

Crisis: The special case of Greece. From mania to melancholy

Abstract

Greece's location on the map is of great geopolitical importance. Being on the verge of Europe it is a crossroad between East and West. Although Greece is considered the birthplace of Democracy, in modern Greece Democracy is still in its infancy. Significant historical events, during the last 180 years of Greece's independence, have caused hardships and suffering that not only marked but also shaped its fate. Greece currently experiences the sixth year of the most devastating recession in its modern history. After a brief introduction to the history of Greece, we shall attempt to explain, through the psychoanalytical prism, the relation between the historical events and the symptoms that appear within the Greek society. How does Lacanian psychoanalysis interpret the Greek crisis? We shall also examine the role the regimes of jouissance and contestation of the Master-Signifier played, under the framework of psychic economy. Having as a guide Jacques-Alain Miller's definition of crisis, we shall attempt to depict moments of crisis from the daily life. We shall refer to the consequences of the encounter of the financial crisis with the present discontent, by looking at a fiction novel by the renowned Greek writer Petros Markaris, which takes place in contemporary Athens. Finally, we shall examine how Lacanian psychoanalysis can operate as a vehicle of relief and hope.

1. Introduction

In today's talk, we shall try to analyse the Greek crisis and attempt to interpret it through the Lacanian prism.

The first part of the talk draws out the historical and socio-political framework of Greece. Pointing out some critical dates we shall see the events that influenced Greece and, in essence, the Greeks as people and shaped the Greek society. This will help us understand the position of Greece as a European State, its dependencies and how the broader social beliefs have been developed as a result of those events. Finally, we shall make a brief reference to the pre-crisis era in order to explain the current situation in Greece.

The second part is concerned with the interpretation of the Greek crisis, mostly utilising three basic tools. Firstly, we shall approach the crisis through the Lacanian

teaching and, more specifically, through the references of some of the most important representatives of the Lacanian thought. Secondly, we shall use a contemporary fiction novel in order to draw a cross-section of the Greek pathogenesis (malaises) and the characteristics of the crisis. Thirdly, we shall see a specific incident of my personal clinical practice, which has a direct reference to the theoretical context of psychoanalysis.

2. Historical Context

2.1 History of modern Greece

Greece is a small country with a large, however, geopolitical importance. As such its modern history is interweaved with wars, political instability and power games mostly orchestrated by the great powers of the era and the country's political regime.

The Greek territory was part of the Ottoman Empire for 400 years, until 1821. In this year, the Greeks rose up against the Ottomans, starting the war of independence. The Greek territory underwent continuous geographical changes for the next eighty years until its present borders were defined. Similarly, *the loan history of Greece starts from its early ages, since the war of independence*. During this war, a number of loans were given to the Greeks, under the condition to be repaid when Greece would become a sovereign state. Greece was finally declared as a "monarchical and independent state" in 1832. By 1833 the Kingdom of Greece had been established and Prince Otto, son of the Bavarian King Ludwig I, was sent to Greece as its first monarch. To assist the young monarch in his new tasks, a state loan was granted by the Great Powers, which was mostly utilised for the payroll of the Bavarian rulers and their entourage as well as the construction of the royal premises and state buildings. As a result in 1843, after just ten years of independence, the Greek State announced its bankruptcy.

Between 1824 and 1893 Greece received ten loans of total nominal value of 640 million francs. In reality from this amount the Greek state received 464 million in cash, the rest being used for warranties and servicing previous loans.

Between 1912-13 Greece was actively involved in the Balkan Wars. During this period and until the 1930s tremendous population changes took place.

Between 1924 and 1932 nine new loans were granted to Greece, of 992 million

francs total value. Until 1932, 30% of the country's income was used to service the various loans that had been taken in the previous years. As a result, in 1932 the Greek state declared bankruptcy for the fourth time in its short history.

2.2 Greece in WW2 and onwards

Greece was actively involved in the Second World War, fighting successfully against the Fascist Italy who invaded Greece in 1940. The subsequent Nazi occupation resulted in the looting of the country's natural resources for the needs of the German war industry, the seizure of the complete agricultural production and Greece's gold reserves by Hitler's Germany and, more important with a death toll of almost 10% of its population (750,000). After the war the country's economy was heavily supported by the Marshall plan and a vast number of its productive population started to migrate to Germany, Australia and the States in search of work, unable to find occupation locally. The labour drain continued for decades while Greece was trying, unsuccessfully, to find its way towards democracy.

