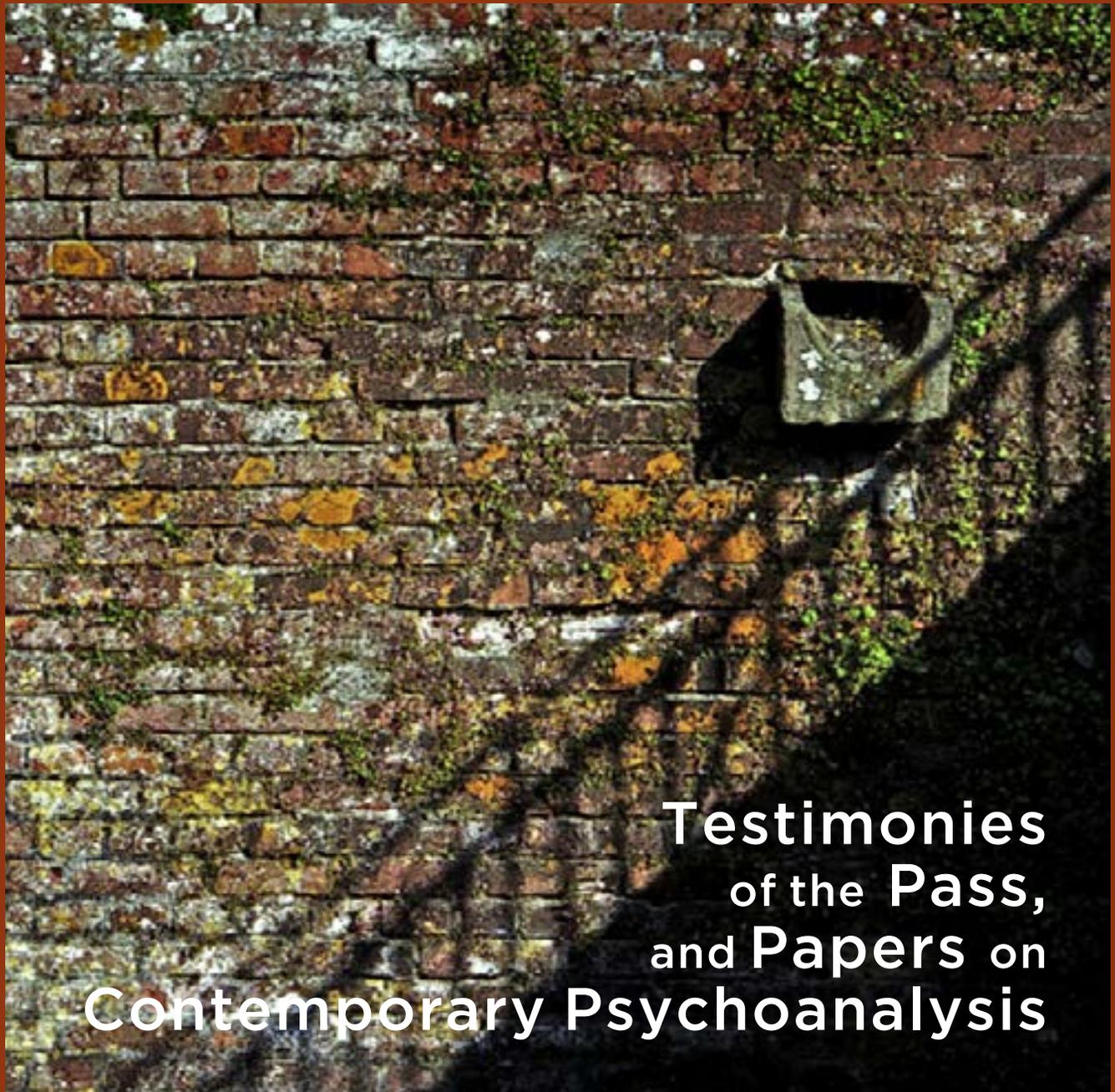


PSYCHOANALYSIS LACAN

LCA e_Journal

Vol.1_2018



Testimonies of the Pass, and Papers on Contemporary Psychoanalysis



Lacan Circle
of Australia

PsychoanalysisLacan is an online journal publishing contemporary psychoanalysis in the Lacanian orientation. PsychoanalysisLacan is produced by members of the Lacan Circle of Australia, a professional association dedicated to the study and transmission of psychoanalysis.

Contents

Editorial Introduction

Russell Grigg, *Enseignements des AE*

Testimonies of the Pass

Sonia Chiriaco, *Repetition, Iteration*

Bruno de Halleux, *Remarkable*

Hélène Bonnaud, *Iteration of the Symptom: Of the One of Jouissance*

Bernard Porcheret, *The Bodily Root of Symptoms*

Papers

Grace Tarpey, *Lacan's Psychoanalytic Way of Love*

Santanu Biswas, *Locating and Annotating the Expression 'The Later Teaching of Lacan'*

David Ferraro, *A Brain is Being Unbalanced: Structure, Science, and the Melancholic's Underworld*

Russell Grigg, *The Place of the Imaginary Ego in the Treatment*

Jonathan Redmond, *Debating the Subject: Is there a Lacanian Neuropsychanalysis?*

Creative Works

Dominique HecqSimon, *Beyond the Doubting of Shadowz*

Simon McNamee, *A Self-Portrait of Σμων*

Editorial Introduction

Russell Grigg

Enseignements des AE

Readers will find original articles, translations of work significant for our field, and readings on contemporary debates and issues in psychoanalysis. *PsychoanalysisLacan* will also publish or republish seminal work not readily available otherwise.

PsychoanalysisLacan will publish, in the public domain, some of the best writing of Lacanian psychoanalysts and researchers. The journal will also publish research in cognate fields that is not readily available or not otherwise available at all.

As an online journal, *PsychoanalysisLacan* will bring contemporary debates and research as well as historically important contributions to speakers of English wherever they live. It will disseminate, discuss and critique applications of Lacan's "reconquest" of the field of psychoanalysis and the unconscious to the analysis of contemporary situations.

PsychoanalysisLacan invites contributions from clinicians and theoreticians on themes relevant to Lacanian psychoanalysis. Each issue will include a number of articles on a theme alongside articles on matters of general interest.

The theme for this first issue is testimonies of the pass. Accordingly, you will find herein presentations by Sonia Chiriaco, Bruno de Halleux, H el ene Bonnaud and Bernard Porcheret that were delivered at the monthly seminar, "Teaching by Analysts of the School", held at the *Ecole de la Cause freudienne* in the year 2012 – 2013. Each presentation, a testimony by an Analyst of the School, is a valuable contribution to our knowledge about the analytic process itself as it is experienced and theorised by the analysand.

This first issue also contains presentations by several members of the Lacan Circle of Australia on a range of issues – love, the ego, neuroscience, melancholia, what it means to speak of Lacan's "later" teaching – as well as two creative pieces.

These are all fresh and valuable contributions. On behalf of the editors, I wish you *bonne lecture*.

Repetition, Iteration

Sonia Chiriaco

■ suggest we differentiate iteration and repetition, as J.A. Miller invited us to do on June 30 this year¹ at the time of the conversation on autism. “For Freud”, he said, “repetition is ‘that’s not it’; it fails and it is repeated. Iteration, on the other hand, is ‘it’s precisely that.’ Repetition is difference [whereas] iteration suppresses the Other.’

This distinction is a valuable move which allows us to throw light on the two planes on which the analytic process is located. This move overcomes another distinction, namely that which Lacan made between the two modes of repetition drawn from Aristotelian categories: in the automaton, which obeys the symbolic order, this is associated with homeostasis, whereas the *tuche*, which obeys no law, disturbs the subject by irrupting without warning.

You will have recognized, in this last mode, the inassimilable real of Freudian trauma which Lacan also emphasized in his last teaching. As J.A. Miller emphasizes, “It is a repetition which comes to rent ... the tranquillity of the symbolic order.” Before Lacan, Freud

was faced with two modes of repetition. As you know, very early on he located the phenomenon of repetition – in 1895 – and did so precisely on the basis of the structure of trauma which is formed in two stages, with the phenomenon of retroactivity which is constitutive of it. Later, in his text “*Remembering, Repeating and Working Through*”² repetition becomes the cause of the frequent aggravation of symptoms in the course of psychoanalytic treatment; he had hit upon a stumbling block which, and he failed notice this till much later, could not be reabsorbed..

For the Freud of 1914, the subject looked for the eternal return of a supposed satisfaction which supposedly took place in a bygone era and he interprets repetition as the search for the traces of a loss. This search for pleasure, never satisfied, the eternal return of failure, is the motor force of repetition.

In 1920, traumatic dreams and the game of *fort-da* signalled to him the existence of a compulsion to repeat “which was placed under the pleasure principle”³. His conclusion was to be a radical one: “The

1 J. A. Miller 19 January 2011

2 Freud S. *Remémoration, répétition, perlaboration, La technique psychanalytique*, 1914, p. 105-115

3 Freud S. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920, *Essays in psychoanalysis*, p. 63

pleasure principle appears in fact to be at the service of the death drives".⁴ In his own analytic work, something in repetition still resisted. Freud would eventually translate this obstacle as a negative therapeutic reaction, then as remnants of symptoms at the end of the analysis. We can see it: the "it's always not quite right" as the motor of repetition which pushes the subject to pursue a lost object indefinitely, meets an "it is the same that returns" of which trauma is the mark.

For the Lacan of the Four Fundamental Concepts, repetition only ever occurs because the encounter is always missed. "We are always called with a real that eludes us",⁵ he said. But what constitutes the power of repetition, is that the real is found behind the automaton. Tuche, is the real as encounter which Freud explained by what in traumatism always insists. In Seminar XI, therefore, we find both the drive which demands something new – we never repeat in the same way – and a drive circuit which keeps reproducing itself identically and indefinitely because it misses the object. Finally, over and above missing the object, we realize that this very circuit is replete with jouissance that can neither be assimilated, nor miss its goal.

We can discern, then, how repetition seeks a forever-lost jouissance and is always comes unstuck at dissatisfaction which obliges one to start again, but also how jouissance insinuates itself into this iteration itself, the reiteration of the same. This same jouissance is what Lacan later calls the One of jouissance.

"The subject is happy", he will say in *Television*. "This is even its definition since it owes nothing to happiness, to wealth in other words, and that all happiness is good for him who holds it, so that he repeats it".⁶

JA Miller showed us how addiction is at the root of the symptom: "one always drinks the same drink one more time ... It is in this sense that Lacan could say that a symptom is an etcetera".

Along his trajectory, the analysand will inevitably come upon these two aspects of repetition that I have just briefly touched on. I will go back over some points of my own journey, keeping to the common theme of this distinction repetition/iteration.

First point: Traversing the fantasy

This traversing was what made me realize, in disturbing them, the scattered elements which stuck together to form the fantasy: the fear of being discovered and the reverse, "the disappearance of being desired", according to a formula which condensed a series of identifications, a traumatic sentence from childhood – "we wanted you when we knew you were going to die", a double nomination, perfectly disguised to hide/show the fleeting moments of exhaustion where the body no longer complies; the object of regard, present at all stages, the system was operating so as to imitate ad infinitum a same jouissance: tirelessly fighting the death drive and the life that was being torn off.

If one follows the later Lacan, the fantasy is a lucubration which gives meaning to the real yet is fundamentally outside meaning. Moreover, repetition makes it function: initially one notices it's about meaningful repetition, the insistent repetition of signifiers drawn from history. Thus, for her, the traumatic sentence had been a fixation – an attachment, Freud would say, around which a fantasy had been built, nourished by deadly identifications. But once traversed, it no longer appears as a scaffold attempting to assemble heterogeneous elements, namely an inaccessible real, the looked-at object, and the Other as desire inasmuch as desire is the desire of the Other. Because in fantasy, the Other is always implicated; here, it was to make me disappear for the Other and to be desired by the Other.

The dialectic of hide/show and its correlate of anxiety, the meaningful equivalents between disappearance

4 Ibid. p. 114.

5 Lacan J. Seminar XI. p. 53

6 Lacan J. *Télévision, Autres écrits*, p. 526

and death came to be concentrated, strengthened around the traumatic sentence whose two faces I had already caught sight of, mortifying and desiring.

However, as we see here, there is not only that of the imaginary and the symbolic in fantasy, but also a pure repetition of the trait, a pure iteration. It's here that Lacan says it's "a window on the real" (Lacan 1967: 254). By examining it closely, one can distinguish there this repetition which feeds it because it is never that, and iteration because it enjoys, iteration of the One of jouissance, the real of which the fantasy itself carries the mark. This is what continues to repeat after the subject has separated from his fantasy, this most opaque jouissance, without the Other, reduced to its most simple expression.

This leads me to my second point:

In the space J.-A. Miller has called "beyond-the-pass," which seems to me therefore infinite, arose the dream which propelled me towards the exit. Without repeating the text here, I will simply note that the significant "young elm" which appeared there, bringing with it a cascade of ambiguities, touched me, at a time when the direction of the analysis seemed to have dried up, with the pure materiality of the signifier, "motor-force" its "driving-force."

This was indeed a novel use of the words, and of the letter I was dealing with. I would only take its full measure after a final interpretation by the analyst: "Write out of the fear of being stupid."

If I single out this comment, it is because it was an interpretation aimed directly at the symptom, which breaks up the defences more than disturbing them, to use the terms used by J.-A. Miller in the meeting at BA. Like any interpretation, this one could also only appear as an afterthought, by its repetitive effects, which led to the conclusion of the analysis; thus, the signifying young elm, which arose from the dream, had put me face to face with the fundamental ambiguity of language; a joke which had brought back, by the analyst's act, an early memory that was related to the trauma of *lalangue*.

I recall it briefly here: humming a song whose meaning I didn't understand, I caught a word, "*hirondelle*" (swallow), which I found charming, then my father's laughter burst forth, bringing with it that of the whole family assembly: because the *hirondelle* (swallow) was only a "*rondelle*" (a slice), ridicule that immediately made me want to disappear out of shame. Even before learning to read and write this blunder came to make me view ambiguity at my own expense. My world was turned upside down.

The text which was the outcome of this last interpretation is a kind of story which shows that writing was not a defence, but also a jouissance. This was the analyst's interpretation which here had touched the real included in the practice of writing. The *hirondelle* (swallow) is not only a jolt, a screen memory, the impact of a shock-wave, an echo of the impact of language on the body, which lays bare the symptom. It still took the analyst's act to make me realize how radical ambiguity, unveiled by the dream of the young elm, had not only returned my rapport with writing, but also hinted at "the impact of the signifier on the body" (Miller 2010-2011). The "writing" of the analyst amounts to a "handling of the sinthome" after which "unfamiliar words" had definitely rid me of this fascination with impeccably ordered words, those words that a long analysis had moreover already well disturbed. What had been traumatic in the first days of life naturally remained elusive; one only recovered the trace in the traumatic equivocal sentence; the memory of the *hirondelle* (swallow) is only a slice. It is the savage manifestation, although accessible, of the traumatism of *lalangue*.

The end of the analysis and the new function of writing that she had produced made merit of the fact that there are other possible uses of trauma. This new alliance with words led me to play around differently with writing which until then had been a container for anxiety, but the jouissance it had held endured. If the symptom is so elusive – says J.A. Miller – it is because it is not a representation ... nor an image ... nor a fantasy ... nor even an idea ... "One cannot say what it is, one can only say that it is".

One last point:

It concerns the expression “watch out,” which had emerged in the pass (Miller 2010-2011), when the desire of the analyst was evoked in me, which one now knows is never a pure desire.

I can say that this meaning made me able, in a flash, to catch sight of what had always made my position waver. In its simplest form, the most condensed, what my unconscious had found, so to speak, impenetrable, was the shock produced by the signifier on the body at birth. If this “watch out” is an inaugural and invariable position, it is also a production of the analysis. Indeed, to accomplish this long journey full of

pitfalls, I needed to recognize, beyond the symptoms and the distressing repetition which had brought me to the analysis, this vital pulse that made me move, jump, desire and so on . . .

Behind the real which encumbers us, there is ... the real.

“Watching out” is pure iteration which points to both what had changed in the analysis and was invigorating and to that which didn’t change.

“The *sinthome*,” says J.-A. Miller – “is the real and its repetition” (Miller 2010-2011).

References

- Freud, S. (2001 [1914]) *Remembering, repeating and working through. (Further recommendations on the technique of psycho-analysis)* *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. Volume XII. (Trans. J. Strachey). London: Vintage.
- Freud, S. (2001 [1920]) *Beyond the pleasure principle. The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. Volume XVIII. (Trans. J. Strachey). London: Vintage.
- Lacan, J. (1983). *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis* (Trans. A. Sheridan. J.-A. Miller Ed.), The seminar of Jacques Lacan, 1964-65, Book XI. London and New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Lacan J. *Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the psychoanalyst of the school, Autres écrits*, p. 254. (Cited by JA Miller, *L’orientation lacanienne, L’être et l’Un*, le 2 février 2011).
- Lacan, J. (1990). *Television: A challenge to the psychoanalytic establishment*. (D. Hollier, R. Krauss, and A. Michelson, eds.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Miller, J.-A. (2010–2011). *L’orientation lacanienne, L’être et l’Un, Lecture series at département de psychanalyse de l’Université de Paris VIII*.
- Miller J.-A. (2011) *Reading a symptom*. (Trans. A. Price). *Hurly Burly*, 6.

Remarkable

Bruno de Halleux

In his most recent seminar, “*Being and the one*”, Jacques-Alain Miller reorganises the end of an analysis by structuring it according to three stages with the ternary of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real (cite). Regarding the symptom, he gives it two axes: the first being faithful to the classical teaching of Lacan, namely that the symptom is a formation of the unconscious and as such that it is decipherable, interpretable and consequently resolvable. The second concerns itself with understanding the symptom as that which remains permanently, as that which doesn’t change, as that which passes through the mill of the signifier and of its multiple significations, remaining as a mark, as an inscription, like a permanent letter on the body. It concerns that which of the symptom endures, which also forced Freud to theorise beyond the pleasure principle and the negative therapeutic reaction in 1920.

Speaking of the symptom as an iteration is to speak of the symptom as the One which repeats itself and which can never be erased.

I have to say that this is the most difficult part of the theory of the pass and of the beyond of the pass as JAM has developed it. How does one identify this S1,

all alone, this mark left on the body by the percussion of the signifier, how to locate this S1 which doesn’t stop repeating without ever being dialectised with an S2? How to find the One all alone that commemorates an unforgettable irruption of jouissance? It isn’t as yet clear to me.

To speak of the end of an analysis from the perspective of the Imaginary register seems to me to make it more accessible. Jacques-Alain Miller, who takes into account texts upon which the classical teaching of Lacan is based as the point of reference — keeping in the register of the Imaginary, says of the end of analysis that it is predicated on the universalisation by man of his particularity. In addition, he links the Freudian notion of particularity to narcissism. The end of an analysis is therefore understood as “getting beyond” narcissism, as a fundamental relation of the image of oneself reflected on the screen of the universal.

Now, I recall the context of my birth whereby I arrived as an unplanned twin, according to my family romance, as a child nearly still-born. How often have I heard this story — my own — of the child saved in extremis by a nurse, of the child that was cherished, that was loved,

because it was a gift from God. I grew up in this position of phallicised child by a mother who brought me up with this persistent belief that I was a miracle. Put in the place of the mother's phallic object, things got even more complicated, because, as a twin, I created a reduced world, a sort of bubble where my brother twin would come to join with my mother only to close off the universe in which I grew up. With twins, one knows how rivalry often gives an imaginary advantage to one of the twins. That is why, I found myself very early on encumbered with an uncontrolled and crippling narcissism.

