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Editorial

Raphael Montague

*I have heard the key turn in the door
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, at the real rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus*

T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land¹

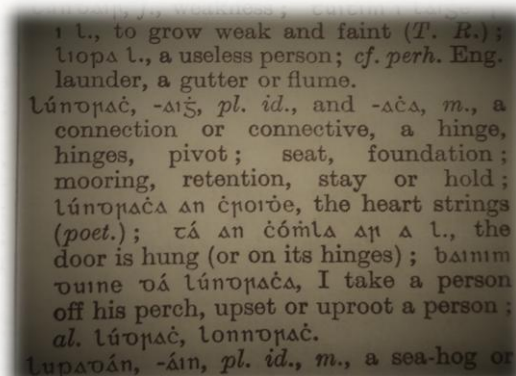
Miquel Bassols presentation, *The Analyst's Impossible Identification*, given at the 2017 Study-days of EOL is published here, with the author's kind permission, for the first time in English in Issue 5 of *Scríobh* (the aperiodic newsletter of ICLO-NLS). The text addresses the question of Pass and politics how the real as impossible might serve as a compass *via* a return after the *fall of identifications*. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the *Proposition of the 9th of October on the Psychoanalyst of the School* Bassols offers a close reading of Lacan's text, developed along two principal axes: that of the reduction of a symptom to its remainder, the remainder which is the cause of the division of the subject, a remainder present at the moment of entry into analysis *via* the transference and also correlative to the remainder of the transference left at the end of an analysis; taken to its proper end. And secondly, that of the question of identifications; a most pressing question today in contemporary Europe, as it was in-between the great War *to end all wars* and the War of *never again*, which is the time of T.S. Eliot's writing in 1922 where he sets a link between the prison of the fantasy/ fantasy of the prison "that each person's window onto the real is constituted"² and the phenomenon of an exponential increase of

¹ Eliot, T. S., (1922) *The Waste Land*, in *The Oxford New Book of American Verse*, Ed. R. Ellmann, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 605.

² P. 3, this Issue.

politically instigated segregations of the politics of small differences, which merely serve to swell the ranks of alt-right, fascist and populist movements. Through what mechanism or mode of identification does this occur? Bassols points out that Freud, in his conceptualization of the social link, discerned that “the libidinally invested object will come to the place of the Ego-ideal for every subject”³ turned in such a manner that the ego of the subject derives a trait from the Other (an Other which, we can say nowadays, does not exist) in order to establish links with semblables in the formation of groupings; sometimes “swarming hooded hordes”⁴ as Eliot would have it, when he poses the question as follows: “Who is the third who always walks beside you? When I count there are only you and I together [...] – But who is that on the other side of you?”⁵

Bassols indicates that what is at stake in the *Proposition* [...] is indeed a mode of social link proper to the analytic experience and if we are speaking of a mode of identification, then of what variety and how might this function in terms of the aforementioned remainder in the relation to the School and politics after the Pass? Read on!



ι λ., to grow weak and faint (*T. R.*);
 λιπα λ., a useless person; *cf. perh.* Eng.
 launder, a gutter or flume.
 λύνσραδ, -σιξ, *pl. id.*, and -αδς, *m.*, a
 connection or connective, a hinge,
 hinges, pivot; seat, foundation;
 mooring, retention, stay or hold;
 λύνσραδς αν έρωιθε, the heart strings
 (*poet.*); τά αν έρωιτα αν Δ λ., the
 door is hung (or on its hinges); βαίνω
 ουνε τά λύνσραδς, I take a person
 off his perch, upset or uproot a person;
al. λύνσραδς, λονσραδς.
 λυραδών, -άιν, *pl. id., m.*, a sea-hog or

Gustavo Dessal’s fine text *Digital Alienation, Notes on the Critical Debate Concerning Mobile Devices*, also published here for the first time in English, tickles the underbelly of the capitalist-technological

alliance to discover that certain of the key architects and originators of the original social media experience have rolled over, and are nowadays wagging their tails in apologia and contrition: apparently it is not just mobile devices which are being programmed! In the false promise of the establishment of social links through various well known app-platforms, what is instead engendered is a mode of “constant partial attention”⁶ through which Smartphones have become “the most extraordinary concretion” [...] of the “episodic substances”⁷ of the *objet petit a*.

A report by Lilli Klint on the ICLO-NLS clinical and theoretical seminar *Aggressivity in the Mirror: Violent acts in Childhood and Adolescence* with guest speaker Iván Ruiz, highlights a crucial question as proposed by Ruiz, with respect to identifications. We can posit that the Mirror Stage involves an acceptance of the constitution of social links which involve an inherent aggressivity; an aggressivity which is inherent to every social link. But in the movement from aggressivity to violence, in the passage to the act, for example, – a paradox is presented in at the level of clinical practice within the institution but also a generally at a societal level (in order for the act to receive a symbolic interpretation it must be enacted but that involves a violence for which there must be zero tolerance) in the asymmetry between Eros and Thanatos, and Ruiz therefore highlights an important psychoanalytic and social question as derived from this paradox. When alienation via identification from outside, is at the origin of the ego - What is it that makes it possible to *not annihilate each other*?

In a report by Sheila Power on *Hamlet* at the Gate Theatre Dublin what is brought to bear is the protagonists relation to his own desire via the dialectics of being and having, suspended in the Other in a signification of the impossibility of the real, a not wanting to know anything about it, but

³ Ibid, p. 2.

⁴ Eliot, T.S., *op. cit.*

⁵ Ibid

⁶ P. 17, this Issue.

⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

where turns of events of Shakespeare's tragedy precipitate a fall of identifications such that the violence of the passage to the act "to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him his umbrage, nothing more"⁸ becomes symbolized such, "that things standing thus unknown, will live behind me"⁹, in a certain resignation/ re-signification, let's say, of the *dèsêtre* (disbeing) of the subject, behind Hamlet, his *wounded name*.

Be encouraged to read this Issue 5 of *Scríobh*: a veritable feast for a Prince or King this Holiday season. Let's see if you, the reader, might agree!



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The Irish Circle of the Lacanian Orientation-
New Lacanian School



⁸ Shakespeare, W., *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, Vol. III: Tragedies, Eds. S. Wells and G. Taylor: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 1163.

⁹ Ibid.

The Analyst's Impossible Identification¹

Miquel Bassols

Social Link and Identification

In exactly twenty-two days, it will be fifty years since Lacan launched the proposition of the Pass with his *Proposition of the 9th of October on the Psychoanalyst of the School*. If we have not overlooked this anniversary in the World Association of Psychoanalysis and its seven schools, this is because of the insistence of Débora Nitzcaner. She has insisted a lot and I thank her for this. The WAP is not very prone to the celebration of anniversaries. These always suppose a certain error of perspective, tending to feed the belief that we can close and save the file in the archive, giving it a date and title that fixes its content for history. But the Pass is for us the constant actuality of the School One, it is what makes its existence possible, it is the permanent interpretation of the School concerning its own existence, in each place. It is impossible to close the archive in order to read it from a supposedly exterior place because the Pass, every Pass in reality, is a text that never stops writing and modifying itself, in such a way that there is no way of closing it in order to constitute its historiography. This also allows us to find in this text of Lacan, each time that we read it, new significations. This opportunity, then, is welcome.