In 1967 a military dictatorship took on power. During the seven-year Junta, Greece's external debt increased in an unprecedented extent and the regime received nineteen (19) new loans to support the failing economy. After the fall of the dictatorship, a numb period followed the reinstatement of democracy. In 1981 a new chapter commenced in Greece when Andreas Papandreou and his socialist government were elected. A period of reforms followed. In terms of economy, however, Greece did not manage to improve its public debt, maintaining the highest per capita debt in the world. A period of artificial prosperity followed under the auspices of the European Economic Community. In 2001 Greece achieved the, what was considered, Herculean task of meeting the convergence criteria to join the monetary union and the euro single currency zone of the European Union (EU). It had sprinted for the previous two years to meet the targets of lower inflation and budget deficits. The extent to which the criteria had been truly satisfied remains, to-date, under question.

2.3 Greece in the years of crisis

Since 2009, and for the last six years, Greece has been in deep recession as a result of its fragile economy and the global financial crisis. Between 2009 and 2015 Greece has received three major bailout packages in desperate attempts to rescue herself

from defaulting. The European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), *the Troika*, took a supervisory role over Greece and the application of the reform policies. In June 2013, however, the IMF admitted that **it failed to realise the damage austerity would do to Greece**. Under the weight of such measures applied across the board and hitting the poorest hardest, the economy was condemned into a death spiral. Between 2009 and 2015 Greece held seven national elections including a referendum.

In January 2015 the left-wing party SYRIZA won the elections, mostly on the promise that would renegotiate the unrealistic debt and would bring the country back to a track of development. At the same time, however, and for the first time in Greek history, the Greek neo-Nazi party, Golden Dawn, managed to get a considerably high percentage in the elections and find its way to the Greek Parliament. On June 2015 Greece became the first developed country that failed to make an IMF loan repayment. At that time, Greece's public debt summed up to €323bn.

Unemployment has hit record levels and more than 200,000 Greeks have left the country since the financial crisis begun. It is estimated that almost 2% of Greece's population has left the country in search of work. The majority are highly qualified professionals, doctors, engineers, lawyers, scientists and so on. It is the worst exodus in Greece's post-war history and the numbers continue to increase as economic migrants go anywhere they can find work. The term "*brain drain*" has been created to describe this situation.

The current crisis is not only a crisis in financial terms but also a crisis of values and ideals; a crisis of the social establishment and human relations, between the people of Greece but also the people of Europe.

3. Pathogenesis – Characteristics of contemporary Greek culture and society

From the brief historical account, we realise that *the modern Greek state and the Greece democracy are still quite young*. Due to the short life of the state, there is an *institutional inadequacy*, mostly in what has to do with the representatives of the State and the mechanisms. The Greek citizen feels like being opposite to the State rather than beside it. *This mentality was reinforced by a series of events, such as the long periods of anti-democratic regimes and the lack of political will*. Furthermore, the management of State resources and State property has been conducted on the basis

of the *personal interest* of the politicians who were in power and the directions of the *Foreign Powers* (mostly USA) and not the interest of the local population. This work is not concerned with the analysis of these events, however, a reference is being made in order to help understand the profile of the average Greek and the contemporary Greek society.

3.1. Politicians

During the last decades, the political system of Greece has known the scorn of the people. The people of the political world (candidate MPs, current ministers, etc), in their majority, are not distinguished by a culture of long-term interest but more by an opportunistic stance. Their goal is to overcome their rivals in an instance and so ascent into power. The public sector is based on a clientele relationship as these relationships have always been in the field and interest of MPs. Through this system, the appointment of their clientele voters was achieved usually without fulfilling the required qualifications for the post. The above fact has always created feelings of injustice concerning the transparency of procedures, which ruled out the filling of these posts by people with the right qualifications. Unreliability and the lack of meritocracy are common grounds in Greece.