This narcissism was strongly revived when during my Baccalaureate year, in a boarding school attached to a Benedictine monastery. I had been appointed as captain of abbey school, the highest distinction possible for a collegian.

The counterpart of this narcissism was a profound conviction rooted in the feeling of uselessness which always accompanied me in my actions. A situation which carries alongside mortification since, like a balloon inflated by my narcissism, I was empty and flat when I was being myself. Ending the analysis in this first instance consisted in overcoming my narcissism and releasing me at the same time of this infinite ambivalence of thinking of myself as both successful and unsuccessful man.

I would like to point out a remark of Jacques-Alain Miller's who reminds us that Lacan articulated the Freudian death drive to the Imaginary. If Death lurks behind narcissism, then there is something of death in order to negotiate narcissism. In the resolution of this first moment, a suicidal impulse which had for a long time accompanied me disappeared completely.

I have already elaborated on the end of the analysis through the lens of the Symbolic register, when I made my testimony in the last days of the School as well as during the first evening of the teaching of the *AE*. The dream which concludes my analysis is astonishing because it responds to my fear of the barons of

psychoanalysis which I assumed in the School were propelling me before a Real which I never ceased to put a stop to and faced in violent ways including a loud NO. The signifier "*Twingo*" which emerged in this dream, condenses a whole network of significations which touch on the Paternal function, on the Desire of the mother, on twins, on the Desire of the father that I have for my son, and so forth. Without repeating here my entire development, I will note that the passage in my analysis from Imaginary castration to Symbolic castration necessitated this long detour, which is specific to analysis, to therein proceed through the field of speech and language.

In passing from speech and language through to leading in fine to an impossible saying, to this, which was the title of an afternoon seminar in Belgium with Eric Laurent, "that there is not the last word." The barred subject is the signifier that lacks, the signifier that is missing, the signifier the subject assumes under the form of nothingness or of the lack of being.

I now get to the third moment of my pass, that which takes account of the Real, through the symptom as it iterates "without rhyme or reason" (Miller, 2011). This is the hardest part, because, like the memories of Sonia Chiriaco who quotes Jacques – Alain Miller, "if the Sinthome is so difficult to identify, this is because we don't have any landmarks in the Imaginary, nor any in bodily sensation. [...] One cannot say what it is, one can only say that it exists" (Miller, 2011).

Last November, I had already called to mind the signifier 'being nothing' which has accompanied me for a long time in my relationships with others. The signifier finds its Imaginary double in the image of myself in the form of the other who is faultless. Perfect, slick, complete, successful, the man which the comic, Gad El Maleh, so judiciously caricatured by the name "blond concept." That person who is successful in everything, who embodies all the current ideals of society, who never misses a step, and who never falters. Until late in my analysis, I clothed all others in this famous blond concept. I used to believe in the

existence of this type of man. I used to think that every person I met in my field, including my colleagues in the *Ecole de la Cause Freudienne*, or specialists es Autism, smart patients, indeed, everyone I encountered I saw in the initial instance as embodying this “excellence,” with this incredible trait of not having submitted to castration. In language — and people all around me smiled — it happened to me too often to pin my last encounter on a “this is truly a remarkable person!” I believed, I believed I was hard as iron, and I needed some years before that from time to time to fall off the pedestal which I had erected. Such was one of my symptoms which never ceased repeating itself. A symptom which I took little by little the measure of and which produced its ultimate offshoot during the day before my famous dream, during a supervision session, I expressed to the analyst my wish to present for the Pass and the brake which I experienced facing the immense knowledge of my colleagues of the *Ecole de la cause Freudienne*.

With this logic, I was giving such consistency to the Other that I could only find myself crushed.

During a meal that followed a conference of the Freudian Field in Belgium, which took place after the Pass, surrounded by several friends and colleagues, one of them who had fine hearing, cried: “With Bruno, everyone is remarkable!” We all laughed.

Is this to say that something persists as before? That the ‘remarkable’ with which I pinned all new subjects hadn’t been reduced by the steamroller which is the analytic process? I don’t think so. On the contrary. Whereas for a number of years I found myself afflicted by the Imaginary and Symbolic relationship where

the Other was ascribed the worth and weight which I procured for it, today, I take rather the ‘remarkable’ as a remainder which is no longer active, of which was the matrix of my relationship with the Other. I no longer believe this. It is inconsequential. Somehow, this ‘remarkable’ was no longer part of the universal order, not at all. It no longer applied to “all men.” There was no longer a universal paternal idealisation. It is like the foam of a wave, leaving a trace on the beach. I read in this remainder which make my friends laugh, the emergence of what is there, the indelible mark of what characterised my relationship with the Other.

If the remarkable is no longer of the universal register, it’s status is changed, it is pinned henceforth as the most singular. What was most surprising during my analysis was without doubt the clearing up of my confusion with respect to my father. This one has fallen, it has become contingent, it shines today by pere-version, by that which is singular, and an astonishing thing, as this father is today in the evening of his life, I have reconnected a thread with him who excluded me from the field of speech. An issue evaporated, he became someone in a series of men I am attached to. I have without doubt surveyed his “remarkable,” his version of *jouissance*, his impossible.

Today my work as an analyst is to find in each of those who knock on my door “the remarkable,” which is hidden underneath the trappings of their demand. I have myself become “remarkable,” in other words, the symptom, that which was there always and which I didn’t want to assume has become now a motor which energises me, it sustains me and spurs me on and — one could also say — a symptom which iterates.

Translation David Westcombe

References

- Miller, J.A. (2011). *L'orientation Lacanienne, L'Etre et l'un, cours du 18 mai 2011, inedit*
- Miller, J.A. (2010-2011). *L'Etre et l'Un*

Iteration of the Symptom: Of the One of Jouissance

Hélène Bonnaud

At the end of an analysis one encounters remnants like condensed words that are being repeated. To say the same thing in an analysis is to come up against the real while at the same time wanting to move past it. In my analysis I often stumbled upon encounters with the impossible and I always sought to overcome them. Thus, the question of the body and of the anxiety related to what the body expresses as painful symptoms always underpinned my analysis. The body was the site of an irreducible, opaque jouissance. The body was that which resisted analysis, that which could not cross a zone; it was a bit like the “occupied zone” of my childhood, an incomprehensible signifier. The body stayed in the occupied zone, prevented as it was from crossing over to the other side and reaching the freedom it was unable to enjoy. This is why the following sentence from Lacan’s lectures delivered at American universities speaks to me: “Man could say that he is a body and this would be very sensible,” and further: “On the other hand, man does not stress that he is a body, but rather that he has one. And this body, he adds, is treated with indifference; man treats his body like a piece of furniture; he packs it on board a train and he happily enjoys the ride” (Lacan 1976: 49). So there were the bodies packed on death trains, and

there is the body that one has; the body that manufactures symptoms so that one becomes alive, and the live body one leans upon to feel that one exists.

One etc...

Iteration is an etc. Lacan says in his Seminar *Le Sinthome*. There is a repetition inherent in the symptom that is written as “dot dot dot.” It is not a word that is being repeated, but rather a symptom that iterates. Iteration is an action that repeats a process. Each time the event is being repeated it is as though it was the first time. It is being repeated with regard to the identical. Jacques-Alain Miller has dubbed it “*semelfactif*,” which means one single time.

At the AMP congress, Eric Laurent called “rumour” the way a mother kept blaming the birth of her child for her suffering. This rumour left a trace in the infant’s unconscious and affected its body. In “*Or worse*,” Lacan says: “knowledge affects the body of the speaking being in that it fragments its jouissance—cutting it up so that fragments of it fall and produce what I call object a” (Lacan 2001: 550). The illegible knowledge of the mother’s speech had affected the subject’s body, fragmenting its jouissance along the way, thereby cutting up the body and fixing jouissance

on the oral zone since it was precisely that which was traumatised at the very start of life. Thus I consider that maternal speech, injurious as it may have seemed to me in my analysis, turned out to be the vector of a fragmented jouissance—a jouissance that became fixated in one single locus of the body—on a rim—the oral zone. The mother’s master signifiers settled down there to make up the subject’s “*lalangue*.”

In the course of one memorable session, the analyst’s interpretation “you are an addict” named one form of addiction, the writing of the drives that iterates and does not stop analysing itself, a loop tying back this addictive rapport to speech, a jouissance endlessly reiterated in the analytic session. It was indeed related to maternal rumour. The addiction to speech came to say the jouissance of speaking beyond meaning. This addictive jouissance is articulated to the mother’s *lalangue* as the echo of her words—words forever identical and beyond meaning. The only thing left was the resonant trace of her words that never ceased being repeated in the analytic setting.

The analysis has consisted of giving signification to the maternal message beyond meaning, in deciphering it until its fallacious truth could be heard. Analysis has reduced this message to its soul, of which Lacan says: “the soul of the symptom is something hard, like a bone” (Lacan 1976: 60). Despite the stop-gap produced by this interpretation, something remained impossible to name, and it concerned the body in its real dimension, the body-parasite whose symptoms became fixated on the margins of non-meaning—like a writing that cannot be read, a writing that ignores knowledge and which is not addressed to the Other.

At this point in time of my thinking about the difference between the maternal rumour as real cause of oral jouissance and the *sinthome* as “wrenching off,” as mode of enjoyment that came to be written from the paternal sentence “if it’s a girl we’ll throw her out the window,” I single out maternal rumour as having imprinted the trace of jouissance on one of the body’s rims.

The beyond meaning of the paternal sentence

It is an enigma that I never worked on during my analysis. But what precise status can one give to this mechanism? It is not repression, because I’ve always known this sentence. No sense could be made of it. It has thus remained empty, neither forgotten nor remembered, like a letter that one does not want to open for fear of not being able to ascertain what it contains. It has remained a blank letter—impossible to read. It has not been communicated to the Other; it has not been possible to historicise it in the dialectic of analytic discourse. It has remained fixed, and as such it constitutes a defence against the real. This reveals that the status of the paternal sentence is different from the status of the maternal rumour which the subject has not ceased to want to analyse, understand and symbolise and which has been granted a response in the transference unconscious. Here, there is something like a hole. The sentence has remained outside of its own historical dimension.

J.A. Miller speaks of the “inhistorisable” in his course on the “*leave in French*” in his seminar about the “*Uns du laps*” (Miller 1990: 14). He argues that from the moment we try to explain the theory of the unconscious as expounded in the later Lacan, a theory which does not hinge on hysteria and history, but rather on psychosis, everything changes. He bases his argument on Lacan’s commentary on Freud’s *Verneinung*, with particular reference to the Wolf Man’s hallucination of the cut finger. A hallucination is a phenomenon that escapes history and the historical, subjective, and semantic refashioning of truth. It puts into question the primary dimension of historicisation, pointing to a breach in historicisation. In order for it to be historicised, one element must have been symbolised. Primary historicisation is only possible if there is primary symbolisation. Drawing on the letter of Freud’s text, Lacan concludes that what returns in hallucinations is a content that has not been symbolised, something that has escaped primary symbolisation, and which is therefore, in the light of Miller’s paper and this analysis, unhistoricisable. Where history supposes that there is some primary

symbolisation, negation takes the form of repression whereas the real is the consequence of the operation of forclusion. On the one hand we have the mechanism of neurosis and on the other, that of psychosis.

In that same text, J.A. Miller draws attention to the opposition that Lacan makes between remembrance and reminiscence. There is remembering when an element is brought back together with its symbolic articulation whereas the feeling of unreality “corresponds to the immemorial forms that appear on the palimpsest of the imaginary.” (Lacan 2006: 327) “Immemorial forms” means here that we are not in the register of memory, but on the contrary, in something that is already all by itself. These immemorial forms appear “when the text, leaving off”—outside the symbolic text—“lays bare the medium of reminiscence” (Lacan 2006: 327). This means that the subject is then unable to elaborate any truth from his or her experience. Remembering is situated on the side of signifying networks, of chains brought about by the symbolic whereas reminiscence is left blank.

This difference between remembrance and reminiscence opens up an interesting reading of the paternal sentence. It became frozen outside of time, the trace of a real that was impossible to say—as if it had been written on a parchment that has disappeared without any trace. I am not saying that there was forclusion of the paternal sentence, but I nonetheless use this compass towards the real in order to say that it has been maintained in a zone between repression and rejection. It is therefore akin to some immemorial form, in its unreal guise, withdrawn as “one all alone.” It is the signifier “throw out” that found resonance in the body of the subject. I had never made the connection between this signifier and the sense of my body falling, an experience I’d had as far back as I can remember, but this enabled me to do so: once the sentence was put into context, it obviously came to resonate with the symptom in the body. In a way this sentence is a response from the real. It became inscribed in the body and not on the rim of the body as I was able to show with the maternal rumour. In this case the whole body was affected. The sensation of

falling, of vertigo which necessitates that one seeks in oneself the inverse movement that enables a freedom from it, that is form primary ejection; I have called this “a wrenching out from the real” (Bonnaud 2012: 112).

This wrenching out from the real suggests how the paternal signifier “throw out the window” has functioned as S1 in the body through pure resonance in the body. This body is then an object that was allowed to, or made to, fall; it was ejected—ejected from its own body as having. This wrenching demonstrates that we have a body because one can lose it. We have it all the more because we fear being let down by it. The experience of this particular sinthome is that of the body that gives way; a sensation that leaves the subject on the brink of the hole.

Thus if unconscious knowledge is a lucubration sourced from maternal language, the real unconscious is marked by an event of the body. The one partakes of fallacious truth right to the bone while the other of the sinthome as iterating has no meaning and cannot be crossed. It is a jouissance that puts into brackets one’s whole life. The sinthome is not the return of the repressed; it cannot be appeased with truth or meaning. It is a jouissance that is produced in the body and that excludes the Other of truth. The body, in this example, is commanded by its own jouissance.

When Lacan reduces the sinthome to “*Yad’l’Un*,” he draws attention to the real as iteration, as kernel, as centre, as that which remains of signifying articulation. He meant that there is not—the body. This is why Lacan suggested that the Other of the signifier is the body. Beyond the signifier there is the body and its jouissance. Analysis enables us to seek its real causality and to get a glimpse of it. For the real cannot be resolved. It can be demonstrated, which is not of the same register. To demonstrate this is what guides my work as analyst of the school. It is some symptomatic remnant, for psychoanalysis is a knowledge about this bit of the real which is the body as parasite—its little apparatus—which accompanies my lucubration.

References

- Bonnaud, H. (2012) *Un arrachement au réel. La cause du désir*, 80 (février).
- Lacan, J. (1976). *Conférences et entretiens dans les universités nord-américaines. Scilicet 6/7, Paris, Le Champ freudien.*
- Lacan, J. (2001). '...ou pire...' in *Autres Écrits. Paris: Éditions du Seuil*, pp. 547-52.
- Lacan, J. (2006). *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (B. Fink, H. Fink & R. Grigg, Trans.). London; New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Miller, J.A. (1990). *L'esp d'un lapsus, l'esp d'une hallucination. Quarto, 90 (juin).*

The Bodily Root of Symptoms

Bernard Porcheret

1) Theoretical preliminaries

*Lalangue and sinthome*¹

We must start with Lacan's contribution. There is language and it is structured. It acts as a brake on *jouissance*; it is used for speaking, communicating and constructing our fictions. Then there is *lalangue*, that is, the material consisting of sounds, phonemes and words in their raw state and not articulated into the structure of a discourse – material that collides with living bodies. *Lalangue* is something that is endured or suffered. It is a passion. Human beings are the patients of this encounter between *lalangue* and the body. It leaves marks on the body. What Lacan calls “the sinthome” is the substance of such marks. These are events, bodily events. Man has a body, and events occur within this body.

These events are covered over by the superimposed level of language as structure. That is, ordinarily they are “sublimated.” Every patient is dealing with symptoms and complaints about them. If he turns to psychoanalysis – transference to psychoanalysis is often already there – he assumes that unconsciously his symptom means something. He will give it the value of a message. Symptoms mean something. He

will therefore attempt to decipher his symptom with the help of a psychoanalyst. Sooner or later a negative therapeutic resistance will appear. It is the indication that a “I do not want to know anything about it” is at work. Wanting to know nothing about a wish-to-enjoy [*jouir*] that symptoms feed one. This is what Freud calls fixation, *Fixierung*. If the analyst succeeds in blocking the unconscious's interpretative delusion, that is, in disturbing the unconscious as a defence, this deciphering will run up against a remainder. It is this remainder that Lacan refers to as a sinthome. A Lacanian sinthome is a symptom that has been disconnected and retains no value as a formation of the unconscious. It is what is untreatable in the marks *lalangue* leaves on the body. It's a form of pure *jouissance*; that is, it lies radically outside meaning. While speaking beings [*parlêtre*] do not recover from this mark of *jouissance*, they may accept it and make use of it once they have fully explored it.

In his 2010- 2011 lecture series, *L'Un tout seul*, J.-A. Miller distinguishes between being and existence, between ontology and henology. Ontology and

¹ Notes taken at Jacques-Alain Miller's 2010-2011 lecture series, *L'Un tout seul* [*The only One*], and his earlier lecture series, *Pièces détachées* [*Spare parts*], during the course of which *Le séminaire XXIII* was published.

its *semblants*: with language and speech I create fictions and I bring what does not exist into existence. Henology is a way of situating the real in psychoanalysis. This real corresponds to the initial shock of the collision between signifiers and the body, which produces a jouissance that one must not have, an event that is always singular and contingent. It is an originary event, one that lies at the very origins of the subject. This Lacanian real or Lacanian existent is brought about by signifiers, but signifiers outside meaning – that is, letters. These are not letters that are secondary to speech; letters that speak and that are read are always on the side of semblants, where this form of writing records speech. They are uniliteral letters that are always the same and which are not there to be read, for they are traces. This form of writing manipulates these traces. And we can add that this Lacanian existent has nothing to do with the pulsating, preconceptual presence we find in Sartre's naturalism. Psychoanalysts need to go beyond listening, which is always listening for meaning. Reading the letter, which as such lies outside meaning, is what distinguishes psychoanalysis from psychotherapy.

Reading symptoms therefore consists in weaning symptoms off meaning. There is a huge paradox in the fact that the psychoanalytic setting, with its supposition of knowledge – that is, the transferential unconscious – is a requirement for uncovering and coming to grips with the real. There is no analysis without the analytic setting and the presence of bodies: Existence in the Lacanian sense attaches to and detaches itself from a signifier-based procedure... Existence emerges from the work of language upon language and it presupposes that a logical apparatus takes possession of what is said [*le dit*], grasps, surrounds, compresses and organises it, and solders the real together with language (Miller, 2010-2011, March 2011).

How can we designate the real?