I will begin by telling you of the signification that the text of Lacan's *Proposition* has taken for me when I read it once again, in its two versions. In fact, it is a text in which Lacan fundamentally and radically interrogates the nature of the social link, and the way in which

¹ Presented at the EOL Study-Days, *Fantasies, Fictions, Mutations*, September 2017.

its constitution goes beyond the Freudian analysis of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Lacan's idea is that the analytic experience, the link of transference, its resolution in the experience of the Pass and in the very experience of the School, can throw a new light on this question. For Freud, the social link was fundamentally made up from the identifications commanded by the unary trait and the Ego-ideal. The libidinally invested object will come to the place of the Ego-ideal for every subject. The drive, by itself, doesn't make a social link. It has an autoerotic structure. It is necessary that the Ego of the subject take a trait from the Other, on the vertical line of the link with the Ego-ideal, in order for there to be established on the horizontal line a link with others in the formation of the group. Lacan tells us in the text of the *Proposition* [...] that what Freud called the "mass" in his *Group Psychology* [...] should today be translated as "group structure"². In this way, following Freud's analysis of the mass on the model of the Church and the Army, the group link is founded on this relation of each subject with the Ego-ideal.

Lacan's question – as Jacques-Alain Miller pointed out in his course on *The Analysts' Symposium*, a course that I will take as a guide here – is the following: "It is fundamental to know if identification is at the base of every social link. This is exactly what Lacan introduces with the name of the Pass: is identification the fundament of every social link as such?"³ Put differently, is there a social link possible that is grounded on a principle different

² Lacan, J., *Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School*, transl. R. Grigg. Available on-line: <http://iclo-nls.org/wp-content/uploads/Pdf/Propositionof9October1967.pdf>

³ Miller, J.-A. *El Banquete de los analistas*. Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2005, p. 181. Unpublished in English.

from that of the three classic identifications considered by Freud in his text: the primary identification with the father; the regressive identification with the object of love; and the hysterical identification with the symptom of the other? Lacan's *Proposition* [...] implies that there is a mode of social link possible beyond these three modalities, a mode that the analytic experience produces when it is carried to its proper end, and which the experience of the pass testifies to. And it is important to consider if we are dealing with a mode that can be understood as an identification; then if so, of what type.

Seen from this perspective, the text of the *Proposition* [...] can be read as a treatise on the social link based on the experience and the ethics of psychoanalysis. Beyond what are effectively the text's explicit political references, when we read it today it becomes a kind of logico-psychoanalytical *Tractatus* concerning the new social link that we can deduce from the analytic experience carried to its end. What each analysand finds at this point in his own fundamental fantasy is something as ineffable as it is singular in his own relation with the real, something impossible to say of the link with the Other, which has ceased to exist as such.

But contrary to Wittgenstein's famous *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the Lacanian *Tractatus* begins precisely where the former finished – 'whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent'⁴ – and begins there in order to instead say the opposite: of what one cannot speak, of what is impossible to say concerning the foundation of the social link, not only is it necessary to say something, it is also necessary to make a choice and ground a political action within psychoanalysis.

This is the perspective I want to take in order to read the *Proposition* [...], one that responds to

the actuality of our WAP Schools and to the new moment inaugurated by Jacques-Alain Miller with the ZADIG network, which implies a decisive step for psychoanalysis of the Lacanian Orientation in the field of politics and social action.

Doors and Windows

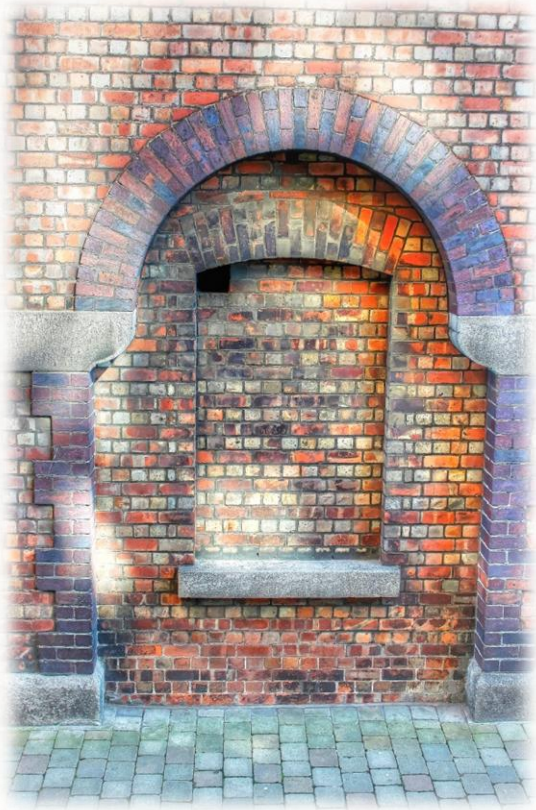
But let us begin with the paragraph of the *Proposition* [...] that Gerardo Battista, from the Executive Commission of the EOL, has chosen as a heading for this conference. He has doubtless chosen it with the hope that we might decipher it. Lacan sets out here, in a very synthetic and precise way, the passage of the Pass. I remind you of it again: "The passage of the psychoanalysand to becoming a psychoanalyst has a door of which this remainder that brings about their division is the hinge, for this division is nothing but the division of the subject, of which this remainder is the cause. In this change of tack where the subject sees the assurance he gets from this fantasy, in which each person's window onto the real is constituted, capsize, what can be perceived is that the foothold of desire is nothing but that of a *désêtre*, disbeing."⁵

The metaphor of the door and the window, used many times by Lacan in his teaching, is revealing for the treatment of the logic of the entries into and exits from analysis. In his text *Position of the Unconscious*, two years before the *Proposition* [...], Lacan indicated that in order to produce an entry into analysis we have to knock at the door of the unconscious from its inside, that is, we already have to be in some way inside this interior of the unconscious which is, in fact, also exterior for the subject itself. And this is only possible to the extent that

⁴ Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, transl. Ogden and Ramsey, London: Kegan Paul, 1922, p. preface.

⁵ Lacan, J., *Proposition* [...] op cit.

the analyst, who is “part and parcel of the concept of the unconscious”⁶, is already represented by the signifier of the transference in the subject’s unconscious, in the place of the Other.



It is from there that the analyst can interpret the subject in order to encounter the *abracadabra* that opens the door and accompany the subject in his entry into analysis. We might think that in order to produce the end of the analysis and the opening of the door of the exit, we would now have to knock from the exterior, in a paradox correlative to that of the entry. And perhaps the Pass could be thought of in this way, with the proviso that this exterior is also an interior of the space proper to the analytic experience of the unconscious. But there is another more important proviso. Here, at the end of analysis, we are not dealing only with a door, but also with a window, as Lacan indicates in this

paragraph. In reality we never leave a house or building through the window, unless we are in a great hurry or there is an emergency [urgency] that forces the subject to jump through it. This is what we call an acting out or a passage to the act, and we know that it is always a false exit from analysis, an exit in which the subject takes with him the secret of his identifications and of what causes his division, his desire. If you allow me to put it this way, the problem of the end of analysis and the Pass is to not confuse a door with a window, not confuse the passage through the door of the Pass with what constitutes the frame of reality in the analysand’s fantasy; nor confuse this window of the fantasy with the door of the exit, which can be equally problematic.