Most politicians have lost their prestige as they do not exercise their duties with the public and collective interest in mind, but they act according to the private interests. They are distinguished for their vanity and intense popularism as they addressed to people based on opinion polls.

Corruption and bribery thrived during the last thirty years and numerous political and financial scandals emerged. These scandals were orchestrated by members of the cabinet in close cooperation with foreign companies, mostly German. Their aim was to satisfy local and foreign interests, a fact that indicates the delinquent jouissance of specific people who got rich by establishing agreements under the table.

Nepotism is another phenomenon which dominates the Greek public life. Specific political families prevail, covering the full political spectrum and governing the country in an interchangeable manner. They maintain a mutually profitable relationship with both their middle-class election "clientele" (electorate) and the local financiers and magnates; compensating the former with positions in public organisations and the latter with tailor-made legislation.

At the same time, public organisations are dominated by bureaucracy, which kills any initiative or creativity. Last but not least soundness of judgement is more than often absent from the Media.

3.2. Citizens & everyday life

Greeks, among themselves, tend to have a preconception about the intentions of the Other, usually being suspicious or having a cautious and reserved behaviour. There is also a tendency to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. The Other is always to blame on their behalf. Sometimes, when they are being criticised they answer back with criticism, often their reaction is judgemental. **More often than not**, they suffer from 'know-it-all syndrome', they feel as if they are being treated unjustly and they tend to complain. Moreover, Greeks are very susceptible to conspiracy theories and scenarios. Many believe that the others (neighbours, relatives, colleagues) gossip about them, think of them negatively and want to harm them. This may be attributed to the fact that the Other has always been involved in Greek politics and issues, as we have just seen in the historical account.

In Greece, it is common to ignore the laws no matter the consequences. The law is being treated as "the law of the Other", hence it is arbitrary. Under the complicity of the client-centered state, they deem themselves exempt from the law, in essence from the castration, having as utmost aim their personal interest. This client-centered state feeds itself through a culture of illegitimacy and political disobedience of both politicians and citizens.

3.3. Excessive borrowing

In the decade 1990-1999, prior to the global financial crisis, Greece had an artificial period of euphoria backed up mostly by the financial support that received for the Olympic Games of 2004 and the European Programmes that were offered in abundance, in order to create the conditions for the country's acceptance of the Monetary Union system. As a result "cheap money" flooded the market. *The consumers were able to receive personal loans, mortgage loans, holiday-loans, stock market products, credit cards and so on.* All these loans were granted almost *without any prerequisites*, regardless the financial status of the receivers and their ability to repay the loan. The middle-class suddenly gained access to financial opportunities that were well above their income capabilities, took advantage and borrowed large

amounts to build luxurious houses and buy expensive cars.

3.4. Lifestyle

During the same decade and afterwards lifestyle became of utmost importance. The media promoted an ideal-person that was beautiful, cared about his/her nutrition, was exercising intensively, dressed always according to the latest fashion and spent his/her holidays in popular destinations.

3.5. Stock Exchange

The 1999 crash of the Greek stock exchange is considered the largest socioeconomic scandal of post-war Greece, as it was the cause for a major redistribution of wealth. Until the summer of 1999, one of the most popular activities in Greece was to play in the stock market. While the general index was hitting daily a new record, many Greeks believed they solved their life problems. Many of the stocks were proved to be bubbles, in essence without any value. It is estimated that 100 billion euros changed hands, the largest part of which was lost by the so-called small investors. Many accuse the then government of this illusional euphoric climate, the fake stability and the stock market “fever”.

3.6. Tax Evasion

Tax evasion is common in Greece since the founding of the Greek State in the early 1800s. The personal interest is always prevalent to the public interest. Tax evasion is another indication that Greeks cannot be subjected to the General Law. On top of that, two institutions remain scandalously untouched by the Greek tax system. The ship owners and the Church of Greece.

4. Analysing the crisis

The Greek crisis is not only financial. The aforementioned issues can be examined from an ethical, political or social aspect. From a psychoanalytic point of view, however, it is important to examine these phenomena under a psychic economy prism. When our beloved Dora visited Freud, during the primary sessions, he phrased the question “what is your part of responsibility in the things you complain about?”

