discovery of a menacing beauty within the crowd. In both cases a sense of purpose and self-discovery becomes ignited. For example, Baudelaire, the poet, in “La Beauté”, was inspired by the wound of his beauty: “et mon sein, où chacun s’est meurtri tour à tour, est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour”. And Schreber thought to himself, “how *beau* it would be to be a woman”,² a mark, no doubt, of emasculation.

The unary trait has a compensatory function after the collapse of the paternal one. Baudelaire’s taste for the “transitory, fleeting, and contingent”, provoked by the intense curiosity of his everlasting childhood, was palpable earlier in Freud’s assessment of Little Hans. There is an irresistible urge toward the passageway of the symbolic by way of the effacement of the mother’s desire. Salamensky (1996, pp. 63–73) asserted that Baudelaire’s personal correspondences have exposed the root of his difficulty with metaphor: it was an inability to symbolize the absence of his mother. This passageway was rediscovered in such traits as the stranger’s fanciful eye: “moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant, dans son oeil”. Veronique Voruz (2004, p. 290) has claimed that Lacan’s concept of the unary trait eventually came to orient “the punctuation of enunciation in its progressive making sense of the Real”. She continued: “essentially, this conception evidences that nomination is present *ab initio* in

1 Leo Bersani’s claim has been instructive: “Baudelaire’s *Petit Poemes en Prose* can be read in light of Freud’s notions of *Verwerfund* and *Verleugnung* and Lacan’s theory of *la forclusion*. I don’t mean that Baudelaire was psychotic when he wrote these poems; he does, however, seem to have represented in them a psychotic relation to the world. Violence in the prose poems is simultaneously seen and repudiated. There is not denial in the sense of a disappearance of perceived realities; nor is there any evidence that a sexual reality (the absence of a penis) or a sexual theory (of castration) is being repudiated. Rather, the psychoanalytic reading I’m proposing has to be defended in more general structural terms: in terms of the narrator’s relation to the world, and more specifically, in terms of the way in which he generates meaning from the incidents he relates. [...] It is as if certain fantasies had been projected onto the world as a way of rejecting them.” Leo Bersani. (1977) *Baudelaire and Freud*. University of California Press. pp. 125–36.

2 These were Lacan’s words. He thought it was important to italicize the word “beau”.

the subject, though it is latent, and that its actualization no longer rests upon a hypothetical father but is of the order of the subject's own invention" (Voruz. 2004, p. 290). Since there is no subject prior to the question, she is incorrect only in her claim that nomination is present in the subject. The question at stake concerns the emergence of the subject through the compensatory function of the unary trait.

Baudelaire often referred to Edgar Allan Poe's narrative of the "man of the crowd". A man, as nameless as his affliction and as the cafe within which he sits,³ suddenly abandons "all the thoughts that are moving around him" (Baudelaire. 1964, p. 7), so that, against the tumultuous noise of the real, he might discover for himself some calm and quiet focus. No wonder Slavoj Žižek (2008, p. 24) isolated this narrative element as expressive of a logic of transition "from the symbolic register to that of the real". The consequence was such that the man "rushe[d] out into the crowd in search of a[nother] man unknown to him whose face, which he had caught sight of, had in a flash fascinated him" (Baudelaire. 1964, p. 7). We can see to what length the man was compelled toward that quest: "curiosity had become a compelling, irresistible [*fatale*] passion". At the root of his curiosity, then, was passion, a word whose etymological significance should be highlighted: "courage" and "endurance" through "suffering". What followed was Baudelaire's beautiful declaration: the man's soul was akin to that of a toddler, we might only add that the child was playing "fort" and "da". An irresistible quest for the signifier of eternal beauty finds itself, like the unary trait's compensatory function, "at the origin of the signifier" (Lacan 2007, p. 52). It is important that we add to this the dimension of the emergence of the subject, a subject whose only fate—*fatal* and *irresistible*—is to be barred from the mother's desire by the signifier. Thus, Baudelaire produced the psychotic demand: "et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis". In any case, one wonders the extent to which the signifier has an origin, it is rather, the origin of the signifier of subjectivity which is here brought into question.

Freud wrote that the meaning of the toddler's game of "fort" and "da" was "connected with the child's remarkable cultural achievement—the foregoing of the satisfaction of an instinct [sic]—as the result of which he could let his mother go away without making any fuss". We can see the importance of the movement toward the symbolic for the purposes of an effacement of the mother's desire, and, consequently, for the (so-called) "cultural achievement" which occurred as an inauguration of the subject into the symbolic system of signifiers. But what is the achievement? It is an achievement of culture and not an achievement of the subject's inauguration into culture. Freud wrote "the departure of the mother cannot possibly have been pleasant for the child, nor merely a matter of indifference" (Freud 1922, p. 15). The renunciation of pleasure, which is in its own way the function of the Name-of-the-Father, installs a prohibition at the level of desire. Miller (2013) once framed this in the most simple way: the presence of the Name-of-the-Father liquidates some of the unbearable *jouissance*.⁴ This is what is at the core of the emergence of the subject within language, and it explains why Freud (1922, p. 16) thought it necessary to write that the child "was in the first place passive, was overtaken by the experience, but now brings himself in as playing an acting part". What is at stake is not the birth of the signifier but more crucially the emergence of the subject. The crowning achievement of culture is the production of subjectivity and not the adaptation of a pre-existing subject to culture.

It would now seem that the unary trait has more to do with the origin of the subject for the signifier. It is not simply that the subject was passive in the first place, as Freud seemed to claim above, but rather

3 For example, Poe wrote: "I sat at the large bow window of the D___ Coffee-House in London". Cf., Edgar Allan Poe. (1845) *The Man of the Crowd*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2151/2151-h/2151-h.htm#link2H_4_0005

4 The presence of the Name-of-the-Father, or "plus" NDP, brings less *jouissance*. Therefore, *plus-NDP = minus-Jouissance*.

that the child actively brought himself into being as a subject through the prohibition of the mother's desire. Baudelaire elaborated with careful artistry the situation of a small boy who witnessed his father dressing. The boy "looked at the arm muscle [of his father], the colour tones of the skin tinged with rose and yellow, and the bluish network of veins" (Baudelaire 1964, p. 8). My claim is that the child grew up to join the ranks of James Joyce, or, at least, of Lacan's Joyce: Baudelaire wrote, "need I say that, today, the child is a famous painter" (Baudelaire 1964, p. 8). The painter's father was not the proper Name-of-the-Father (barring the mother's desire from the outside) but was rather the canvas upon which the child elevated himself from within as a famous and beautiful artist. The "picture of the external world ... took possession of his brain" (Baudelaire 1964, p. 8). during the formative age when the paternal function laid itself bare. The beautiful unary trait compensated for the symbolic hole, so that a 'ditch' was invented for the subject. This explains why Freud was indifferent to the question of whether this cultural achievement occurred from the outside-in or from the inside-out: "it is of course of no importance for the affective value of this game whether the child invented it himself or adopted it from a suggestion from outside" (Freud 1922, p. 15). The importance is only that the child in one way or another comes into being as a subject of language.

Holes & Ditches

The concept of a ditch introduces an important corrective to the clinical theory of the emergence of the subject. It also offers an innovative counterpoint to the psychoanalytic theory of the signifier. The ditch is a space of subjective possibility, inspired by a hole. Put differently, neurotic structure inspires a ditch within signification as a consequence of a hole within the real. On the other hand, psychotic structure inspires a ditch within the real as a consequence of a hole within the symbolic. Incidentally, the English word "ditch" might just as well appear alongside the word "distance" (*diskus*). I make this connection to draw attention to one of the essential functions of a ditch, which is to produce distance. Ellie Ragland once intimated that the loss of distance is what constitutes psychosis, and not, as it were, the loss of a crucial paternal signifier:

one could describe [the neurotic] order as the distance from primary *jouissance* that bolsters the ego's resistance to knowing about primordial identifications. Perhaps what we generally call perception—or perspective in art—is actually a measure of distance from the primary object, a distance that is lacking in the structures of autism and psychosis. ... It is not, then, the father's proper name that is in question. (Ragland 1995, pp. 218–9).

Georg Simmel, who was one of Baudelaire's contemporaries, noted that the transition toward the modern city produced the unfortunate consequence of the loss of distance. For example, he believed that "one never feels as lonely and as deserted as in this metropolitan crush of persons", where "bodily closeness and lack of space" significantly disturb the mental life of the individual (Simmel 1903). Badiou, commenting upon his intellectual friendship with Gilles Châtelet, added that "loneliness and interiority are ... the subjective essence of alterity and the outside world" (Badiou 2016, p. 173). Though it is a counterintuitive and paradoxical claim, it would seem, nonetheless, that it is precisely through one's immersion into the crowd that one comes to feel lonely, thereby indicating that this has something essential to do with the relationship of mental life to an environment which has lost its inherent sense of distance. Lacan explained during his seminar of January 23rd, 1963 that the experience of depersonalization must have something to do with the loss of the distance that one has *vis-a-vis* the mirror. Distance, which is itself a curious form of lack, comes to be lacking within the

metropolis and this no doubt contributes to the widely held conviction that there is a correlation among schizophrenia and the city. The sudden crowd of signifiers, whose topological significance will not be understood without the concept of a ditch, evacuates the possibility of subjectivity.