Lacan invents a saying, “*Yad'lun*,” “There is some One” (Lacan, 2008 [1971-1972]: 127).² This is the kernel of the fact that there is discourse – the discourse necessary for there to be being. The One is prior to being. Every signifier, each signifier, is One. Any signifier is One when it is the only one. The signifier qua One precedes, presides over and conditions being. The signifier, in so far as it exists as real, presides over and conditions all equivocations, that is to say, all the semblants of being in discourse. This original One therefore has to be conceived as the only One. This single signifier is effaced, it is an originary mark, Freud's originary repression. It makes it possible to position the lack. Gottlob Frege turns this lack that comes from the One, which is a lack because it is effaced, into the sign of inexistence.³ Therefore, at first there has to be One, one that is effaced. This locus of inexistence is formed by the eclipse of the original One and is the locus of the Other, which is the locus of being. This effacement is marked with a zero, the initial zero of the series of whole numbers.

The emergence of jouissance and addiction

Along with this One of existence, there is the substance of jouissance, which is opaque to meaning. This is Freudian fixation, *Bedeutung*. There is a complete split between *Bedeutung* and *Sinn*. The One is effectively imprinted on the body, affecting it. This always-contingent event is traced out upon the body. It is an affection that traces and an intrusion of jouissance. This enjoying substance belongs to a completely different register from that of signifying substance. It is assigned to the body, which is not the body in the mirror, the specular body, but the body that enjoys itself. The expression, “the body enjoying itself” indicates the reflexivity of jouissance. The drive is the drive of the One; it is acephalic and reflexive; it is autistic. This disturbance or disorder that is jous-

2 Literally, “There is some One.”

3 Only set theory makes it possible to operate with the absence of being, contrary to the theory of classes whose beings are this or that. In set theory, all that the elements have in common is being ones and belonging to this or that set indicated by such and such a letter – except that in set theory one also counts the empty set when one counts sub-sets. The empty set appears as a One-more. This One comes via signifiers, it breaks down our world, it is primary and cannot be deduced.

sance, brought about by the branding mark of the One, is therefore the irruption of unforgettable jouissance. This is what will be commemorated by the repetition of the One.

It is, as J.-A. Miller remarks, fundamental that in this cycle of repetitions and commemoration of the same, the instances are not summed. In this respect, addiction differs from addition (2011: 58).⁴ One never learns anything from these experiences.⁵ This jouissance lies outside meaning and is mute. Lacan discovered it in female sexuality. In his very first seminars he indicates that the letter feminises and that femininity lies outside the symbolic. It is not all there yet, far from it, but this does point in the right direction. With the *sinthome* he generalises this jouissance. And what specifies it is its fundamental opacity. We have to insist upon the fact that this jouissance (*jouissance*) is not that of enjoyed sense (*sens-joui*). It must absolutely be distinguished from the object a. The object a is a form of jouissance that is linked to discourse and is dependent upon the signifiers which produce it by means of the machine of discourse. “Object a” designates the type of jouissance that has meaning. Effectively, the object a corresponds to the kernel of jouissance that can be elaborated and located.

Thus, symptoms repeat purely and simply. They iterate and don't make sense. One observes them. One uncovers them, and even, as I have been saying, go beyond the object a, which is also a *semblant*. This repetitive jouissance lies outside knowledge; it is an auto-jouissance. It is an S1 without an S2, where the body takes on the function of S2. The body is the Other (Miller 2010-2011 [11, 18 & 25 May 2011]. There is the One and the body which appears as the Other of signifiers, by which it has been marked and where this constitutes an event. This bodily event, which is what this jouissance is, appears as the true cause of psychical reality. This is no longer the Other of truth

but the Other of the body and its jouissance. The body here is not organised by desire but by its own jouissance. This jouissance remains unknown, inaccessible and incessant.

To conclude my initial theoretical remarks

The real in psychoanalysis is, then, this level at which existence combines with writing that lies outside sense. The real in psychoanalysis is a conjunction of signifiers as substance and jouissance. The conjunction is always a contingent one. Here, the real is lawless, outside the laws of language. This unforgettable experience of jouissance is like a forced entry. It disrupts the order that was there before. It is a malfunction.

The trauma of the collision between signifiers and the body has a disordering effect and creates a fault line or a gap that we can call the phallus, fault or sin – but also impotence, which is the neurotic's mask over the impossible. This fault line always has a tendency to increase.

2) What my analysis has taught me about the bodily basis of symptoms

You aren't in a hurry!

My first round of analysis ended on “disbeing” [*désêtre*]. Meaning had been bleached out and dried up, with its effects of depression and enthusiasm. I met my second wife. Then, ten years later, I start a second round of analysis with a second analyst, who begins by telling me, “*You aren't in a hurry!*” I have a dream following the first session, and it indicates with a great deal of precision that my analysis recommences precisely at the point at which I had stopped eight years previously. Disbeing does not affect existence, and I was still a long way away from having got the measure of what, for me, formed my bodily event. Between my first and final round of analysis – my

4 “L'addiction, c'est la racine du symptôme qui est fait de la répétition inextinguible du même Un. C'est le même, c'est-à-dire que cela ne s'additionne pas. (On boit toujours le même verre une fois de plus.)”

5 The etymology of the word “addiction” comes from the Latin “*ad dicere*” or “*ad dictus*” which signifies: spoken to. The slaves of Rome were “spoken to” by this or that master. In later Latin “*ad-dictio*” signifies: physical restraint. Thus, an addict is a slave, dependant on a practice.

fourth, which I called “A toboggan in the transference” – there was, first, during my second analysis, the time required for a new unfolding of my family romance and for the construction of a fantasy that would become reduced to the sentence, “A child is ill.” It was necessary to unpick the failure of this consistent and imagined Other who was the custodian of my jouissance. Thus, as my fantasy, which is an imaginary formation of the drive, progressively faded, so my symptom, which was its real production, was able to be unlocked a little bit more. This happened in my third round of analysis. First, deconstructing (*démontage*) the semantics of my symptom, exposing its grammar and making an initial approach to its drive dimension resulted in extracting from it the letter “*pressé*,” “in a hurry.” I deduced the name of the symptom from it, “*l’homme-pressé*,” “man in a hurry.” However, I had not yet got to the real root of it. This was a semblant, a “foothold.” I clung to it, I was happy with it, as if merely giving it a name was enough. It hid the real root of the symptom. It insisted. It was still necessary to reduce the Other, paradoxically supported by the transference unconscious, if one was to dissolve the symptom in the real and expose what was to be the final term of the analysis.⁶

Several years!

A final phase unfolds, then, which goes from the end of this third analysis to the conclusion of the final one. Several gaps will appear, right till the end and its leap to a conclusion with the toboggan.

The third analysis ends with the word “*femme*,” woman. That’s the last word. It’s like a plug. Life goes on, but contingent events occur, one by one, which designate and index what, in my body, continues to be written.

My symptom continues to settle in. Its reiteration makes it increasingly obvious, and its lethal aspect ends up dominating the picture. A series of bodily events occur. My father dies several weeks after my

mother has a stroke and loses part of her sight. And then, three days later, my mother-in-law dies of erd while being resuscitated. Maintaining appearances, I am, however, affected down to the heart of my being, a heart attack – well named – does the trick, with no aftereffects, even though I have another one, which is treated early. A background of negative transference sets in, which I quickly interpret as the structural absence of a response from the Other. Two or three years later, a second, lengthy and serious incident, confirmed by a surgeon, occurs. The scar is a trait on my body that for me is the sign of a deeper mark. I establish a connection between my body and *lalangue*, which is confirmed by J.-A. Miller’s lecture series, *L’Un tout seul*, which for me will be a sort of interpretative agency over the course of the year 2010-2011.

It took a crisis to bring me back to the couch. In the summer of 2011, once again a contingent event happened to someone close to me. As a result of this a decisive ambiguity arose: “Cancer of the tongue,” *cancer de la langue*, was ambiguous with “cancer of *lalangue*,” “*cancer de lalangue*.” “Ambiguity makes a void or a hole – bordered by the letter – resonate. It isolates the letter of jouissance in symptoms” (Miller 2007: 28 March 2007). *Passage à l’acte*, I rush into the prompter’s box. I go back into analysis with the aim of going right to the end and going through the pass again. Eight months, eight dreams, one parapraxis, one acting out, one bodily event, one intervention.

Three Lacanian formulas that are to be read together: there is no sexual relationship, auto-jouissance and there is some One. With these three formulas I can show how my defence was disorganised, with the striking effect of bringing my *sinthome* to light.

1) There is no sexual relationship

Two dreams got even with the signifier “woman,” which was the final word of the third analysis. They uncorked the bottle.

⁶ “This hole in knowledge included in the real has been described by J-A Miller as a separated asystematic fragment of fictional knowledge. Effectively, the Other is made by the eclipse of the original One. This is where the unconscious as a defence is apparent.” “*Le réel au XXIème siècle, présentation du thème du IXème congrès de l’AMP*”, *La cause du désir*, n°82.

The dream about femininity (no. 2) takes place after a class I gave in which I get confused, neglecting how radically outside the symbolic femininity is, foreclosed. In this dream, one clear statement stands out: “In *Seminar III*, Lacan’s sole interest in psychosis is so that he can show the foreclosed nature of femininity.” That is what, at bottom, I did not wish to know despite my Lacanian baggage.

This was followed several days later by “the dream of the bottomless pit” (no. 3). The setting is unclear, there are dunes, the North Sea. The atmosphere is sombre and murky. I am with my wife in a holiday house. A female colleague and her husband happen to be staying in a neighbouring house. They invite us over. We have to reply to the invitation. Despite my wife’s hesitation, I go over to say yes. At first she is not there, and then she arrives. She is usually so feminine and bright, but she is dishevelled, her hair is sopping wet and messed up. She is all puny and I take her in my arms. Stunted as she is, she shrivels up. Discombobulated and distraught, I cross the sandy garden. Near the exit, against a low wall and seated on the ground is a young man I know, a little crazy and backward. He says, trying to reassure me, “Don’t worry, everything will be all right.” There is a well close by him. It is unclear. On my return, my wife is beside herself. On the telephone she agrees with their daughter who is complaining about mine. Blunder, anxiety, awakening. The images of my daughter and my friend blend with one another, their feminine characteristics dissolve, they disappear in my arms and disintegrate. Then comes the statement: “There is a bottomless pit.” The woman disappears.

2) From the body’s auto-jouissance to the body that enjoys itself

The first dream of this last period of analysis locates what is at stake in my analysis and what its terrain is (no. 1). The dreamer’s unconscious body, isolated and headless, naked on exposed terrain surrounded by ruins, is racked by spasms, as if it were being struck by bullets, as in a scene from the film *Full Metal Jacket*. A body is enjoying all on its own. The body is there.

This auto-jouissance of the body reappears at the end of my analysis when a malaise, a bodily event, the reiteration of a mute jouissance and a veritable proof-by-the-new surface in the plane taking me to Tel Aviv for the Study Days of the NLS, *Reading a symptom*. It thrusts the “making oneself . . .,” the third moment of the drive, to the status of paradigms. The obscenity of the body that enjoys itself, its autism, the shamelessness of this “making oneself be seen.” We have gone from the Other speech to the Other reduced to the real body, the Other on which the One is imprinted.

3) There is some One

Two dreams – the interjection dream and the striking out dream – indicate that an unspeakable and incessant mark is hiding under the imaginary shreds of the Other of speech.

The interjection dream (no. 4): I’m doing an oil painting. I’m trying to clear up a stain. A friend calls out to me from up ahead. After a few metres I realise that I’ve left my canvas in the middle of all the others. The idea comes to me that my son, who is young, might smudge it. I go back, but too late! “You idiot!” I yell at him. I wake up. I wish I were dead. The idiot is me, always wanting to clear away and cover over the stain. The interjection becomes: the One is hiding underneath dejection.

The striking out dream (no. 5): I’m looking at a vague relief map of northern Spain. My analyst goes past and uses a yellow highlighter to cross out a pile of rubble. Letters of the name of a town, *Llogar*, with an accent on the “o.” My analyst takes my iPhone. I no longer have any means of access to knowledge. In a state of anxiety, I catch up with him and take my phone back. Without looking at me, without speech and in an offhand manner, he gives me a broken telephone, the child’s toy. I wake. “*Llogar*” is a condensation of “*lugar*,” place, and “*llegar*,” arrive. The acute accent points like an index finger: you have arrived at this place. Underneath the dejection, there is a hole, the product of a trait. The o is a zero barred by the accent. Ambiguity over the zero. My unconscious responds

like a letter (*lettre*) game. Ambiguity over being (*l'être*). Then the schema from the last of J-A Miller's lectures. What's going on with my consent to this striking out, to this inaccessible and unceasing mark?

A slip of the tongue, occurring after a session of analysis, brings the analysis to an end. While I am discussing an institutional matter with my analyst after a session, I say, "*Je suis un aliment apaisant,*" instead of, "*Je suis un élément apaisant.*" This produces a cascade of oral drive events that had remained untouched for so long.

"The dream of the tomb-man" (no. 6) followed: descending the stairs in a famous arcade in Nantes, with a man at my side. The man falls and, in the dream, the dreamer says to himself: it's time he woke up and got up. The ambiguity is fertile.

It leads to an interpretation by the analyst which causes the master signifier "*croque-mort,*" undertaker, to fall, which had been continuing to maintain the Other's consistence along with that of its objects a, "these mobile indexes of jouissance in speech." It masked the voracity of the real aspect of the drive. This is the leap from the toboggan. I had produced this signifier in the session. On my way to the door, I retrieve my coat from the coat hook. Silence, no sound of the door opening to go and get the next analysand. I turn around, my analyst is there wearing a dark coloured suit – a contingency of interpretation – a suit that one would wear on solemn occasions. In the shadows in the corridor, behind the waiting room, he faces the wall, motionless, mimicking an undertaker. Blown away, "cut off," dumbfounded, separate.... In the street a few metres further on, lighter, I laugh. A word comes to mind: "breath."⁷ The breath remains. The interpretation made the master signifier "undertaker" fall, a word that I had produced earlier in the session. "Undertaker", this S1, this ego ideal, this identification and its superego injunction, multiplied by the gaze attributed imaginarily to the Other, looking down on the scene of the fantasy. He persisted so as

to give it consistency. Lacan's remark concerning the gaze an obstacle to the conclusion of the treatment in the obsessional subject is well illustrated here. Imitating him, mute and without a gaze, the analyst assumes it himself and separates me from it. I was this gaze gazing at itself, this voice invoking itself. Crunch. I was this mouth to which I was offering myself as food in order to appease it.

Am I thereby cured of my addiction? The breath remains.

What is this word "breath"? Is it my fictions that have been "*soufflées,*" flabbergasted, turning out to be as inexistent as a flash in the sky, as inexistent as objects a? For sure, no symptom has been flabbergasted, getting its consistency from them, confirming what Lacan needs: that it is dissolved into the real. Is this a new rim that will close upon the hole? Have I invented a way of dealing with one's "breath"?

Whooping cough at the age of one left me on the verge of dying. The return of the pulmonary Thing transfixed my parents. Its impact upon my body, by knotting itself to the absence of a signifier, made this contingency into an inaugural body event. Its iteration, covered by the superimposed level of my neurosis, presents two aspects. It's mortal aspect, that of the signifier that kills. The other, its aspect of jouissance, is its life power. The word "breath" indicates this living aspect. As if there had been a topological turning around, as if this point of going back over the symptom's steps, as it were, at which the effects of creation bloom. And so I point out to my analyst that, as my analyst, I am left to gently blow upon the fictions of being. I undertake the procedure of the pass once again, because I am left to speak from the place of this hole in the Other.

You haven't come!

Strangely, I said to myself that I would only return to my analyst once I had received acknowledgement of my demand. Two weeks went by, I wait. I miss

⁷ "*Soufflé*", related to "*souffle*" means dumbfounded.

two sessions. Acting out. On my return, I say so to my analyst. He thunders, almost going hoarse, “You haven’t come!” And this resonates with: you are not in a hurry. Ethical backsliding, recalling the *Wo Es war soll ich werden*. I did not wish to give ground over my oral jouissance.

It was after this that I experienced this profound malaise in the plane taking me to Israel, which I mentioned above. Gathering myself, I joke: “*le petit marrant*,” funny guy. I finally understand the meaning of this signifier that would sometimes appear quite often. Those around me were afraid. I had no shame in displaying myself, my body in jouissance, the ego in exile. The drive is voracious. Two terms then struck me: “caution” and “responsibility.” One has to be careful with this mortal game. One must also assume responsibility for it.

In conclusion

I have described this word “breath,” “breathing,” (*souffle*) as a discrete word.

This formulation, which had emerged at the time of my final pass, indicates a movement, a leap towards a vanishing point, and aspiration which I was consenting to towards an elaboration without closure. It has no closure in the sense in which there is no final word, where, whenever something is pinned down, some-

thing that complements it is called for. From grasping one thing to grasping another, immediately let go of, caught up in this endless movement of generalised equivocation, is to allow oneself to be captured by the real, to make oneself its dupe! (Laurent 2011)

This is what the last dream of my analysis indicates, the one in which the “bottomless well” (no. 8) occurs. It designates the hole in the Other. “I forgot my session, I will take the next train, but I cannot find my keys for leaving home. The manuscripts of the Dead Sea in their jars. The last room in the Jerusalem [Holocaust] Memorial, *Yad Vashem*. It is a circular library, incomplete forever, in which ID numbers and names are recorded: nothing but numbers, nothing but letters. In the centre, the bottomless pit. And above, the life of people, their fictions. I wake. There was no session that day. I get up” (Porcheret 2012).

My analysis, whose final words in my last session were “I am happy,” allow me to step aside in relation to my own program for jouissance. They indicate satisfaction that has subsided. This gnawing away at my body by *lalangue*, this cancerous *lalangue*, is what in my first testimony I called, “the drive’s voracity.” The jouissance that was produced, its iteration and its addiction, are what here I am calling “the bodily root of my symptom.”

References

- Lacan J. (2008). ...*Ou pire: Le séminaire livre XIX*. Paris: Seuil.
- Laurent, E. (2011). *L'impossible nomination, ses semblants, son sinthome. Cause du désir no. 77*.
- Miller, J.-A. (2004-2005). *Pièces détachées [Spare parts]*. Lecture series at département de psychanalyse de l'Université de Paris VIII.
- Miller, J.-A. (2007). *Cours l'orientation lacanienne*. Lecture series at département de psychanalyse de l'Université de Paris VIII.
- Miller, J.-A. (2010-2011). *L'Un tout seul [The only one]*. Lecture series at département de psychanalyse de l'Université de Paris VIII.
- Miller, J.-A. *Lire un symptôme*. Mental, n° 26, juin 2011. Miller, J.-A. (2014). *Le réel au XXIème siècle, présentation du thème du IXème congrès de l'AMP. La cause du désir, n°82*.
- Porcheret, B. (2012). *La pulsion est vorace. Cause du désir no. 83*.

Lacan's Psychoanalytic Way of Love

Dr. Grace Tarpey

In a recent interview, Jacques-Alain Miller was asked: Does psychoanalysis teach us something about love? To which he responded: A great deal, because it's an experience whose mainspring is love. It's a question of that automatic and more of than not unconscious love that the analyst brings to the analyst, and which is called transference. It's a contrived love, but made of the same stuff as true love. It sheds light on its mechanism: Love is addressed to the one you think knows your true truth (Miller, 2008).

In this paper I argue that, in turn, the way the Lacanian psychoanalyst holds this address for truth is itself true love.