Having presented the framework of the Greek society, we shall try to approach the current crisis using three basic tools.

These tools are:

1. The Lacanian teaching
2. The fiction trilogy of the writer Petros Markaris
3. An incident from my personal clinical experience

4.1. Lacanian Teaching

4.1.1. The impeachment of the principle of the Master-Signifier and the regime of jouissance

As Jacques-Alain Miller (2004) mentioned in the 4th Congress of the WAP in Brazil, “we have transitioned from the era of civilised morality, Freud’s era, to an era of cruel morality, the current era. This cruel morality is responding to a crack.” This crack in Greece relates with the non-credible Master-Signifier, which has been defeated by an unbound Plus-de-Jouir. The impeachment of the principle of the Master-Signifier is one of the tools that can be used to interpret the Greek crisis. The S1s (S ones), the ideals of credibility, meritocracy and justice do not function in our case. Jacques-Alain Miller (2003) in his article Political Insights writes about the non-homogeneity of the State. He explains that the State does not exist and the National State is perforated. In Greece, we witness the loss of the symbolic points of reference. The relation of the citizens with the representatives, the procedures of the State and legality, is rendered infectious. Trust has been broken since the Members of Parliament and the Members of the Cabinet commercialise the State properties, a State which they have been appointed to serve.

When the state is deceased in such a degree and the master signifiers as indications of the decline of the master of democratic societies do not modify jouissance, the consequences can prove disastrous. **Jouissance of certain people in Greece had consequences on the social and economic being of the country.** Lacan describes jouissance as a bottomless pit. The jouissance of the capitalist, to which Lacan refers, shows us the desire of people to enjoy infinitely and without loss. In this jouissance, castration does not function. Contrary to psychosis, in neurosis *object a*

has been extracted from the body and even though separated it returns to the Erogenous zones, either as a natural or an industrial object. As a consequence of the capitalistic speech, Lacan mentions that the *object a* has reached its zenith and imposes itself to the subject by calling it to enjoy beyond inhibitions at a frenetic rate, and without obeying the classic way in Oedipus law. In our society, the object of consumption has a privileged position. Lacan defines it as the object of Plus-de-Jouir.

Deceived by phantasies of fulfilment and prey of their Plus-de-Jouir, the Greeks let themselves into a life of fake abundance, served to them by plastic money and based on a perfect image. Being in the imaginary, it was only a matter of time before the vulnerability began to reemerge.

In Greece, we witnessed the personification of the superego command of jouissance with a positive sign. The thing is that the Greeks enjoyed with the consent of their governments and the European Banking Institutions. The historical timing, the specific geopolitical characteristics of Greece and the temperamental elements of the Greeks created symptoms, which were expressed within the society. The citizen does not abide by the voted law, does not pay taxes and considers that he can exempt his self from the majority and the general agreement that all citizens are called to serve.

Being accused of this infinite jouissance and the country in a state of symptom within Europe, the question posed is whether the Greeks are ready to pay the price of castration, each taking his own responsibility to the extent he ought to for the change of the bleak social and political scenery of the country. When Lacan said "to make the subject believe in his symptom" he referred to the subjective accountability of the symptom.

4.1.2. The clinic of surplus

Lacan gave substance to a clinical definition that apart from the within-limits jouissance it is possible that there is a jouissance which might be infinite. The base of this jouissance is the body. According to the Lacanian clinic, " a body enjoys itself". The subject has a relationship with his/her body. It is not *a* body but it *has* a body. As a consequence of the discourse of science, there is the ambition of the human body to recycle infinitely and without loss. It is an indication of our times that our stance

towards castration has changed. Biotechnology and bioscience promise the modification of the body with a purpose for eternal youth, beauty and sustainable growth. We will dare speak about a delusional ambition, which rejects the castration of old age (plastic surgeries, weight-loss pills, potable youth collagen and beauty elixirs). Of course the clinic of "out of boundaries" emerges in the subjectivities that the psychoanalyst receives in his office. It is about the clinical phenomenon of the speaking body, the well-known one symptom clinics in which the symptom covers the structure (anorexia, drug addiction, internet addiction, addiction of any nature etc.). In the clinic of surplus, the superego is the bearer, the promoter of these "only symptoms". In the crisis of Greece, all that the austerity policies have proven is that the debt is hard to solve. In this cul-de-sac, they ask the country *to produce a primary surplus, which we could consider as another consequence of the superego.*

4.2. Fiction writing as a means of interpretation

Petros Markaris is a renowned author of detective novels whose books have been translated into 13 languages. He has achieved public acclaim by writing the crisis trilogy. This trilogy consists of three novels set in the environment of crisis that Greece has experienced in recent years.

