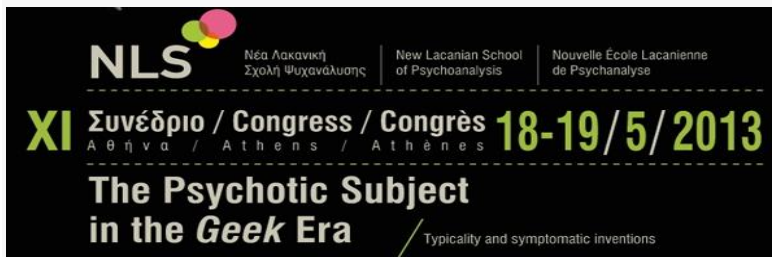


XIth NLS Congress

The Psychotic Subject in the Geek Era

Typicality and Symptomatic Inventions

Athens – 18th & 19th May 2013



Argument In a world where each “One” is kitted out with his “I-object”, a world where being a geek[1] constitutes an ordinary lifestyle, what becomes of what we call psychosis? The triumph of the “I-gadgets” as objects outside-the-body [hors-corps] has upset relations between parlêtres, relations that hitherto were codified by what Freud called the programme of civilisation. From the 20th to the 21st century, we have passed from the era of discourses that knot the social bond to the world of the One-all-alone which finds support in the symptom as an alternative social bond.

In his intervention at the Tel Aviv Congress, which will be the reference for the Congress in Athens, Éric Laurent proposes for the NLS “an enquiry into the way in which we read, in our present-day practice, what the word ‘psychosis’ means for psychoanalysis.”[2]. One can indeed generalise the psychotic effort, which consists in giving order to the world without the aid of established discourses, to the general effort of writing one’s own symptom. This symptomatic mark, this seal on the body, this trace of *lalangue*, or even forced invention, consists in a reduction of the flight of meaning. On the other side, surfing the frantic canvas of the web presents itself as the Danaids’ barrel of the 21st century. Thus, for Raffaele Simone, the mediasphere produces a revolution in the mind that is larger and more penetrating than the one feared by Plato in Phaedrus regarding the advent of writing[3]. Rather than adopting an attitude of nostalgic sorrow, we shall say how psychoanalysis takes on board these new forms of books, written in real-time, that each individual drafts in his own image, a private Facebook that is more and more open towards the world, an exhibition of one’s own case under constant revision. However, Simone stands closer to Lacan in so far as he considers that media are not man’s extension, but on the contrary, man is the media’s extension. Is not the “I-object” a supplementary organ whose function is sought by the bloggers we are?

In this context of great disorder in the real[4], psychiatry has increasingly distanced itself from the constituent signs of psychosis in favour of the silence of the organs (to the point of losing all references, for example, in the case of Anders Behring Breivik). Meanwhile, psychoanalysis, rather than mourn the decline of the paternal imago, has revealed the arbitrariness of the father, its fictional dimension, in order to focus more and more on the formal envelope of the symptom. This is how it aims at the symptom's core of jouissance in what is most real about it, which constitutes at the same time, for the speaking-being, his most singular anchoring point.

Many discourses attempt to give order to the world. Lacan formalised four of them, plus the capitalist discourse "which gnaws away at each of them" and where "it is the object a that rises to the zenith and redistributes the possible permutations"[5]. The conceptual shift in Lacan's work which moves from the first to the second paternal metaphor corresponds to this movement of civilisation that is becoming plural[6]. It is no longer just the Name-of-the-Father, but the whole of language that takes charge of phenomena in which signification is stabilised. This Other which Lacan barred with a stroke to mark that it only takes its assurance from a fiction, this Other which therefore does not exist, forces each of us to produce the singularity of our trajectory.

In the papers for the Congress we will have to emphasize the symptomatic invention, the singular subjective bricolage called upon by the era of the Other that does not exist[7] and its "I-objects". In other words, how does the subject make a language out of his symptom? How does he grasp hold of objects to turn them into functional organs? Éric Laurent points this out: it is from the psychotic subject that we must learn how, for each and every one of us, the whole of language takes charge of the effort of naming jouissance. Thus, the right way to be a heretic in psychoanalysis after Oedipus[8] would be "the one that, from having recognised the nature of the sinthome, does not hesitate to use it logically, that is to say, to use it until he reaches his real, after which his thirst is sated." [9] To recognise the nature of the sinthome is to recognise the way in which "enjoying substance is taken up in language itself" and given order[10]. It is the language-organ that makes a subject a parlêtre, implying that at the same time as it gives him being it fobs him off with a having, his body. By significantizing them, organ-language plies the organs out of the body, which makes them problematic and requires that a function be found for them, without the aid of any established discourse, for the so-called schizophrenic.[11].

