

The Madness of Each One

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Abstract

In 1978 Jacques Lacan wrote "...everyone is mad, that is, delusional".¹ Returning to that aphorism precisely in the era of depathologisation is an invitation to dive into what we know as "Lacan's last teaching" and at the same time reaffirm the subversive character of psychoanalysis.

On the one hand, psychoanalysis, like Alice's Cheshire Cat, does not burden the notion of madness with a disability prejudice or a negative value.² On the other hand, unlike that Cat, psychoanalysis is not enough to recognize that we are all mad, but it is interested in exploring and locating in pragmatic terms the madness of each one of us, in order to draw consequences from there. Thus, what Lacan stated at the end of the 1960's "do not expect anything more subversive than the very fact of not pretending to give you the solution", has a new version at the end of the 1970s.³ This new version, presented through the clinic of the knots and its continuist perspective, teaches us that although an analysis can solve some aspects of patients' suffering by bringing about changes in their lives, there are also those aspects that are resis-

tant to change. This new version of the clinic produces unique responses to well know questions: how far to take the experience of an analysis?; What function will interpretation have?; What does the analyst do with that which does not change and is this about the failure of psychoanalysis or is it about its maximum potential? We shall see...

I. A compass for the last teaching

I will return to what I stated yesterday at the beginning of my intervention. In 1978 Jacques Lacan wrote "...everyone is mad, that is, delusional."⁴ Thirty years later Jacques-Alain Miller begins his Seminar talking about "the times we are living in", that is, the actuality of our times, what we call "the subjectivity of the times"; he begins and ends the seminar dedicating several classes to a brief Lacan's text to highlight a sentence we found there: "everyone is mad, that is, delusional".

Miller states "I considered the phrase...everyone is mad, that is, delusional" as a sort of condensation of Lacan's last teaching⁵, he also says that this phrase

1 Lacan, J., ¡Lacan por Vincennes! (1978). Revista Lacaniana de psicoanálisis #11, p.11. Grama, B. As. 2011.

2 "Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad". Alice's Adventures in Wonderland <http://www.open-bks.com/alice-71-72.html>.

3 Lacan, J., El Seminario, libro XVII: El reverso del psicoanálisis (1969-70). p.74. Paidós, Bs. As., 1992.

4 Lacan, J., ¡Lacan por Vincennes! (1978). Revista Lacaniana de psicoanálisis #11, p.11. Grama, B. As. 2011.

5 Miller, J.-A., Todo el mundo es Loco, p.308.

is a "compass". I know that you have at your disposal in English the text of Lacan we talked about published under the title "There are Four Discourses", and you also have the last two classes of Miller's seminar "Everyone is mad", all this material is in the journal Culture/Clinic. Applied Lacanian Psychoanalysis 1, which is part of the bibliography for this meeting, so I think you will be able to follow me easily in this first part that I want to develop.

Well, I was commenting that at the beginning of his seminar Miller starts talking about the subjective conditions of our time and I suppose that this is a topic known to you - the question of the fall of the Big Other, and its semblances: authority, law, religion, ideals, etc., all these figures are finally declinations of what we know in psychoanalysis as the Father, and its symbolic function, that which we call the Name-of-the-Father. The interesting thing is that Miller begins the seminar talking precisely about this question of the epoch, saying that in the face of the changes of the epoch, psychoanalysts must place themselves in the eye of the typhoon, He states:

when you try to unleash a typhoon, you have to be located in the eye. Very calm, very serene. Something that is difficult when one is constantly pushed in all directions...What is called the position of the analyst implies being in the eye.

Miller wants to take up what Lacan said about the analyst; that an analyst should be at the level of his time, that is to say, be sensitive to his own time, understand it, let himself be touched by his own time, but without being fascinated, because our main function is to know how to interpret and in order to interpret we cannot be fascinated by anything. That is to say, just as we could not interpret a patient if we are fascinated by him, neither can we analyze our time if we are fascinated by its phenomena. But fascination, like transference, can be positive or negative.

Miller locates negative fascination, precisely in this first class of his seminar, and says that it is amusing to see some psychoanalyst's nostalgia for the past shouting, "Where are you Name-of-the-Father? I am looking for you!" This is not the position of the Lacanian Orientation. Thanks to Jacques-Alain Miller we were able to recognize some time ago that we are in an era where it is becoming more and more evident that the Other does not exist. Consequently,

we need to practice from the position that the Other does not exist: we cannot go against that.

In this seminar, Miller puts this position into action. He begins by placing this question as a starting point, and from there he will demonstrate, as the chapters progress, that Lacan, throughout his teaching, made the same movement as the epoch. His first teaching, the classical one, consisted of a theoretical structure that is based on a consistent big Other, therefore the Name-of-the-Father was at the center. Lacan in his last teaching focuses on the lack in the Other, in the non-existence of the Other, and therefore reformulates the notion of the Name-of-the-Father - we say that he pluralizes it - because it is no longer about a figure that has to operate from the place of the father. Rather, the subject finds something that operates for him like the Name-of-the-Father - and this can be multiple and contingent.

In Lacan's classical teaching, the Name-of-the-Father was the organiser that defined the diagnosis and decided the direction of the treatment. However, as Lacan advances in his exploration, he relativizes the importance of this operator, until he reaches Joyce and proposes a clinic in which what is central is not the presence or absence of the Name-of-the-Father but the modes of subjective functioning. How a subject like Joyce manages to function in the world by using a substitute for an absent Name-of-the-Father. In this way Lacan's teaching is updated even before his own time, leaving us tools to think a clinic that is at the height of our present time. It is this question that we are interested in working with you, the way in which this phrase "everyone is mad" is a compass to orient us in Lacan's last teaching and therefore a compass to think our current clinical practice today. For this, we need to differentiate this phrase "everyone is mad" from the field of psychosis.