The book that I'm going to refer to has not been translated into English, however, other books of his can be found, such as "Deadline in Athens", "Zone Defense", "He committed suicide" and "Late-night news". In his novels, the main hero is police detective Costas Haritos.

In the first part of his trilogy, namely "Overdue Loans" detective Haritos is investigating a crime where a murderer kills bank officials and people connected to money. Four murders take place. The first is that of a retired Chief Bank Executive. The second is that of a foreign executive of an English Bank in Athens. The third is of a Dutch visitor, who works for an Organisation which assesses Greek Bonds, only to the conclusion that the real reason for his visit is the collection of evidence concerning bets regarding the bankruptcy of Greece. And finally, the fourth murder concerns a Greek who owns a collection agency for overdue loans and who threatens and terrorises not only bank debtors but their minor family members as well. What they always find at the crime scene is a piece of paper with the letter "D". And as if this is not enough, Athens is filled with posters urging debtors not to repay their loan instalments or credit cards.

The four victims share common characteristics. Firstly, none of them has family or anthropocentric values. They all practised an instrumentalisation of their employees

and of their customers either small or big ones, with a sole purpose to impose their grandiose schemes. They had no remorse humiliating or writing off whoever became an obstacle in their way. Their only target was unbridled profit and to maintain the high prestige of banks and organisations which they represented by using legitimate or illegitimate means.

Here we can say that their general attitude and behaviour reminds us of the ancient Greek idea of “hubris”. Hubris is the main conception of the ancient Greeks’ cosmic theory. When someone overestimated his abilities and power (economic, political etc.) and behaved arrogantly and offensively to other people, to the laws and the unwritten godly law, exceeding the limits of human deeds, he committed hubris. His arrogant and violent behaviour comprised, for the ancient Greek world, a violation of moral order and an attempt to overthrow social balance. It provoked the Gods’ wrath called *Nemesis* and then *Tisis*, which means punishment.

The key to solving the crimes will be an ex-Olympic champion who because of using anabolic drugs has been confined to a wheelchair and is in the last stages of his life. The ex-champion will help detective Haritos to reach the solution of the mystery. The investigation will prove that the instigator of the crimes is the champion himself who decides to take the law into his own hands and organises the murders of those he *considers responsible for money doping. Therefore the letter “D”*. Quoting the words of the instigator during his arrest:

“We, who have all been doped in order to win medals and distinguish ourselves, have all paid a dear price. I paid it with my health, the other three (he means his accomplices) with their financial disaster. We all got what we deserved. It was fair. What more if not doping did banks exercise? From the credit cards they sent you at home by post without having asked for one, from house loans, from consumer loans, from holiday and wedding loans they light-heartedly gave away to the hedge funds and the betting on the bankruptcy of a foreign country, which was not to blame. What was all this if not doping?”

Reflecting on the above novel we are reminded of the apt expression of *Eric Laurent’s*, *that we live in a time of generalised addiction*. Freud in his work

“Civilization and its Discontents” highlighted the failure of the principal of pleasure to secure people a constant revelation. It is the failure itself of the principal of pleasure that produces the idea of happiness. In addition, he spoke about love. According to Freud love is the moving power of civilization. However, when we lose the object of

our love we become more desperate than ever. Consequently, the solution of love does not shield us from the inevitable pain. The human also has to deal with stress, boredom and nostalgia. Freud named the solution of religion "heavenly cradle" because it suggested another kind of comfort in the afterlife. Marx's phrase, "religion is the opium of the people", has been substituted by the phrase, "consumption is the opium of the people". In other words, the comfort of religion has been substituted by consumption, which offers immediate satisfaction. Modern societies attempt to answer the lack of being, through debt. Obviously, though, consumption can offer but a metonymy of the unsatisfied to a non-feasible happiness. That's why in the modern clinic we have to deal with addictions of any kind. Anything can become an addictive substance: drugs, gambling, work, money, etc. *The modern distress of our civilization fatally met the economic crisis in Greece, and each impact highlighted the scope of the other.*