"What is love" for Lacan? Firstly I think that love is fundamentally ethical for Lacan. Thus the question: "What is Ethics?" In raising these Socratic questions one cannot avoid the realm of philosophy, which is, etymologically speaking, the realm of love for knowledge. And for Socrates, true knowledge begins with the Delphic dictum: "Know thyself." In order to know anything, philosophy begins with the subjective "I" who experiences wonder and asks questions. The first questions philosophy asks are: "Who am I?" and

"How do I know who I am?" Classically, the questions "What is ethics?" and "What is love?" follow on from the ontological and epistemological questions.

For Lacan, ethics emerges in the interval between Aristotle and Freud, between the interval of rational knowledge and unconscious desire. Aristotle's ethics privileges the human faculty of reason for the development of good habits. Lacan points out that ethics for Aristotle is worked out against a science of "habits, training, and education" (Lacan, 1992, 314). As opposed to Aristotle's trust in rational deliberation as the mainspring of a proper ethics, Lacan turns to Freud's discovery of the unconscious and privileges the realm of desire as the well spring of an ethical life. In the Ethics of Psychoanalysis, Lacan is clear that prior to the question of rational knowledge, ethics is the "activity of living in conformity with the desire that is within you" (Lacan 1992: ch.14).

At the same time that Lacan was writing about the ethics of psychoanalysis, the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas was insisting on the priority of ethics to epistemology. I think that Levinas philosophy of ethics is worthwhile thinking about together with Lacan's theory of ethics. Instead of prioritising the knowl-

edge of being, Levinas places ethics at the heart of human experience. Comparably, for Lacan, ethics as it pertains to desire is more paramount than knowledge. Although Lacan thinks about the workings of desire differently to Levinas, their conceptualisation of desire in terms of how it relates to ethics is similar in that Levinas posits the idea that desire is desire for the Other; and that, differently from need, desire can never be fulfilled. Furthermore, most significantly, Levinas shows how desire is realised in the singularity of a separated being who exists in a fundamental relationship to language which itself is the concretisation of desire. Clearly this is close to Lacan's theory, which posits desire as the absolute condition for the generation of subjectivity through the individual's entry into the symbolic order of language (Lacan 1977: 265).

In a nutshell for Levinas, ethics is based on the desire for responsibility – the subject's "ability to respond" to the other. Responsibility is characterised in the self – other relation as a relationship of alterity rather than identity. The ethical self approaches the other person as other, as different from oneself. Levinas's idea of separation, together with the notion of singularity, is crucial for his conception of ethics. Levinas maintains that ethics is possible only if the other is other with respect to the point at which the "I" departs, the point, that is, where the "I" can disidentify from others and therefore be separate in her or his own singularity (Levinas 1979: 36). Only in this way can we conceive that a relationship of alterity be maintained, whereby the other is radically other than me.

Lacan is also emphatic about the necessity of the singularity of each being. But in Lacan, singularity expresses something of the "real," something that escapes the conformism of the subject – a non-negotiable distinctiveness of the individual subject as an always already divided subject.

I think that Levinas' phenomenology of ethics takes philosophy as far as it can up to Lacan's psychoanalytic understanding of an ethics of love. But all in all it is the clinical practice of psychoanalysis that goes

beyond philosophy to the end point of a practice of ethics through transference love. Lacan declared that with the advent of psychoanalysis a new kind of love has come into being: true love as transference love (Lacan 1977: 123).

A constitutive principle of the transference is the supposed subject of knowledge: that the analyst will know the "true truth" of the subject. As Miller says of love: "We love the one who harbours a true response to the question: "Who am I?" (Miller 2008). However, psychoanalysis points to a knowledge that is not known, that is unconscious. Lacan maintained that there is really no such thing as knowledge without acknowledging that it is limited by the *jouissance* of the speaking being. Really, "knowledge is an enigma," an enigma that is presented to us by the unconscious (Lacan 1998: 126).

Fundamentally, psychoanalysis is ethical for Lacan because it assigns an actual space for the singular being of the difficult desire of enduring desire (Lacan 1992: 309). Further, Lacan later develops an emphasis on the drive, *das Ding*, the real, the fundamental fantasy, the *sinthome* and the enjoyment of *jouissance* in relation to desire, which shows up even more so that it is psychoanalytic practice which provides the space for the distress of the anguish (of the real) experienced in the subject's confrontation with her inner life (Lacan 1992: 304). And this is because psychoanalysis works with transference love. Whereby philosophy is the love of wisdom, psychoanalysis uses wisdom in the service of love.

I think that there are two fundamental types of love in Lacan's writing that need to be differentiated: narcissistic sexed love and true sublime love. In his early writing Lacan conceived of love as a function that is fundamentally a narcissistic structure: the desire to be desired (Lacan 1977a: 186). On the nature of narcissistic love, Lacan said: "The whole question is to discover how the love object may come to fulfil a role analogous with the object of desire" (Lacan 1977: 186).

Lacan, and Freud before him, thought that all demands are demands to be loved. What Lacan emphasised is that it is desire that lies behind the demand. As desire is produced in the beyond of demand, demand is actually aimed at the Other. The subject, in confusing desire with the demand to fill lack, also confuses an actual other with the Other. Desire for the Other then gets projected as a demand placed upon others. Thus, the lover uses the other as a stopper, rendering invisible the lack in the Other.

Seen in this way, the demand for love “annuls the particularity of everything that can be granted by transmuting it into a proof for love” (Lacan 1977: 286). Being then is reduced to the crushing of the demand for love; and this is fundamentally unethical. The narcissistic subject who thinks he loves really hates and destroys the other. Lacan said it like this: “I love you, but, because inexplicably, I love in you something more than you — the *objet petit a* — I mutilate you” (Lacan, 1977, 263).

Hence, this first kind of love as “a specular mirage is essentially deception,” it is an “essential duplicity” (Lacan 1977: 253). Love is deceptive because the subject who demands to be loved or who imagines that he gives love fails to recognise that it is really desire that is operating within the hollow of a demand for love. At the same time the lover loves so that the other will see her or him how she or he wants to be seen. Hence, what we often call love, for Lacan, is really ignorance; and it is also hate (Lacan 1977: 263).

I think Lacan, like Freud before him, is referring here to love as courtly or romantic: sexed love. And he is clear in his later work that there is no such thing as a sexual relationship. Instead, romantic love is a mirage that fills out the void of the impossibility of the relationship between the sexes. Furthermore in romantic love there is no person as such; you don't need a real person; what is necessary is merely the existence of an image (Salecl 1994: 19).

Beyond romantic love and beyond philosophical love Lacan propounded the case that, only with Freud, has a

psychology of love been truly understood. Freud's analysis of love progressed well beyond the abject failure of his precedents because he grounded love at the level of the drive (Lacan 1977: 191). Psychoanalysis shows how love is ethical but more than ethics, it reveals that its origin is to be found through transference in the drive.

Freud said that in psychoanalysis a person discovers a new kind of love: self-regard with regard to others. He postulated that, “the state of being in love that makes its appearance in the course of analytic treatment has the character of genuine love” (Freud 2001 [1915]: 168). Freud refers here to transference love whereby the subject achieves “things that would otherwise be beyond his power” (Freud 2001 [1938]: 39). In “*Observations on Transference Love*” where Freud discusses a notion of “genuine” love, he is clearly referring to a love that goes beyond narcissistic love. The course of transference love is true love and has “no model in real life” (Freud 2001 [1915]: 166).

Developing Freud's observations further, Lacan argues that true love as transference love gives the subject the opportunity to get a distance between how he sees himself as lovable and where he can come to see himself as caused by lack. The transference, therefore, allows for a separation of the demand for love from desire. As Lacan said, there is a radical distinction between loving oneself “through the other,” which allows no transcendence for the other, and loving through a “circularity of the drive in which the heterogeneity of the movement out and back shows a gap in its interval” (Lacan 1977: 194).

Lacan first defines love in terms of a narcissistic image that forms the substance of the ego ideal — from which the subject wishes to see himself in a desirable way. In romantic love, the other is placed in the position of the ideal ego. The other is loved because of a desire to attain perfection for the ego. (Salecl 1994: 19). For the later Lacan, however, true love goes beyond the ideal to the real. Beyond the narcissistic relationship towards the love object Lacan later in his work shows that we need to encounter the real, the

traumatic object in the subject. Thus, true love aims at the kernel of the real. And this is accomplished in psychoanalysis.

Contemporary Lacanian psychoanalytic treatment is dedicated to the real, for each subject to discover her or his real. But this discovery still is accomplished only through the transference. The transference is the driving force of any psychoanalysis. As Miller explains: "The transference gets unravelled on the basis of the function of the real in repetition. What repetition is destined to miss... (then later) is found to be enacted in the transference." (Miller 2008)

Repetition is the continued disappointment of the encounter with the *objet a*. When lacking "evokes the real with which repetition attunes itself to but misses, there will be the traumatic real." (Miller 2008) And it gets experienced as *jouissance*. Transference love then gives access to *jouissance*.

The first type of love I have referred to in Lacan's work is a love that aims to make up for lack protecting itself from an originary trauma of a sexual relationship. The second kind of love I refer to in the later Lacan, true love, aims at the real bearing within it the traumatic lack of the sexual relationship. However, the real is allied with the excessive enjoyment of *jouissance* (Reinhard 1994: 788). It is this alliance that forms the imperative of an ethics-of-love. An ethics-of-love is what remains of the object when the imaginary and symbolic features of the object are annihilated. (Salecl 1994: 6). This love sacrifices those illusionary characteristics of the other as sexed *objet* allowing for the other to be other, different from me, an ethical disposition; albeit an ethical disposition that is extended to incorporate the *jouissance* of the real.

Lacan stresses in "*Seminar XX*" the difference between the sexed relationship and a soullove relationship. He says here "when one loves it has nothing to do with sex" (Lacan 1998: 25). Instead, love addresses a being, our own being, as soul love (Lacan 1998: 84). The soul who loves, has the courage and patience to

confront being. Lacan advises us that to love we need to love our own being first in order to pay appropriate homage to the other. "To love our own soul." "Sex doesn't count here" (Lacan 1998: 84).

Beyond loving our own soul, or to put it another way, beyond loving our own unconscious, Lacan notoriously defines love as consisting in giving nothing of what one has. To love is to recognize your lack and give it to the other. Love therefore approaches the being of the other from a standpoint of the Nothing. It is important here to qualify this assertion by arguing that love is not an attitude which has any clear objective of what is good for another; it does not amount to altruism. To give love for Lacan does not mean to give moral good nor goods as possessions. Rather giving pertains to a gift giving something else that you don't possess, which goes beyond you, the beyond of a possession and the beyond of a non-possession of myself — a sublime love.

Lacan at the end of "*Seminar XI*" expressed that "love which it seems to some that I have downgraded can be posited only in the beyond where at first it renounces its object" (Lacan 1977: 276). Sublimation goes beyond the traumatic object as *das ding*, circling it but never acquiring it or touching it. The object as part object cannot be reached except to raise it as a no-thing to a level of dignity of the real: "a Voiding love" (Johnston 2005).

As I have shown, Levinas is adamant that ethics is a question of responsibility. This is true for Lacan too. I concur with Reinhard that both thinkers show up the condition for responsibility as enjoyment — not the enjoyment of responsibility but the responsibility for enjoyment (Reinhard 1994: 803). Sublime love enjoys *jouissance*. It bears the ability to respond to the Symbolic in such a way that it would no longer be opposed to the traumatic encounter with the real. Instead there would be *jouis-sense* — an enjoyment of signification.

Lacan is adamant that nowhere does sublime love show up like it does in the psychoanalytic setting. He

declared that with psychoanalysis, a place of “limitless love” has come into being; “there only may the signification of a limitless love emerge, because it is outside the limits of the law, where alone it may live” (Lacan 1977: 276). In psychoanalysis desire can be brought back through the formation of a gap in relation to an Other: the analyst. The analyst loves by giving the gift of the gap to be suffered and enjoyed.

In psychoanalysis, it is the responsibility of the individual to endure the desire of desire, but most significantly for true love to be realised, it is the responsibility of the analyst to give the subject patient experience of her or his own desire as it emanates from lack (Lacan 1993: 300). Freud argued that the whole responsibility for psychoanalysis lies with the analyst. He said that it is up to the analyst to unite ethical motives with technical ones (Freud 2001 [1915]: 169).

The subject in analysis can deal with his demand for love only by first transferring it to the analyst. But it is the analyst who must ardently and vigilantly maintain the gap whereby the drive emerges so that the subject can be joined with her or his own desire. The analyst gives the gift of love as distance for the subject so that the subject can freely desire and gain her or his own existence as fully lived.

Lacan insisted on the analyst's desire to guide the analysis. As Russell Grigg makes clear, the active desire of the analysand for the analyst attaches less to the flesh and blood person of the analyst as it does to the Other as the signifier of the analyst (Grigg 2008: 101). The analyst himself remains an enigma to the subject in analysis. The analyst's desire, on the other hand, a very singular desire, encompasses an end for analysis for the specific person in analysis. The goal is separation. In the first moment of transference the subject's particular fantasy is traversed and the analyst as a supposed subject of knowledge gets de-idealised. In the second moment of separation, love's effect of imaginary coherence gets stripped away to reveal the pure drive of the subject. Throughout the entire

analysis, the analyst desires this end of the real for her patient. The analyst creates a way of proceeding from his or her own worked-through desire in the transference in order to be rejected as master signifier and then finally mourned by the subject (Grigg 2008: 114).

Psychoanalytic love as true love involves an act of absolute freedom, suspending the field of meaning and the symbolic order, allowing for the trauma of the real. Profoundly singular in psychoanalysis the subject undergoes *jouissance*. This is only possible through the subject's transference being met with an analyst's desire. The analyst's desire as *soullove* is responsible for *jouissance* in the subject. The analyst's ethical disposition of love comprises her or his desire to patiently give nothing of what she has but in the beyond of her own ability-to-respond, to orient the transference as a love aimed at the real in order to allow for the subject's desire to be raised to the level of the dignity of *jouissance*. The analyst bears up to the *jouissance* of the real and in doing so bears witness to sublime love. In this way, the subject undergoes love for her own being, her own soul.

I want to conclude this article by referring to Lacan's psychoanalytic “way” of love as the *Tao* of psychoanalysis. Following Eric Laurent, the word *Tao* here is used to mean the “way” one can at the same time do and say, that is, enunciate (Laurent 2007: 43). Lacan was interested in how to articulate in psychoanalysis the void of the real. Of course the real as a motivating brute force cannot be known as such but with the analyst's decoding of the signifier an opaque *jouissance* can come to the fore for the subject that empties words of meaning and changes one's relationship to knowledge.

My argument here is that the *Tao* of psychoanalysis is given through the psychoanalyst and that the *Tao* of the psychoanalyst is “the way insofar as it is that which is nameless and that can all the same name itself”: the void median (Laurent, 2007, 42). Ultimately, the *Tao* of the psychoanalyst is to hold oneself in one's place of desire. There in this place of

holding desire, “making what does not hold together hold together” – the real and sense, doing and speaking emerge (Laurent, 2007, 51). There where there was a fracture or a rupture the analyst can transform knowledge into an active void median. And it is the void median which is at the heart of the person.

Herein lies the Lacanian psychoanalytical way of love.

References

- Freud, S. (2001 [1914]). *On narcissism: an introduction*. In J. Strachey (Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol 14. London: Vintage, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis.
- Freud, S. (2001 [1915]). *Observations on transference love*. SE. Vol. 12.
- Freud, S. (2001 [1915]). *Mourning and melancholia*. SE. Vol. 14.
- Freud, S. (2001 [1938]). *An outline of psychoanalysis*. SE. Vol. 23.
- Grigg, R. (2008). *Lacan, language and philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Johnston, A. (2005). *Nothing is not always no-one a voiding love*. Filoaofski Vestnik. Xxvi. Number 2. 67-81.
- Lacan, J. (1977 [1964]). *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*. J-A. Miller (Ed.), A. Sheridan (Trans.), Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits: a selection*. A. Sheridan (Trans.), London: Tavistock Publications.
- Lacan, J. (1992 [1959 – 1960]). *The ethics of psychoanalysis 1959-1960: the seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Dennis Porter. London: Tavistock/Routledge.
- Lacan, J. (1998 [1972 – 1973]). *Seminar XX. Encore. on feminine sexuality, the limits of love and knowledge*. J-A. Miller (Ed.), B. Fink (Trans.), W.W. Norton, New York.
- Laurent, E. (2007). *The purloined letter and the tao of the psychoanalyst*. in V. Voruz and B. Wolf (Eds.), *The later Lacan: an introduction*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Levinas, E. (1979). *Totality and infinity: an essay on exteriority*. A. Lingis (Trans.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Miller, J.A. (2008.) *On Love: interview with Hanna Wear*. A. Price (Trans.), http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?page_id=263. Lacan.dot.com.
- Reinhard, K. (1995). *Kant with Sade, Lacan with Levinas*. MLN, 110 765 – 808.
- Salecl, R. (1994). *Love: providence or despair*. In *Lacan and Love. New Formations*. 23. Summer. 13-24.

Locating and Annotating the expression 'The Later Teaching of Lacan'

Santanu Biswas

Jacques Lacan consistently used the word 'teaching' (*enseignement*) to describe the lessons contained in his annual seminar in Paris and he used the word quite often. As a result, the word teaching figures regularly in his seminars, as well as in his invited lectures and writings that usually followed his seminars. However, Lacan never used the expression 'later teaching' to describe any part of it himself. In fact the phrase later teaching did not come into existence until twenty years after Lacan's death. Though Lacan's later teaching was naturally contained in Lacan's seminars, the credit for identifying, naming and describing it as such goes to his literary executor, Jacques-Alain Miller, who drew the attention of others to it by speaking on it for the first time in his 'Course' on Lacan on 6 and 13 June 2001. Until then, Miller had either stayed silent or spoken only allusively of this stage of Lacan's teaching.

In his 2002 essay called '*Le dernier enseignement de Lacan*' ('Lacan's later teaching') that is based on his 2001 Course on this theme, Miller stated that the cut that distinguishes Lacan's later teaching had to be 'isolated' and it had to be constructed in order to be described because it 'isn't obvious' in Lacan's works (Miller 2002 [2003]). Miller went on to distin-

guish, name, add an accent to and thus 'individualise' Lacan's later teaching while speaking on it in 2001. But why did Miller take so long to introduce this stage of Lacan's teaching by its proper name? Miller's reply to the question in his essay is that, since this teaching is situated beyond Freud and psychoanalysis, that is to say since it is about the psychoanalysis that emerges following the annulment of Freudian psychoanalysis, the introduction of this teaching had to be properly timed so that it could be followed up by the work of cleaning up an old system that it necessitated: Once everything has sunk, everything is annulled, what remains of the shipwreck? This is how I myself view Lacan's later teaching. This teaching treats the existence of psychoanalysis as a superstition in a cryptic way. A cleansing, a degradation of psychoanalysis is needed in order to make it work. This is why the later teaching was kept at a distance, why it was only approached through its technical side—making knots, designing knots, complicating the knot. This is the time period when Lacan came to describe psychoanalysis as a fraud (Miller 2002 [2003]).

In other words, Lacan's later teaching 'ex-sists'— is situated outside— his earlier and latest teaching. In his later teaching, Lacan distanced himself from

Freud and stepped outside psychoanalysis itself so as to consider psychoanalysis from the perspective of a future time that has not yet arrived in reality, a time when psychoanalysis no longer existed as a practice (Miller 2002 [2003]). Lacan's later zysis is thus a kind of posthumous psychoanalysis that could easily have been addressed to Kierkegaard's '*Sympanekromenoi*.'