Lacan is more precise here as regards this engineering of doors and windows that we find in analysis. There is a passage⁷ – he writes – and it is the only passage at the end of an analysis that goes from analysand to analyst. For Lacan, there is in fact no other true end of analysis than this passage, even for someone who didn’t begin his analytical experience in order to be an analyst and doesn’t think about exercising its practice. This is the case for everyone, even Pope Francis, who, as we have recently found out, made use of the analytical setting in a given moment of his earthly life. For him too, the end of analysis would be this passage from analysand to analyst. It is just that there wasn’t enough time for this – six months is very little –, or that his analyst wasn’t sufficiently Lacanian, or not sufficiently expert in the theme of doors and windows. This passage has for Lacan a very particular mechanism that is only encountered if one has reduced one’s symptom in the course of analysis to a remainder – the word remainder is

⁶ Lacan, J., *Écrits, The Complete First Edition in English*, transl. B. Fink London and New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2006. p. 797.

⁷ In Spanish ‘paso’ can have the meaning of ‘passage’ but also means ‘step’. It also resonates with ‘Pase’, that is, with ‘Pass’.

very important here –, to a symptomatic remainder correlative to the remainder left by the transference; a remainder that was, in fact, already present in what made the subject enter through the door of analysis, beneath that signifier of the transference that represented the analyst in the unconscious. This remainder is what should now function as the hinge of the window, what should allow the window to open and close without the subject realising, without him knowing. But there is an element that had fixed this hinge of the window of the fantasy – and it is what we call identification.

Hinges

Identifications, which should already have been put a little into question in the entry into analysis, are a mode of fixating the being of the subject in his fantasy. The subject of the unconscious, the Lacanian subject of the signifier, is precisely defined by its being a subject non-identical with itself, a divided subject. And it is because there is no possible identity of the subject with itself that identifications are necessary. Put differently: it is because the identity of the subject of the unconscious is an empty identity that it has to make use of identifications. And these identifications fixate the panorama of reality that we see from the window of the fantasy. Every identification is in this sense a belief in being identical with oneself, which is madness, just as much in the form “I am a Bororo”⁸ – this is the example Lacan used from very early on – as in the form “I am Argentinian”, “I am Catalan”, and also “I am a psychoanalyst”.

Madness begins in reality with the “I am [...]”, because starting from here identity necessarily

escapes, whatever words we say afterwards. Identity, in the singular, is empty. Identifications, then, always in the plural, are diverse.

Without doubt, an analysis supposes from the start a vacillation of identifications, and at its end we expect *the fall of identifications*, according to that expression that we frequently use, in order to uncover the *desêtre*, the disbeing, the lack of being of the subject of which Lacan’s paragraph speaks, beyond the window of the fantasy. This *desêtre*, Lacan insists, has the same logical structure as the object cause of desire that we try to isolate at the end of analysis. We might think that what is most important about a door or window is its lock or handle. No, what is most important about a door or window is its hinge, because this is what links and articulates it with the frame in order that it turns and functions as such. A hinge always has two articulated pieces that pivot: one has its leaf on the door or window; the other has its leaf in the frame. This hinge is what links the subject to the frame of his fantasy, which has served him up to this moment to frame reality, to give it a signification. What is important is the hinge, which is neither inside nor outside, or which is inside and outside at the same time, in the subject and in the place of the Other, and which Lacan already situated with the formalisation of his famous object *a*. There can be doors and windows without locks, and also without handles, but there is no door or window without hinges. In other words: there is no subject without that which causes it as a divided subject, without that object *a* that up to this moment had remained hidden in the very window of the fantasy as the true spring of its movement. It is easy to write this hinge [*gozne*] a little wrongly in order to find in it jouissance [*goce*]. We are dealing precisely with this: the jouissance that the subject finds fixated in its

⁸ Lacan, J., op. cit., p. 96.

fantasy, and that obtains its greatest rigidity in identifications.



In reality, the window of the fantasy, for someone who has never been analysed, is a rigid window, a fixed window, like those we sometimes find in hotels meant to avoid mishaps. The window of the fantasy is an insurance, a defence before the real in order not to fall into the void. But it is a repetitive window, which always says the same thing, always has the same landscape fixed in its frame. It is what we are used to calling the subject's *fundamental fantasy*, which explains all of the significations of his life, his form of enjoying. We can even think of it as being like some well-known paintings by René Magritte, in which a painting, painted inside the painting, is in absolute contiguity with the landscape that would be seen through the window that is behind the painting and hidden by it. With this painting, the subject always sees the same landscape in the window. Or we could also think of it as being like those sinister windows in observational experiments that only allow us to look in one direction, from the observer to the observed. Here, the observed is the subject itself, who cannot in reality see the exterior, what we suppose as real, but only what his psychic reality, to use the Freudian term, allows him to see.

Above all, however, the window of the fantasy is a fixed fantasy, without hinges to open or

close it. Or, to put it better, its hinges are elsewhere. Where? When the analysand can start to ask this question, we have to think that the analysis has already advanced quite a long way. Where is the hinge of the being of my *jouissance*? Here, the “assurance that he [the subject] gets from his fantasy”⁹ starts to stumble, to “capsize”¹⁰, as Lacan writes. Lacan himself in fact provides a response to this question – where is the hinge? – in another part of the text: the hinge of the subject's *jouissance* is in the “*agalma*”¹¹, that object that he isolated in his Seminar *Transference*, as an anticipation of the object *a*, the agalmatic object that the subject is from the beginning: “only he [the subject] doesn't know”, Lacan writes, “that he is the *agalma* of the analytical process”¹², the object that was put in play by the transference and is at the beginning of the process, the object with which the subject entered into analysis and put, or supposed, in the place of the Other. Lacan insists on this throughout the *Proposition* [...]: the analysand is the true *agalma* of analysis; it is just that he cannot see this from the Other side of the window of the fantasy. And it is necessary, Lacan adds, that the analyst is ready to lose his own *agalma*, his own object of *jouissance*, in order to be able to accompany the subject towards this frame of the fantasy. This is what allows him to give a place, always virtual and thanks to the transference, to the *agalma* of the analysand. This is so much the case that Lacan makes his formula of the transference, the only one he provided, in this very text, equivalent to the agalmatic object, to that hinge that is necessary for the functioning of the entrance door and exit door.

⁹ Lacan, J., *Proposition* [...] op. cit. p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 8.

¹² Ibid. p. 6.

But before passing through the exit door, we must open the window of the fantasy. Let us say, then, that the hinges to open it were already present in the entrance door, in the transference with the analyst. And that an analysis can thus be understood as the operation through which the analysand comes to put the hinge of the entrance door in the window of the fantasy in order to discern a little what there is beyond this window. This takes two forms, which for Lacan are logically equivalent according to whether they are seen from one side or the other: from the side of the subject we are dealing with a *desêtre*, a lack of being, a non-identity with itself; from the other side, of the window, we are dealing with the subject's being of *jouissance*, his singular mode of enjoying. The question we can already put is whether from this last side we can speak of an identity or not, even if this will always be an identity that escapes from the first side.

When the analysand has isolated this being of *jouissance*, he can then find the hinge of the window of the fantasy that looks out onto the real and see a little of what is beyond – that which constituted him - without him knowing it - in the desire of the Other. He can see from where he was seen, without knowing it, from this place of the Other. But he also sees, and this can further increase the foundering in question, that this Other, in fact, didn't really exist, that this symbolic Other has in fact been a supposition, necessary for the process. In fact, it is only because of the window's hinge, because of the subject's own being of *jouissance*, that the side of the One and the side of the Other can be distinguished. This is another curious characteristic of every hinge: it at the same time separates and connects two spaces that are in fact One. Once the window is opened, the Other and the One of *jouissance* are the same, they are in perfect continuity.