4.3. An incident from my personal clinical experience

According to Jacques-Alain Miller's psychoanalytic definition (2008), a crisis is what happens "when discourse, words, figures, rites, routine, the whole symbolic apparatus, is suddenly found to be powerless in tempering an unruly real", a "crisis is the real unchained, impossible to master".

Moreover, according to Gil Caroz (2015), "the pattern routine-crisis-routine has been replaced by the series crisis-crisis-crisis, which tends towards the infinite".

During the last seven years, I had been working at the State Organization Against Drugs (OKANA). It is a state institution which supplies Buprenorphine as a substitute to drug use and offers psychosocial support to drug addicts. In view of budget cuts the management decided to move its units from a privately rented spacious premises to state hospitals. I was assigned at the central hospital of Athens, as a therapist. My office was not more than 4 square meters and without a window.

November 2012

I have difficulty in reaching the hospital due to a strike at the metro, which forces me to leave for work two and a half hours earlier, taking the bus. The centre of Athens is paralysed due to general strikes and demonstrations against the austerity measures. The situation is suffocating. My first appointment is with a patient who arrives wounded with stitches on his head. He is a young male of 33 years old, unemployed, psychotic and HIV positive. He has abstained from drug use for quite some time. However, the excluded symbolic returns to the real in the form of serious accidents in which the patient "*lets himself to be involved*". During the session, he explains to me that the stitches are due to an accident of the previous day, when he was run over by an oncoming vehicle which he had not noticed. While he is talking to me suddenly his sight freezes, his body starts shaking and at the same time he is screaming. I realise that this is not a psychotic episode but a post-traumatic epileptic seizure. The patient falls on the floor hits his head on the already wounded spot and the whole office floor is covered in blood. In my appeals for help, nobody responds but a nurse. It is extremely difficult to offer him first-aid because of the asphyxiated limited space of the office. Finally, the patient gains consciousness. **I am facing a denuded real. It was a day which consisted of moments of crisis;** the chaos of the capital as a consequence of the economic crisis, the socially excluded patient indicating the vulnerability of psychotic subjects in times of crisis, the bad conditions in the therapy unit and the unexpected behaviour of my colleagues ignoring my call for help.

5. Voluntary Deaths

Incidents of depression and stress have increased significantly not only in Greece but also in South Europe in general. 2010 was a landmark year for the application of the austerity measures, which had as a consequence seen a rise in the suicide rates; the suicidal index increased from 3.37 among 100,000 inhabitants to 4.56 in 2012. Suicides increased in all age groups of both sexes, but even more among men in the productive ages between 20-59. The increase was phenomenal for European standards, rising to 34%. The consequences of austerity measures have influenced more intensely men who lost their jobs, something that certifies the consequences of *castration* to men. It must be reported that historically the percentage of suicides in Greece, before the crisis, had always been quite low as compared to international incidents.

5.1 Suicidal notes in Greece between 2010-12

39 year old: "I have too many debts. My brother lent to me but it wasn't enough. I ask everyone's forgiveness."

52 year old: "I can't take it anymore. I ask my family to forgive me. I want my child to have a good education."

53 year old: "Better a horrible end than an endless horror. I have no money to pay the rent. How can you think straight with an empty stomach? I am in quicksand."

62 year old: "I had been working my entire life and nobody knew me, not even the police. But I made a great mistake. At 40 I went freelance and now I am up to my head in debt. I can't pay my debts and I shall end my life."

77 year old: "I can't come up with a better solution than a dignified end, before I start looking for food in the rubbish bins."