I return to the relationship of the ditch and the hole: the neurotic's real hole inversely returns as a ditch within the symbolic. What does not become included within the real projects itself into the symbolic. This, as Lacan once claimed, is the inverse operation of foreclosure:

a hole in the real [becomes the] means [by] which the subject enters into a relationship that is the inverse of what I have set forth in earlier seminars under the name *Verwerfung*. Just as what is rejected from the symbolic register reappears in the real, in the same way the hole in the real that results from loss, sets the signifier in motion. This hole provides the place for the projection of the missing signifier (Lacan 1977, pp. 37–8).

Except that we must be wary of presuming that the essential production of this manoeuvre is the signifier and not the subject. Psychotic structure searches out a ditch as semblance so that during the course of a modern analysis the analyst sometimes comes to occupy precisely this position. Dany Nobus (2000, pp. 142) wrote that “in curtailing the psychotic's jouissance analysts epitomize a semblance of castration, which is meant to be conducive to the creation of an artificial space of desire and a socially adapted lifestyle”. His proposed technique, which is today widely held by Lacainans, is the following: “the semblance of castration can be implemented via the analyst's radical ‘No!’ as a response to particular expressions of the psychotic's jouissance, or it can be effectuated more surreptitiously through the analyst's demand that patients engage in new social bonds and make themselves accessible to new encounters” (Nobus 2000, pp. 142–3). The role of the analyst, then, increasingly becomes one of curtailing jouissance. The invention of any such ditch resulting from curtailment elevates the subject onto the stepladder of beauty (*escabeau*) and provides some stability for the mental life of the individual.

One need only skim the annals of military engineering, and the signifiers that have come to be archived therein, to be struck by the curious preoccupation with ditches during war-time. Essentially, the function of a ditch has been to slow advancing troops and to protect the space of the friendly. We should note, for example, the profound importance of the ditch for Mohammed during the “battle of the Trench” in Yathrib. Neurosis is no doubt the slowest of clinical structures (although, as a result of his crusade against psychoanalysis, Paul Virilio would not enrich dromology with this remarkable insight). The “cunette” is one signifier for “ditch” put into circulation within military lexicon, and it is closely linked to *lacunetta* or *lunca* (both of which might be translated as “hole”, “pit”, “gap” or “void”). Incidentally, cunette is also sometimes referred to as a “cut”. A small trench is constructed with two concurrent functions in mind: first, it drains excess, channeling it away from friendly space and providing for an elevated plot of land, and; second, it presents a small obstacle for potential intruders. Cunette is the modern equivalent of the Lacanian “cut”, or, more classically, it is an advancement upon the Freudian theory of clinical “interpretation”. Ellie Ragland, like most Lacanians, conjoined the Lacanian “cut” and Freudian “interpretation” by claiming that “any [effective] interpretation works as a cut and has a very complex meaning in the analyst's determining when to end an analytic session” (Ragland 2015, p. 167). The cunette may be used at the level of jouissance, as a cut involving curtailment.

Modern sewage has flushed away the symbolic ditch whose function was once to channel the *objet*

petit a. Even the ancient Indus' complex system of drainage was carefully plotted between the trail and the field and at the perimeter of crucial areas of intersection within the city. It lined the city and its manifold contours, visibly interrupting the consistency of the city. The invention of the hollow-pipe drain in the nineteenth century made possible crucial developments toward the unfathomable networks of conspiracy, forming the backdrop of the modern city. The drains have become hidden within hollowed out spaces such as walls, floors, sidewalks, and roads. Thereafter, they have attached themselves to the vast networks, consolidating otherwise disparate and differential elements of the city—ultimately ending at treatment facilities. There are also those who find a home within the hollowed infrastructure of the sewers. They exist within the real of the metropolis. No wonder Freud connected soap to the yardstick of civilization (in the context of a wider discussion regarding sewers, toilets, and ditches). For his part, Lacan defined civilization by the sewer. Miller didn't miss this: "civilization is what advances in the depths of the sewer" (Miller 2005). The logic presented in *Civilization and its Discontents* was no different (Freud [1930] 2001, pp. 96–97).

Ordinary Psychosis

Lacan's work began and ended as an investigation into psychosis. Stijn Vanheule documented the various phases of this research, noting that it began in the "age of imaginary identification" and the "age of the signifier", and moved into the "age of object *a*" and the "age of the knot" (Vanheule 2014). We might deduce from this that Lacan began by privileging the mental registers of the imaginary and symbolic for any further understanding of psychosis, only subsequently moving toward the register of the real and the *sinthome*. The least we can say is that Lacan's *oeuvre* can be framed against the backdrop of his commitment into researching psychoses. For example, his first major piece of work, which was his doctoral dissertation, had to do with the topic of "paranoid psychosis" and its relationship with "personality". He referred back to this research for many decades and produced two journal publications related to that topic during the same period (Lacan [1933] 1988). Finally, toward the end of his life he began to stir controversy by continuously asking if James Joyce was mad: quite directly, he asked "was Joyce mad?" (Lacan 1975–76). The controversy of raising the question demonstrates by itself that Joyce's psychosis could not have been understood as "extraordinary" in the clinical sense of the term (e.g., 'full' psychosis). Also during this period was the publication of an interview transcript with a psychotic man who Lacan instantly dubbed the "first Lacanian psychosis" (Schneiderman Ed. 1980).

In his "Presentation on Psychic Causality", Lacan (2006a p. 126) demanded an answer from Henri Ey to the following question: "is there nothing that distinguishes the insane from other patients ...?" Lacan repackaged the question moments later: "how can [Ey] distinguish this patient from a madman? If [Ey] cannot give me an answer in his system, it will be up to me to give him one in my own". The demand inherent to the question facilitated a supposed knowledge regarding the 'discrete' or 'continuous' status of the clinical structures of neurosis and psychosis. Lacan (2006a p. 135) went on to argue, against the organic-psychodynamic perspective of Ey, that the distinguishing factor separating neurosis and psychosis has something to do with language disturbances: "the interest that madness thus kindles in us ... its metaphysical import is revealed in the fact that it is inseparable from the problem of signification for being in general – that is, the problem of language for man". The question obviously returns the benefit of clarity (which is itself a remarkable cultural achievement made possible by the distance that discrete categorizations provide). The "continuous" answer might thereby evacuate intense clinical fixations of their meaning, frustrating the demand for an answer, and giving way to the analyst's desire

(which is, as Lacan put it in one of his earlier seminars, a desire for absolute difference).⁵

Pierre-Gilles Guéguen (2010) has tried to make some headway by revealing that Lacan adopted conflicting positions on the differential diagnosis of neurosis and psychosis. The problem is that the question of differential diagnosis has remained anchored to the orienting category of neurosis. Neurotic structure need not occupy the function whose authorization secures from without the various clinical structures; whereby “neurosis” itself seems to occupy the paternal function. Miller (2013) discovered the crux of the problem when he reminded us that “Lacan ... derives the structure of psychosis from the structure of neurosis as a variation on the fundamental structure of neurosis, or of normality”. Ordinary psychosis has often been envisioned as the subject’s reparation of a neurotic knot, thanks to the additional thread of the *sinthome*. While this line of thinking has restored the consistency of Lacan’s late borromean framework one wonders if it has not restored the general movement of his thought. I am tempted to revise Lacan’s (2006a, p. 575) 1946 claim that “man’s being [can] not be understood without madness, but it would not be man’s being if it did not bear madness within itself as the limit of his freedom”. Lacan (1966) always scoffed at the word “freedom”, and always claimed that it can only be articulated or understood “within the walls of a prison”.⁶ The prison-house of discrete neurosis affords the orderly [ordinary] status of neurosis, but beyond the walls of that prison there remains the locus of subjectivity. It is not therefore that madness is the limit of freedom but rather that neurosis is the limit of madness. This is what I mean when I write, as I am now, that neurosis itself has come to occupy the paternal function.

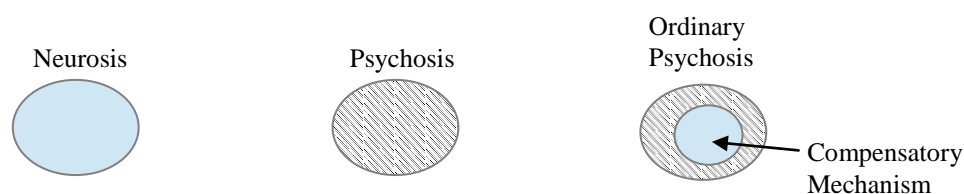
We might advance a bit further by exploring the path that links subjectivity to delusion. Jacques-Alain Miller (1995) wrote that “in the measure of what constitutes ‘I’ in each of us, there is the possibility that each of us is delusional”. It is a subtle point but one well worth noting: delusions exist within neurotic structures as well as psychotic structures, and it should not be presumed that the mere presence of a delusion is the sole criteria by which to distinguish the various clinical structures. In other words, it is not that psychosis may be distinguished from neurosis by the mere presence of delusions. The subject, which is the unique privilege of neurotic structure, is itself a delusion made possible by the symbolic’s intrusion into the real. It occurs when subjectivity is foreclosed or barred by the symbolic. The only remaining option for a subject which has been barred from the symbolic is to return within the real as a certainty. No doubt, this was Descartes’ certainty. It is not therefore the absence of delusion (marked by its certainty within the real) that renders psychosis ordinary but rather the presence of the most essential delusion: subjectivity as such. It is therefore possible that the concern with the question of the “discrete” or “continuous” status of the clinical structures avoids an altogether more interesting possibility: neurosis—and the consequent delusion of subjectivity—is the ordinary mechanism of psychotic stabilization.