This is the famous *traversing of the fantasy* that marked a whole epoch of the Freudian field, that is, for us, a very fruitful whole epoch of the pass. But the window of the Pass didn't close there.

Traversal

It is perhaps appropriate to detain ourselves a little on this word, *traversing* [*frankeamiento*], which has various meanings. In the first place, it means to open a path, clear it of undergrowth, or remove the impediments that obstruct or impede the course of something in order to *clear the passage* [*franquear el paso*]. It also indicates the act of passing from one side to another, *passing through a door* [*franquear una puerta*] in order to get to the other side. But let us be careful and remember that the Other side doesn't exist as such, being only an effect induced by the hinge in question. There are other acceptations of the verb *traverse* that we can take into account. In its pronominal form, *franquearse*, it is said of a person when s/he reveals his or her inner life to another with a certain generosity. This is also something necessary for the passage of the Pass.

In any case, we must emphasise that what is important in this traversal is not the traversing itself, but being able to isolate from there, from the fictitious place of the Other, the function of the hinge, of the subject's being of *jouissance*. And this occurs not in order to remain in this

Other place, which already doesn't exist as such, but instead in order to return to the One of jouissance in another way. What is important is the return without which the Pass itself wouldn't have any meaning. This is an idea present from the beginning of Jacques-Alain Miller's course. The trajectory is never linear, it goes from the symptom to the fantasy [...] and back¹³. And it is only in the return where we can situate the dimension of the *sinthome*, the symptomatic remainder to which the symptom has been reduced when the analysand has reached this point.

We are dealing in effect with a subjective mutation. Amongst other things, the subject can, starting from here, open doors and windows with this hinge, lending it to others in order that they can open the door of entry into analysis, without the need for more or less therapeutic picklocks or crowbars or master keys. Such a trajectory would not be needed in order to ride roughshod over doors and windows. And this does not change the fact that somebody who has got to this point can also constitute a danger. We have to ask ourselves whether we can simply let this happen. The Pass is conceived in order to see this case by case.

And there is a paradox at the end, although it is perhaps not the last one: the subject can choose – we are dealing with a choice – to go through doors and windows and not want to return, not only not want to return to analysis, which is always fully justifiable, but also not want to return in order to make of this going through a teaching for psychoanalysis in a place that accords with this experience. *To Not Return* [*Para no volver*]¹⁴ was, for example, the title of

a book that a well-known Spanish author and editor published a few years ago as the account of her analysis. And this is doubly paradoxical in a culture, the Spanish culture, in which, with respect to psychoanalysis and Lacan, things are usually inverted: people return without ever having set off. But we shouldn't be too critical as regards this possibility, for it is something that also happens to analysts themselves. Once the hinge is found, it is possible to leave without wanting to return, let oneself be, according to the idea that one already knows something even if not exactly what. In order to know exactly what this is, the passage of the Pass is required, and this only happens with others, in the absence of the Other that doesn't exist. What is required is the School of the Pass. And even there the psychoanalyst who has made the passage to psychoanalyst can also not want to return, can also write the book *To Not Return*. This is a possibility that we have known in the history of the Freudian field and the WAP. We are dealing once again, each time, with a choice.

I ask you to hold on for a while to this term *choice*. It is present in the text of the *Proposition* [...], as regards a “choice of knowledge” that would be the one proper to the analysand at the end of analysis. “In this choice”, Lacan writes in the first version, “the place of non-knowledge is central”¹⁵. But the term *choice* is also a term of our current time.

What is curious about the Analyst of the School, the analysand who has done the Pass and transmitted in a convincing manner how the hinges of doors and windows have functioned for him through the course of his life, is that once he has encountered this mechanism, this hinge, he decides to stay at home. He decides to make of the School this home, understood now as the collective subject of its experience. And

¹³ Miller, J.A., *Du symptôme au fantasme, et retour*, Teaching delivered at the University Paris VIII, 1982-1983. Unpublished.

¹⁴ Tusquets, E., *Para no volver, Narrativas hispánicas*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 2006.

¹⁵ Lacan, J., *Proposition* [...], op. cit.

he decides to use the hinge for the benefit of the School, in order to operate in as analytical a way as possible with the doors and windows of the School. There are always a lot of them – especially in the beautiful new building of the EOL. He won't lack work. This is the decision to want to know what happens with the transmission of psychoanalysis when it is carried out starting from a fundamental non-knowledge, the non-knowledge of what the analyst is as such.

The Analyst Does Not Exist

For my part, I can now return from here to the question of the title: the analyst's impossible identification. Because, in effect, there is no possible identification of *the analyst* as a set of traits, that is, a universal defined as such that would provide an identity for its elements. After the trajectory that we have seen – in which the analysand has necessarily let fall the identifications that fixed doors and windows, transferences and fantasies – what exists is the *desêtre* of desire, the disbeing of desire, discerned as what founds every empty identity. This constitutes the beginning and the necessity of the School as the place of elaboration concerning this impossible identification of the analyst. *The School*, Jacques-Alain Miller indicated when he elaborated its concept, “is founded on the non-identity of the psychoanalyst. Its identity card has been lost. Lacan's concept of School supposes that there is no concept of the analyst; that there is not, to put it logically, a predicate “analyst” that can be, starting from standardised criteria, attributed to this subject. Or, to put it differently, that the signifier of the analyst doesn't exist.”¹⁶

The classical problem responded to by Lacan in his *Proposition* [...] was rather that of the identification *with* the analyst, which at the time was an orthodox position concerning what it was that should be obtained at the end of an analysis. The entire the *Proposition* [...] is written, in an explicit way, in order to criticise the idea that the end of analysis consists in the identification *with* the analyst. In reality, this famous *identification with the analyst* is based on the following: on being able to finally say “He is like me”; and not so much “I am like him”. We generally think of identification in the direction from the subject to the Other; to identify with the Other as another subject. But in reality we are dealing with a movement that goes from the Other to the One. What is at stake is reducing the Other to One self, by means, in the first place, of a trait. Every identification makes the Other exist as another subject, also as another ego, in order to try to reduce it [the Other] to the One. Given due consideration, is it really possible to identify with the analyst as we have situated him? No, it is only possible to identify with a trait, not so much with him (the who) as with a trait (the what) isolated by the hinge of the transference. To believe that one is identified with one's analyst is part of the mirages of inter-subjectivity that have to be dispelled in an analysis, and which Lacan criticises precisely in this text, even saying that people should have started there in order to criticise him, who had at the beginning grounded the analytical relation in an inter-subjective one, between two subjects, the one and the other. In fact, the *Proposition* [...] constitutes Lacan's criticism of himself on this point.

There is no identity of the analyst. But this doesn't prevent the analysand identifying all the same with a trait of the analyst. The problem is which one and in which way. Already, in 1958, in his text, *The Direction of the Treatment* [...],

¹⁶ Miller, J.-A., *El concepto de Escuela*, www.wapol.org

Lacan indicates something fundamental with respect to the question of identification in the structure of the analytical group: “It is not true that analysands undergoing training analysis model themselves on the image of their analyst, regardless of the level at which one wishes to detect that image. It is rather that analysands of the same analyst are linked to each other by a feature that may be quite secondary in the psychical economy of each them, but upon which the analyst’s inadequacy in his work is clearly stamped.”¹⁷ This totally transformed the problem’s axis, in a displacement from the vertical axis to the horizontal axis of identifications. The problem is not whether there is an identification with the analyst, which is in fact impossible, but instead whether there is a trait of his that many of his analysands share between them.