In the case of psychosis Miller says there is the real of mental illness; however the phrase we are referring to refers to a delusional belief. In the context in which Lacan says the phrase "everyone is mad", madness means delusional belief, not psychosis. Incidentally, in the middle of the seminar Miller travels to Canada, and upon his return he comments on an experience about a treatment center for psychotic patients.

Miller relates that experience explaining that the type of practice that takes place in that center feeds the delirium of the psychotic subject and he explains

that the Lacanian Orientation operates exactly the other way around:

when we evoke delirium in psychosis, it is more with the idea of extinguishing it and not of nourishing it...we start from the idea that there is an original experience in these cases, an experience of perplexity in front of a sign...this rare experience that in general can be located, that must be isolated, becomes a signifier with the addition of another signifier that will be the real signifier of delirium...It seems to me that from this clinical point of view, when delirium is understood at this level, we can be satisfied with the definition Lacan gave...delirium is a screen...That is why we try...to accommodate the delirium but never to nourish it.⁶

Miller's experience in that Canadian clinic locates the fundamental issue: the phrase "everyone is mad" does not mean that everyone is psychotic. Psychosis as such has a real, which I could call here "fragility in its knotting". And this has very important practical implications. We have to know that if we take the treatment of a psychotic subject too far we can destabilize him; that is, if we shake his certitudes we can cause damage and if we act out erotomanic impulses in the transference we can ruin the treatment, etc. So, the sentence "everyone is mad" has to be understood in its context, which includes the second part of the sentence: "everyone is mad, that is, delusional" this "that is, delusional" is the key to the matter. I will not elaborate much on the question of delusion, I have seen in the program several papers that will surely refer to it, especially Russell Grigg's "A general Theory of delusion". I am sure that Russell will teach us a lot on the subject.

The important thing is to point out that the phrase "that is, delusional" must be understood with precision. You know that in Lacan's classical teaching, delirium is a construction that the psychotic person carries out, a substitution of the meaning that has been foreclosed; this delusional construction saves the psychotic subject from sinking into perplexity, from being absorbed by the hole of the real, delirium allows him to work in the world, perhaps in a strange way, but it allows him to make links with others.

However, in Lacan's seminar, the moment of Joyce and subjective knotting goes beyond the presence or absence of the signifier of the Name of the Father central to the classical period.

At this point in his teaching what is clear for Lacan is that subjectivity is constructed around a hole that exists in all beings that we speak of, this hole is named in different ways: "Communication does not exist", "the woman does not exist", "there is no sexual relation", etc. The real for Lacan at this point in his teaching is this "non-existence"; it is an ultimate limit for language, an impossibility of meaning, of saying, of naming. It is on the bottom of this hole that the subject has to construct an imaginary-symbolic apparatus that conveys the jouissance of the body, that creates systems of circulation of jouissance.

For example, in the case of neurosis we have the fundamental fantasy that functions to link the three registers: the symbolic, imaginary and real and respond to a question that never has an exact answer: "What am I for the Other?" and, "What does the other want from me?" In the absence of a clear answer, the subject responds with his fundamental fantasy. The subject who constructs his life around a fundamental fantasy of rejection, for example, "I am a problem for the Other", lives a life based on a construction that has been determined by different contingencies of his history, by the interpretations that he himself made of those contingencies, of the remains of his family novel, of the marks that remained from different experiences of jouissance. All of this finally fixes a way of jouissance through that fundamental phantasy. The truth is that this construction is no less mad than any delirium. I say mad and not psychotic. I mean that it is a delirious construction in the sense that the fundamental fantasy does not have a biological location in the brain, it is not in the DNA, it is not produced by a chemical phenomenon, but it is a symbolic construction that fills a void, determining a life as if it were an absolute truth, a destiny. We saw examples of it yesterday when we talked about the end of analysis.⁷

The treatment of neurosis leads the subject to discover the contingency of his subjective constructions and the crossing of the fundamental fantasy when the end of the analysis is approaching. It is about that moment in which the analysand subjectifies that what he had based his relationship with the

⁶ Miller, J.-A., *Todo el mundo es Loco*, p.307-308.

⁷ See "The pass and the end of analysis" in this volume of *Psychoanalysis Lacan*.

world on was not an invariable destiny, it was not an absolute truth, but a construction of his own, unconsciously fixed and sustained in a circuit of repetition that allowed him to extract a satisfaction, even if it was in suffering.

As you can see, by referring to the fundamental fantasy we are moving from the field of psychosis to the field of neurosis. When the subject can encounter his own delirium and see how it had been constructed, and understand its contingent and fictional character, it is only then that the neurotic subject can go beyond that which had locked him up in a madness fabricated by himself, it is only then that the subject can do something different with his own madness.