Jacques-Alain Miller diagrammed the essential clinical structures in the following way: neurosis appeared as a full circle, psychosis as an empty circle, and ordinary psychosis as an empty circle with an embedded full circle. For a long period of time the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father has been the sole criteria for differential diagnosis. However, more research has suggested that foreclosure could

5 But what is absolute difference? Alain Badiou teaches that difference cannot be a difference of units, categories, or atoms. Rather, a pure difference must be thought of as a difference within difference, otherwise referred to as a pure multiplicity. That is, these are difference of differences which never bottom out except at the turning point of the empty set or void.

6 Lacan, in reply to a journalist, once said, “these terms, the term [freedom], makes me laugh, yes. I never talk about freedom.” Also, he once wrote that “freedom ... is never so authentically affirmed as when it is within the walls of a prison”.

result in a substitute “compensatory” function for relative stabilization.⁷ Lacan (1975–76) prepared this position already when he stated that “psychoanalysis, by succeeding, proves that one can moreover do without the Name-of-the-Father. One can moreover do without it provided one makes use of it.” Miller (2013), for his part, claimed that “the Name-of-the-Father substitutes itself for the desire of the mother, imposes its order on the desire of the mother, and what we call the predicate of the Name-of-the-Father is an element which is a kind of make-believe of the Name-of-the-Father, a *Compensatory Make-Believe* of the Name-of-the-Father—the *CMB*”. He described Schreber’s psychosis in the following terms: “beforehand, he had a compensatory identification, then when ... he became a writer. After the triggering, he managed to get back to some kind of *compensatory* activity”. Schreber’s underlying clinical structure was psychosis but, when it was not yet triggered, and, moreover, when he attempted to make a name for himself through his writing, there was a compensatory identification which substituted for the paternal metaphor.



I propose the following minor amendment: that which was full in Miller’s diagram should rather be envisioned as relatively empty, and that which was empty, should be diagrammed as relatively full. Psychosis is full because the ditch is lacking, or because it often involves a feeling of *too much*. There are too many signifiers, there is too much noise, there are too many connections, there is too much jouissance, and so on. It is very often a clinic of the *too much*.⁸ The analysand demands as a coping mechanism that the analyst dig for him a ditch: this promises silence, focus, tranquilization, order, discipline, etc., as Willy Apollon ([1991] 2014, p. 128) puts it, “[the psychotic demands] to set up an obstacle to the Other’s aggression”. For example, one of my analysands claimed that the silence of the clinic, made possible by the “cunette” of the analyst, opened up a space for him to finally feel his feet in his shoes and the ashy texture of his palms. He described for the first time a feeling of calm, quiet, focus. The analyst’s silence functioned here as an obstacle which permitted the analysand to temporarily reunite with the body from which he had come to feel “dislocated”. Cunette might also function through the obligation that an analysand speak freely, which, at times, provides the analysand suddenly with an orientation.⁹ It would seem that the psychoanalytic clinic becomes one of the relatively few remaining spaces of refuge within the modern city.

Not Logic I

Jacques-Alain Miller’s diagrams overcome the problem of any purely logical formulation of the ordinary psychosis. Lacan (1974–75) also turned toward the imaginary register of knots and topology

⁷ The word “compensatory” already demonstrates the extent to which the Name-of-the-Father remains essential for clinical categorization.

⁸ I had originally believed that this phrasing (“a clinic of the *too much*”) was my own invention. However, it occurs to me now, though I cannot find the source, that it may have been Jacques-Alain Miller’s invention.

⁹ Miller made this point in 1989: “The paternal metaphor in analysis does not come from the paternal position of the analyst. That is to say, it comes from the necessities or obligations made to the subject to symbolize his experience through language. And this in itself is the interdiction” (Miller 1989, p. 43).

so as to prevent any confrontation with the hole of the symbolic. He explained: “J’avance dès aujourd’hui. ... ce que dans la suite je me permettrai de démontrer ... j’avance ceci: le noeud borroméen, en tant qu’il se supporte du nombre trois, est du registre de l’Imaginaire”. Whereas the symbolic form of the *matheme* once captured the real by restricting excessive imaginary distortions, when that symbolic form is envisioned as a hole, the ditch, which would have been projected into the real, may only be transmitted through such imaginary forms as the unary trait or semblant. This was demonstrated through the concept of a “buckle” within Lacan’s knot theory. The buckle diagrammed the ditch that occurred at the intersection of any two threads within a knot.¹⁰ Lacan’s (1974–75) claim was that the buckle occurs over a point of infinity, which means that it occurs over a bit of the real. There where the symbolic and real once formed a couple for “integral transmission”, the imaginary and real have come to be, so that, at the point of intersection, the imaginary thread bends around the real.

It is because the laws of discourse are not fully operational for the psychotic that there is also a grammatical problem for any transmission of psychotic structure. Mitigation is only possible through the imaginary form. Grammar is portrayed as if it were so much poetry fabricated by the hands of a man of genius. I wrote the word “fabricated” because grammar also appears as if it were the beautiful invention of a fashion designer, since, as Miller once put it, “fashion has been inspired by ordinary psychosis, it’s clear”. The psychotic makes his own grammar or language through the *jouissance* that dwells deep within himself, that is, he makes his own common language through *lalangue*.

Baudelaire’s “man of genius”, whose “strong nerves” are indicative of a certain subjective disposition (akin to the “militant conviction” of “fidelity” described as the necessary revolutionary attitude by Alain Badiou), was nothing other than the figure who knows-how (*savior-faire*) to transform *lalangue* into a semblance of the common beauty. In doing so, the symbolic function becomes replaced by a homologous function by way of the unary trait or semblant. We ought to reinterpret one of Kierkegaard’s key passages: ‘What is a poet? A person whose *jouissance* is overwhelming but whose lips are so formed as to transform *lalangue* into the common beauty of his art’.¹¹ The social link is established when the beauty is so convincing that the public responds with the demand for more and better suffering on the part of the poet. Similarly, Lacan (1975–76) claimed that James Joyce knew-how to transform *lalangue* into an art form, and this, precisely, made up for the missing phallic signifier.¹²

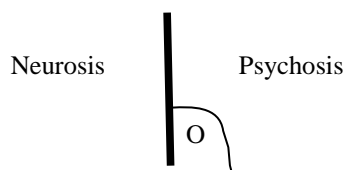
It is rarely mentioned that the symbolic already has within itself the essential imaginary structure of semblant, and that the Borromean knot is found already within the imaginary form of several Lacanian symbolic transmissions. This point is demonstrable by tracing an overlay upon some of Lacan’s symbolic formulae. The problem is that the imaginary form is not always easily discernible within the symbolic formulae. I will demonstrate this by returning to one of Miller’s diagrams before moving onto a consideration of Lacan’s formula of the paternal metaphor. If Miller’s diagram of the three essential clinical structures (depicted above) provided a cursory understanding by separating out each structure, discretely, then we might claim that his subsequent diagram (depicted below) consolidated the essential structures into a single diagram. In either case, there is a logic of layering, whereby some distance is achieved between structures, which is another way of stating that there is a logic of the buckle or the

10 For example, Lacan made statements such as: “being buckled imply[s] the hole without which there is no knot”, and “it buckles a hole” (Lacan 1974).

11 Kierkegaard wrote: “what is a poet? An unhappy man who hides deep anguish in his heart, but whose lips are so formed that when the sigh and cry pass through them, it sounds like lovely music. ... And people flock around the poet and say: ‘Sing again soon’—that is, ‘May new sufferings torment your soul but your lips be fashioned as before, for the cry would only frighten us, but the music, that is blissful’” (Kierkegaard 1843).

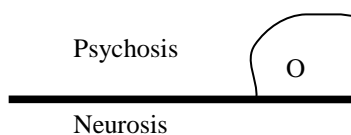
12 Lacan said: “but his prick was a little craven, as I might say, it was his art that supplied for his phallic bearing”.

ditch.