Lacan’s criticism of the theory of the identification with the analyst at the end of analysis, which we find in the *Proposition* [...], raises then another problem that is fundamental to the analytical society or group: does the analyst’s identification exist? Is it possible to identify him by a series of traits? Or would it rather be the absence of any identification(s) that would permit his identification as such? There is without doubt a tendency that would lead to an affirmative response to this last question, to opposing the promotion of the analytical group on the basis of the identification with the analyst, as is the tendency of the IPA, the impossible identification of the analyst who has become detached from all identifications as analysand. The elaboration of the moment of the Pass as the traversing of the fantasy and what we have called the *fall of identifications* go in this direction. But this doubtlessly leads to new paradoxes, which Jacques-Alain Miller had

¹⁷ Lacan, J. *Écrits* [...] op. cit p. 535.

already studied in a very precise manner in his course *The Analysts’ Symposium*, only two years before the creation of the WAP. The first paradox is that the School functions like one of Russell’s sets, *the set of those sets that don’t belong to any set*¹⁸. This is a good way of understanding the School, following another definition, Maurice Blanchot’s, of “the unavowable community”¹⁹, the community of those who have no community. But as Jacques-Alain Miller has already stressed, in this moment, this definition “doesn’t get us out of the paradox, but instead makes it evident”.

I think that if we had remained within this paradox, with the theory of the traversing of the fantasy and the fall of identifications, the WAP wouldn’t exist as it does exist, or at least it wouldn’t exist following the logic of the School One that renders it incomplete in order to provide an exit from this paradox, to find its true hinge. If you read, or re-read this course *The Analysts’ Symposium*, in fact dedicated to a reading of the *Proposition* [...], you will see that we can never remain satisfied with this paradox.

Worker / Saint

You will even see, on the contrary, that two possible modes of the analyst’s identification are taken up there following Lacan’s later teaching: the identification with the worker; and the identification with the Saint. These are two figures appropriate to the Analyst of the School, two ways of using his hinge: on the side of the Saint as someone emptied of jouissance; on the side of the worker as someone who transfers and causes the work of the School. I am not going to comment on these two modes here. On the other

¹⁸ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, New York: W.W. Norton Inc. 1938, “Appendix B, The Doctrine of Types” pp. 523-527.

¹⁹ Blanchot, M., *The Unavowable Community*, New York: Station Hill, 2009.

hand, we are also aware of the beyond of this theory: the notion of *identification with the sinthome* or with the *sinthomatic identity*, the identification with what has been reduced in the symptom at the end of analysis to the most singular and opaque jouissance of the subject, to the hinge, separated from the doors and windows of his work as analysand.



We are dealing with an identification heterogeneous to the three identifications known since Freud, because it is an identification without an Other to identify to, or without an Other to identify with, or starting from which, one can identify oneself. To identify oneself with the singular, with what cannot be assimilated or compared with anything, is in fact impossible, but impossible in the logical, real sense, in the sense of what does not cease to not be written. The *sinthomatic* identity would consist, however, precisely in this attempt to not give an inch with respect to the singular. To identify oneself with what is most singular (the *sinthome*) is to stop hoping that the Other will be like oneself, which is at the same time the best insurance against any form of segregation or racism.

Then, the notion of the *fall of identifications* should be reformulated, starting from the notion of the *identification with the sinthome*, thus, - not just starting from the traversal of the fantasy. In fact, this first notion was an expression used by Jacques-Alain Miller at the end of the 1980's at the same time as the famous *traversal of the fantasy* was being investigated. The so-called

fall of identifications occurs in the register of the symbolic in order to modify the subject's relation with the real, it is a moment correlative to this traversal. It is defined there as a name of the "disinvestment, the reduction of identification"²⁰ in its imaginary effects. I emphasise that the terms *fall* and *reduction* do not suppose in any way a disappearance, a liquidation, or the return to a zero state. In the same way that there is no possible liquidation of the transference, it would be illusory to suppose a disappearance of identifications at the end of an analysis.

As Lacanian psychoanalysts, we frequently regale ourselves with the virtues and pleasures of the fall of identifications. This would constitute the paradox of a group that identifies with those who do not identify with anybody or anything. We are the non-identified! Fantastic, but remaining within this paradox we cannot finally go very far in our confrontation with current times, especially with the current discontent of identities and the conflicts they experience.

Allow me to intone then, even at the risk of a misunderstanding, a eulogy of the impossible (comma), identification (comma), of the analyst (with the commas well placed). There is a Lacanian identification of the analyst, which is not an identification *with* the analyst, but *without* the analyst, without the definition of his identity. It is an identification that passes through the impossible, through what is impossible to say, or even to bear, which should occur as many times as necessary – and we never know how many times are really necessary – in order to isolate that real that one must know how to deal with each time in the analytical group. To not give

²⁰ Miller, J.-A., *Le Partenaire-Symptôme* – Teaching delivered at the Department of Psychoanalysis, University Paris VIII Lesson n° 16 of the 6th of May 1998. Unpublished.

ground relative to one's own desire²¹ for me means never giving way with respect to this real upon which the analytic group is founded. It means at the same time not avoiding this, not leaving it aside as impossible, but instead decisively assuming it as impossible. It is because it is impossible that I really assume it, then, as my responsibility.

Identification without Analyst

Identifications, however much they have fallen, remain present, even if the subject already cannot recognise himself in them. Let us rather say that we also have to know how to make use of the fallen identifications, according to the formula that we have used on other occasions: to do without identifications, but only in order to make use of them.

Otherwise, how are we to understand Lacan's observation in his Seminar of 1976-77? An observation that is prudent but at the same time decisive, taking up again his criticism of the theory of the end of analysis as an identification with the analyst. Lacan asks here whether an analysis in its end does not consist in "identifying oneself, taking one's guarantees in a kind of distance, with one's symptom."²² The whole question here concerns this guarantee found in a distance with respect to the identification with the symptom, because in this distance the other members of the group necessarily intervene.

What else might that desire expressed by Lacan towards the end of his teaching mean? His

desire was nothing more and nothing less than *the identification with the group*, something that might appear to be an absolute contradiction in terms when seen from the perspective of an ideal subject, dis-identified at the end of analysis. Instead, inversely, from the perspective of singularity, *sinthomatic* identity, Lacan could say: "What is my desire? Identification with the group."²³ (I stress: with the group, not within the group.) You will find this phrase in his lesson from the 15th April, 1975, and if we stick with the simplistic idea of the subject dis-identified at the end of analysis, it might seem surprising; a subject who is, for sure, already without an identification within the group, whether the family group, the social group, the national group, or even the analytical group itself. However, we have to keep reading Lacan's line of argument: "it is certain that human beings identify with a group. When they do not do this they are screwed, ready to be locked up."²⁴ This is a first warning to, in its turn, let fall, that idea of the liquidation of identifications with which we at times regale ourselves by speaking of an end of analysis that, in the best of cases, would leave the subject completely mad.

In reality, beneath the appearance of the supposed non-identification of analysts, what we see at times is a kind of *counter-identification* (in the same way as *countertransference* is spoken of, a conceptual impropriety based upon a belief in inter-subjectivity). There were many analysts counter-identified with Lacan following the dissolution of the EFP. There are not only the identified-against, who did and do exist, but also those who didn't know very well what to do with their identification with Lacan – both

²¹ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, transl. D. Porter, London and New York: W.W. Norton, 1992, p. 319

²² Lacan, J. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIV: L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*, Lessons published in *Ornicar?* 12-18 Lesson 12/13, p. 6.