All this process implies a process: first there is a construction process of what we call the "transferential unconscious" so that at the end the subject can go through this construction and experience something of what we call the "real unconscious". It is precisely these questions that I want to talk about now, because if the phrase "everyone is mad, that is, delusional" is the compass of Lacan's last teaching, then the whole clinical practice that emerges from this teaching comes into play - the way of thinking the analytical session changes, the type of interpretation changes, the idea of the end of analysis also changes. I worked on these issues a few years ago in Toronto. I am going to take up again in my presentation today some of the ideas that I started to investigate at that time:

1. I develop the theoretical question that guides the clinical practice of the last teaching; that is, the difference between two categories of the unconscious in Lacan: the transferential unconscious and the real unconscious;
2. I discuss how the real unconscious leads Lacan to search for a new perspective to move beyond classical psychoanalytical interpretation;
3. Finally, I elaborate the importance of time in any analytical experience from a viewpoint that Jacques-Alain-Miller called "the three moments of an analysis."

II. The Lacanian unconscious is a construction in transference.

a. The transferential unconscious

Lacan starts "The mistaking of the subject supposed to know" (19-67) by asking himself "What is the unconscious?" Five pages later, he answers that:

all that is of the unconscious only plays on the effects of language. It is something that is said, without the subject representing himself nor saying himself in it, nor knowing what he says. Then Lacan adds: The order of indetermination constituted by the relation of the subject to a knowledge passing beyond him / results, one can say, from our practice, which implies it, insofar as it is interpretive.⁸

So, Lacan explains that the unconscious unfolds in the field of language, but that it exists because it is constructed thanks to our interpretative practice. We call this version of the unconscious the transferential unconscious, not only because an analyst is needed for it to be constituted – as it is the analyst who does the interpreting – but also the Other, that who structures language. That is the Other who is a guarantor of what is said, because, eventually, that's where what is said refers us to. That's why Miller says that the transferential unconscious and the Name-of-the-Father go hand in hand.⁹ As we can see, transference and interpretation articulate with each other to found the transferential unconscious, which will be the territory where analysis takes place.

Now, although Lacan starts the text above with the question "What is the unconscious?", Miller states that what truly guides Lacan in his work is the question "What is the real?". There's nothing more natural than that question to a psychoanalyst; Miller states "What is real in the end, in the dimension of words, in everything that analysis carries: stories, anecdotes, lamentations, reproaches, approximations, vows, lies, regrets, sighs, words... what is there in all that, in the end, what is real?"¹⁰ Well, until Seminar VI the real was the symbolic: It is the symbolic because what Lacan called the real at that time was excluded from analysis and, therefore, what he isolated as the real in the cure, in the subject, is the symbolic nucleus.¹¹ It is in Seminar 7 that the real begins to take shape far from the symbolic and the imaginary.

8 Lacan, J., *Otros Escritos*, p.354. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2013.

9 Miller, J.-A., *El ultimísimo Lacan*, p.102. Paidós. Bs. As. 2012.

10 Miller, J.-A., *El Ser y el Uno*, Class of 01/19//11. Unpublished

11 Miller, J.-A., *El Ser y el Uno*, class of 01/19//11. Unpublished

In his seminar *The Being and the One*, Miller develops how, thanks to Hegel, Lacan was able to arrive at a structured real, that of his early teaching, that of the structured unconscious as a language, but – Miller says “that makes no Lacanian sense, unless it is understood that the unconscious is real. Then Lacan kept the real unconscious to himself – Miller adds – and only put it in writing in his last text...his “Preface to the English Language Edition of Seminar XI”. Let’s see what Lacan says.

b. The Real Unconscious

When *l’esp du laps*...the space of a lapsus no longer carries any meaning (or interpretation), then only is one sure that one is in the unconscious. One knows. But one has only to be aware of the fact to find oneself outside it. There is no friendship there, in that space, that supports this unconscious. All I can do is tell the truth. No, that isn’t so – I have missed it. There is no truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie. But one runs after it all the same.¹²

This is then the real unconscious which, as Miller states, ...makes a hole in Lacan’s teaching¹³ because it is against the notion of language, but it responds to a clinical evidence, and that’s the one we learn in analyses that last until their conclusion; the evidence is that there is a limit to language, and access to it can only be gained after going through the transferential unconscious. So, our first conclusion is that both constructions – the transferential and the real unconscious – need interpretation, transference, and time in order for them to occur. I will now specify some fundamental questions about interpretation and time in analysis.

c. Lacanian interpretation.

In the text I mentioned above, “The Mistaking of the Subject Supposed to Know”, after Lacan labels psychoanalytic practice as interpretive, he adds a criticism to the way in which psychoanalysts sometimes use interpretation. He says:

interpretation gives every satisfaction...Above all to the psychoanalyst who deploys in it the beatific moralism...Which is to say the one who covers himself up by only acting in any case for the good...Thus the stones where his patient

stumbles are no more than the cobbles of his good intentions.

With these remarks, Lacan warns us that the psychoanalytic interpretation – at least in Lacanian psychoanalysis – has nothing to do with analysts who know about the unconscious of their patients before the unconscious is constructed in transference. That’s why Miller says, in his conference “So Shhh!,” that many times analytic theories of interpretation only bear witness to the narcissism of analysts. When analysts think they know and interpret from that place, what they do is explain, and they usually do it thinking that it will “help” their patients, because they believe they know what their patients should know, and as they believe they know before their patients, they tell them, they inform them, they explain. That’s why Lacan states “the stones where his patient stumbles are no more than the cobbles of his good intentions.”