The diagram demonstrates that neurosis and psychosis are discrete clinical categories separated by a thick territorial boundary. Over time this boundary became something of a rubicon, and Miller (2013) was forced to admit that “[its] frontier, year after year, in supervision and in practice, became thicker and thicker”. Except that there is also the ordinary psychosis, which is nothing other than the prefigurative *alea iacta est* moment of a pass into the point of no return. The little notch within the diagram delimits the space of the ordinary psychosis and represents an exception to the extraordinary or pure psychosis. A similar notch occurs in traditional symbolic notation, as for example in the case of function notation: $f(x)$. The rim-like structure delimits a notch within which may be found the content of that function. This rim-like structure of traditional notation seems to be giving way to new developments within modernity. For example, category theory inscribes itself pictorially via extrinsic morphisms, the most important of which is the “identity morphism”. The identity morphism exposes an object as nothing more than an elevated ditch, rather than, for instance, a burrowed ditch: an object is reducible to the morphism’s trajectory of self-reference, which occurs during a sustained moment of narcissism. Note, anyway, that *morph-* is meant to refer to nothing other than the formal outward appearance of one’s beauty.

The notch of ordinary psychosis opens up toward the neurosis while being entirely barred from it, demonstrating a logic similar in effect to category theory. The intuition that ordinary psychosis is represented by an elevated ditch is not entirely lost upon me. I propose to turn the diagram 90 degrees counter-clockwise, to reveal the similarities among Miller’s diagram and early Fregean concept notation. Incidentally, Lacan (1968, pp. 6–9) borrowed the concept of the “little hollow” or “concavity” (*höhlung*) from Gottlob Frege’s *Begriffsschrift* (1879), and, as I shall demonstrate, he used it to develop a theory of the subject.



Ordinary psychosis introduces an emptiness into the full psychosis revealing the possibility of a temporary dwelling place for a subject. Without this dwelling place there is only what Lacan repeatedly referred to as the “abolition of the subject” by the “heterogeneity of the symbolic Other” (e.g., the crowd of signifiers, language, etc.). Lacan (1993, pp. 287–8) once said that “the difference between someone who is psychotic and someone who isn’t ... is based on the fact that a type of love relationship abolishes him as subject ... for the psychotic”. The “love relationship” is rather one of the mother’s pure desire, which, when it has not been properly effaced by the paternal function, invades the subject at the most intimate part of mental life. It is not the Name-of-the-Father, then, that provides the criteria for differential diagnosis, but rather it is the absence or presence of the essential delusion of subjectivity. The criteria by which to measure psychosis against neurosis has much more to do with the presence or absence of this core subjective delusion, as well as its casing, otherwise referred to as its

“ditch”, and less to do with the presence or absence of the symbolic bar. The analyst must first ask himself when he begins to listen to any potential analysand: “where is the subject?” and “what is its relative degree of stabilization?”. Only after asking these questions about subjectivity is it next possible to discover that the bar itself either is or is not lacking. It is not enough, then, to claim only that the missing Name-of-the-Father constitutes psychotic structure, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

Not Logic 2

It has often been repeated that the paternal metaphor grounds the system of signifiers by substituting the mother’s desire for an unknown signification. Lacan’s most well-known attempt at writing the formula appeared as follows:

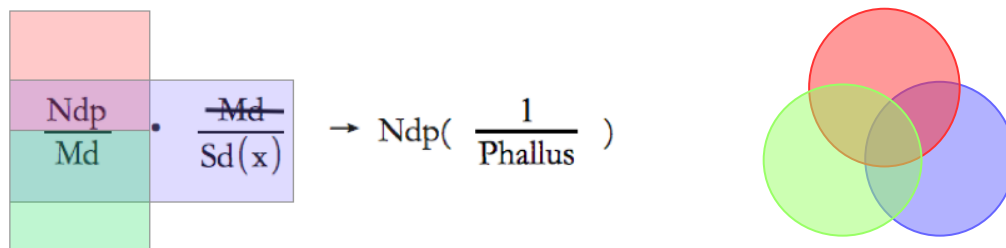
$$\frac{Ndp}{Md} \cdot \frac{\overline{Md}}{Sd(x)} \rightarrow Ndp\left(\frac{1}{Phallus}\right)$$

This formula is not only an expression of its unique syntactic arrangement, that is, of its content, but it is also an expression of the inherent possibilities opened up by the symbolic function. In other words, its symbolic form also carries the function of phallic cut, thereby performing an integral separation of imaginary and real. This explains Lacan’s (1999 p. 110), insistence that his mathemes were “integrally transmitted”, which implied for him that anything added to make sense of them introduces a certain ‘shakiness’ by way of the imaginary order (note that “shaky” is a synonym for the more appropriate word “unstable”). When Lacan claimed that “we haven’t the slightest idea what they mean, but they are integrally transmitted”, it would have been more accurate for him to have claimed that it is precisely because we haven’t the slightest idea what they mean that they are integrally transmitted. These beautiful formulae are transmitted *in form* and not only (or not exclusively) *in content*. We have only to turn to those mysterious symbols known as the *muqatta`at*, which open some of the Quarnic surahs, to find verification of this principle. There remains no consensus regarding the meaning or interpretation of these abbreviated letters. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2001, p. 17 f. 25), an esteemed scholar of the Quran, has claimed that “some commentators are content to recognize them as mystic symbols of which it is unprofitable to discuss the meaning by mere verbal logic”. The name for the symbols does provide us with an indication of their essential function: *muqatta`at* translates into English as “cut”.

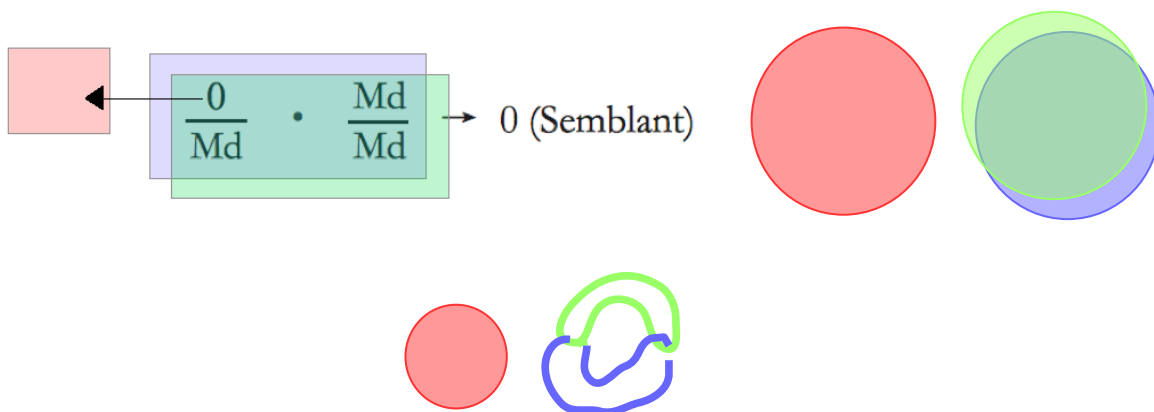
Nonetheless, the content of Lacan’s formula does indicate something pivotal: the Name-of-the-Father (Ndp) substitutes the mother’s desire (Md) by effacing it (~~Md~~) and arranging for an unknown signification. This unknown signification was written in traditional notation as Sd(x). Taken together, this formula expresses the grounding metaphor of neurosis, but it does not express anything about psychosis except that it is in some relationship of pure difference the neuroses. Neurosis is here again represented as the phallic pillar of any psychosis. The former introduces a hole where we supposed the Name-of-the-Father to be, so that the mother’s desire does not become properly effaced and problems begin to surface at the level of the substitution of signifiers. We might formularize this by placing the mother’s pure desire (Md) above the unknown and effaced signification, or, alternatively, we simply write, in place of the unknown signification, a pure 1:1 ratio of the Mother’s desire: Md:Md. The hole in the paternal function (represented below by the number zero) stands over the Mother’s Desire, thereby leaving the latter entirely intact as the “one”.

$$\frac{0}{Md} \cdot \frac{Md}{Md} \rightarrow 0 \text{ (Semblant)}$$

I want to return for a moment to Lacan's original formula. Suppose that the symbolic order – and its higher level function as Name-of-the-Father, since, as Lacan (2006a, p. 67) once put it, “it is in the Name-of-the-Father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function”—is identified by a red thread. Suppose that the imaginary order is identified by a blue thread responsible for the production of signification. Suppose also that the order of the real is identified by a green thread. When these threads converge, the colours change. It is possible to produce the following overlay:



We know that the clinical category of full or extraordinary psychosis is defined by a lack at the level of the symbolic function (a lack in the function of the production of lack) so that the imaginary and real remain conjoined. The result is that there is no proper effacement of the mother's desire. Suppose, according to our diagram, that the formula has the following overlay produced (represented only as a topology to the right and below).