²³ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XXIV, 1974-1974, RSI, Lessons 2 – 5* published in *Ornicar?*

²⁴ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XXIV, 1974-1974, RSI, Lesson of the 15th of April 1975.*

Lacan the analyst and Lacan the teacher – and also especially with their own analysands.

There is then, no subject that can sustain itself without identification, even less in the experience of the Pass. The question, the real question thus follows: “But with this I do not say with which point of the group one has to identify.”²⁵ This is the crucial point.

Lacan does not give here many clues in order to situate this crucial point of identification, but he gives enough in order to know to look for it in the right place: it is the function of the *plus-one* that is necessary for the social link that exists, without an identification *within* the group. The plus-one (the logical principle of the experience of the cartel, the School, and in fact of every social group oriented by the analytical discourse) is not the imaginary function that grants consistency to the group through the mutual recognition of its members. Nor is it the symbolic function in which this recognition always takes its support: the figure of the Ego-ideal; whether this is the more or less authoritarian leader or the Master to whom we typically attribute all the group’s ills. This Master is, on the other hand, inevitable if we understand that the Master’s discourse is also that of the unconscious itself; or also that of the reciprocal transference that links - members in a group.

Would this nodal point then be a function of the real? It is certainly impossible to identify with the real of the group, because the real itself is defined by being what is impossible to represent, what cannot be grasped by any image or symbol. But the plus-one is precisely the one who should know how to make the real appear in what founds the group, in order to make of this the group’s compass and know how to deal

with the mirages of the imaginary and the impasses of the symbolic.



That each one should become the *plus-one* of such an experience of the School is the best trait of identity that we can expect from *each-one* of its members, whether analysts or not, and without doubt beyond every identification in which they can only lose their identity in believing themselves to recognise one another.

Once we get to this point, the analytical experience cannot be resolved into a single movement that would run against the current of identities – whether political, linguistic, gendered or religious – in order to, once traversed, leave them in suspense as the remainder of the operation. We have to consider in each case the return path – what otherwise would the Pass give testimony to? – that lends to the analytical experience its true reach in the *politics of the symptom*, which Lacan wanted to place at the head of all politics. This is what we are concerned with today, following the *Aufhebung* of the Schools of the WAP that Jacques-Alain

²⁵ Lacan, J., [...] *R.S.I.*, op. cit. *Ornicar?* 5, p. 55.

Miller has promoted this year with the ZADIG network – *Le Réel de la vie*.

Politics of the Symptom

To conclude, in order to situate a form of identification with the group that would be that of the Analyst of the School (AS), the analyst of the experience of the School as subject, let me give a reference that seems to me very precise; but also one that can motivate a real political action from the standpoint of psychoanalysis and outside of any party loyalties. What is at stake is making oneself the cause of the subject of the collective, identifying oneself with the hinge that turns it from a series of dispersed individuals into a “subject of the individual”²⁶, in accordance with the expression of the early Lacan. The reference is a slight transformation that Jacques-Alain Miller has recently made²⁷ to a well-known Kantian formula. It is summarised in three points, three steps that orient us at the moment of intervening in the group:

1. Speak for oneself.
2. Put oneself in the place of every other.
3. Speak in accord with oneself.

Kant’s second phrase – put oneself in the place of the other – is the most important of the three. It is in fact an identification, the identification that believes to always understand the other by thinking that one can really put oneself in his place; but that, for this very reason, cannot help

²⁶ Lacan, J., *Écrits*[...] op. cit., p. 175.

²⁷ We are referring here to Jacques-Alain Miller’s proposition in his Conference in Turin on 23rd of May of 2017, broadcasted by Radio Lacan: “Kant states: ‘putting oneself in the place of every other’, as if the place of every other was constituted and the subject had to conform himself with this place. So, I will modify Kant’s principle, what is at stake is to put any other in its place as subject”.

Available on-line:

<http://www.radiolacan.com/en/topic/989>.

converting this other into what most resembles oneself. It is the principle of the group effect condemned to misrecognise the real on which it is founded. The slight modification introduced by Jacques-Alain Miller subverts this operation of identification by saying: put every one – every one of the others – in its place as subject. This is radically different: it is the fall of group identification in order to cause the subject’s effect of division in the structure of the group, decisively pointing to the real that makes of the group the subject of the individual, the subject of each one of the individuals of the group. What is at stake is making of the exception that every subject always is in the group, of the singularity of his symptom, something that is valid for each and every member of the group. It is from here then that each one necessarily speaks for itself and can finally speak in accord with itself, with this singular *itself* that is its symptom. It is here where each one encounters this singularity as an identity with oneself. The Pass is, in effect, of this order; establishing this strange identity, impossible to identify, which is an AS, an Analyst of the School.



To produce an effect like this in the group, it is necessary to situate oneself in the place of the

plus-one of this group in order to make appear its dimension as subject. It is necessary to be a heretic of this group. A *heretic* is one who identifies with his *sinthome* in such a way that he cannot make of this any possible orthodoxy. This was without doubt Lacan's position when he said: "do as I do, and do not imitate me"²⁸. This is the sentence of a resolute heretic.

And this is also the position that Jacques-Alain Miller put forward in his last conference in Turin last July, which he synthetically summarised as follows: "One has to make a choice between the S_1 [the master signifier that fixes both the subject's non-identity with itself and its identifications] and the object *a* [the hinge object of the collective subject]"²⁹. This is a forced choice, but it necessarily supposes a choice of identification, without saying especially with what part of the group. To not choose – in the name of a *there is no Name-of-the-Father or identification that holds up*, which is always certain – is to follow the inertia of the worst of the group without being able to confront it. The best compass will continue to be the real as impossible, the same one that orients us in the clinic. This also constitutes the impossible of the analyst's identification.

Translated by *Howard Rouse*

²⁸ Lacan, J., *La Troisième* [The Third], in *Lettres de l'École Freudienne*, 16, 1975, p.183.

²⁹ Jacques-Alain Miller, Conference: *Heretics*, Turin, July 2017. Available on-line: <http://www.radiolacan.com/en/topic/1016/3>

Digital Alienation.

Notes on the Critical Debate concerning Mobile Devices

Gustavo Dessal

The proliferation of smartphones represents a profound shift in the relationship between consumers and technology. Across human history, the vast majority of innovations have occupied a defined space in consumers' lives; they have been constrained by the functions they perform and the locations they inhabit. Smartphones transcend these limitations. They are consumers' constant companions, offering unprecedented connection to information, entertainment, and to each other. They play an integral role in the lives of billions of consumers worldwide and, as a result, have vast potential to influence consumer welfare — both for better and for worse.¹

Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity

It is likely that Steve Jobs was not fully conscious of what he had just invented when he let the world know about the existence of the first iPhone. He knew that he was on the point of producing a great shock in the world of technology, but it was still too early to predict the reach that this would have. This happened only ten years ago. However, we currently have the impression that intelligent telephone has existed forever, given that it is now difficult to imagine

that it was once not with us. As Andrew Sullivan observes, the intelligent telephone is not just another object that is added to the interminable list of technical inventions. It possesses a specific characteristic which makes it incomparable to any of the earlier inventions: its absolute presence and the mode in which it intervenes in all aspects of our lives². In reality, the smartphone is hardly a telephone, a function that, in terms of measurable time, is probably the least utilised. We are dealing with a miniature computer that possesses a power greater than many other computing devices, to the extent that its use has already surpassed that of laptops and tablets. The fact that its size and weight means that it is an easily transportable object, that it fits in the pocket adds something extra. Not only the facility of having at one's disposal an apparatus capable of realising innumerable functions, which span practically all the spheres of the everyday life of human beings, but also the fact that its small size grants it a magical property: that of incarnating in a material form, as never before, the characteristics of the *objet petit a*, with which Lacan theorised the Freudian concept of the partial object. The smartphone is the most extraordinary and successful concretion of the "episodic substances"³ of this object, especially the gaze and the voice. The incomparable role that this little apparatus has forged cannot be explained merely by the indisputable services it renders to us. Heretofore, no object had succeeded in constituting itself as such an absolute condenser of the libido. For a full day or more we can survive without car, company, family, partner, without watching the television, reading a book or listening to the radio. Very few people, by contrast, can bear a full day without their mobile phone. In order to refer to the

¹ Ward, A.F., Duke, K., Gneezy, A. and M. W. Bos, *Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity*, In *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* 2, no. 2 (April 2017): 140-154. <https://doi.org/10.1086/691462>

² SullIván, A., *I Used to Be a Human Being*, In *New York Magazine*, September, 2016.

³ Cf. Lacan, J., *Note Italienne, Autres Écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 2001, p. 309.

fact of their limiting the use of the telephone, geeks typically use the expression *to wean off*.

In 1971, Herbert Simon was the first to employ the term “attention economics”⁴ in order to refer to the fact that a world rich in information feeds on a very scarce commodity, namely attention. Currently the attention economy is possibly the most important branch of the capitalist market economy, given that all production is increasingly dependent on ever more sophisticated technologies that would exploit a commodity as valuable as it is proportionally small: human attention. The perceptual system is incapable of processing the overwhelming quantity of information that it receives every second and it is for this reason that the attention economy is designed to extract the maximum performance possible from this fragile human faculty; by means of a sophisticated combination of studies of consumer behaviour and the creation of digital resources capable of acting as bait. With the advent of the Internet, and the infinite economic potential that instantaneous access to consumers supposes, the technology of advertising has penetrated even further into the dynamics of the subject. The Freudian field, by which we designate the habitat of the subject of the unconscious, as Freud and Lacan elaborated it, no longer belongs only to the psychoanalyst. It has been invaded by a veritable army of engineers, philosophers, experts in behaviour and ergonomics, as well as all kinds of disciplines concerned with happiness, motivation and the hidden mechanisms that govern the desires, preferences, habits and defences of speaking beings. Their aim is clear: to bring to light the workings that mobilise human attention. Although, from a theoretical standpoint, they do not know it, they intuitively get that

⁴ Simon, H. A., *Designing Organisations for an Information Rich World, in Computers, In Communications, and the Public Interest*. Ed. M. Greenberg, Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1971, pp. 38-72.

communication devices do not only fulfil a function of utility. Technology might very well be at the service of the effective fulfilment of indisputable practical needs, but the way in which it has penetrated into our lives, or rather, the way in which our lives have been captured, with our overwhelming consent, in the networks of digital technology, demonstrates that there is something else at stake. Many of those who have contributed to modelling the contemporary world know this very well; especially those who have begun to question the effect of a revolution of which they have been the architects.

The name Justin Rosenstein probably means nothing to the majority of readers. However, he is none other than the engineer who, in 2007, invented the “Like” button for Facebook. He is currently running his own start-up, dedicated to the creation of ideas that would enable users to get out of the addictive networks of the digital world. Rosenstein recognises that – just like any other form of addiction – technology contributes to what he calls a “constant partial attention”⁵, that is, to the impossibility of concentrating in a fixed manner on a task, moment or situation. If the “Like” button was “wildly” successful, as its very creator admits, this is because its manipulation provides something more than the entering into a supposed connection with others and the establishment of a social link. Similarly, Loren Brichter, the creator of the mechanism “Pull-to-Refresh”, considers the gesture of swiping down the screen, with the objective of updating information, pertinent to many applications, in the same way.⁶ The compulsive way of clicking “Like”, or of permanently refreshing the screen, in itself, without doubt provides a jouissance.

⁵ Lewis, P., *Our Minds can be Hijacked: the Tech Insiders who Fear a Smartphone Dystopia*, In *The Guardian, Weekend Magazine Technology Special*, Friday the 6th of October 2017.

⁶ Bosker, B., *The Binge Breaker*, In *The Atlantic*, November 2016.

Brichter captured this perfectly. At the time, her invention represented an extremely important change in the way information was updated in many applications. Today however, the technology of “push up” notifications (which automatically send information without the user having to do anything) should have rendered the “Pull-to-Refresh” option obsolete. However, this has not occurred. Tristan Harris, an engineer who worked for Google, explains this very simply: “every time you swipe down the screen, it is like a slot machine. You don’t know what is coming next [...]. What makes it so compulsive is precisely the possibility of disappointment”⁷. One has to admit that Harris hits the nail on the head here. His intuition concerning the role played in all this by the “possibility of disappointment” that the mechanism of repetition sets in motion, which we define in our terms as a *minus of jouissance*, is truly remarkable



Communication technology exploits, for the benefit of the attention economy, the users’

⁷ <http://www.tristanharris.com/essays/> retrieved on the 14th of November 2018.

compulsion to constantly check their mobile screen in order to verify whether they have received any notification or message. How is this achieved? Different techniques exist in order to induce the feeling that if we are not constantly attentive to our phones then we run the risk of *missing something*. In a system that feeds the repudiation of every dimension of castration as well as feeding the conviction that one can *have it all*, it is fundamental to ensure that the subject makes of the virtual link the social mode par excellence. This is particularly notable in teenagers, who experience belonging to social networks as something that includes them in the discourse of the Other, and which affords them a subjective shelter. By contrast, the possibility of *losing* something of group life can represent a source of anxiety, for example, when a contact blocks them in Whatsapp or Facebook. Jean Twenge, who has studied adolescent behaviour and the use of social networks, observes that the tendency for adolescents to feel alone and excluded has increased considerably⁸. By contrast to previous generations of young people, the current ones go out less and spend more time with their screens rather than meeting peers in the real world. Athena, a 13-year-old teenager, expresses this with absolute clarity: “I think our phones like us more than we like actual people”⁹.

In 2005, Brian Wansink (Professor of Psychology at Cornell University) carried out a curious experiment that consisted of bringing together two groups of people in a restaurant and serving them a bowl of soup. Half of the guests had a bowl that imperceptibly filled itself up as they ate the soup. At the end of the experiment it was demonstrated that these people had drunk 73%

⁸ Twenge, J., *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood – and What That Means for the Rest of Us*, Atria Books, New York, 2017, P. 77.

⁹ Ibid. p. 6.

more soup than the others, just because of the fact of their seeing that there was still liquid in the bowl¹⁰. Although it might beggar- belief that a prestigious university would provide funding for such an absurd experiment, if we look closely, it is perhaps not so absurd. Professor Wansink only extracted one conclusion: people do rely on somatic sensations to determine whether or not to carry on consuming.¹¹ Unbeknown to himself, he was sounding out the paradoxical terrain of libidinal satisfaction which has, in effect, has cut its moorings with the biological body. But, at the same time, the experiment is an extraordinary metaphor for the system of commerce that feeds the hunger of consumers: we cannot stop eating soup, because the supply of soup cannot stop. Although the soup can of course come out of our ears, satisfaction is never assured, which goes hand in glove with a system of production that is maintained by the impossibility of stopping even for a minute. Where the consumer's level of dissatisfaction must be kept constant; a consumer who, at the same time, is incapable of perceiving that he has not stopped eating soup and that he *cannot stop wanting* to eat soup.