Lacanian interpretation does not concern itself with the good of patients. It is not an explanation, an unveiling, an indication; nor does it look for the meaning or the repressed story. What Lacanian interpretation seeks is, on the one hand, to allow the subject to elucidate his or her relationship with *jouissance* and, on the other, to move that relationship. In that respect, Lacan states the following in *Talking to Brick Walls* (19-71):

There is not a single analytic interpretation which does not exist to give to some proposition that is encountered its relation to a *jouissance*, to what does psychoanalysis mean? That it is speech that assures the dimension of truth to this relation of *jouissance*. And again it remains no less assured that it cannot in any way say it completely. It can only, as I put it, half-say this relation, and forge a semblance of it.¹⁴

These words explain how the analytic interpretation touches something of the construction insofar as it forges a representation around the relationship of the subject with *jouissance*, but such invention is the second part of interpretation, which the patient is in charge of. Certainly, it would not be possible without the analyst’s action in the first part. Let me add an

12 Lacan, J., *Otros Escritos*, p.599. Paidós. Bs. As. 2012

13 Miller, J.-A., *El ultimísimo Lacan*, p.95. Paidós. Bs. As. 2012.

14 Lacan, J., *Hablo a las Paredes*, p.72

aside here to make it clear that —from a psychoanalytic standpoint—, construction and interpretation are different. Interpretation aims at a definite point, breaks the S1-S2 relationship, opens a door to meaninglessness, etc., while construction brings together, articulates S1-S2, producing a simulation of meaning just where we need the structure to understand the logic of the case. Now, there are different versions about what interpretation is throughout Lacan's work. I will take those in his late teaching, beginning with Seminar XVII, which is not strictly part of his late teaching, but which provides an indication of it.

In Seminar XVII, Lacan presented the structure of interpretation as knowledge – that is, knowledge as truth – and, as such, it can only be half-said. So, he proposed two sides of the half-said: the riddle and the quotation:

A riddle picked out, as far as possible, in the texture of the psychoanalyst's discourse, and that you, the interpreter, can in no way complete by yourself...A quotation, on the other hand, sometimes taken in the same text, a particular statement. This can be taken as a confession, if only you connect it up to the whole context. But here in this case you are appealing to whoever is its author.¹⁵

Lacan also notes the structure of the half-said in another figure, the oracle, and in 1973 he states “the oracle that it neither reveals nor hides...it makes a sign”¹⁶. In this regard, Miller says:

The oracle, as a way of saying, consists, above all, in giving no explanations. Explaining is unfolding and the oracle is something folded...That constitutes the oracular: a new emergence producing an unprecedented effect of truth, an unprecedented effect of meaning...for that very reason unailing, since the place of its verification is empty.¹⁷

From L'etourdit onwards, the half-said is displaced by the notion of equivocation. Lacan explains that:

the unconscious, by being “structured like a language”, namely, *lalangue* that it inhabits, is subjected to the equivocation by which each is distinguished. One tongue among others is nothing more than the integral of the equivocations that its history has allowed to persist in it.¹⁸

When Lacan finally abandons the idea of the truth, he also abandons the hope that the “effects of truth” emerging from language will liberate from the symptom. Instead, he devotes his full attention to the “effects of equivocation” emerging from *lalangue* (that which exists language). That's why in his book *The Reverse of Biopolitics*, Eric Laurent states: Lacan no longer speaks of the effects of truth that liberate from the symptom, but of the effects of equivocation that operate¹⁹. This is the reason why in *L'etourdit* Lacan proposes thinking about interpretation by way of equivocation, and he says: Nothing operates therefore except from signifying equivocation.²⁰ As Miller explains, this perspective proposes an interpretation that:

is not made up of the contents, the statements, but that it is a method of saying characterized...by its ludic essence, and that it implies redirecting language – which is a regulation – to the possible games in language. In fact, its model is the funny witty remark, the witz, that witz which, according to Lacan, allows us to go through the door beyond which there's nothing else to find.²¹

But there's one more turn, in Seminar XXIII, precisely when Lacan was speaking about interpretation by way of equivocation. He added a new element and said: There must be something in the signifier that resonates. So, Lacan goes from “reason” to “resonance”, from what one thinks to what one feels in the body. That is, the body is added, and so the quotation goes on as follows: But for this speech to resonate, for it to be consonant with, to use another word of the *sinthome*...the body must be sensitive to

15 Lacan, J., “El reverso del Psicoanálisis”. *El Seminario. Libro 17*, pp. 36-38. Paidós, Bs. As.

16 Lacan, J., “Introducción a la edición alemana de un primer volumen de *Los Escritos*”, *Otros Escritos*, p.584.

17 Miller, J.-A., *Un esfuerzo de poesía*, p.23. Paidós, Bs. As., 2016.

18 Lacan, J., “El atolondradicho”, *Otros Escritos*, p.514.

19 Laurent, E., *El reverso de la biopolítica*, p.220. Grama, Bs. As., 2016.

20 Lacan, J., “El atolondradicho”, *Otros Escritos*

21 Miller, J.-A., *Un esfuerzo de poesía*, p.24. Paidós, Bs As 2016

it.²² Let's recap then. Interpretation will take different forms throughout Lacan's work: the riddle, the quotation, the oracle, the equivocation. How can we think about each in clinical practice?