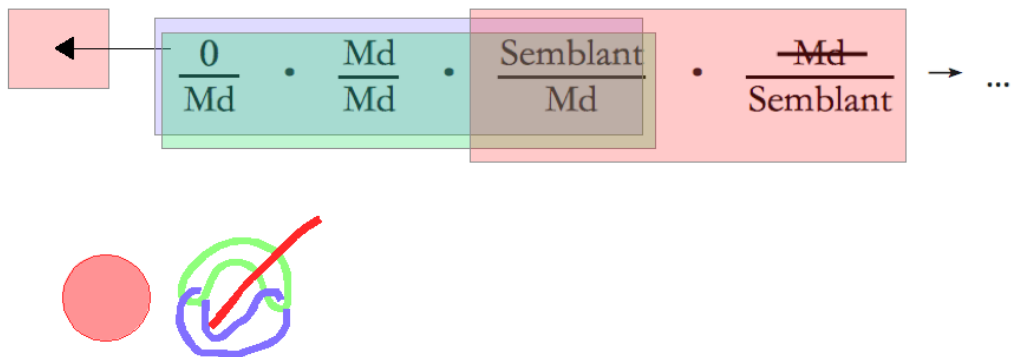
The argument has been that the only way to repair a broken knot is to introduce an additional thread as a substitute for the missing symbolic function. Ragland (1995, p. 211) wrote that “any phallic anchor (be it a Father's Name as a signifier, or an *object a* acting as a signifier) can make a fixed substance—a libidinal glue—out of the jouissance which fills the void”. If one is capable of making use of the *object a* as semblant and phallic anchor then one might be capable of living without the proper Name-of-the-Father (Miller & Laurent 1998). The imaginary phallic anchor is therefore produced directly out of the real, with the consequence, if he is lucky, of some semblance of subjectivity. We might add to our previous claim about the unary trait as phallic anchor that the semblant is also capable of operating in this way. This explains why Russell Grigg (2007) once remarked that Lacanians often use the concepts

of semblant and phallus synonymously.¹³ (However, the notion of “libidinal glue” used above by Ragland harkens back to the position that it is the consistency of a pre-established neurotic knot that must be restored and sustained.) Perhaps we might write the formula for ordinary psychosis in the following way:

$$\frac{0}{Md} \cdot \frac{Md}{Md} \cdot \frac{\text{Semblant}}{Md} \cdot \frac{\cancel{Md}}{\text{Semblant}} \rightarrow \dots$$

The first two columns have only reproduced the formula for extraordinary or full psychosis heretofore developed. The last two columns are new and introduce a corrective to the non-effacement of the mother’s desire by way of a semblant. In this case, the two columns of the semblant operate as “phallic anchor” by effacing the mother’s desire and giving rise to another semblant. Perhaps it gives rise to the much demanded semblant of subjectivity. However, we should take notice of the following: the latter two columns (I am tempted to refer to them as the columns of the semblant) only reintroduce the essential logic inherent through the original paternal formula. The imaginary logic of the formula, its topology, indicates that the method of stabilization exists within and not outside of an overarching psychosis. Moreover, the overlay for this diagram reintroduces, in its own way, the one presented initially by Jacques-Alain Miller: an empty circles nests within a full circle. It is because the symbolic formula reproduces the paternal one only by nesting the new paternal function from within that we can see the importance of a topology or knot logic.

A red thread might be introduced inside of the hole of psychosis as a means of separating and effacing the mother’s desire. It might be visualized in the following way:



It only stands to reason that the symbolic logic would be the same, and that, moreover, the semblant would stand in for the signifying function, since, for Lacan ([1971] 2001, p. 14 & Lacan. [1971/1972] (2006b) “the signifier is the semblant par excellence”. Miller (2011) has even claimed that the primordial father – Freud’s primordial father of the horde – is himself a semblant: “if it is pleasure that sets the limits to *jouissance*, ... what is the story of the Father figure of the law? We should call him by his name: it is a semblant”. But the production at the other end of this formula is not a signifier. It is rather an unknown symptom: it is a *sinthome*, represented visually as a corrective red thread. A more comprehensive version of the formula follows:

13 Grigg wrote that “[a] way in which the notion of semblant in Lacan is frequently understood, is to see it as akin to the phallus”.

$$\frac{0}{Md} \cdot \frac{Md}{Md} \cdot \left[\frac{\text{Semblant}}{Md} \cdot \frac{-Md}{\text{Semblant}} \right] \rightarrow \text{Semblant}(\text{Sinthome})$$

I have introduced square brackets only to highlight the “CMB function” (classically referred to as a “delusional metaphor”) as being essential to the constitution of psychotic stabilization. It also serves to demonstrate the quilting mechanism of the buckle within an overarching psychosis. The mother’s desire sustains itself (without effacement) when the brackets are not invented by the subject. In other words, when the thread of any such effacement is lacking, we might say that the lack remains lacking rather than installed as a structuring principle: the extraordinary psychosis explodes onto the scene. The brackets demonstrate the imaginary function of separation or distance by providing some consistency for the objects. This is performed through a layering or distancing of one logic from another, so that the imaginary makes up for symbolic inadequacy. The inclusion of any such bracketing within symbolic notation is also the mark of the predominance of the imaginary over the symbolic. It is through this cunette that the autonomy of the subject might be achieved. The word “autonomy” should be provided with its full homophonic significance: “auto-*non*-me” and “auto-*nom*-me”. The establishment of the autonomy of the subject, which is the innate achievement of culture, occurs alongside his release from the maternal confines.

The Topology of Concept Notation

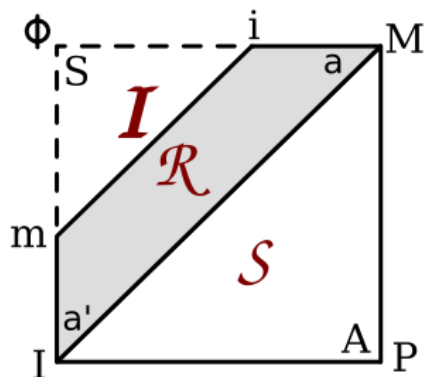
Frege’s concept notation has often been described by philosophers and logicians as idiosyncratic.¹⁴ Lacan has redoubled this idiosyncrasy by introducing his own. Innovations such as these should not be dismissed out of hand. Rather, from time to time they ought to be advanced if only to see how they might possibly repair a *lapsus* within existing theory. Recall that in the table of sexuation there is a universal quantifier appearing in conjunction with the phallic function ($\forall x\Phi x$). This appears in the left column, within the column of masculine sexuation. Above that formulae there is another which contains the existential quantifier which has something to do with the split subject (e.g., the subject submitted to the phallic function, the subject as submitted to castration, as S-barred, \$). There exists one who is not submitted to castration on the condition that all human animals are in fact submitted to castration. I have altered Lacan’s rendition of Fregean concept notation by placing the universal formulae above it and by placing the split subject within the concavity. If the universal quantifier is related to the horizontal line then the existential quantifier ($\exists x\Phi x$, or ‘there exists one who is not castrated’) is related to the vertical line.



The split subject appears beneath the masculine formula in the chart of sexuation. Within the concept notation it appears as a consequence of a judgement (the vertical stroke). The universal quantification occurs as if it were a horizontal thread, or what Frege named the “content stroke,” with a “concavity”

14 This claim can be found in just about any introductory book on Frege’s notation (Landini 2012).

for the subject on that thread. Lacan's innovation was to introduce an "S" near the judgment stroke, which was meant to represent a primary or master signifier, and the "S¹" on the content stroke (rather than the more proper way which was to introduce it after the content stroke). It would not be appropriate for Frege to place any letter after the judgment stroke and before the concavity, nor would it be appropriate to include a letter on the content stroke or in the concavity. Perhaps one way of reading Lacan's innovation is to think of the notation as a makeshift topology, that is, to interpret his work as a recuperation of symbolic assertoric notation by the imaginary logic of knots, or knot logic.



The S and the S¹ were meant to represent signifiers. Lacan claimed, in the context of the concept notation, that the subject is represented by a signifier (S) for another signifier (S¹). This implies that the subject's place is within the concavity and before the function of the signifier. We might claim that the first signifier, the signifier-function, is the obverse of the phallic function, and this, perhaps, permits me to place the universal quantification to the right of the notation, as shown below. (To support this claim, see, for example, Lacan's "R Schema" wherein the symbolic phallus, Φ, appears on the opposite or obverse point of the phallic signifier, S.) To put it in Fregean terms: the subject was a concept for the function of the signifier. This might be written a number of ways. If we follow the argument that the phallic function is the passageway through which the subject comes to be split by signifiers, then the following formula would be introduced: $\forall(x)\Phi(S)$. The consequent split-subject is positioned within the concavity precisely because it is the subject as concavity or ditch within the horizontal chain of signifiers.



The subject is barred only to the extent that the bar is the proper Name-of-the-father as pure function. Jacques-Alain Miller claimed:

This bar is a signifier. We see it as that because, as such, it does not have much meaning, this bar. ... I will take this bar as the bar of substitution, the bar of pure substitution. That is to say, it enables us to write this down: where there was one, there comes another. ... With this bar we can write a temporal organization. There is an organization of time which means first the 1, secondly the 2; and, the second term is substituted for the first one, such that the first one, we may say, is suppressed (Miller 1989, p. 44).

The bar is itself the Name-of-the-Father, which, as it happens according to traditional Lacanian theory,

makes possible the substitution which gives birth to the subject. This is why it is possible to extend the ditch of the subject from the bar, as its inherent exception. To claim therefore that the subject is barred, that is, that the subject is a barred-subject, is not to claim that the subject is itself the bar. It is rather that the subject is made possible through the bar of the signifier. This explains the necessity of the judgment stroke as vertical bar in Frege's assertoric logic, thanks to which the metonymic movement of one signifier to another is made possible on the content stroke. We can see the extent to which the understanding of subjectivity, as well as the possibility of differential diagnosis, is affixed to the bar.