All the above cases (Linardou, 2013) share the following characteristics. They are all middle-class men, mainly self-created businessmen, financially destroyed. A big part of Greek society remains patriarchal with non-negotiable demands from men. The male model requires financial power and independence so that the father can carry on his shoulders the needs of the family, the upbringing and education of the children. The elements of pride and dignity are synonymous to the Greek male identity. An inflexible super-ego, such as this of a self-created businessman, is what will push a man to struggle, even exceed his efforts in life by working hard, or by taking financial risks even at a time of crisis, thus offering financial security to the members of their family **at any cost**. However, this powerful super-ego can become tyrannical and at the same time a factor of vulnerability when the subject, as a bankrupt businessman, is socially disavowed and shrinks into an object in his rejected dimension. To make things worse, the State is unable to operate as a symbolic point of reference, hence to offer education, health services and work opportunities to younger generations. This task burdens, once again, the family and the father in particular who has to cater for his offspring's social benefits.

The modern society swallows people. The subject during a time of crisis comes face to face with the non-existence of the Other. We observe therefore that some subjects are in danger of collapse, by losing their symbolic support, the object of Plus-de-Jour, and in the end by coming to terms with the destruction of the imaginary. In melancholy, the subject acquires an object's rejected identity. We could say that the Greeks confronted a mourning situation, which concerned the loss of both objects and ideals (work), that supported their psychic economy. Melancholy is, in its way,

an illness of the ideal. In this illness, the ego is being impoverished. It is not easy for someone to lose something on which s/he has invested libidinally.

In the disastrous race of melancholy, what comes first is a manic triumph, i.e. the phantasy bubble of the stock market, the daring plans of small investors, an unbridled consumers' sensualism. According to Lacan, in mania, there is a rejection of the unconscious, a rejection of the object as a ballast of the unconscious as the one that comprises its base. The impulse of death which concerns melancholy is present in the same way in mania, no matter how this mania is connected with the same kind of apparent stimulation.

The subjects that exit this world become objects and are in no position to gain knowledge of their actions as they take them together. But their message concerns us all. The person who takes his own life faces a situation he cannot deal with. Suicide escapes the protection of dialectic and implies a dissociation of violation, which indicates a separation from the Other, as well as an exceeded framework of significance. The thought is the obstacle for every action between what is right or wrong. Whereas the action, placed inside the neurotic suspension, is the exit from an endless thought regarding what the subject will eventually act on. It is the last tool a subject has when facing his/her anxiety.

On the contrary, the psychoanalytic action targets the core of being. The psychoanalytic experience is not of training nature but has the characteristics of a revelation. This revelation concerns the meaning of the formation of the unconscious. The *parapraxies*, the *paralexies* and the dreams are momentary beings of a fugitive nature and constitute the unconscious, which protects us because this is where the meaning of truth interferes.

As a consequence of an economic or social or personal crisis, the words lose their significance. The analyst by his interpretation evacuates the meaning. By isolating the signifiers that are out of meaning s/he helps the subject to realise what it is that is unbearable, he faces what real he met so that he can make another use of jouissance.

When a psychoanalyst works in the public sector, especially during a period of crisis, psychoanalysis can obtain a dimension of common welfare. In this case, the analyst, by offering himself as an object for many uses, directs the subject to the

psychoanalytic discourse, embodies the lack of the Big Other and operates as a **hooking** point, when the subject is disoriented. Having transference as a guideline the psychoanalyst can lead the subjects to redefine their desires. The analyst, by taking over the responsibility of his psychoanalytic action, can assist the subject to maintain a distance from the catalysis of his social bonds, the symbolic network and finally the subject's collapse which signifies the passage-to-the-act.

The psychoanalytic experience is a place where whatever is said concerns each subject personally and the end of every session can operate as a *Point de Capiton*.

6. The hope of psychoanalysis

According to the Turin theory, Jacques-Alain Miller concludes that "the functions and the phenomena highlighted on the level of the collective, are identical with the functions revealed and the phenomena involved during therapy. From a Freudian view, the being of the collective is nothing but an individual relationship multiplied". **The history of our crisis has shown us that the individual and the social symptom meet.** For the Lacanian teaching, the symptom can be found within the field of the real. The real is the one that doesn't function. The symptom contrary to the fleeting formations of the unconscious tends to repeat itself and to insist. Lacan will say that it is the one that never ceases to be written. By supplying us an unconscious satisfaction it saves us from the sacrifice of castration. The aim of an analysis is for the subject *to consent to the castration*.