In 1967, Eric Laurent consulted Lacan. In the book *Do you know Lacan?* Laurent recounts that meeting. He starts as follows:

In the preliminary interviews, I presented Lacan with all that farrago, asking him, above all, not to take me into analysis because I was too lost, too young, and too privileged compared to others who could not ask for analysis. Lacan concluded those interviews assuring me that my age and the fact that I was lost were perfect to start an analysis, and that as far as privilege was concerned, I had no idea what I was saying. He added a phrase whose harmonics still resonate, and whose multiple meanings have gradually been cleared. Today, I will transcribe it as follows: "You always end up becoming a character in the novel that is your own life. For that, analysis is not necessary. What it does is comparable to the relationship between a story and a novel. The contraction of the time allowed by the story produces stylistic effects. Psychoanalysis will allow you to discover stylistic effects that may be interesting to you."²³

We could say that here we find traces of each of the forms interpretation takes throughout Lacan's late teaching. Firstly, we find a trace of interpretation by way of equivocation. The same reasons that the analysand assumes as contraindications for his treatment are transformed by Lacan as favorable conditions to take him into analysis (Lacan took his desire to the letter, as Éric had not cancelled the appointment despite what he was saying). Hence "Lacan concluded those interviews assuring me that my age was perfect to start an analysis". Secondly, the quotation actually appears when Lacan resorts to the signifier "too privileged", but Lacan redoubles the bet by adding an enigmatic formula to the analysand's words, warning him that he has "no idea" what he is saying. Finally, the interpretation takes an oracular tone when Lacan tells him at the end, "psychoanalysis

will allow you to discover stylistic effects that may be interesting to you." But we said that this version of Lacanian interpretation expressly includes one more element: the body. I will take two examples of this matter. We find the first one in the same article where Laurent recounts his analysis:

Lacan cuts the session and walks with me to the door. His look is incredibly, theatrically bad; his mouth is open but he doesn't say a word. I told myself that I was going to be eaten raw, although I didn't have the slightest idea why. Once I was outside...I walked into a bakery without realizing it and asked for a certain kind of cake, making a welcome slip of the tongue that held me see the chain of causes that had led me to feeling like eating... cake...The following day, when I was thanking him for that psychoanalysis lesson about the ways of "making oneself be eaten." I confided to Lacan that I would like to do the same with my own patients. "Oh!"; he said as he slowly walked to the door with me, "you need a lot of experience for that".²⁴

The second example is the one that can be found in the movie *An Appointment with Lacan*, (I'm not sure whether it was shown in Australia). It's a documentary filmed by Gérard Miller where some of Lacan's patients are interviewed and where they remember their analyses. Susan Hommel, now a psychoanalyst in Paris, and one of Lacan's patients then, says:

One day, in a session, I was talking about a dream I had...I wake up at 5 o'clock every morning...At 5 o'clock the Gestapo came to get the Jews in their homes. Lacan leaped up from his chair and came to me. He gently stroked my cheek. I understood "geste a peau".

This second example is also useful to explain didactically what we mean by "interpretation by way of equivocation".

Let's remember what we mentioned earlier: Lacan explains in *L'étourdit* that, since the unconscious is "structured as a language", it is also sensitive to the effects of this, which Lacan calls "lalangue"

22 Lacan, J., *El Seminario, Libro 23. El sinthome...*, p.17-18

23 Laurent, E., "Cuatro observaciones acerca de la inquietud científica..." en *Conoce usted a Lacan?*, p.37. Paidós, Barcelona, 1995.

24 Laurent, E., "Cuatro observaciones acerca de la inquietud científica..." en *Conoce usted a Lacan?*, p.41. Paidós, Barcelona, 1995.

(in French, “lalangue” all together, with no space in between, precisely to make it clear that it is the use of the language, but without its grammatical rules). Lacan says, “One tongue among others is nothing more than the integral of the equivocations that its history has allowed to persist in it²⁵. This means that there are imprecise resonances inhabiting our own correct way of speaking, that is, in what we have learned as the “right way of saying things properly” according to semantic, linguistic and grammatical rules and provisions: we encounter lalangue in the sounds we have heard, those leftovers of sense, alternate meanings that the words we know have been gaining at different times, the confusion caused by words that sound the same to the ear but that mean differently, and so on.

So, on the one hand we have the language that follows the rules of grammar and on the other we have lalangue, which is this universe of meanings and sounds that go through language and that inhabits us since the moment we are born. This, that even if it is not in our conscious level of awareness when we talk, it is always present underneath the language. These resonances are, precisely, the foundations of the art of comedy and which Freud’s book “*Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*” clearly shows. However, in the field of language, what we always have is the signifying articulation, S1-S2. This means that one signifier (S1) has meaning in association with another signifier (S2). It is the articulation of two signifiers what makes sense out of something. This is the articulation of signifiers that is being produced, what the subject learns through his or her life experiences, his or her surrounding culture and historical period. Once this articulation S1-S2 is produced, this meaning becomes unconscious and thereby automatic. It works without the subject knowing it is operating. That’s how Susan Hommel experienced the night. For her, the night was the hour of the Gestapo, and Gestapo was a reference to the horror of Nazism. When the night came, she was not aware that she was entering deep into the horror. That’s why she couldn’t sleep peacefully.

However, if the analyst’s intervention had been an explanation to the patient; if, for example, Lacan had said: “You cannot sleep peacefully because for you the night is connected to your childhood and the suffering in the horrors of Nazism” he would have only strengthened this S1-S2 bond, it would have

given it even more consistency. The Lacanian analytical interpretation, by contrast, aims at breaking this articulation. The articulation a subject has produced in his or her own use of the language and which has been engraved, affixed in him or her. Analytical interpretation seeks to separate S1 from S2 so that the subject can realize that the meaning of things is not something fixed, universal or eternal.