Frege claimed that the content stroke may occur without the judgment stroke only when "the writer does not state whether he acknowledges [the statement] to be true or not" (Frege 1879, p. 11) However, it would be more accurate to assert that when the content stroke occurs without judgment there is in fact no writer but only the written (e.g., culture, language, poetry, the Other, and so on). The concavity is most certainly in question without the presence of the judgment stroke. In such cases, the written asks the question of the judgment through which there might be the possibility of the writer as subject. Although Wittgenstein claimed that the judgment stroke is "altogether quite meaningless" (Wittgenstein. [1922] 2016, S.4.442), we might extend this insight by claiming that the judgment stroke exists as pure semantic operation: it is the moment of convergence of symbolic and imaginary threads. Frege wrote: "with this judgment stroke I close off a sentence, so that each condition necessary for its holding is also effectively to be found within it ..." (Frege [1897] 1984, p. 247). Frege continued, remarking upon Peano's lack of a judgment stroke: "you cannot tell just by looking at it whether one of Mr. Peano's sentences is complete" (Frege [1897] 1984, pp. 247–8). Thus, without the judgment stroke, there is only the endless sliding of signifiers across the horizontal line.

I introduce as my own invention the following reformulation of Lacan's notation:



Frege meant the judgment stroke "to produce in the reader merely the idea of the [content], say in order to derive consequences from it and to test by means of these whether the thought is correct. When the vertical stroke is omitted, we express ourselves *paraphrastically*, using the words 'the circumstance that' or 'the proposition that'" (Frege 1879, p. 243). The omission of the vertical judgment stroke is therefore another way of stating 'the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father.' In any case, Frege was concerned with the reader's utilization of his notation. He could not admit the possibility that the concavity within the content stroke was an attempt on the part of the written to produce the judgment through which a subject might come to have autonomy within culture. For example, he claimed that "whatever follows the content stroke must have a content that can become a judgment". It was therefore from the content stroke that the judgment stroke was discovered, and not, as it were, from the judgment stroke that the content stroke was discovered. Or, put differently, the content stroke was in search of a judgment, where the paraphrastic sentence 'the proposition that ...' carries the possibility of introducing an 'assertion that ...'.

Frege went on to claim that "the horizontal stroke that is part of the sign combines the signs that follow it into a totality" (Frege 1879, pp. 1–2). I believe that he meant to invoke a sense of punctuation, a sense of separation between sentences, and, therefore, he meant to demonstrate that the symbolic order

of signifiers is constitutively incomplete or lacking. In other words, he introduced a cunette. He continued, “the affirmation expressed by the vertical stroke at the left end of the horizontal one refers to this totality”. It is not by chance, I think, that Lacan, Jakobson, and Miller positioned the metaphoric axis as the axis of “verticality”, while metonymy was the “horizontal” axis. In Miller’s famous “suture” article, he wrote that “the successor operation installs a ‘horizontal’ sequence of numbers on the basis of this primary ‘verticality’” (Miller [1966] 2017). Frege came to believe that language introduced too little precision, so that, naturally, ordinary written language must have been for him something like a crowd of signifiers. What Frege sought was nothing more than the possibility of an integral transmission. He described the predicate/subject manner of logic as “useless prolixity” because there were too many words pouring into the real. His beautiful notation introduced the cunette through which a ditch might be discovered for the subject.

As it happens, the psychotic sometimes demands a judgment stroke, and for a very important reason: to promote and retain to the greatest extent possible a semblance of his subjectivity. For Frege, the judgment stroke made possible some guarantee of the dwelling space of subjectivity. This space, otherwise referred to as the concavity, along with the removal of any emphasis on the linguistic couple of subject and predicate, ensures that for Frege “nothing is left to guesswork”. In other words, it ensures that one might ward off that which is *too much* within the sentential real. The signifiers on the content stroke (S_n to S_{n+1}) offer a possibility for the elevation of the subject by way of an *escabeau*, a small stepladder – raised by the question “is it beautiful?” (“est ce beau?”)—hollowed out by a semblance of castration. Miller wrote that “[the *escabeau*] is what the speaking being hoists himself onto ... in order to make himself *beau*. It is his pedestal ...” (Miller 2016). You will notice that in my diagram there is no primary signifier for the battery of signifiers, no central phallic function, no “bar”, through which the traditional Name-of-the-Father may be installed into the mental life of the ordinary neurotic. Instead there is the ‘any signifier’ of the S_n , the *semblant* par excellence. This is why the subject may in fact also be the bar, the subject is born at that precise moment of the self-discovery of his judgment.

Baudelaire, Sans Sujet

Charles Baudelaire believed that modernity was a moment of profound subjective emergence, and not, as it were, a unique and definite period of time to be catalogued within art history: “Il y a eu une modernité pour chaque peintre ancien; la plupart des beaux portraits qui nous restent des temps antérieurs sont revêtus des costumes de leur époque”. In other words, he believed that there was a modernity for every period and for every artist, which amounts to the following proposition: modernity is a name for the inauguration of a new form of art that breaks from the repetition of previous historical forms and lays the foundation for the elevation of the subject. For Miller, “the clearest clue [of ordinary psychosis] is when you have to admit that the subject is unable to conquer a place in the sun, ... when he doesn’t fit in” (Miller 2013). When a difficulty presents itself at this level it is because the subject has not been properly invented. The disturbances of mental life are in fact disturbances of linguistic, social, political, and cultural life. They are disturbances of the quest for autonomy. This is the implied meaning of Lacan’s claim that psychosis is a “disturbance ... at the inmost juncture of the subject’s sense of life” (Lacan 2006, p. 559), since, as we know, what is most inward concerning the subject is the extimacy of the unconscious (Miller 2008). In a word, such disturbances are reducible to the problem of the localization of subjective space.

It is remarkable that similar insights were made within the academic field of “modernist studies.” For example, a popular claim has been that modernism is definable as the period of celebrity, or, more

accurately, the period of “celebrity authors;” which is another way of stating that it is a period of one’s self-authorization or self-inauguration into the social image of celebrity. One scholar, Jonathan Goldman (2011), even wrote a book with the title *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*. He went on to write that “modernism generates a figure of the author as a unique, larger-than-life personality” (Goldman. 2011, p. 2). The modern author makes himself larger-than-life through a sort of inflation of ego (as well as the imaginary apparatus which provides for its consistency), inventing himself as an author – that is, making a name for himself – by bringing together disparate stylistic assemblages. The word celebrity is here linked to the condition of fame, or, speaking etymologically, to the process of making a name for oneself within public life. The modernist passes through a sort of self-authorization, akin, in effect, to Lacan’s notion of the “pass”. Recall that Lacan was ‘as alone as he ever was’ and that it was through his unique arrangement of stylistic interventions within the psychoanalytic field that he produced for himself a school. The analyst authorizes himself, and, through such authorization, produces the condition of his autonomy.

Commentators often prematurely punctuate the first sentence of the foundational act, forgetting about the second part (*italics*): “I found—as alone as I have always been in my relation to the psychoanalytic cause—L’Ecole Française de Psychanalyse, *of which, for the four coming years in which nothing in the present forbids me to answer for, I will personally assure the direction*” (Lacan [1964] 2010). Here we can see the birth of an authentic and novel psychoanalytic act, or what Alain Badiou (2003) defined as “militant conviction” (akin, in some sense, to the founding act of Saint Paul). It was the moment of “fidelity” to a cause which would have been the solitary delusion of Lacan had the act not been carried through with fervent tenacity; in other words, the act was in fidelity with the psychoanalytic cause, which is, in the final analysis, I would say, the cause of the real. Lacan’s cause was grounded within the delusion of his subjectivity, it was an act for which he would continue to live out the consequences so as to bring forth the celebrity name of Lacan onto the public scene. It was not unlike that delusion remarked upon by Miller, regarding the founding act of Islam:

Ask yourself if what orders our world is not for a large part a delusion.
... The Freudian field is a delusion, it doesn’t have a clear-cut
existence. It’s a thing for a few thousand people in the world who
speak of the Freudian field ... When you read about Mohammed – God
forbid that I say anything against Mohammed—he went away alone,
he had some divine message, he wrote it down, and this discourse
ordered one million people in the world. It was a divine delusion
(Miller 2013).

We should not be relieved of the burden of thinking through the consequences of this argument that the founding act is also a delusion, however divine. The pass reveals today that it is altogether easier to achieve it, though altogether less common. We are obligated to ask ourselves the question concerning the ease with which the pass might today be accomplished—if, in fact, we could think of it as an accomplishment—and the subsequent infrequency of militant conviction among emerging generations. There is no pass without militant conviction, and, thus, there are few passes among these generations, though, certainly, there are acts.