When Miller wrote that a cleansing of psychoanalysis was necessary to make the later teaching effective, by the term 'cleansing' he meant the cleansing of thought germane to the later teaching itself, in so far as this teaching resulted from the hollowing of the signifier, and especially in so far as it is expressed with the help of knots. Unlike the first two stages of Lacan's teaching that are 'supported by thought' and that uphold with Freud that 'the unconscious comes from thoughts,' the later teaching: questions and cleanses all interpretations; it relegates thought to the 'symbolically-imaginary' or, while dealing with knots, it locates both thought and the unconscious at the level of the 'difficult relationship of the body and of the symbolic' called the mental, which is a non-Freudian definition of the unconscious; it opposes the symbolic with a body of knots one can manipulate but not deduce or imagine with; and, above all, it defines the real in terms of the exclusion of sense (Miller 2002 [2003]). But why did Miller introduce this teaching as late as in 2001? Was he waiting for the new century to arrive so as to help him add the new accent, as he had done in case of the publication of *Lacan's Autres écrits* in 2001?

In '*Lacan's later teaching*,' Miller explained his deliberate delay in publishing *Autres écrits* in terms of the new effect that it enabled the writings to produce: The appearance of *Lacan's Autres écrits*, at the beginning of the 21st century, has evidently produced a different effect than it had at the moment of its first publication following what was pouring from Lacan. Today it feels more like a meteorite, having nearly nothing to do with the present moment of universal discourse. One might ask: 'Where did that come from?' [...] It

also had a different effect from what would have been produced if this collection of texts had been published shortly after the disappearance of Lacan, when they would have had the value of a final pronouncement. This is why I have held back, with the idea that they would become a new signifier if one could wait a while, especially if one waited for the new century. One would have the occasion to ask not what was reflected of the past but what it announced about the future. (Miller 2002 [2003])

In other words, Miller punctuated and thus altered the meaning of *Lacan's Autres écrits* by delaying its publication. The duration of the delay was carefully chosen, for it was exactly enough to allow the twenty-first century to ensue. By ensuring that *Autres écrits* was published at the start of a new century and not at the end of an old one, which necessarily introduced a long gap of two decades, Miller made it speak about the future instead of the past. Was Miller trying to produce a similar effect by introducing the stage of *Lacan's later teaching* by its name and by publishing a seminar from this stage for the first time, after an almost identical delay?

It is hard to be certain but there are some remarkable overlaps between Miller's approach to *Autres écrits* and his address on '*Lacan's later teaching*' to make us speculate on this line. In the first place, Miller released *Autres écrits* in April 2001 and he formally introduced the stage called the later teaching two months later, in his Course in June 2001, effectively waiting for the new century to begin in either case, advertently or not. More importantly, Miller mentioned this teaching using the expression 'later oral teaching' (*dernier enseignement oral*) for the first time in the '*Prologue*' to *Autres écrits* written in February 2001, a month after the turn of the century, indicative of a haste to conclude following a delay. (Miller 2001: 8) Above all, in '*Lacan's later teaching*' Miller speaks of both *Autres écrits* and *Lacan's later teaching* in terms of the delay he had caused to their appearance, using the expressions '*abstenu*' and '*tenu écarté*' respectively to denote the two types of holding back exercised by him (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Is Lacan's 'later' teaching to be viewed simply with respect to an 'earlier' teaching? Miller, who has a very precise notion of Lacan's teaching, states that Lacan's later teaching should be seen as the third of the four stages of his teaching. Going by Miller's classification, the first stage of Lacan's teaching, embodied by his first ten seminars, '*celebrates the domination of the big Other.*' His teaching takes the big Other as a 'basic given' and revels in the knowledge of the meaning of signifiers of this big Other's discourse in the unconscious. This was the stage of Lacan's return to Freud with a Lévi-Straussian twist. (Miller 2002 [2003])

The second stage of Lacan's teaching began in 1964 out of the first cut in that teaching in 1963 when Lacan found himself outside the Freudian institution owing to his 'excommunication' by the International Psychoanalytical Association. It is embodied by the next ten seminars in which Lacan relativized the big Other by introducing the side of the object small a. In the second stage of his teaching, the big Other is not all, for it is studied in conjunction with the object small a and thus also looked at from a place external to it. In this stage Lacan distanced himself from his first teaching in the name of analytic experience. He said that only from the point of view of the analytic experience is it possible to say that the unconscious is not real because it functions as a supposition— a supposition that allows the production of a large number of signifiers that in turn allows for the isolation of what is not signifier, namely, the object small a. In short, the psychoanalytic experience itself leads to something outside of psychoanalysis as a remainder or a refusal. In this stage Lacan looked at the universal in conjunction with the singular: While the signifier is shared with others, the object small a belongs to the subject; while the big Other is universal, the object small a is singular (Miller 2002 [2003]).

The third stage of Lacan's teaching that is designated as the '*later teaching*' and embodied by the next three seminars— *Les non-dupes errent* (1973-74), *RSI* (1974-75) and *Le sinthome* (1975-76)— reverses the perspective of the first two stages by looking

predominantly from the side of the object small a and the singular and not from the side of the big Other and the universal. Due to this, the later teaching is 'haunted by the problem of autism', in so far as '[a]utism means that the One is dominant and not the Other.' Here singular stands for that which is particular to everyone, that which is not available to or shared by or common to all. Two of the inter-related consequences of the dominance of the One over the Other are, a questioning of Freudian psychoanalysis and the birth of the idea that a psychoanalyst authorises himself. In general, Lacan's later teaching indicates a movement from the big Other, the signifier, language and desire— all pertaining to the universal and inherited from Freud— to the One, the *sinthome*, *lalangue* and *jouissance*, all pertaining to the singular and introduced by Lacan (Miller 2002 [2003]).

The editors of the excellent collection of essays called *Later Lacan* (2007) argued in their 'Preface' that the stage called the '*later teaching*' began with *Seminar XX*: 'So the period we refer to as the later Lacan starts with *Seminar XX*.' (Voruz and Wolf 2007: ix) Moreover, although they rightly treated *Seminar XXIII* as a text belonging to this stage, they provided an unclear picture of the contour of the stage by not stating where it ended. Miller, however, had a far more precise idea of the contour of every stage of Lacan's teaching. In '*Lacan's later teaching*,' Miller clearly regarded *Seminar XX* as 'the end of his second stage of teaching' and not as the beginning of the third or the 'later' stage (Miller 2002 [2003]).

The fourth and final stage of Lacan's teaching, named '*The latest Lacan*' (*Le tout dernier Lacan*) by Miller in his Course in 2006, is embodied by the last four seminars. Since I was not sure from where the fourth stage began, I wrote to Miller, who replied on the same day, '*Seminar XXIV*' (Miller 2014, private email to me).

In '*Lacan's later teaching*,' Miller explained the radical difference between Lacan's later teaching and his earlier teaching from several directions. Let me reiterate the important ones retaining Miller's own wording as far as possible.

To begin with, radically unlike his earlier teaching in which the Name-of-the-Father and the big Other dominate, in Lacan's later teaching they do not exist. The change is shocking and scandalous because without the Name-of-the-Father there is no language or body. In Miller's words: Without the Name-of-the-Father there is only chaos. Chaos means outside law, a chaos in the symbolic. Without the Name-of-the-Father, there is no language, there is only *lalangue*. Without the Name-of-the-Father, there is, properly speaking, no body, there is only the corporeal, flesh, organism, matter, image. There are body events, events which destroy the body. Without the Name-of-the-Father, there is a without-the-body (Miller 2002 [2003]).

The introduction of a psychoanalysis without the Name-of-the-Father and the big Other produced the effect of 'a fallen mask.' It was as though the mask that Lacan wore in his previous teaching had started to come off. In the later teaching, the Name-of-the-Father is 'reabsorbed in the multiple' and replaced by the signifiers of the paternal metaphor on Lacan's logical square (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Similarly, unlike his earlier teaching that is defined by the lack, Lacan's later teaching is defined by the hole. Miller says, Lacan's later teaching is different from his earlier teaching due to the difference between the hole and the lack. The difference is that, whereas space and its laws are operative in a lack— '[l]ack means an absence inscribed in a space, it obeys the order of spaces; spaces are untouched by the lack'— a hole more profoundly 'implies the disappearance of the order of spaces. It entails the disappearance of the space itself of the combinatorial rules.' Therefore, a hole, unlike a lack, makes 'ex-sistence' possible (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Additionally, whereas Lacan's earlier teaching deals with the problematic of domination of the symbolic, his later teaching deals with the problematic of knotting and with questions related to knotting, such as: Are the three elements knotted by themselves? Or is their knotting together made possible by

a fourth, supplementary element? (Miller 2002 [2003]) By prevailing over knowledge in the symbolic, the geometry of knots modifies the very concept of the unconscious in Lacan's later teaching in which, unlike in Freud's works where the unconscious is treated as a debility, mental debility stands for the disharmony with the symbolic, the real and the imaginary that the speaking being, going by his 'conflict, Spaltung, the interval between demand and desire, castration, sexual non-rapport,' is tormented by. The speaking being is structurally lost and badly oriented because his libido is narcissistic and his body is sick of castration. Appropriately enough, Lacan rejected all the glorious and elaborate psychoanalytic terminology in his later teaching and announced simply that 'the mental debility of [...] [the speaking] being means that his mind doesn't put him in relationship with the real.' From the perspective of Lacan's later teaching, the Freudian unconscious is 'a lucubration of knowledge on mental debility' (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Moreover, Lacan's later teaching consists of separating the real from the symbolic, or the immediate data from knowledge, in psychoanalysis by separating Freud's theory from practice. Lacan supposed in his later teaching that below the symbolic structure there is a real of immediate data that is not definable except in terms of the structure, which allowed him to organise a real outside meaning, a real preceding the structure and its meaning, and therefore a real indefinable in terms of structure. It is a teaching that urges one to distinguish between the unconscious as a theoretical lucubration of Freud and the unconscious as the experience of the real in the practice of psychoanalysis (Miller 2002 [2003]). Thus, in course of untying himself from Freud, Lacan was also untying Freud's theory from the practice of psychoanalysis by assessing and restating Freud's theory in the light of the experience of practice. Miller clarified that Lacan's choice of the practice of psychoanalysis as his point of departure and his emphasis on practice are rooted in the numerous indications present throughout Freud's work of how the latter's theory was retroactively modified by his practice, though the practice was

instituted by the theory in the first place. In Miller's summary, 'Freud was the theoretician who gave birth to the practice, and Lacan was the practitioner who elaborated the theory from the practice' (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Furthermore, contrary to Lacan's earlier teaching, his later teaching lowers knowledge 'to the rank of a lucubration' and upholds 'the reference to manipulation,' in so far as the analyst pays attention not only to the symbolic or pure logic but more importantly to the body and to the real as excluded from sense, and in so far as he has to work by manipulating his translation or by manipulating the knots. Miller shows us how Lacan stressed on the return to the immediate data of consciousness beyond logic in his seminar by translating Freud's German term for the unconscious, '*das Unbewußt*', as the blunder, '*l'Une-bévue*', in French, where the reconstitution of a meaning in French from the sound of a German word is itself a false translation, a blunder of translation. What allows for psychoanalysis is that blunders are always possible between words, and that the same signifier can produce different meanings, of which the translation of '*Unbewußt*' as '*Une-bévue*' is an example. One might call such translation bizarre, but it is precisely the method James Joyce employed in writing *Finnegans Wake*, which, Lacan stresses, is a difficult but necessary method for the psychoanalysts to grasp (Miller 2002 [2003]). Thus, in Lacan's later teaching, the unconscious is treated as a blunder of

consciousness, whereby the final reference of the unconscious is consciousness in so far as consciousness is susceptible to error, deception and blunder. And this is why Lacan proposed that consciousness resembles the unconscious in negation. It is precisely this negation that enabled Freud to make a substance called the unconscious out of a supposed knowledge that the unconscious really is (Miller 2002 [2003]).

Finally, whereas Lacan's earlier teaching is instructed by logic, his later teaching is instructed by poetry, in so far as in his later teaching Lacan tended to assimilate psychoanalysis not to the rules of logic but to the rules of poetry. Unlike the engagement with language in logic or in everyday life, poetry involves an engagement with language in which the meaning of a signifier is doubled by literal and figurative meaning, lexical and contextual meaning, subjective and allusive meaning, biographical and historical meaning. Thus, Lacan sought to resolve the logical aporia of the practice of psychoanalysis by relativizing the primacy of logic itself in that practice in terms of the introduction of a practice of poetry through his later teaching (Miller 2002 [2003]).

While discussing Lacan's later teaching these precise indicators of the stage, I think, should be kept in mind.

References

- Miller, J-A. (2001) Prologue to Lacan, J. *Autres écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 7-9.
- Miller, J-A. (2002 [2003]) *Lacan's later teaching* (B. P. Fulks, trans.). *Lacanian Ink* 21, accessed 30 May 2014. Available at: <http://www.lacan.com/frameXXI2.htm>
- Miller, J-A. (2014). Private email to me dated 28 May 2014.
- Véronique V. & Bogdan W. (eds.) (2007) *The Later Lacan: An Introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press

A Brain is being Unbalanced: Structure, Science, and the Melancholic's Underworld

David Ferraro

Structure & Suffering

A passage from the letters of Strindberg may help in orienting a discussion of melancholia: Life is so horribly ugly, we human beings so utterly evil, that if a writer were to portray everything he saw and heard no one could bear to read it. There are things which I remember having seen and heard in good, respectable and well-liked people, but which I have blotted out from my mind because I could not bring myself to speak of them and do not wish to remember them. Breeding and education are only masks to hide our bestiality, and virtue is a sham. The best we can hope for is to conceal our wretchedness. Life is so cynical that only a swine can be happy in it; and any man who sees beauty in life's ugliness is a swine. Life is a punishment. A hell. For some a purgatory, for none a paradise (Strindberg 1964).

These words are from a letter by the Swedish dramatist and melancholic, August Strindberg, to a friend in 1905. A week later, Strindberg wrote to his German translator the following: I long for the light, have always done so, but have not found it... My whole life often seems to me to have been planned like a play, so that I might suffer and depict suffering (Strindberg 1964).

These words of Strindberg encapsulate some themes that I wish to explore here – the hell of melancholy, and its purgatorial counterpart – in a context in which melancholy, and its contemporary iteration, depression, has changed since the time of Strindberg. Whilst depression is common nowadays, almost to the point of ubiquity, it remains difficult terrain in which to find one's bearings. It is not for nothing that Freud took so long in theorising melancholia; anxiety, perversion or the displacement and metaphorisation of a conversion hysteria have a discernible (if 'misdirected') purpose which is singularly lacking in the pointless misery of melancholia.

Contemporary diagnostics has accumulated vast amounts of data on these phenomena, but explained little of their structure and function. Psychoanalytic accounts typically assign melancholia to the psychotic structure, and depression to the neurotic, respectively. Whilst this convention makes much sense, I think it insufficient. Firstly, if we are to speak of melancholic psychosis, then this itself requires further diagnostic clarification. Some melancholics are persecuted by the lost object in a manner coextensive with paranoia. Some descend into mania, acts of destruction and recklessness, but many do not. Some

melancholics present with catatonic features, and a collapse of language. In short, melancholia can, in my view, be found across all clinical structures and sub-structures, and there are, therefore, as many melancholias as there are structures. There is also the question of whether melancholia constitutes a clinical structure in itself. The sine qua non criterion for a diagnosis of melancholia is a self-reflexive, subjective experience of suffering, destitution, misery. Like the other affects, this is conscious, a matter of the effects of melancholic phenomenology. And where we are dealing with consciousness, phenomenology and effects, we are situated elsewhere than at the level of the unconscious, of structure, and causes. In this view, melancholia is the subjective effect of any one of a number of structures, as one possibility of being against a given "transcendental horizon". (One should not, of course, be too dichotomous on this point; diagnostic structure does not simply generate phenomenology, but is in the phenomenology itself.)

It seems to me that whilst it is crucial to situate a subject's depression within a structure, we must also, in dealing with a disorder of emotion, attempt to determine where the subject is going. To follow Strindberg's observation, this might be either hell or purgatory. Purgatory is, of course, a noted artifice, a construction designed to get Catholics out of the inferno. The question today is whether and how such a construction is available to the melancholic, even if he is psychotic, or whether there are some unique barriers to this in our milieu. Or, to put it differently, even neurotics can go to hell. Infernal suffering is, as conceived by Dante (among others), characterised by the subject being enclosed within a circularity of structure. In contrast, the artifice of purgatory at least allows the possibility not of being rid of suffering, but of ascension, even if this movement is as slow as it is painful.

Hell and purgatory are both consequences of sin for the subject. What kind of sin is melancholy? Lacan answered this question with an invocation of Dante (Lacan 1990 [1973]), saying that depression was a "moral failing", a weakness "in the duty to be

Well-spoken, to find one's way in dealing with the unconscious". (We can contrast Lacan's emphasis on well-speaking with the contemporary fixation on "well-being".) The reference to Dante here is significant. In the *Inferno*, those guilty of sloth, or, *acedia*, to give it its Thomist name, are punished through immersion in bodily sludge. *Acedia* is not mere sadness, but a kind of torpor, or sloth. It derives from the Greek term *χρηδος*, meaning "care" and "attention", and hence *a-keidia* could be understood as a sin at the level of the subject's relation to himself, his own thoughts and body. The mire of *jouissance* has overcome desire. In Dante's *Purgatorio*, the slothful make an attempt to repent through rushing, making up for lost time (Regnault 2009). If this weakness ends in psychosis, Lacan says, there is the risk of a fatal return of the real through mania. In contrast to this is the virtue of the *gay savoir*, which alleviates neither sin nor guilt, but finds a way to make do with both.

A Brief History of Melancholia

In his early study of ancient and medieval tropes on phantasy, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1995) outlined some of the history of melancholia in Western thought. *Acedia* is no longer a sin against the spirit, as much as it is a sin against the "capitalist work ethic" (Agamben 1995: 5). And whilst melancholy, or black bile, from the Greeks, was never a good thing as such, it has until relatively recently at least been an ambiguous thing. Christians have long associated *acedia* with monastic discipline, under harsh conditions. Aristotle noted that men of genius were often found to have this most wretched of temperaments. Melancholy was associated closely, in the Middle Ages, with love, and particularly with over-valuation on the loved object. (The remedies for this over-valuation consisted of elaborate rituals of debasement of the beloved for the besieged melancholic.) From Dürer to the Romantics, melancholy was associated with creativity, passion and profound contemplative wisdom. It is as if the mortal illness of melancholy contained within itself the basis of its own cure, and, as Agamben points out, 'the greatest disgrace is never to have had it' (1995: 7).

Freud (2001 [1917]), in "*Mourning and Melancholia*", stressed the ambivalence of melancholia, resulting in the subject's self-reproaches being veiled attacks against an incorporated lost object. We should, in my view, read Freud's "*Mourning and Melancholia*" alongside of two papers by Karl Abraham (1988 [1911], 1988 [1924]), in which he theorises the melancholic in essentially paranoid terms. In contrast to Freud, for whom the melancholic's self-reproaches are really attacks on a lost object incorporated into the ego, for Abraham, it is the object itself that does the attacking. The persecutory object descends upon the ego, and its relation to the subject is one of hate. Abraham always stresses the oral nature of the incorporation of the object. (This account of melancholia bears some resemblance to the "anaclitic" depression observed by René Spitz in orphanages.) There may not be a single depressive discourse, but many, keeping both Abraham and Freud in mind.