Analyst’s use different techniques to free a subject from a meaning that has been torturing his or her life and which they thought was the only possible one: we cut the sessions, we use the enigma, a quotation. At the end of his teachings, Lacan says that one of the best options to accomplish this is by way of equivocation. Susana Homel’s example shows formidably this interpretation by way of a homophonic equivocation. And which is the effect? Susana states “that surprise(gesture), it did not diminish the pain but it did transform it. Forty years later, when I tell you about that gesture, I can still feel it on my cheek.” Susane did not forget the horror of Nazism. It is not that, magically, the word Gestapo did not mean Nazi police any longer or that it changed its historical meaning. It means that now, after this unforgettable intervention of Lacan, every time Susane hears or pronounces the word Gestapo she does not only remember the Nazi police, but what comes to her mind also is that gesture of Lacan on her skin. In this way, the S1-S2 articulation: Gestapo-Nazi became weaker, because this S1 (Gestapo) now refers also to another S2 (caress), therefore, it does not have the same effect of meaning. That was Lacan’s purpose when developing his theory of interpretation by way of equivocation in *L’eturdit*.

To make use of lalangue, where there are no grammar rules. To use this place that can become a playground for sounds, where words can be forced, dismantled, or combined with no logic so they can produce effects, they can break the meaning produced by the rules of the language.

In his last Seminar, Miller will say that *L’Eturdit* is Lacan’s latest great text, and that it is about a theory of interpretation. In fact, later, Lacan will suggest other formulas for interpretation, such as the Chinese poetry or the jaculation, but these formulas still keep the logic of the interpretation by way of equivocation. For example, in *Seminar*

25 Lacan, J., “El atolondradicho”, *Otros Escritos*, p.514.

XXIV (April 19, 1977) Lacan gives the example of the Chinese poetic writing and says:

you will see that these forcings by which a psychoanalyst can make something else ring out, something other than sense, for sense, is what resonates with the help of the signifier; but what resonates, does not go very far, it is rather flabby. Sense deadens things, but with the help of what one can call poetic writing, you can get the dimension of what one could call analytic interpretation...Metaphor, and metonymy, have an import for interpretation only insofar as they are capable of functioning as something else. And this other thing that they function as, is indeed that by which sound and sense are closely united. It is in as much as a correct interpretation extinguishes a symptom, that the truth is specified as being poetic. It is not from the angle of articulated logic...and the first thing would be to extinguish the notion of the Beautiful. We have nothing beautiful to say. A different resonance is at stake, one founded on the witticism. A witticism is not beautiful, it depends only on an equivocation.²⁶

We see that the notion of equivocation is back again. The final purpose is to lead the subject to the limit of meaning which allows them to encounter the shortfall of language in order to capture the real. What would that be?

The encounter with the real unconscious for a fleeting moment. Let's remember how Lacan described this in his text "When l'esp du laps...the space of a lapsus no longer carries any meaning (or interpretation), then only is one sure that one is in the unconscious." That is, when we stretch the limit of the S1-S2 articulation and show its contingency, the randomness of its value, the subject can finally capture something of the real: that there is no sexual relationship, and because of that, everyone needs to invent their own way of bonding with the other.

Eric Laurent, by the way, in his conference during the Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis in Barcelona, 2018, states that Lacan places in *Seminar XXII* the effectiveness of interpre-

tation by way of the jaculation. Laurent says: what in *Seminar XXII* is called jaculation, this that indicates a real effect of meaning, becomes the "new signifier" in *Seminar XXIV*.²⁷ And Miller referring to this explains "When we call a new signifier as new, we are, in fact, referring to a signifier that may have a different use...a signifier that might be new, not just because it could have an extra signifier, but because instead of being polluted by the dream, this new signifier would trigger an awakening."²⁸ As you can see, here we have the topic of "awakening", but I will go back to it later.

Before that, I would like to say that this itinerary we are following today is a tour through Lacan's work, and what I'm trying to show is not a way of surpassing but of integrating his works. It does not mean that we leave the transference unconscious behind and we now change it by the Real Unconscious, or that interpretations by way of equivocation leave aside the quote, the enigma or the session cuts that Lacan teaches in *The direction of the treatment* (1958). These perspectives include different, conceptual and clinical tools and the previous ones are not excluded.

Another issue that is important to place is the question of time. The fact that an analysis is not only made of the analysand's discourse plus the analyst's interventions: it is made of time. Lacan is warning Eric Laurent about something related to this in the example I mentioned before, Eric tells Lacan that he would like to make interventions as the ones Lacan did. Lacan answers: "You need a lot of experience for that". Lacan is referring to time, not in terms of age, but in terms of time of formation (that is, you may be 80 years old and have a poor formation, it is not about the age of the practitioner, but about the quality of the time they have invested in their formation).

Now, the effect of an interpretation also takes time. That's why I would like to remember what Lacan said in *Seminar XIII The object of psychoanalysis* (1965), when he brings back the topic of the Zen master (*Seminar I*), he says:

...everyone knows that a Zen exercise has something to do, even though people do not know very well what that means, with the subjective realization of a void. And we are not forcing things in admitting that anyone, the average contemplative, will see this figure,

26 Revista Lacaniana, N° 25, p.19

27 Laurent, E.: conferencia inédita "Disrupción del goce en las locuras bajo transferencia". Barcelona, abril, 2018.

28 Miller, J.-A., El últimísimo Lacan, citado por Laurent en su conferencia inédita "Disrupción del goce en las locuras bajo transferencia".

will say to himself that there is something like a sort of high point which should have some relationship with the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and that this singular high point will be obtained in an abruptness, succeeding a wait which is sometimes realized by a word, a sentence, a jaculation (utterance), even a rudeness, a kick in the backside. It is quite certain that these kinds of pantalooneries or clowning have no sense except with respect to a long subjective preparation.²⁹

I stress the fact that Lacan says “a long preparation”. What he means is that if we tell a patient “geste a peau”, for example, we are not going to change their life suddenly, but that we need to work in analysis for a while before an interpretation has an effect. In *Radiophonie*, Lacan says “for the being, it takes time to make itself be.” And this is a central indication in psychoanalysis. That’s why I chose the question of time as the third point of my lecture.