I return now to the overarching theme of this essay. Leo Bersani explored the theme of foreclosure within Baudelaire’s poetry but found inadequate evidence to suggest an underlying psychosis in the author. Nonetheless, he suggested that foreclosure was at play, albeit in a modified and restricted form. Bersani was aware, therefore, that the delusional consequences of foreclosure could not possibly be the sole criteria by which to differentiate clinical structures. For example, Bersani wrote that “Baudelaire’s

Petit Poemes en Prose can be read in light of Freud's notions of *Verwerfund* and *Verleugnung* and Lacan's theory of *la forclusion*. I don't mean that Baudelaire was psychotic when he wrote these poems; he does, however, seem to have represented in them a psychotic relation to the world" (Bersani 1977, pp. 125–36). The psychotic relation is one of projecting within the real that which had been refused within the symbolic. Bersani did not focus at all on attempting to derive the proper clinical structure from the evidence—no doubt, it was a strength of his approach rather than a weakness—but he did seem to attribute some central importance to the bar of the Name-of-the-Father and not to the emergence and re-emergence of the subject. The latter criteria would have opened up his research into the question of Baudelaire's apparent stabilization.

Lacan's work sometimes indicated that the subject was the central concept around which there might be any deeper understanding of psychosis. For example, in his pivotal essay "A Question Prior to Any Preliminary Treatment of Psychosis", he wrote that "three years after 1911 [Freud] probably would not have missed the true reason for the reversal in Schreber's sense of indignation—initially aroused in him by the idea of *Entmannung* [emasculatation or castration]—which was precisely the fact that in the interval *the subject had died* [*le sujet était mort*]" (Lacan 2006, p. 473). A similar logic occurs in the following two lines of Baudelaire's poetry: "ne cherchez plus mon coeur; les bêtes l'ont mangé", he continued, "Ô Beauté, dur fléau des âmes, tu le veux! Avec tes yeux de feu, brillants comme des fêtes, Calcine ces lambeaux qu'ont épargnés les bêtes!". This subject who died [*le sujet était mort*] must be located somewhere within the "interval", outside of which there must have been something of the stabilization of psychosis. Within the interval there is the triggering point, or, rather, the moment of the disappearance of subjectivity, when we may state categorically that the psychosis was "extraordinary". There is a relation among the interval of the delusion (a delusion rendered all the more extraordinary by the self-authorization of his celebrity, as in, for example, the memoirs) and the moment outside of the interval, which was, of course, the prolonged moment of stabilization. Schreber wrote:

I started this work without having publication in mind. The idea only occurred to me as I progressed with it; ... Yet I believe that expert examination of my body and observation of my personal fate during my lifetime would be of value both for science and the knowledge of religious truths. In the face of such considerations all personal issues must recede (Schreber [1902] 2000, p. 3).

It is precisely all personal issues which have not at all receded! For important reasons these personal issues have achieved the dignity of finally becoming personal, precisely through public examination. Schreber has written himself out of culture, stabilized within the face of delusions that never hit their mark as the delusion of a subjectivity proper. Culture stands to benefit from his unique case, it stands to benefit by cutting Schreber a place, a place which Schreber himself demanded from culture when he wrote that "expert examination of my body and observation of my personal fate during my lifetime would be of value both for science and the knowledge of religious truths". The militant conviction concerning the importance of his case now seems to us a testimony of his pass and self-authorization, so that, his delusion has received the fate it had demanded for itself. Thus, he wrote himself out of the triggering determinant of his condition. There must have been discovered within the written culture of objects (e.g., hallucinations of birds, and so on) the conditions for the emergence of an elevated/celebrated subject: Beau de l'air. He wrote: "Elle se répand dans ma vie, Comme un air imprégné de sel, Et dans mon âme inassouvie, Verse le goût de l'éternel".

The theory of the subject that I am outlining is similar to another invented within the philosophical field by Alain Badiou. For him, the central question has concerned the movement away from the world

of objects, whereby the individual is himself an object of culture, toward the invention of a subject split by the conditions of his emergence, split, that is, by a new truth, excessive and real, and an old truth. It is for this reason that Badiou has dismantled the traditional Kantian presupposition concerning the object and subject couple, claiming quite daringly that “it is reasonable to have no subject at all in the beginning” (Badiou 2013, p. 104). No wonder Badiou wrote so eloquently of his theory in a book-length treatise about the delusional psychotic known today as Saint Paul! According to Badiou, the truth of a new order, let us call it a new beauty, brings forth a subject who might remain in fidelity to that emergence. Badiou wrote that “the Christian subject does not preexist the event he declares (Christ’s resurrection)” (Badiou 2003, p. 14), it is rather that the Christian is the one who produces the conditions of his own crucifixion/resurrection. The Christian subject is the consequence of his own self-division, diving himself from the religion which came before and that which has yet to come.

Badiou’s earlier set theoretical intensional logic posited that objects are best understood as pure non-unitary multiplicities of multiplicities. Except that there is also the empty set. The empty set occurs when one moves from the level of pure multiplicity to the next step, the void. His later critique of extensional logic demonstrated that multiplicities exist within culture as ostensibly self-consistent objects. These objects rely upon a loop-back device referred to within category theory as the “identity morphism”. The identity morphism reduces an object only to its extrinsic self-relation. An object is a point reducible to its representation by another morphism: an object is represented by a morphism for another morphism rather than, as has been tradition within Lacanian theory, a subject is represented by a signifier for another signifier. The split of the subject is ditched by this logic, which is to say, in other words, the ditch for the subject has been ditched. Whereas the intensional logic of set theory has made possible the claim that a subject is burrowed within the concept of a function, the extensional logic of category theory has not permitted this possibility. This is the situation within which psychoanalysis must today think.

Constantin Guise

At least two assumptions have perpetuated the traditional Lacanian theory of psychosis: first, that it occurs as a consequence of an inadequately tied (or broken) Borromean knot, and; second, that it is a result of some failure during the apparently ordinary process of neurotic onset. Perhaps, by some small measure, this position has also been sustained because of the prefix “fore-” (from the Old English, “before in time, rank, position,” etc.) into the operation’s crucial concept: “*fore-closure*”, indicating to some commentators that the failure occurs during an early period of psychical development. We would continue to be mislead if we presume that the operation of foreclosure describes a failure at the level of psychosis. Foreclosure is rather the triumph of psychosis over the obstacle of neurosis, the latter being, in other words, a crucial obstacle for the inauguration of long-term mental stability. The failure is not at the level of psychosis, as if the psychosis were the result of a deviation or perversion of the pre-established subject along the path toward neurosis, but rather at the level of neurosis itself: neurosis is the failure of any successful psychosis, or, put differently, “neurosis is a failed perversion” (Lacan 1974–75) This explains some of the breadcrumbs that Lacan left out for us, such as, for example, the concept of *pere-version*. The homophony indicates that the pre-neurotic structure of perversion is a moment of a turning toward the father function or one of its equivalents, and not, as it were, a turning away.

This position helps to resolve the logical problem outlined by Lacan in his early work on psychosis, in his famous “On a Question Prior ...”, wherein he claimed that foreclosure (*forclusion*) occurs as a consequence of an inadequacy in the Other: the Other does not respond to the subject’s call. He wrote:

“I will thus take *Verwerfund* to be ‘foreclosure’ of the signifier. At the point at which the Name-of-the-Father is summoned ... a pure and simple hole may thus answer in the Other; due to the lack of the metaphoric effect, this hole will give rise to a corresponding hole in the place of phallic signification” (Lacan 2006, pp. 455–56). We should note that Lacan wrote that the Name-of-the-Father is “summoned” and not installed, and that, moreover, that there is or is not a response to this summoning by the Other. It is as if the Other must answer a subject who raises a question of the Other’s proper name. It would be more accurate to claim that the subject is the question that the Other asks of himself, the answer of which results in the Other’s division and the autonomy of the subject. Lacan, in the same essay, posited the subject’s death during psychosis. How could this subject who is dead give rise to a demand aimed at the Other? We must note that the subject is dead not in the sense of being split but rather in the sense of *not at all being split* and therefore of not at all having the certainty of its projection within the real. The Other does not respond because there is no subject at all.

Carl Sequin, a topologist at the University of Berkeley, wrote: “if we use a knife with n blades and apply a total twist angle of $t*360/n$, the cut line on the surface forms a (t,n) -torus link, and so do the solid parts after the cut has been executed. The solid parts form g connected components, where g is the greatest common divisor of (t,n) , and each link component is a $(t/g, n/g)$ -torus knot. When t and n are relatively prime, there is only a single connected component” (Sequin 2005) A torus has within itself the possibility of splitting into a proper Borromean knot. Assuming $n=3$, some of the important variables follow: (1) thickness of the knife or cut, (2) twist of that cut relative to the lap around the torus, (3) angle between blades, and; (4) the possibility of those blades either (a) emerging from within the torus or else (b) being inserted from outside of the torus. If the blades emerge from within the torus then they must move outward toward the surface, and they must from the beginning connect along a central beam. In this case, they become separated (increasingly so) as the blades work themselves outward toward the surface. If, on the other hand, the blades are inserted from without then they must be separate from the beginning and subsequently work themselves toward a central point of convergence within the torus. This model encourages us to extend Badiou’s axiom of “scission”: that “one divides into two” (a corrective to the Hegelian presumption that “two unites into one”), one divides into three.¹⁵ Therefore, the torus of culture may very well have within itself the cutting device that processes the achievement of the subject’s autonomy.