We can thus make the catalogue of psychotic inventions[12]: invention of a discourse, of a resource to be able to make use of his body in the case of the schizophrenic, invention of a relation to the Other to stay in the social bond in the case of the paranoiac, impossible invention in the case of the melancholic, invention of an anchoring point or an identification in the cases of ordinary psychosis. Furthermore, non-invention constitutes an equally interesting class, as the trauma of language appears there in its purity.

Our effort, says É. Laurent, is however the reverse of classificatory attempts. There is in psychoanalysis a horizon of the unclassifiable at which this effort aims, so that the symptom may designate the singularity of a subject. But this extension to the ordinary status of psychosis to "everyone is mad", does not mean that everyone is psychotic. "One should not mix up the lessons to be learnt from the psychotic subject (which bear on the entirety of the clinical field) with a clinical category as such, making it the most sizeable category of our experience." [13]. Thus, our enquiry should also explore "how the ordinary Name-of-the-Father of existence transforms once we have our horizon of the unclassifiable"[14]. And we shall find once again, with the dimension of the father as fiction, the typicality of psychosis, and the phenomena of triggering linked to the encounter with "A-father", phenomena which do not concern invention.

Ordinary delusion is a geek's effort of invention. "You can be sure that it's a delusion when it stays at the level of One-by-himself [...] Does it manage to form a social bond or not? Sometimes contingency plays a role. There are forms of delusion that one can clearly see cannot be socialized"[15]. But don't religious fanaticism, authoritarian therapies, or even generalised evaluation, reveal a furious call to the father? To these triumphant forms of the collective, doesn't psychoanalysis oppose an unheard-of response in so far as it is an experience of traversing the impasses of the "One-all-alone"? This is the question that our enquiry on psychosis in the geek era may contribute to solve.

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Translated by *Florencia Fernandez Coria Shanahan*

[1] Geek: American slang term that originally referred to a person considered odd, perceived as overly intellectual. Gradually used more internationally on the Internet, the term is claimed by proponents of high-tech gadgets. According to the Oxford American Dictionary, the origin of the word is the Middle High German Geck, which means a fool, a mischievous, and the Dutch Gek which designates something crazy. (Source : Wikipedia)

[2] Laurent E., «Psychosis, or Radical Belief in the Symptom», Hurly-Burly Issue 8, October 2012, p. 243.

[3] Simone R., *Pris dans la toile, l'esprit aux temps du web*, Gallimard, French translation to be published on November 15th 2012. Original version in Italian: *Presi nella rete. La mente ai tempi del web*, Saggi, avril 2012.

[4] Reference to the title of the forthcoming WAP Congress in Paris in 2014. Conference by J-A Miller published in *Lacan Quotidien* 63, available on the NLS website.

[5] Laurent É. op. cit. p. 244.

[6] Miller J-A, *Extimity*, Course of 5th February 1986.

[7] Miller J-A, «Psychotic Invention», Hurly Burly Issue 8, October 2012, p. 263: «The Other doesn't exist means that the subject is conditioned to becoming an inventor».

[8] Caroz G., See his excellent argument for PIPOL 6, «After Oedipus». The NLS Congress in Athens is thus inscribed within the perspective of the 2nd European Congress of Psychoanalysis, organised by the EuroFederation on July 6th and 7th 2013. (www.europsychoanalysis.eu)

[9] Lacan J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, (1975-1976), Paris, Seuil, 2005, p. 15.

[10] Laurent É., op. cit. p. 247.

[11] Lacan J., «L'étourdit» (1972), *Autres écrits*, Seuil, 2001, p. 474. «... from this real: that there is no sexual relation, by dint of the fact that an animal has a stabitat that is language, that dicking around in it [labiter] is likewise what forms an organ for his body – an organ which, so as to ex-sist unto him in this way, determines it from its function, and this happens even before he finds its function. It is even on this basis that he is reduced to finding that his body is not without other organs, and that the function they each hold poses a problem for him – which specifies the so-called schizophrenic [le dit schizophrène] on account of being caught without the aid of any established discourse.»

[12] Miller J.-A., «Psychotic Invention», Hurly-Burly Issue 8, October 2012.

[13] Laurent E., op. cit. p. 249.

[14] Laurent E., op. cit.

[15] Miller J.-A., op. cit., p. 268.

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Reading a Symptom