III. An analysis is the construction time

Choses de finesse en psychanalyse was a seminar that Jacques-Alain Miller started teaching in 2008. It was published in Spanish as *Sutilezas analíticas* (*Analytic subtleties*). In this seminar, Miller states that a pure analysis, that is, one carried out until its end, might be divided into three moments or periods. Each of these is characterized by a set of conditions that provide it with a distinct functioning. That’s why they are three modes of analysis: beginning analysis, ongoing analysis, and ending analysis.

Earlier on, in his seminar *Donc*, Miller had considered the question of the three moments in an analysis. Here, he held that there was no *matheme* for the intermediate period, since a formalization of the level of accuracy available for the other two periods had not been developed yet (Miller, 2011). However, in *Analytic subtleties* the author tries to specify certain co-ordinates of that intermediate period more accurately, and the result of such attempt is his suggestion that the key moment for the direction of the treatment is precisely this intermediate period of an analysis.

The first period of an analysis, when analysis begins, is full of events. There are discoveries, disclosures, crossings. That which was implicit becomes

explicit but in turn undergoes a radical transformation: it is formalized. Its logical consequences produce the first therapeutic reliefs. Therefore, transference is usually in its more positive aspect. Miller says “beginning analysis is the best part; it is the analyst’s pleasure, the analysand’s pleasure; Americans call it “the honeymoon.” Ah, how wonderful it would be if we could only begin analysis! It would be fantastic!”³⁰ As there are subjective disclosures in this first moment, it can be easily recognized that the opposition between the “conscious” and the “unconscious” is in the foreground. But Miller explains that this is not the same in an ongoing analysis, that is, the one which goes beyond the first interviews. An ongoing analysis reaches the intermediate period, and at that moment the main opposition is not so much “conscious / unconscious”, but rather that of the unconscious as knowledge and as *jouissance*.

This means that at the beginning of analysis everything that the subject says on the “conscious” plane starts to take shape and reveal an “unconscious” logic. This construction allows the subject to find knowledge in the formalization of their discourse, in the serial arrangement of memories, in the localization of certain S1’s that configure the formula of their choices, etc. This produces a feeling of well-being that the subject credits as a gain. But as the analysis advances, the patient’s discourse decreases and is organized around that which insists. It insists despite the conquered knowledge, and that which insists is *jouissance*. That’s why Miller says, when he refers to the intermediate period of an analysis, that “the main opposition is rather that of the unconscious as knowledge and as *jouissance*.”³¹ At this point, then, we have reached another moment in analysis, different from the first. We are in the second period, the one we call intermediate.

Unlike the first, the intermediate period has slow therapeutic effects. Disclosures become scarcer, they even stop, and repetition appears instead. Miller explains that it is no longer the repetition of traceable elements, those which produce a disclosure when arranged in a series. On the contrary, as Miller states, it is “repetition in stagnation. Certainly, an ongoing analysis calls for crossing the stagnation, bearing it, that is, exploring the limits; it is, if you will, what I used to call the experience of the real according to

29 Lacan, J., Citado por Eric Laurent en su conferencia inédita “Disrupción del goce en las locuras bajo transferencia”. Barcelona, abril, 2018.

30 Miller, J.-A., *Sutilezas analíticas*, p.115. Paidós. 2011.

31 Idem.

the modality of inertia.”³² Miller notes that in ongoing analysis, of course, there are disclosures, but what is actually expected – both the analysand and the analyst expect it – is something of the order of untying libido. As we can see, we are no longer in the realm of a gain (of knowledge) with the surplus jouissance which is entailed by that and which is experienced as a feeling of well-being. Instead, we are in the realm of a loss of jouissance. Specifically, the intermediate period of an analysis is about promoting the withdrawal of libido from those elements that were isolated and formalized in the moment of disclosures of a beginning analysis. Because of this, Miller states that, in an ongoing analysis, “the concerning issue is not so much that of a time to understand, but that of a time to disinvest...we focus on the withdrawal of libido...We are only satisfied by disclosures that lead us, as such, to that place.”³³

Therefore, if the predominant question of the first period of analysis (i.e. the beginning) - What does that mean? - in the case of an ongoing analysis, that question is replaced with a new one. The analyst intervenes to facilitate the process that gives rise to a new question: What does that satisfy? How does it provide satisfaction?³⁴ So, if Miller spoke of “the honeymoon” when referring to the first period of analysis, the second period is about something else:

Struggling with analysis as it goes on is another thing. I told myself in my reflections: “I can bear it, but the thing is knowing how” ...without a doubt with the burden of the reproaches it may result in: “You are not doing anything to get me out of that place” ...Sometimes that’s the reason why someone wants to change analysts: they get tired of the truth obtained; they go to someone else thinking the truth will be changed.³⁵

This is the reason why we said earlier that the intermediate period of analysis is a key moment, because that’s when analysands reproach analysts for their malaise. Sometimes they claim to have a feeling of stagnation: they stress their “perfect attendance” throughout the years, they try to impose their

feeling of urgency, and that’s how negative transference is triggered. If analysts act on the urgency demanded by analysands, they end up letting themselves be fooled by the therapeutic preoccupation instead of leading the analytic experience toward its radical point: the end.