In any event, ancient, medieval and psychoanalytic views of melancholia retained a kernel of ambiguity (and ambivalence) in the conception of this disposition. If we adjust our perspective to more contemporary times, it seems that this kernel of ambiguity at the heart of melancholia is not altogether erased, but it is much more difficult to find. There are a number of reasons for this, each of which is worth noting if only to elaborate how the various entrances to purgatory have been systematically shut.

Shamelessness and Public Health

First, there is the proliferation of public health discourses that have shifted the domain of melancholy from the spiritual to the medical and psychiatric. The critique of the latter discourses has been well-documented by others before me, so I will not expand upon it here, other than to state that contemporary fantasies on depression correspond more or less directly to the bureaucratic regulative frameworks of public health, and the liberal individualism of contemporary economic arrangements. For example, consider the anti-stigma campaigns that exist for depression. At one level, such campaigns ask an audience to respect

the rights of the depressive. But which rights are these, precisely? Nothing other than the right to be depressed or, as Jacques-Alain Miller (2007) puts it, the right to a *jouissance* unimpeded by the inhibitory, judgemental and increasingly panopticonic gaze of the Other. It is not sufficient to merely have one's depressive *jouissance* – which, after all, melancholics have had for a long time in any case – but to have it without moral judgement and ethical implication. Note how such anti-stigma campaigns are often, in subtle ways, re-stigmatising their objects. "You would not morally judge against a cancer patient, or a diabetic, so why a depressive?" The rights of the depressives are therefore affirmed and "respected", but only on the strict condition that the malady itself is conceived on reductionist medical lines. And it is not merely the bureaus of public health which promulgate this notion, but the depressives themselves, who are often scandalised by any notion that a depressive (or a diabetic, for that matter) might be implicated in his or her own suffering. It is an extraordinary situation, in which a "disorder" defined principally by subjective suffering is held to be without any kind of subject. Hence the popularity of intrinsically absurd, reductionist biological explanations, such as "chemical imbalances" in the brain, and the rise of empirically-dubious medications, replete with behavioural "techniques" of distraction, avoidance, and "positive thinking". A brain is being imbalanced – we can discern in this contemporary condition echoes of Freud's formula on the perverse fantasies of neurotics. Even the likes of Strindberg can do something with his melancholia, even if it is no more than depict his own suffering. The contemporary depressive is denied even that, as one cannot make use of a subjective suffering if one has no subjective relation to it in the first place.

How then is melancholia to be treated? The various options therapies are almost as noxious as the condition itself. Antidepressant medications are increasingly popular, but their efficacy is highly equivocal, especially if one peruses research beyond that funded directly by pharmaceutical companies. This is to say

nothing of their libido-sapping effects, and the fact that some antidepressants actually increase the risk of suicide in certain subjects. For severe, psychotic depression, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is an option of last resort, yet this too can have serious implications for a subject's cognitive functioning. Among the psy-treatments, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is the most common. It is a standardised attempt at inculcating subjects with techniques for panel beating "distorted" thoughts into their correct shape, with the underlying premise that virtue is equivalent to reason, which is itself equivalent to well-being. In short, it is a kind of Taylorism for the soul, and like the aforementioned treatments, of dubious value in helping subjects make use of their melancholia.

Now, as far as neurotic depression is concerned, a solution of sorts would seem to be to place desire in the spot occupied by depressive jouissance, to effect an articulation and symbolisation in place of misery. Dante himself suggests this idea when, confronted with his own love melancholy in the *Vita Nuova*, he ultimately affirms his task as being to create "those words that praise my lady". Poetry and gay science here stand in opposition to melancholy. Something roughly equivalent is conceivable for grief – investment in the lost, loved object comes gradually to be replaced by symbolisation and memorialisation.

Yet this path too, whilst not entirely blocked, is at least stymied by the contemporary supremacy of the image, and the concomitant regression of psychology to the Imaginary. To the extent that it has any subjective content remaining at all, depression has been situated at the narcissistic axis of "self-esteem", "confidence", "body image" and the like. The psychological treatments for depression at this level revolve around persuading the subject to hold a nicer, more rational opinion of the image he sees in the mirror, as if depressive self-recrimination were a matter of mere ignorance or stupidity. All of this is in keeping with the Discourse of Capitalism as we understand it in psychoanalysis, which is, it should be recalled, identical to the Master's Discourse with the exception that the barred

S replaces the S1 at the top- left side of the schema. The result is a lack of master signifiers, which are now mere units of value, and subjects themselves are reduced to the status of countable signifiers. "Making ashamed is an effort to reinstate the agency of the master signifier" (Miller 2007: 23). Both honour and desire are on the side of the nobility, at least inasmuch as there is an aristocratic affirmation of the symbolic against the sludge of the Imaginary. It is not for nothing that anti-stigma campaigns are reducible to a demand for shame-free jouissance.

The penchant for quantification is here, as everywhere in evidence. A multitude of smartphone apps exist in order for the subject to quantify his own depression (or anxiety, or sex life), and compare it against norms. This is alienation pushed to intensification, in a reversal of Freud's maxim, where I am, there must "it" be, where "it" is an "objective" registering which informs me of my own subjectivity. This alienation – barbarous in its aims, and conformist in its doctrine – is nowhere more in abundance than in contemporary psychological treatments of depression. As grotesque as the "chemical imbalance" hypothesis is, and as unpleasant as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) side-effects can be, it is the psychological "therapies" which aim to indoctrinate the subject and mutilate his or her discourse to the point of non-recognition. The "cured" subject is then left with a symbolic with which he can do nothing (other than think positively, or rationally, which amount to the same thing in psychological discourse), and hence, with no means of Well- speaking. Subjects are managed and self-manage, not cured.

Differential Diagnosis, Differential Ontology, and Finding a Way Out

If melancholia is an effect of contingency and structure, then a differential diagnosis must account for a differential ontology. According to the psychosis-neurosis distinction, we have a corresponding distinction between void and lack. (Loss, of importance in melancholia, is possible in either structure.) Hence, one is left with the possibility of an hysterical

melancholia, or obsessional melancholia, as Raul Moncayo (2008) puts it, but also, for instance, the possibility of a paranoid psychotic grief. Each position implies different relations to the Other, to social bonds, and to language and desire. The melancholic in any given structure, must do or say something, if he or she wishes to overcome it, but for the psychotic melancholic, this must be a creation *ex nihilo*, as it were, something constructed on the basis of a void, as Justin Clemens (2013: 97) noted in his recent work. One gets a sense of this in Sartre's famous line that "hell is other people". This is a psychotic position par excellence – there is no Other with whom one can engage in this position, except for an intolerable gaze, which is of so much importance in Sartre's phenomenology. Consider, by way of contrast, the definition of hell given by Father Zosima in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, namely, that hell is "the suffering of being unable to love". We are here far-removed from bodily sludge, or from Sartre's hell, to a more neurotic domain, since, after all, in love, the subject must occasionally condescend to desire.

There are, therefore, at least three broad ontological positions for the subject in melancholia. The neurotic is essentially divided, and characterised by lack, and must find his or her way to desire. In grief, the subject is left to face the real, imaginary and symbolic dimensions of loss, whilst in psychosis, melancholia emerges against the backdrop of void, and foreclosure. Transposing depression into neurosis results in it becoming a problem of desire, worked out differently in the obsessional, hysteric, and phobic. Nevertheless, this needs to be distinguished from a failure in mourning. Separation from the object is a lifelong process and universal.

The different inflections on melancholy in the different structures suggest different possibilities as to an exit. In brief, if the remedy to *acedia* is some sort of activity, we may find some clues as to which activities are necessary with recourse to one of the first, and major theorists of activity, namely, Aristotle. For Aristotle, there are three key activities: *theoria*, *poiesis* and

praxis. Each suggests different ways of knowing, doing, and speaking, and each has important relations with melancholia. To revisit the melancholia of old – the uses to which melancholy could be put were to be found in the illness itself, and whether its subject was predisposed to creative activity, contemplation, or romantic or heroic love. As we have seen, these symbolic ways of overcoming melancholy are not quite foreclosed, but are, at the very least, inhibited by contemporary discourses. One possible exception is in the conception of depression as a kind of paradoxical resistance, a tactical withdrawal. Nietzsche hints at this in *Twilight of the Idols* when he talks of the despair of the Russian soldier, in the midst of the Napoleonic campaigns, who throws himself into the snow, only to awaken some time later, bedraggled but alive.

The purpose of a bout of depression lacks the kind of internal logic of other pathologies. From a naïve phenomenological perspective, one can understand the benefits of fear, even if its manifestations are directed at the wrong object in certain phobias and anxiety disorders. A similar point could be made of sexuality and perversion, in which the latter is (supposedly) a mere misdirection of the former. Depression is not as straightforward, as it has no obvious benefits. This may be why Freud chose mourning as his point of comparison in his famous paper – it is not that mourning is so similar to melancholia, but merely, the most similar, and above all, mourning has a purpose, if only as withdrawal. Likewise, contemporary depression can be seen as a kind of refusal to be a mere countable signifier, a "human resource", of value only in terms of "output". As Darian Leader (2008) pointed out in his book on depression, one of the first examples of CBT was China's cultural revolution, where depression was a kind of rebellion against positive, pro-government thinking. Similarly, depression of the hysterical variety can be understood as a refusal of mastery, whether the master be a political dictator, the "master" of a household, or the capitalist with imperatives of productivity. And where there is political (or economic, or hysterical) resistance, there can

likewise be praxis. It is not as if depression itself is any kind of viable resistance against political, corporate, domestic or bureaucratic barbarism, but rather that it can show the space where such a viable praxis may be possible. Many will be familiar with the importance of group solidarity among psychotic subjects, for instance, and one can see that such solidarity among melancholics would bring the libido out from the ego and into the social sphere. And just as a certain praxis may be derived from the depths of melancholic despair, so can forms of theoria and poesis be other means of tracing a path to desire (in neurosis) or of assembling (or knotting) something positive (a *Sinthome*) in the place of a void.

There is a jouissance not merely in depressive “affect”, but in depressive discourse itself, which constitutes a central component of the condition. Consider the immoderate, narcissistic self-reproaches of the melan-

cholic. The subject uses every resource of memory and imagination available to conjure ever more horrible thoughts and fantasies, working themselves up to the point of misery. As with all forms of jouissance, these rituals have a strong narcissistic component, but with a different speaking, or a different activity, jouissance need not be purely masturbatory and pointless. Creative production, for instance, is a means of harnessing the very same psychical resources, and of generating a jouissance for the subject that is not limited solely to narcissism. This is not a matter of some pop philosophy notion of “art as therapy”, but rather, of creation as a means to nomination. There are good and bad names, after all, and “depression” is a stifling nomination that severs the subject from the means of overcoming his or her condition. In the spirit of *gay savoir* or the practice of *savoir-faire* lies the possibility of a different, better nomination, of the sort that Lacan illustrated with his later work on *consistence and suppletion*.

References

- Abraham, K. (1988 [1911]). Notes on the psycho-analytical investigation and treatment of manic-depressive insanity and allied conditions. In *Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* (pp. 137-156). (D. Bryan and A. Strachey trans.). London: Hogarth.
- Abraham, K. (1988 [1924]). Manic-depressive states and pre-genital levels of the libido. In *Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* (pp. 418-480). (D. Bryan and A. Strachey trans.). London: Hogarth.
- Agamben, G. (1993) *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*. (R. L. Martinez trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Clemens, J. (2013). *Psychoanalysis is an antiphilosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Freud, S. (2001 [1917]). *Mourning and melancholia*. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV*. (J. Strachey ed). (pp. 237-258). London: Hogarth.
- Lacan, J. (1990). *Television: A challenge to the psychoanalytic establishment*. (D. Hollier, R. Krauss, and A. Michelson, eds.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Leader, D. (2008). *The new black: Mourning, melancholia and depression*. London: Penguin.
- Miller, J-A. (2007). *On Shame*. In *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. (pp. 11-28). Durham, NC: Duke.
- Moncayo, R. (2008). *Evolving Lacanian perspectives for clinical psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac.
- Regnault, F. (2009). *Dantesque passions*. (B. P. Fulks trans.). In *Lacanian Ink*, 34, 106-129.
- Spitz, R. (1946). *Anaclitic depression*. An inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood, II.
- *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 2, 313-342. Strindberg, A. (1964). *Plays: One*. (M. Meyer trans.). London: Methuen.

The place of the imaginary ego in the treatment

Russell Grigg

Lacan burst upon the scene with his critique of contemporary views about the place of the ego in psychoanalysis. The critique was one of the major planks of his return to Freud: a withering broadside attack on the autonomous ego, the healthy part of the ego, reinforcing the ego, adaptation to reality and the place of the ego in it. For us this battle that has been fought and won and we see little need to return to the issue some 60 years after Lacan locked horns with the psychoanalytic establishment of the day.

It might be time instead to engage in some reflections on the ego. And I have a contention. My contention is that there are two quite separate, independent lines of thought running through Lacan's considerations about the ego and I don't see that he ever really demonstrated how the two were especially connected. Maybe the connection can be explained in some plausible way. It is just that I don't get what the connection is. In the first part of my paper I explain why I don't get it. And if I have come all this way it is not so that I can [...] but so that you can help me get it. Then, in a second part of the paper I talk about the place of the ego in the progress of the treatment.

The conception of the ego as an autonomous agency is replaced in Lacan's conception of the ego by two lines of thought that are, as I say, independent of one another.

The first is what I call the "ego-subject" and I relate it to the ego as subject of knowledge (or misknowledge) and as agent (an illusory or false agent) of our actions. In this first sense it contrasts with and stands over against the Lacanian subject. This is a frankly philosophical concept.

The second is more specifically concerned with the formation of the ego, with its origins in the mirror stage and the consequences of these origins. This line of thought directly addresses the ego's place in treatment and is clinically significant. I will call this ego the "ego-object".

Some words on each in turn.

The ego-subject

Early discussions of the ego in Lacan's work – I'm thinking of *Seminars 1* and *2* especially – centre on two theses: 1/ the ego's role as a focus of knowledge and

misknowledge/miscognition, or, in French, *connaissance*, and *méconnaissance*. The *savoir/connaissance* opposition is crucial and all so-called ego knowledge invariably has something illusory about it. 2/ The ego's relationship to agency and the emphasis upon the "decentring" of the subject. This claim about agency is that the mainspring of our actions is located in the unconscious and so any notion of ourselves as free and autonomous agents is thereby an illusion.

Both these theses are highly philosophical in nature, which explains not only Lacan's interest in philosophers influential in his time and milieu – Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre, as well as Kojève and Hyppolite, also Merleau-Ponty – but also the interest subsequently shown in Lacan's work by philosophers themselves. Both theses (the *méconnaissance* thesis and the agency thesis) are also concerned with the ego considered as a "subject", as distinct from "object": as subject of knowledge, even if it is misknowledge, and as subject of action, even if it is a mistake to think of the ego as the real subject of action. These are philosophical matters and Lacan's critical and sceptical views about ego knowledge and agency have shown themselves to be of special interest to philosophers.

Now, what I don't get is the connection between the philosophical views and the mirror-stage. While these theses about the ego as subject of knowledge and action are obviously relevant to the question of the ego's autonomy, or lack thereof, it is not so clear how this discussion relates to the fact that the ego has been formed by and during the mirror stage. The mirror stage emphasises that the ego is an object at grips with its semblable, look-alike, counterpart, or small other, locked in an erotic and rivalrous relationship. I don't see how this addresses the (more philosophical) question of the ego as supposed subject, nor do I think Lacan manages to show how they are connected.

The ego-object

I will say just a few words about the mirror stage in relation to this "ego-object". I'll be brief both because

the theory is pretty well known and in the main well understood anyway, and because I want to focus on the ego-object in other respects.

1. The first and fundamental identification is the ego's mirror-stage identification with its counterpart, semblable, look-alike. It is the dual or dyadic relationship in which the identification with the other (small other) takes place in the form of a double attitude towards the small other: erotic, narcissistic attachment, the "you and me, and the aggressive rivalry, the "you or me".

2. While at one point Lacan refers to the "contrary-to-nature" features of the imaginary couple (461), these attitudes are both natural in the sense of inherent to the nascent ego. So while there is a clear filiation with the Hegelian struggle to the death of the master-slave dialectic familiar from Kojève, the aggressive rivalry is not motivated by a struggle to the death of two consciousnesses. Rather, it is a natural – I emphasise "natural" – response of the human being to the image of its counterpart, its semblable, its look-alike. It is ethology rather than philosophy that is at play here. Likewise, the narcissistic enamoration with one's own image in the imaginary counterpart is also a natural function of the ego.

3. The ego's identification with the specular image serves to unify the imaginary elements of the fragmented body. It makes then into a unity. This unity then becomes the basis of a narcissistic investment in the self that marks the transition from the autoerotic to the narcissistic moment. Thus the theory of the mirror stage and the formation of the ego fills a theoretical gap in Freud's work on narcissism by providing an explanation of what in his paper on narcissism Freud describes as a "new psychical action", without further explanation, that marks the movement from autoeroticism to narcissism: a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts, however, are there from the very first; so there must be something added to auto-erotism

– a new psychical action – in order to bring about narcissism.

Thus, the previously fragmented and individually invested regions of the body come under a unified image of the body which is libidinally invested, and Freud calls this narcissism.

This ego, the product of identifications, can be cathected, libidinally invested in, just like any other object can. That is, in the field of our experience the ego is an object like any other. I will ask whether the ego really is just like any other object in a moment, but for the moment we can follow Freud's insight that the libido can be invested in. Moreover, we can also agree with Freud when he says that the ego is a bodily ego, we represent the ego to ourselves in the form of our body, a body that is signified and libidinally invested.

What sort of object is it?

If the ego can be taken as an object, what sort of an object is it? It is unlike any of the objects that Freud introduced and Karl Abraham developed. In Freud's account (even more so in Abraham's) each object (anal, etc.) is associated with a phase and a specific attitude towards the object of that phase. The oral phase is marked by the desire to incorporate the object, the anal phase by the ambivalent relationship of love and rage towards the object, and so on. In each of these phases the ego is in the subject position. The ego loves, hates, devours its object. And when the ego becomes an object? It adopts these attitudes towards itself as a reflection of its attitudes towards its own objects. The ego is liable, then, to love itself, to devour itself, to hate itself through the identifications it makes with the objects it has identified with.

Even if we say that the ego is narcissistic, we should remember that narcissism has a morbid dimension, making the term "narcissism" particularly well chosen, given the morbid dimension of the mythical figure of Narcissus, spellbound till death by the reflection he does not realise is his own. Narcissus has

always been associated with melancholia, or at least with sloth, *acedia*, involving as it does withdrawal of investment in the things of the world.