I invite the reader to consider the possibility that ordinary psychosis promotes the introduction of this new Borromean topology out of the torus. Baudelaire, for example, was and remains a man of culture. This was what differentiated him—the “man of the world” —from the mere artist. He wrote, and I will quote him at length:

By ‘man of the world,’ I mean ... a man who understands the world and the mysterious and legitimate reasons behind all its customs; by ‘artist,’ I mean a specialist, a man tied to his palette like a serf to the soil. M.C.G does not like being called an artist. Is he not justified to a small extent? He takes an interest in everything the world over, he wants to know, understand, and assess everything that happens on the surface of the spheroid. The artist moves little, or even not at all, in intellectual and political circles. ... the majority of artists are, let us face it, very skilled brutes, mere manual laborers, villages pub-talkers with the minds of country bumpkins. Their talk; inevitably enclosed within very narrow limits, quickly becomes a bore to the man of the

15 Incidentally, it is even possible that each of the three split tori become further split into three tori.

world, to the spiritual citizen of the universe (Baudelaire 1964).

The man of the world is the one remains immersed within the cultural torus, although desperately, it would seem, he also attempts to carve out a space for himself. Baudelaire presented us with a portrait of the modern subject as a man of genius. It is a portrait without a signature by an artist without a proper name. In place of the proper name there is the transmission of a matheme: "M.C.G", similar, in effect, to the tetragrammaton's YHWY or the Quranic *muqatta`at*. No wonder Jacques-Alain Miller (2011) claimed that the matheme and the proper name are equivalent functions. To be clear, I am claiming that the matheme is painted and not written, it is an aesthetic and not an inscription. It is certainly beautiful, but it is not necessarily intelligible. It is only written to the extent that it provokes a sense of beauty within the soul of the man who looks upon it. M.C.G paints a portrait of the soul via the style of the man himself, a *portait* by forming a neuter of the doorway (*portale* or *porta*) into modern subjectivity. This is why we can continue to claim within the age of ordinary psychosis that the style is the man himself. The figments of M.C.G's water-colours fade in a lightning-flash of unique (*unary*) strokes that endlessly perform the following magic trick: the woman vanishes before his very eyes.

Baudelaire found in M.C.G the possibility of subjective emergence. Both Constantin Guys and Charles Baudelaire were named after dead male paternal figures, and came to assume that dead name, marking their own subjective inadequacy. To be more precise, Baudelaire was named after his mother's father, Charles Dufayis, who died well before Baudelaire was born and who left very little information about his life for Baudelaire's careful eyes to inspect. Baudelaire's actual father died when Baudelaire was only five or six years old, that is, around the same time that the young child was painting a portrait of his father's naked body. Baudelaire harboured an intense dislike for his step father and referred to him disparagingly as "the general", as if to mock the semblance of his authority and to reveal it for what it was: a semblance which Baudelaire had no doubt wished would had been more real. All of this introduced a situation of intimacy among Baudelaire and his mother, to the extent that the two shared romantic letters for the majority of his life. Baudelaire hid nothing from his mother, not even his sexually transmitted diseases. He died, romantically, within her arms.

M.C.G, on the other hand, is twice removed from the proper name, which is "Ernest Adophe Hyacinthe Constantin". It is curious that this name seems entirely omitted within Baudelaire scholarship. The common presumption has been that M.C.G substitutes for the name "Monsieur Constantin Guys," or, as it is sometimes written without the honorific title, "Constantin Guys". This sleight of hand only renews the guise, and the proper name fades evermore into the background. To become the Guy he rather attempts Earnestly to Adopt the Beautiful as a Constant, that is, he adopts the beautiful guise of the matheme, thereby reinventing a mythology whose significance should not be lost upon us today: the myth of Hyacinthus. Hyacinthus was killed by the distance (*diskus*) that separated him from his father, finding new life only by rising up as a *beau fleur*. A similar myth ends with the inscription "INRI" upon the crucifix. In any case, the militant conviction of M.C.G is located in the story of a nameless man of the crowd who suffered the misfortune of not being alone: "Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir être seul" (Baudelaire 1964). Baudelaire retold Poe's classic narrative and described a man at a cafe on the brink of death. Suddenly, the man aroused within himself the passion to locate an appealing face which had vanished within the crowd.

The modern crowd fills up the space within which the subject was supposed to be produced, and produced, precisely, as an exclusion from that crowd. The modern subject is constituted as an element of that crowd. It is as if he is externalized, placed into the sea of signifiers which make up the field of the Other. There is no space for him to come to be excluded, and this is what necessitates for him a quest toward the unique, a quest which characterizes a generation of modern thinkers such as

Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Stirner. The modern age is increasingly an age of inclusion, participation, and democracy. It is increasingly not the age of revolution. This was Kierkegaard's position when he gave the following example:

In the present age, a rebellion is, of all things, the most unthinkable. A political virtuoso might ... write a manifesto suggesting a general assembly at which people should decide upon a rebellion, and it would be so carefully worded that even the censor would let it pass. At the meeting itself he would be able to create the impression that his audience had rebelled, after which they would all go quietly home—having spent a very pleasant evening (Kierkegaard [1846] 1962).

This was a point made considerably well in the work of contemporary political philosophers beginning with the late Ernesto Laclau and continuing through to Saul Newman. In other words, revolutionary politics finds itself in trouble when it can no longer locate a subjective departure outside of the symbolic order. The problem is that modern subjectivity does not seem like subjectivity at all, precisely because, finally, the subject is no longer excluded. No wonder, then, Kierkegaard described the present age as one in which both revolutionary crowds as well as the police congratulate themselves after a political gathering.

The Choice

I want to conclude by looking at an essay by Jacques-Alain Miller (2002), titled “The Effect of the Subject in the Psychoses: From the Symptom to the Fantasy and Back”. There is an ongoing discussion on the question of the subject and its relation to the clinical structures supposed as psychosis and ordinary psychosis. Miller, in dialogue with Laurent (1998), explored the “incidence or degree of occurrence of the subject in psychosis”. This, I think, is already an interesting and important project. Miller demonstrated that psychoanalysis always puts the subject in some relation to the phallic signifier, such as, for example, within the paternal metaphor where it was situated within the process of signification under the bar of the Name-of-the-Father. Miller wrote that “the subject in psychoanalysis only takes on his or her value ... from his or her inscription as an argument”. We see within this statement a reference to Frege and the early work conducted within the *Cahiers l'Analyse*. The subject is an argument within a function, or, put differently, a concept of a function. But the subject cannot be the function itself. We cannot suppose at the beginning a subject whose function is an “x” or a “y”. Rather, the subject is an effect, and not, as it were, a production, otherwise the subject would be a synonym for the phallic function itself instead of merely being in some imaginary relationship to it.

Miller concluded that psychoanalysts are obliged to situate the subject in some relation to the phallus. Next, he claimed, and he frequently repeats this claim, that the subject “surges forth” as “a miracle” of the real. Above I have attempted to demonstrate that this miracle is rather a “divine delusion”, and, moreover, an essential one. It is a miracle not that the symbolic addresses the real, that is, that the Name-of-the-Father produces the subject, but rather that the real seems to respond to the phallic signifier with the invention of subjectivity. This manner of phrase promotes an active or autonomous intervention from the real, rather than, as it seemed before, from the symbolic. Miller subsequently returned to the axiom: “the subject [is] an effect of signification [and] a response of the real”. I believe that the only way forward is to demonstrate that the subject emerges at the same time as the bar, and that, finally, this is the miracle: the autonomy of the subject is also the movement of the bar, so that, the subject and the bar are somewhat co-determinate, though independent.

Miller (2002) described the case of a psychotic child:

He knows perfectly that, in order to construct himself as a subject, he has to create a point of lack which is strictly identical to the phallus, and of which the organic support is the penis. Thus, I consider this sequence as particularly demonstrative. Of what? Demonstrative of what one can call the efforts to produce the subject in psychosis. These are effects of production which concern, essentially, the phallic function. ... Each time, it is a realization of castration which is, for the subject, the only way of his subjective completion.

The seeds of this position have been planted: “there is, in effect, a being of the subject from before his signifying production. Evidently, we have a hard time calling him or her a subject”. This necessitates the invention of a new concept for the pre-subjectivized subject so that we might clear the mess of the theory of the subject from such conventions as “the subjectivized subject”, and so on. It is clear that the psychotic subject is an object of culture, rather than a subject of autonomy. Miller (2002) continued, “the choice of psychosis—which is, for us, unthinkable—is the choice of a subject who objects to the lack-in-being which constitutes him in language”. It is more appropriate to claim that the choice is not of the subject but rather of culture, language, or the Other: the subject is the core delusion, and, finally, the real secret, the subject is the cut itself. Psychosis is the choice of culture over the autonomy of the subject. In other words, psychosis is the choice of the parents—not the children.

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