Now, it is important for me to stress that the analysand is also responsible for crossing the rough time of the intermediate period of an analysis. Some testimonies of the pass are clear in this regard. I will use two examples; the first is the testimony of Jérôme Lecaux:

At the end of the treatment, I wanted to change analysts and I discovered that I couldn’t. It was a symptomatic loyalty that reproduced the loyalty to my mother. I couldn’t break up, whatever I said, whatever I did. The elucidation of the fundamental fantasy “being the Other’s pillar; he cannot do without me” allowed me to leave. But then I thought “Why leave? My work goes on and the analysis is not an obstacle.” Leaving would have been to continue believing that words can do it all...So, staying allowed me to break up. Having experienced the emptying of the object, becoming aware of the lack of signifier in the Other allowed me to set the chiasma of the pass in motion.³⁶

Another example can be found in *Analytic subtleties*. Miller invites an Analyst of the School, Bernard Seynhaeve, to talk about the third moment of an analysis: the end. Seynhaeve, situates his analysis as a process between two interpretations. The first interpretation is at the very beginning of the analysis:

As I was leaving my analyst’s office, he looked me straight in the eyes...and asked me: “What’s that, the scar on your cheek?” I answered: “Oh! It’s nothing, a skin cyst that was removed.” He spoke slowly as he told me: “You should have talked to me about that.” From the moment the analyst looked me straight in the eyes,

32 Miller, J.-A., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.113. Paidós. 2011.

33 Miller, J.-A., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.113-114. Paidós. 2011.

34 Miller, J.-A., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.111. Paidós. 2011.

35 Miller, J.-A., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.116. Paidós. 2011.

36 Lecaux, J. (2016). “La Cruz y la barrera” en *Revista Lacaniana de psicoanálisis* N21, p.69.

the trace of the drive of the object-gaze would begin to unfold. This trace would be closed twenty-three years later in the same way.³⁷

Later on, Seynhaeve locates the second interpretation and says:

Interpretation number two arrived after a long analytic convolution, as the analyst cut the session and, when we were about to separate, sitting on his chair, peacefully held me a while longer and, looking me straight in the eyes, he told me: “You love your fundamental fantasies too much.” This sentence caused a subjective earthquake without me understanding anything. The analyst had touched a jouissance that I myself ignored.³⁸

In this second example, we can clearly see how the object-gaze condenses all the subject’s jouissance, but we can notice that time was necessary. It took 23 years of “analytic convolution”. The analyst’s simple intervention when he said, “You love your fundamental fantasies too much”, made it possible for the subject to untie that jouissance. That’s what the analyst waited for throughout the intermediate period of the analysis. So, we could say that the second period of an analysis is essentially about a period of libidinal disinvestment. It isn’t the simplest one. It takes time, but it is the necessary condition for the end to be possible. It is only by going through this intermediate period of analysis, sustained by both the analysand’s and the analyst’s desire, that it will be possible to create the conditions for a pure analysis to occur.

Finally, once the intermediate period of analysis has been crossed, the end arrives. Transference and interpretation are disarticulated; they fall because there is no more meaning to deconstruct. So, the pass would be the road which goes from the transferential unconscious to the real unconscious. We talked about this topic of the pass yesterday, and we located the relationship between the title of this conference - “We’re all mad here” - with the end of analysis, and the formation of the psychoanalyst; now I will just return to the topic of the pass to

highlight what Miller explains about the pass and its difference with the “pass bis”. Miller says:

This moment which Lacan called “pass” is the way out of the transferential unconscious. It’s a moment when the relationship with the psychoanalyst, the companion analyst, is transformed...It’s about a liquidation...That’s the moment when the function of the *l’esp du laps* is most clearly inscribed, the function in which the lapsus, a formation of the unconscious, no longer has any scope of meaning or interpretation. We can then speak of the way out of the transferential unconscious.³⁹

In other words, it is when the subject deconstructs his madness (his fantasies, his identifications, the chains of causes and consequences that he attributed to his life) only then, at the moment when the subject encounters the void, only then does the analysis end. So, in his seminar *Le tout dernier Lacan* (*The very last Lacan*), Miller resorts to the expression “the reverse of the pass” to explain that:

Lacan imagined proposing a new way, which consisted in establishing a relationship between the real unconscious and the analytic cause. He outlines it in a way that is always oriented as the pass bis. This goes in the opposite direction, as it goes from the real unconscious to the transferential unconscious. The pass bis is a transference with the analysis and, therefore, is the reverse of the pass.⁴⁰

So, once the subject encounters his own void, what happens? He goes back to creating a story about himself, but the difference is that he is no longer a prisoner of that story; he does not believe it as an absolute truth and he does not suffer from it as a destiny. He can tell it to others because he has separated himself from it and has taken enough distance so that it does not affect him or his clinical practice. It is not possible to live in a void - it is necessary to build a new madness, the madness of each one of us, written in our own handwriting, with the ink of the most singular thing that each one of us has. It is a

37 Seynhaeve, B., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.199. Paidós. 2011.

38 Seynhaeve, B., *Sutilizas analíticas*, p.202. Paidós. 2011.

39 Miller, J.-A., *El ultimísimo Lacan*, p.97. Paidós. Bs. As. 2012.

40 Miller, J.-A., *El ultimísimo Lacan*, p.98. Paidós. Bs. As. 2012.

lucid madness because it recognizes that it is built on a void, and because it makes of that void the power of something quite similar to freedom.