As I say, the ego is apt to be not just an object of self-love but is also susceptible to measures of self-loathing and abhorrence. We are accustomed to explain this wide variation in the ego's view of itself in terms of a split between the ego and the ego ideal, which we regard as a symbolically mediated standpoint outside the ego from which it is assessed and judged as loveable or not. The paradox is that it is the melancholic who sees the truth about the ego most clearly; as Freud wrote, the melancholic regards himself as "petty, egoistic, dishonest, lacking in independence, one whose sole aim has been to hide the weaknesses of his own nature". He drily observes that in this he has a keener eye for the truth than most people and wonders why a man has to be ill before he can be accessible to a truth of this kind.⁸ It clearly makes for less misery to be judged loveable than not, even if self-love, like any love, has a seductive and illusory character. And the converse to this also applies: liberal doses of narcissism are recommended for not sinking into the pit of self-loathing.

In melancholia the identification with an object as refuse, with the degraded or abject object, is capable of producing self-loathing in the ego with the melancholic consequences that follow. The melancholic knows better than anyone the hazards involved in the fall of the semblants that bind the ego to its own private sources of pleasure.

It is interesting, in the context of these remarks, to reflect on the fact that the process of an analysis involves mourning and object loss which can be painful, difficult and even traumatic. There is always loss in analysis when the semblants to which one is bound fall, and trauma when the abject reality of what lies beyond the veil is exposed, when the object as cause of desire is unveiled. The ethics of psychoanalysis offers very little by way of comfort or succour.

The analysis itself is unable to shelter the analysand from the difficulties encountered along the path of the analytic experience itself. And the alleviation of suffering neither is nor should be the aim of analysis, which is not about achieving happiness or even well-being, even if these end up being secondary benefits, “collateral damage” we might say, of this process that has another aim.

Analysis is of course not always painful and difficult, but it sometimes is, and the part of the process that is painful and difficult is produced by the vacillation, or the falling, of semblants – semblants that include not just what fantasmatically attaches a subject to his or her object as a source of jouissance but also what attaches him or her to his or her ideals, and this includes ethical ideals.

Lacan describes analysis, built as it is on the process of free association, as a structured process whose outcome is the production of a sequence of S1s, or master signifiers, that have determined crucial behaviours of the subject over their life. “You are this!” “You are that!” A girl lives out the imperatives of her father ... The production of these signifiers has the capacity to release the subject from being determined by them. This is no merely cognitive or intellectual exercise but is one that is effectively lived through – repeated – by the analysand in the transference relation with the analyst. It is impossible for this exercise to take place in the absence of the transference; which is its *sine qua non*.

The process is a slow one of ‘disidentification’, but this doesn’t mean that the subject ends up without identifications. The ego is a repository of identifications, and there is no subject without an ego. On the contrary, the subject’s identification with the universal dimension of S1 is the necessary condition for analysis to be possible in the first place, since it is the manner in which the subject is caught up in the unconscious. At the end of the day – in the final analysis, as we say – the subject is not completely or absolutely separated from his master-signifiers. The

subject has been through the experience of his lack in being, *manque-à-être*, his division as a subject. The aim of an analysis can therefore be considered to be to call identifications into question. It is important that the analyst not acquiesce in the analysand’s identifications, in order that these semblants with which the subject identifies can be brought to “vacillate”, as Lacan says, when these semblants start to wobble – like those little widget icons for your apps on your iPad which wobble when you keep your finger pressed down on them – and you get what Lacan calls the “Socratic effect” – already contained in the practice of free association itself.

The semblants of sex are particularly susceptible to being questioned by analysis. The reason of course is that not only sexual identity but also the sexual encounter itself are sustained by semblants. Semblants take the place of a sexual relationship. Analysis makes very apparent the extent to which male desire is sustained by phallicised semblants. As the analysis progresses and a man traverses his individual fantasy, his fantasy is reduced thereby to its bare elements. When this occurs the phallic function may become even more insistent, along with its underlying castration. As Freud saw; he spoke of the rock of castration as an obstacle that a man encounters towards the end of his analysis. This castrating effect of analysis is also indicated by how common it is for men to engage in a regular practice of masturbation in close synchronicity with their sessions—as if seeking to derive, post session, reassurance over his own potency. For a woman, on the other hand, as the pathways of her desire unfold, she is inclined to encounter the inexistence of the Other and the futility of sacrifice. A woman’s scorn or cynicism can remind a man that his sublimations count for nothing in comparison with jouissance and that his attachment to his semblants is misplaced, since it cannot be compared to the real of jouissance. Women are closer to the real and also have a keener awareness of the fact that the phallus is a semblant. A woman’s desire naturally leads her to the barred A, whereas for the man the ϕ function is an obstacle to the reduction of the phallus to the status of a mere semblant.

We should also note that what makes semblants vacillate is the emergence of the S1s themselves that are produced by the analytic discourse as such.

We should further recognise that “wobbly semblants” can be the reason for someone’s starting an analysis in the first place, and so this is not just what happens at the end. Being abandoned by a lover, the loss of a job, outbursts of anger or violence towards those one loves, a personal crisis of some kind can produce a narcissistic trauma – I am worthless, not lovable, my life is crap, I hate my job, everyone walks all over me, etc. There are many such crises in a person’s life, and there are certain moments in one’s life, such as early adulthood, when they are most intense. These crises alone are enough to make someone give you a call, though there also must be the belief that these crises mean something, that they must have a meaning. And it is this crisis of narcissism that precipitates a person into analysis. But what this means is a/ that the analytic process is not the only thing that can make semblants vacillate, and b/ that their vacillation is not a sufficient outcome of analysis.

Nevertheless, the fact that the collapse of semblants can lead someone to seek an analysis is in itself suggestive. For a start, it gives things that are of the order of trauma a special significance for us: mourning over an unexpected and sudden loss, a life-threatening illness, violent social strife, war even—all these things that are outside our control are capable of producing lifelong and sometimes radical changes to the person. The fact that these are all things that can produce trauma, from which good things can flow as can bad, indicates that they are also the things that sustain the imaginary of a subject. What happens is that with their collapse the role that semblants play as a refuge for the subject is exposed ... and this is the sort of crisis that can lead to a demand for analysis.

It is quite an interesting phenomenon – that what appears as one of the possible entries into analysis (the collapse of semblants) is also one of the effects of analysis itself – and, indeed, it is not uncommon

that these conditions at the entry throw light on the destabilisation produced by the analysis itself.

It is possible, then, to think of the progress of an analysis as sort of non-traumatic traumatisation, or, if you wish, as a controlled decline of the imaginary. In analysis the fall of semblants results, not from the slings and arrows of misfortune; rather, the fall of semblants results, slowly, and in a way regulated by interpretation, from the analysis itself. This of course makes analysis a process that has less to do with the healing of wounds, the recuperation of the subject’s identity, or a return to the status quo ante in such cases. Interpretation, and indeed the process of analysis itself, are less brutal means of dissolving the artefacts with which the individual’s narcissism is surrounded. And a gentle awakening, a slow trauma, as when we say a “slow burn”, that is calculated and ratified by the subject, is undoubtedly more beneficial than the unforeseen crisis apt to result from the sadism or cynicism of the Other.

Paper presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the Affiliated Psychoanalytic Workgroups, Boston, 10 – 11 October 2013.

Debating the subject: Is there a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis?

Jonathan Redmond

Mathematical formalisation is our goal, our ideal? Why? Because it alone is *matheme*, in other words, it alone is capable of being integrally transmitted. Mathematical formalization consists of what is written, but it only subsists if I employ, in presenting it, the language (*langue*) I make use of it. Therein lies the objection: no formalization of language is transmissible without the use of language itself.

Jacques Lacan, *Encore*.

Introduction

Neuropsychanalysis aims to bridge psychoanalytic theory with neuroscience through integrating the psychoanalytic theory of mind with the neuroscientific understanding of the brain. Through drawing on the methodologies of the brain sciences such as imaging technologies and techniques for measuring implicit cognitive processes researchers claim they are able to make direct observation and study of neurodynamic processes under changing psychological conditions (Solms & Turnbull, 2011). Thus, research aims to study the dynamic nature of unconscious mentation and its underlying neural organisation (Solms & Turnbull, 2011). Through this process, theorists hope

to verify or challenge existing psychoanalytic hypotheses regarding psychological mechanisms, develop new psychoanalytic theories and, provide new theoretical insights (driven by psychoanalytic ideas about mental functions) concerning brain processes and problems in fields such as neurophysiology, neuropsychology and psychiatry (Neuropsychanalysis, 2013, April 15th). An important feature of neuropsychanalytic research is the empirical investigation of Freud's theory of unconscious mental processes. Using an array of techniques, researchers seek to empirically test and verify his theory of the unconscious including primary process thinking and the drives.

Neuropsychanalysis raises the question of whether a specifically Lacanian neuropsychanalysis constitutes a coherent project. The neuropsychanalysis movement is comprised of two main groups. An organisation with links to the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) presents their work in the journal *Neuropsychanalysis* which features luminaries such as Kandel, Solms, Damasio, Sacks, Ledoux, Kernberg and Fonagy (Neuropsychanalysis, 2013, April 15th). The second group is more eclectic; it is not represented by a specific organisation or journal and has stronger ties to Lacanian theory and philos-

ophy. In this paper I pose the question – “Is there a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis?” – by examining neuropsychanalytic research on Freud’s theory of the unconscious in lieu of Lacan’s idea of the subject of the unconscious. I maintain that Lacan’s theory of the subject, which is characterised by a void or gap, creates inherent difficulties for a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis and may also provide the basis for a critique of neuropsychanalysis. By comparing underlying assumptions of neuropsychanalytic investigations of the unconscious with Lacan’s theory of the subject I demonstrate the differences and agonism evident between these theoretical approaches to the unconscious. This tension is developed by showing that neuropsychanalytic attempts to verify the unconscious in cognitive and brain mechanisms differs radically from Lacan’s idea of the “divided” and “insubstantial” subject of the unconscious, that may only be supposed and conceptualised via mathematical formalisation. As such, I claim that a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis is untenable.

Neuropsychanalytic investigations of the unconscious

Attempts to integrate psychoanalytic theory with neuroscience have been a feature of psychoanalytic inquiry since its inception (Sulloway, 1992). Freud’s scientific training in biology and neurology informed the basis of his earliest clinical work and subsequent development of psychoanalysis. As commentators note (Solms & Turnbull, 2011), Freud’s initial attempts to ground psychoanalysis in biology were abandoned due to the technical and conceptual limitations evident in the biological science of the time. Although Freud developed a psychological theory of the mind he never abandoned the idea that psychoanalysis might be ground in biology and the workings of the central nervous system. Moreover, the history of psychoanalysis indicates theorists have continued to explore the nexus between psychoanalysis, biology and in particular, neuroscience (Sulloway, 1992; Shevrin, 2003). The recent emergence of neuropsychanalysis as a specific area of enquiry in psychoanalysis is, in some way, a culmination of past attempts to fulfill

Freud’s original attempts to ground psychoanalysis in a biologically based model of the mind.

Neuropsychanalytic research attempts to substantiate Freud’s hypothesis of unconscious primary process thinking using experimental methods. Theorists assume that empirical validation of the unconscious will not only substantiate pivotal Freudian ideas but that this research may have clinical applications, such as an increased understanding of psychopathology and treatment efficacy (Brakel & Shevrin, 2005). Freud’s theory of the unconscious was groundbreaking, in part, because he identified mental processes influencing both normal and abnormal behaviour operating below the threshold of conscious awareness. He claimed that unconscious thinking, known as the primary process, has its own set of “rules” that differ significantly from ego functions and conscious thought (Freud, 2003). For example, primary process thinking allows contradictions in logic, is associational and is governed by the “pleasure-principle” (Brakel, Kleinsorge, Snodgrass, & Shevrin, 2000). While Freud’s theory of unconscious mental process was developed through his clinical work contemporary psychoanalytic theorists have sought to verify his ideas on the primary process using experimental methods (Bazan, 2006, 2011; Bazan, Shevrin, Brakel, & Snodgrass, 2007; Bazan et al., 2011; Brakel & Shevrin, 2005). For example, Brakel and Shevrin (2005) have investigated primary process thinking by examining different types of similarity judgements. In Figure 1 below, subjects are asked to decide what configurations of shapes are most similar to a master figure.

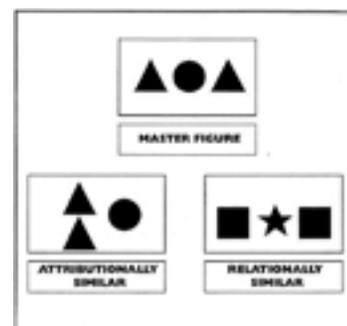


Figure 1: Attributional similarity and relational similarity

Theorists claim that two kinds of similarity judgments can be made: attributional similarity and relational similarity. Attributional similarity judgments are made according to shared attributes existing between two objects. In Figure 1, the attributional cell contains geometric objects with the same shape as the master figure. In contrast, relational similarity exists when the two objects share compositional elements. In Figure 1, the master figure and the relational comparison share the same linear spatial sequence and pattern between geometric objects – although the shapes are different the “pattern” in the two cells are similar. According to Brakel and Shevrin (2005) attributional thinking corresponds with an aspect of Freud’s theory of primary process thinking while relational thinking is linked to a higher order ego function.¹

Through a series of experiments researchers have found that attributional thinking, and therefore primary process thinking, is evident in array of populations. For example, children between the age of 3-5 show a prominent and significant use of attributional thinking (Brakel, Shevrin, & Villa, 2002), as do individuals with heightened anxiety (Brakel & Shevrin, 2005) and those experiencing acute psychotic states (Bazan et al., 2011). From a psychoanalytic perspective these findings confirm clinical experience. Primary process thinking has long been considered evident in the life of children as evident in play therapy (Esman, 1994). Moreover, a tendency of primary process thinking of subjects in a clinical population can be linked to the theory that unconscious conflict is linked to higher levels of anxiety (Brakel & Shevrin, 2005); in addition, the correlation between higher levels of attributional thinking in acute psychosis appears to verify Freud’s premise that symptoms are formations of the unconscious.² This research appears to verify one aspect of

Freud’s theory of the conscious, namely, the existence of primary process thinking.

Integrating psychoanalytic theory with science, and particularly neuroscience, has important philosophical implications. Although Freud was adamant that psychoanalysis was a science his justification for these views are both difficult to sustain and potentially undesirable to maintain (Grigg, 2008). In neuropsychology, theorists differ in their response to this problem. For example, Shevrin (2003) aims to distance himself from theorists such as Rubenstein who insist that psychoanalytic theory be grounded and verified in neuroscience. In contrast, Shevrin is reluctant to view psychoanalysis as a science despite some “overlap”. He does not seek to ground psychoanalysis exclusively in neuroscience and maintains that psychoanalysis remain a praxis, that is, a theoretically driven clinical therapeutics. He presents a twofold approach to neuropsychology: scientific empirical research methods can be used to test psychoanalytic hypotheses; and second, findings from neuroscience can provide “convergent” evidence in support of psychoanalytic theories. Thus, when comparing psychoanalysis and neuroscience he uses the term “convergence” and “convergent validity” – this entails that neuroscience findings may independently verify psychoanalytic hypothesis through developing theories in distinct disciplines that converge on the same construct. He states: But as I will try to show, my approach is initially grounded in psychoanalytic theory that provides the springboard for examining potentially related neuroscience findings and theories. It is more akin to discovering a convergence than to seeking a foundation elsewhere for one’s theorizing. Out of this convergence may arise independent support for important psychoanalytic assumptions and theories that link mental

1 Brakel and Shevrin’s (2005) broader discussion of attributional and relational thinking is also linked to research by Smith and Medin (1981) and Murphy and Medin (1985) in cognitive psychology.

2 Here Freud states: Every time we come upon a symptom we can infer that there are certain definite unconscious processes in the patient which contain the sense of the symptom. But it is also necessary for that sense to be unconscious in order that the symptom can come about. Symptoms are never constructed from conscious processes; as soon as the unconscious processes concerned have become conscious, the symptom must disappear. Here you will at once perceive a means of approach to therapy, a way of making symptoms disappear (1916-17, p. 279).

events to their neurophysiological counterparts (Shevrin, 2003, pg. 2).

Despite these claims, his discussion of Freudian drive theory and affective neuroscience shifts from convergence to neuroscience grounding psychoanalytic theory. Shevrin claims that the discovery of a mammalian motivation system linked to the neurotransmitter dopamine by researchers in affective neuroscience grounds Freud's drive theory. On the one hand, his discussion of drive theory is focused on the "classical" aspects of Freud's theory such as the somatic source, object, aim and pressure (Shevrin, 2003). However, in outlining his main findings, Shevrin contradicts his earlier views on the independence of the neuroscience and psychoanalysis. He states: The classical view of motivation embodied in Freud's drive theory is supported independently by substantial neuroscience evidence. This independent evidence based on non-clinical methods demonstrates that two key presuppositions of clinical motivation theory, motive pressure and functional equivalence, have convergent validity. A clinical theory of motivation based on these assumptions acquires greater cogency. Based on this convergence, a theory of agency is presented as well as implications for our understanding of the primary process... Finally, the neuroscience evidence provides a neurophysiological and neuroanatomical grounding of drives (Shevrin, 2003, pg. 18).

Hence two kinds of comparisons are made between the unconscious and neuroscience – convergence validity and a "grounding" of drive theory in neuroscience. While the claim that aspects of drive theory and neuroscience have convergent validity is clear his statement that Freud's drive theory can be grounded in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology indicates a different relation. Grounding evokes the idea that drive theory can be directly linked to a neurophysiological and neuroanatomical substrate. Consequently, this moves well beyond a convergence between two distinct fields and appears to contradict his earlier views that psychoanalytic theory should remain distinct from neuroscience.

In summary, neuropsychanalytic research aims to provide empirical support for Freud's theory of the unconscious, such as primary process thinking and the drives, by providing evidence as to their underlying cognitive processes or neural substrate. These overarching assumptions and aims lie in tension with Lacan's theory of the subject of the unconscious, and thus calls into question the possibility of a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis.

The subject of the unconscious

Lacan's idea of the subject of the unconscious contains assumptions that are significantly different to the neuropsychanalytic counterpart. Lacan's theory of the subject is derived in Freud's idea of the unconscious. Although Freud never used the term "subject", Lacan uses this term when theorising the unconscious; he first introduced the term subject in 1953, in part, to crystallise the Freudian distinction between the unconscious and the ego. The phrase the subject of the unconscious designates a formal category that has far reaching implications for the theory and practice of Lacanian psychoanalysis. For Lacan, the subject of the unconscious is central to what psychoanalysis is: the subject of the unconscious is a locus distinct from the ego and consciousness that emerges from becoming a "speaking being". It also constitutes the primary focus of clinical intervention. Lacan's translation of Freud's dictum "*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*" to the injunction "where (it) was itself it is my duty to come into being" (Lacan, 1955, p. 348) highlights how the Freudian idea of the id and the unconscious are reframed in terms of the subject of the unconscious. In addition, it also indicates an ethical imperative: Lacan maintains that an individual must take responsibility for their subject position despite the unconscious nature of such identifications.