What is highlighted during a time of crisis is the profound weakness of human nature. However, psychoanalysis *doesn't cultivate victimisation*, but by operating from the part of missing it cultivates the subject to fail in the proper manner. To quote Jacques-Alain Miller "there are many ways to fail, but some of them are more satisfying than others." He also reminds us that Freud has vaccinated us with the impossible. To be more precise, Freud (1937), in his article "Terminable and interminable analysis" mentions that the analyst is called to fulfil difficult demands during his practice. As he has said the analytic activity seems to constitute the third of the most impossible professions, in which nobody is certain in advance for an insufficient failure. The other two are education and governance.

In our modern civilisation, new symptoms appear, consumption objects favour our addiction. However, their core remains the same, our own individual jouissance. For

psychoanalysis, the absolute object doesn't exist *but in phantasy*. The therapy of psychoanalysis *doesn't* support itself *on an ideal*. On the other hand, the analyst is inspired by his/her desire. This is a desire that is more powerful than becoming maître/master, it doesn't aim to any secular possession, to any recognition, it doesn't pursue the identification of the analyst with the patient. The analyst has acquired this ability with his/her personal analysis and by keeping a distance from his/her own subjectivity, the identifications, the ideals and the roles attributed to him/her by the patient, within transference to offer the subject the capability of exploring the enigma of desire and its fundamental phantasy. Jacques-Alain Miller (1992) tells us that psychoanalysis ignores what is good for you. Psychoanalysts must have no prejudice about what is good or wrong and promise neither happiness nor harmony or wellbeing. What psychoanalysts know well is that no identification can eliminate the drive, which will keep on persisting silently. On the contrary, the only thing they can promise is that they will help the subject to clarify his/her desire and to reveal his/her own subjective particularity. *They don't wish to cure at any cost.* The therapeutic result is a consequence of this procedure and therapy is accomplished on top of that, as Freud would say. The point is each time, *who is the Other*, with *whom* the subject has to deal. It is important that the Other should introduce the subject to the dimension of desire. Lacan said that what is therapeutic is the desire and not the jouissance.

The crisis in Greece is a motive to check what has gone wrong all this time. The answer of the Greeks to the real of the crisis is not unanimous. Despite financial insecurity, there are many who decide to get married and start a family. Several neurotics request their introduction to analysis. For some others the solution is to obtain a PhD degree. Adults' creative centres (history of art, philosophy, photography, jewellery making), which are realised by the museums of Athens in the period 2013-2015, had a remarkable turnout.

Finally, artistic production and especially the theatrical one has been quite rich during the time of crisis in Greece. 858 theatrical performances have been staged since October 2014 until today in Athens (Athinorama, 2015). People's participation is impressive. Some of these artistic efforts were inspired and realised by artists who had very thin financial means. They are artists who in mid-crisis are deprived of their means more and more. Even though they live out of nothing they are creative. The relationship of the artist with nothing highlights sublimation. The artist by operating on a level of different terms is guided not by profit but by the creation of a social bond and recognition. It is a different approach of drives. It is certainly quite another

approach than that of the Golden Dawn party. A work of art as a symptom awakens our senses and even more our physical sense with desires, images, words and sounds. Works of art as symptoms give us access to the darkest side of our jouissance without ruling out the body, not only of the artist but that of the spectator as well. Lacan taught his students that aesthetic is what you feel, pointing out that aesthetic is directly related to the body. Psychoanalysis supports culture because that is where the relief of society is located. The Athenian Academy of Clinical Studies, which belongs to the Institute of the Freudian Field, has held, since 2013, film projections followed by discussions in order to highlight the psychoanalytic aspect of film-making, since it considers it a reflection of the human mental reality. Through this effort, psychoanalysts converse with directors, critics, cinema theorists, etc. and of course with the spectators who are given the opportunity to express their thoughts and so to sublimate.

Psychoanalysis and art, either individually or combined, could be an answer towards the unbearable real of crisis.

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