Lacan's theory of the subject is complex; although the subject is included in the definition of the unconscious it is not synonymous with unconscious thought processes, such as "primary process" thinking. Rather, the subject is characterised by a formal gap, a void that emerges due to the effects of language, and

as such is opposed to a substantial form or essential identity. Lacan's comments on subject of the unconscious makes the incompatibility with neuropsychanalysis self evident:

The unconscious is the sum of the effects of speech on a subject, at the level at which the subject constitutes himself out of the effects of the signifier. This makes it clear that, in the term subject—this is why I referred it back to its origin—I am not designating the living substratum needed by this phenomenon of the subject, nor any sort of substance, nor any being possessing knowledge in his pathos, his suffering, whether primal or secondary, nor even some incarnated logos, but the Cartesian subject, who appears at the moment when doubt is recognized as certainty—except that, through my approach, the bases of this subject prove to be wider, but, at the same time much more amenable to the certainty that eludes it. This is what the unconscious is. (1979, pg. 126, emphasis added).

Two points should be made here: first, the subject is “insubstantial” and second, it linked to Descartes' cogito – I return to this second point later. Lacan's idea of the subject, and hence the unconscious, are at odds with the assumptions underlying neuropsychanalysis. That is, the underlying aims and assumptions of neuropsychanalysis are incompatible with Lacan's theory of the subject. For example, Lacan's statement that the unconscious cannot be identified with any concrete abstraction, psychological entity, material substance or living substrate entails that Shevrin's aim of “grounding” Freudian drive theory in neurophysiology and neuroanatomy are in contradiction. In addition, while Brakel and Shevrin's (2005) findings on attributional thinking and the primary process should be commended for

verifying important tenants of Freud's description of the unconscious, from a Lacanian point of view, this verification is only partial. That is, primary process thinking, although unconscious, is not equivalent to the subject of the unconscious. This point is evident if we consider Lacan's comments about the unconscious as structured like a language. In fact, Lacan's statement that the unconscious is structured like a language and his theory of the “signifying chain” are derived from Freud's theory of primary process thinking. By conceptualising Freud's ideas of “condensation” and “displacement” – the two poles of primary process thinking – with more contemporary linguistic ideas of metaphor and metonymy, he provided an original and illuminating reading of Freud's theory of the unconscious.³

This emphasis on language and the rhetorical tropes evident in primary process thinking differ from the subject of the unconscious. What makes Lacan's theory of the subject of the unconscious distinct from the assumptions underlying neuropsychanalysis is that the categorical definition of the unconscious is maintained. It is easy to forget that the idea of the unconscious refers to something impossible – to assume that the unconscious can be “made conscious” or “unveiled” through experimental methods shy's away from the “negative” definition of the unconscious. That is, the unconscious, in the most elementary sense of the term is something that cannot be thought or represented. Thus, I claim that Freud's description of primary process thinking and its subsequent verification by researchers maps the mechanisms underlying formations of the unconscious as opposed to the subject of the unconscious.⁴ Moreover, Lacan's work develops the paradox lying at the center of psychoanalysis namely, that the unconscious is by definition, “outside of thought” but draws

3 Here Lacan states: This is why an exhaustion of the defense mechanisms... turns out to be the other side of unconscious mechanisms... Periphrasis, hyperbaton, ellipsis, suspension, anticipation, retraction, negation, digression, and irony, these are the figures of style... just as catachresis, litotes, antonomasia, and hypotyposis are the tropes, whose names strike me as the most appropriate ones with which to label these mechanisms. Can one see here mere manners of speaking, when it is the figures themselves that are at work in the rhetoric of the discourse the analysand actually utters? (Lacan, 1957, pg. 433).

4 Freud describes five formations of the unconscious that emerge via primary process thinking: dreams, symptoms, jokes, forgetting, and bungled actions.

on the fields of linguistics, logic and mathematics to develop this idea.

As Lacan's earlier statement indicated, the subject emerges from the effects of the signifier and language. However, although the subject is posed in relation to the signifier it is not irreducible to it. Hence, while the primary processes are linked to the rhetorical mechanisms of language the subject of the unconscious is not equivalent to this. Lacan's statement, that his idea of the subject is to be found via Descartes' cogito, points instead to the idea of division. For Lacan, the subject "appears" at the moment in the cogito when doubt and certainty emerge simultaneously; the idea of the divided subject, which is the subject of the unconscious, is found at this point. On the one hand, the subject of the unconscious is a supposition – it can never be identified in any substantive or empirical sense and remains at the level of supposition.⁵ On the other, Lacan also claims that the subject exists in a "topological space" and that this can be formalised using linguistics, mathematics and logic (Grigg, 2008).

For Lacan the subject of the unconscious occupies a topological space where discourse, language and the corporeal drives have continuity.⁶ The subject designates a gap or a void and as such is "radically" unconscious; it has no actual existence, it cannot be identified with any substantive or material entity or with a psychological process or mechanism. Despite this difficulty, the subject is central to Lacan's understanding of psychoanalysis and specifically the unconscious. For example, the subject is linked to the drives and as such remains pivotal for conceptualising the problems encountered in clinical practice. Thus, when Lacan states "the drive is precisely that montage

by which sexuality participates in psychical life, in a way that must conform to the gap-like structure that is the structure of the unconscious" (1979, pg. 176) he alludes to the idea that the unconscious is a "gap" and the this gap is the place where the subject and its drives are situated. Moreover, for Lacan this gap marking the place of the subject of the unconscious and its drives should be conceptualised as a topological space, that is, a place that can be supposed and then conceptualised by drawing on mathematical disciplines such as set theory and topology.⁷ He alludes to this by stating that: This articulation leads us to make of the manifestation of the drive the mode of a headless subject, for everything is articulated in it in terms of tension, and has no relation to the subject other than one of topological community. I have been able to articulate the unconscious for you as being situated in the gaps that the distribution of the signifying investments sets up in the subject...which I place at the centre of any relation of the unconscious between reality and the subject. Well! It is in so far as something in the apparatus of the body is structured in the same way, it is because of the topological unity of the gaps in play, that the drive assumes its role in the functioning of the unconscious (Lacan, 1979, pg. 181, emphasis added).

Consequently, Lacan's idea of the unconscious is conceptualised as a topological space: this "gap" constitutes a locus from which the subject, its drives, and language are situated in "community" with each other.⁸ Consequently, although his idea of the subject is insubstantial the conceptual problems of psychoanalysis are articulated using the formal language of mathematics as opposed to the paradigm of biological neuroscience.

5 In logic, a supposition is made when an utterance refers to a specific thing or object without explicitly naming it. For example, there is a supposition of truth in everyday discourse; that is, when I speak to another person there is an implicit agreement that each person is speaking the truth. Without this supposition of truth, the social relation would be radically different. Lacan's idea of the subject emerges from a similar operation. That is to say, the subject, although unstated, is supposed through speech acts and more specifically, with reference to the formations of the unconscious.

6 Hence the title of Fink's (1995) book *The Lacanian subject: between language and jouissance* provides a nice characterization of this thesis.

7 In mathematics there are many kinds of topological spaces. For example, Euclidian geometry provides a 3-dimensional picture of space via the x, y, z-axes. Lacan's interest in set theory and topology is central to his attempts to conceptualise the problem of the unconscious.

8 This is a topological term, usually referred to as neighborhood, and refers to the idea of proximity inasmuch as different elements have contiguity by belonging to the same set (Wolfram Mathworld, 2013).

Conclusion

It is quite clear that Lacan's ideas on the unconscious is not easily integrated with current neuropsychanalytic research on the unconscious. The most obvious reason for this is that Lacan's theory of the unconscious cannot be equated with a substantial, material or psychological entity. Lacan's insistence on this point entails that his views on the unconscious lie in contrast with current neuropsychanalytic research. As I have shown, neuropsychanalytic research aims, in part, to verify Freud's theory of the unconscious – such as the primary processes and the drives – through identifying the cognitive mechanisms and brain substructures that converge with or ground classical Freudian hypotheses. However, this explicit aim of verifying psychoanalytic hypothesis using

the methodologies and constructs of neuroscience becomes nonsensical when viewed from a Lacanian vantage point. Lacan's mathematical approach to conceptualising the unconscious produces a radically different object of investigation when compared to the assumptions underlying neuropsychanalytic research. Consequently, it is clear that a Lacanian neuropsychanalysis cannot proceed along the path used by fellow neuropsychanalytic researchers. In addition, given the conceptual discrepancies relating to how Freud is understood, a more detailed Lacanian critique of neuropsychanalytic research may begin with questioning a fundamental aim of this field: "What does it mean to verify the Freudian hypotheses of the unconscious?"

References

- Bazan, A. (2006). *Primary process language*. *Neuro-Psychoanalysis*, 8, 157-159.
- Bazan, A. (2010). *Conversations with Howard Shevrin III* Ghent, December 1st, 2005. *Psychoanalytische Perspectieven*, 28(3-4), 271-308.
- Bazan, A. (2011). *Phantoms in the voice: A neuropsychanalytic hypothesis on the structure of the unconscious*. *Neuropsychanalysis: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences*, 13(2), 161-176.
- Bazan, A., Shevrin, H., Brakel, LA, & Snodgrass, M. (2007). *Motivations and emotions contribute to a-rational unconscious dynamics: evidence and conceptual clarification*. *Cortex; a journal devoted to the study of the nervous system and behavior*, 43(8), 1104.
- Bazan, A., Van Draege, K., De Kock, L., Brakel, L.A.W., Geerardyn, F., & Shevrin, H. (2011). *Empirical evidence for Freud's theory of primary process mentation in acute psychosis*. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*.
- Brakel, L.A.W., Kleinsorge, S., Snodgrass, M., & Shevrin, H. (2000). *The primary process and the unconscious: Experimental evidence supporting two psychoanalytic presuppositions*. *International journal of psycho-analysis*, 81(3), 553-569.
- Brakel, L.A.W., & Shevrin, H. (2005). *Anxiety, attributional thinking, and the primary process*. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 86(6), 1679-1693.
- Brakel, L.A.W., Shevrin, H., & Villa, K.K. (2002). *The priority of primary process categorizing: Experimental evidence supporting a psychoanalytic developmental hypothesis*. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50(2), 483-505.
- Esman, A.H. (1983). *Psychoanalytic play therapy*. In C.E. Schaefer and K.J. O'Connor (Eds.) *Handbook of play therapy* (pp. 11-20). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- Freud, S. (1916-17). *Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis (part III)*. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (Vol. XVI, pp. 243-483)*. London, UK: The Hogarth Press, 1957.
- Freud, S. (2003). *An outline of psychoanalysis*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Grigg, R. (2008). *Lacan, language, and philosophy*. NY, New York: SUNY Press.
- Lacan, J. (1957). *The instance of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud* (Trans. B. Fink). In J. A. Miller (Ed.), *Écrits: the first complete edition in English (pp. 412-444)*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.
- Lacan, J. (1966). *Science and truth* (Trans. B. Fink). In J.-A. Miller (Ed.), *Écrits: the first complete edition in English (pp. 726-745)*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.
- Lacan, J. (1979). *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis (Trans. A. Sheridan)*. In J.-A. Miller (Ed.), *The seminar of Jacques Lacan, 1964-65, Book XI*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Smith, E. and Medin, D. (1981). *Categories and concepts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Murphy, G. and Medin, D. (1985). *The role of theories in conceptual coherence*. *Psychology Review*, 92, 289-316
- Neuropsychanalysis. (2013, April 15th). *Research grants in neuropsychanalysis*. Retrieved from <http://www.npsafoundation.org/page%2012/page13/page13.html>
- Shevrin, H. (2003). *The psychoanalytic theory of drive in the light of recent neuroscience findings and theories*. Paper presented at the 1st Annual C. Philip Wilson, MD, Memorial Lecture, Einhorn Auditorium Lenox Hill Hospital 131 East 76th St, New York, NY.
- Solms, M., & Turnbull, O. (2011). *What is neuropsychanalysis?* *Neuropsychanalysis: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences*, 13(2), 133-146.
- Sulloway, F. J. (1992). *Freud, biologist of the mind: Beyond the psychoanalytic legend*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press

Beyond the Doubling of Shadows

Dominique Hecq

"Too many events in a man's life are invisible. Unknown to others as our dreams" Anne Michaels
"Still more remarkable is the fact that our knowledge changes too, some items emerging, while others are lost" Plato

An emeritus professor of dead languages in the School of Classics, Sophie Ivy Reed knew, but had not realised, that she was like a moth following a beam of light directly to its source. For some years now, there had been something like a huge shadow in her life, a space she had entered step by step, slowly extending herself into the dark. She had dreamed of incarnate gestures in stories she'd written from that place. And when he arrived at the end of summer, she saw that she was scared, or perhaps more excited than scared, though the excitement was toned down by a certain sense of duty.

She had known of his coming, of course. She had thought his decision odd, rash, reckless, even. Who would ditch a successful surfing career at the drop of a hat? On closer inspection—of the act, not the wording—she could understand, for she'd done it herself. But who would choose the country campus of one of Australia's oldest sandstone universities to

study poetry and philosophy? That was beyond her understanding. However, it was his decision and she had had to accept it despite—or perhaps because of, her having been instrumental to it through some fluke of fate.

Professor Sophie I Reed, author of *A Stardust Audience*, was trying not to dwell on this, the day his flight was expected. At 3.00 pm, she decided to take a short walk and headed for the library. It was a hot day, and the harsh, beating sun came out amid the high branches of the gum trees on the university car park, scorching and spreading out with a flush of chrome green after the recent rain. There were gusts of wind blowing gum blossoms. Sunshine everywhere.

Sophie spotted him from the car park on her way back to the Classics building and felt like calling out his name. But she checked herself as she checked her watch, ashamed of her own impulsiveness. After all, he was only due to land at 3.00 pm. And according to her watch, he was just getting through customs at 3.14 pm. She hurried back to her building and up the stairs to her office. Confidently, she turned the door handle. Now that was strange. There he was in the corner of her right eye, defying the laws of time.

She recognised him intuitively— the way he moved with intent purpose.

Sophie Reed tried to make herself dislike him. She looked for signs: the arrogant French upbringing cleverly disguised among impeccable manners, the Californian accent, the loudness of his presence in her office, the goatee, the perfectly aligned white teeth, the gorgeous elf ears that were surely pinned back, the pierced earlobes, the tattoo, and above all, the smell of cigarette that clung to him. But what she found she actually disliked as she listened to his story was some obscure affinity.

Like herself, he was a nocturnal migrant, crossing from coast to coast, with nothing at the end of his journey but a guiding light to divert him from his course. And this set off distant alarm bells. Because in their conversations he constantly made references to Plato's arguments and use of metaphor in *The Republic*, Sophie instructed him to read *The Symposium*, and write a critique of Socrates' argument with Diotima.

Soon, though, Sophie would delight when he came whistling past her office. Soon, she would welcome his slipping in unconcealed through the door at any time of day to ask questions and answer just as many; to destroy all that seemed evident and make mere solitude exhilarating, complete, irrelevant. She would learn that you think by means of synthetic images that follow each other at great speeds, landing every now and then on linguistic fields, though never staying there for too long and flying off again to return to a grammatical airport. Soon, she would notice something in his voice, or perhaps in his manner, that spoke of loss. And this would move her. Then she would ask herself who was indeed this guy with a mind the size of a planet and the wild wonder and buried grief of a child.

Soon, after the heat had died down in the evening, she would drive out slowly, listening to Oasis all the way through the blue cloudless sky and the light so dazzling. At times, she would have to stop on the side

of the free-way and shut her eyes. She would then listen to the noise of traffic and study the map in her heart and conscience. And she would ask herself who would not be grateful for this?

On campus, there is a small agora between the North and South buildings on the far side of the lake. In autumn, Sophie made a habit of going there after the day's work to stop what had become a constant moving back between two lights. Sometimes, she would watch the sunset there so that she would not get lost on the way home. She saw that when the sun is setting behind the hills and the light is falling gently on the stones, the air takes the shape of dreams.

One day, as she leaned across the rail from where you can see the hills breaking the sky, she smelled the smoke that hovers about him. He waved at her and before she registered that the hills hung mirrored in their shades like a poem flaunting its metaphor, he was leaning on the rail next to her. He jerked back and pulled out a packet of cigarettes from his breast pocket, took one and lit it. When he flicked his lighter, she saw an unblinking star, but dismissed the image. Replacing the packet to its home, he lifted his head and looked at her. He took one drag from his cigarette and exhaled, giving her a small nod. He took another puff. She didn't miss the satisfied sigh he let out, watched the grey tendrils pour out of the lit end of the cigarette, reaching out into the space around it like a living thing. As the cigarette shrunk, she felt a wave of heat rush through her body and a violent desire for one. He scrunched the remnant of the cigarette on the rail and threw the butt into one of the small bins across from the agora. He sat down on the top step of the circular flight of steps and lit two cigarettes. He passed her one as she sat down next to him. The sun was gone but the evening was warm. Any moment now he would glow next to her. She dismissed the thought, like a cliché. Then all of a sudden, he turned to her and said, his voice gravelly: Are you ok SIR? I thought you'd know. I don't understand. It seems we read each other's minds. And finish off each other's sentences. True, but absurd.

A total silence came about. Almost strident. Discordant. At the far end of the building on the North side of the agora a light came on. Sophie thought of Rembrandt and of paintings where the scenery would only return light that came through its windows. Light and shadow, thought to be real, yet in reality, ghostly, unreal and oneiric. The conversation could have ended there, but to break the spell she asked:

- Where does that light come from?
- Badly phrased question. You should ask where do those shadows come from?

A black light, angelic and cold, she said flatly, where the imagination burns through, undazzled and dazzling. He burst into laughter, taking in the irony. Then more silence, a silence louder than the previous one, only interrupted by the screech of an owl somewhere in the distance, moved.

- What was that noise?
- Wrong again. You ought to say where do these silences come from?
- And who do you think you are, *Grand Jacques*?
- I am a question corrector.
- It seems you come up with a new job every day.
- Fallacious interference. I mean inference.
- Anyway, do shadows speak?
- No, but their spokespersons do. Which means shadows remain silent, but their silence can be heard.
- Well, then, where do those shadows come from?
- It depends; some shadows are merely the exact compensation of light, its natural consequence, or its double.
- That may be so, but in this kind of scene, right now, the light is beyond the pale.
- Why so Irish?
- Pardon?
- Well, there are shadows and shadows.
- I thought that all shadows belonged to the same half-light or penumbra.
- Ooh. Only in the same way that all lights are part of the same blinding light. Light blinds, shadows show.

Though Sophie Ivy Reed wanted to say she didn't need a philosopher at that point, she did not answer

anything to that. She ventured a glance at him and saw that even in this twilight he seemed to be shining. She took a drag from her cigarette and watched the thin bluish smoke she exhaled drift. She could sense him shifting next to her and was aware of the texture of his clothes and of some slight rustle. Soft-rough, like skin needing a shave. She felt the voiceless ending stick in her own throat, so half-closed her eyes.

At that moment a form took shape and shone from the shadows of her childhood: there, in the sun-drenched sand of the Sahara, not the Australian agora or its desert, stood the Little Prince.

A Self Portrait of Σιμων

Simon McNamee

my sapping romani darkbark eyes
speak of a tinding tenderness
of metempsychosis
and the truth within of an awful desire

my profile ruddyolive is a mere reflection
of what has been forgotten
the face a monstration
an image relying purely in a lie

the scarring lines cuttings
of the arm and wrist
disclose the language of
the extimate unwounding itself

the deepblack wave of hair
a licking flame for the muses
of mount helicon filling the ears
for the one that hears

the welting of an unbelted neck
speaks of the death that conditions
what is to come the fabricwound
body round the breath

my hands a love
singing of joy
gives this script
which envelopes itself