Tristan Harris (a philosopher as well as an engineer) became famous in the Tech world when, as a Google employee, he published a memo with the title: *A Call to Minimise Distraction & Respect Users' Attention*: a denunciation of the manipulation of will and choice generated by the industry of the attention economy¹². In this essay, Harris explains how the user's responsibility is completely dismantled when confronted with the infinite variety of technological mechanisms, carefully studied in order to annul the will, or influence the desires of

subjects. The existence of the unconscious is no longer a secret for Google, Facebook, Amazon and similar firms. Moreover, their engineers even know something more than this: they have discovered that the Freudian field is the field of jouissance and that even if algorithms have a limited action upon the apparatus of jouissance of the speaking being, they are not completely ineffective. On the contrary, they manage to touch the well-spring of the drive(s) and affect their circuits. And they do not do this by following a generic protocol, but instead they are tailored to the individual by means of the tracking of the interactions of that particular user: Facebook's algorithms can instantaneously recreate their mood. This granular information allows the system to *learn* the buttons it must push in order to *touch* the subject's jouissance.

Andrew Lepp, Jacob Barkley and Aryn Karpinski, researchers from the College of Education, Health and Human Services at the University of Kent have published a study according to which, the frequent use of smartphones amongst young people tends to produce a greater level of anxiety and a lesser degree of life satisfaction, when compared with those peers who use these objects less¹³. With all due respect to the University of Kent and to its researchers, the proposed correlation should probably be inverted. It is anxiety and the/ a decline of jouissance that determines the fact that many young people find themselves hostages of addiction in the use of their devices. It would be comparable to thinking that people addicted to food tend to experience greater levels of anxiety than those who follow a

¹⁰ Wansink, B., Painter, J. E. and North, J., Bottomless Bowls: *Why Visual Cues of Portion Size May Influence Intake***. In *Obesity Research*, 13: 93-100, 2005. doi:10.1038/oby.2005.12

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Harris, T., op. cit.

¹³ Lepp, A., Barkley, J.E. and Karpinski, C.A. *The Relationship between Cell Phone Use, Academic Performance, Anxiety, and Satisfaction with Life in College Students*, In *Computers in Human Behavior*, Volume 31, 2014, Pages 343-350, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.10.049>. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563213003993>)

reasonable diet. This kind of research demonstrates, at the same time, that the demonization of technology can come to be as absurd and unproductive as its idealisation.

What we typically denominate as the technological-scientific discourse is in truth a soldering that is starting to melt. We see progressively the unfolding of two contrary paradigms, by which two distinct concepts are expressed Science and technology are beginning to travel separate paths, particularly given that the principle of impossibility that governs science has no place in the discourse of technology. Furthermore, in relation to temporality, science and technology are opposed. Whilst true science progresses slowly, technology advances in an accelerated form and makes speed one of its main postulates. For the Silicon Valley set, the classic scientific method is anachronistic and inadmissibly slow. This divorce between science and technology has serious implications, given that the latter currently generates the greatest percentage of wealth in the world economy. Persuasive technology, which employs all the resources of computational engineering and its alliance with cognitive-behavioural methods, is deployed to the fullest extent in order that the attention economy achieves its best dividends. Perhaps, in order to alleviate the consciences of their workers, companies like Google and Facebook encourage them to practice mindfulness and other so called *spiritual* exercises.

Curiously, whilst the attention economy becomes the fundamental driving force of the market, so-called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is experiencing an unprecedented inflationary rise; all for the benefit of Big Pharma, which also holds enormous interests in this branch of the economy. It is perhaps not a coincidence that this supposed disorder is multiplying in an exponential way in an era in which a

schizophrenic message is disseminated. Namely, the offer of all kinds of innovations that permit the simultaneous realisation of various tasks (multitasking), the possibility of metonymically *surfing* social networks, chat-rooms and *quick reading pages*, etc. In short, we live in an era of constant distraction, while a simultaneous attempt is made to seize the user's attention, in order to convert it into a sales target.

Some of those from Silicon Valley who, feeling guilty for having contributed to the creation of an algorithmic system capable of sounding out the very circuits "in which people look for food, drugs, sex, alcohol", as Tristan Harris confesses, have "repented", and are now trying to create a very peculiar "conscience". They design applications that will reduce the addiction to applications, and just in case, send their children to elite schools in which the use of mobile phones, tablets and laptops is totally prohibited¹⁴.

It is not certain that prohibition is going to resolve a jouissance that is threatening to get out of control, or impede our becoming objects consumed by the market. As Moore's law¹⁵ demonstrates, rather than subsiding, the advance of the wave of technology is ever more rapid. Therefore, we must learn to live with these new symptoms and find a way of treating them, knowing full well that there is only one way to start, even if we do not know where it will lead us. But everything begins with a knowledge concerning the use that each subject makes of its *objet petit a*, and the place that this occupies in the economy of his or her unconscious fantasy.

Translation by *Howard Rousse*

¹⁴ Harris, T., Op. cit.

¹⁵ [TN] Moore's law is the observation that the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles about every two years.

**ICLO-NLS Report on Iván Ruiz's Seminar
*Aggressivity in the Mirror: Violent Acts in
Childhood and Adolescence.***

The clinical and theoretical seminar entitled *Aggressivity in the Mirror: Violent Acts in Childhood and Adolescence* with Iván Ruiz took place in Dublin on September 29th, launching the ICLO-NLS programme for calendar year 2018/19. The well-attended event was opened by Joanne Conway, Chair of ICLO-NLS, who introduced the programme for the year with an overarching theme, *Violence Today*. Conway welcomed Ruiz, who began his seminar by speaking about Freud's death drive and Lacan's notions of violence and jouissance.

The Mirror Stage involves an acceptance of social connection and the aggressivity therein is something inherent to every social link. Violence is not a psychoanalytic term, since Freud speaks about the death drive and Lacan about aggressivity. Thus Ruiz asked: why is there a shift from aggressivity to violence? This shift toward violence occurs in order to find the victim, and he mentioned the Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han's notion of the "policy of violence"¹. And he referred to Hieronymus Bosch's painting, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, as an aggressive image recognised by Lacan as an illustration of an erotic relationship with the image of the other and the origins of the ego.

Aggressivity is recognised as the death drive by Lacan and aggressive tension emerges in psychoanalysis as negative transference. This

¹ Han's analysis concerns the relation between violence and individuality; the changing appearance of, and the subtle operation of violence in a society. Cf. Byung-Chul, H., *Topology of Violence*, transl. A. DeMarco, Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2018.

inner world of analytic drama linked to the subject's history is an obstacle and an identification that tries to cover up the subject's fundamental lack and the jouissance attached to the identification. Thus identification on the one hand and jouissance on the other indicate that the ethics of psychoanalysis is characterised by the loss of jouissance that can produce negative transference and aggressivity, which can take the forms of opposition, negation, ostentation, and lying.

Ruiz highlighted the lack of symmetry between the tendencies of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Moreover, for Lacan, *Eros* does not denote only love and life but also hatred, as there is a marked continuity between them. Ruiz raised a question; what makes it possible to *not* annihilate each other? The Mirror Stage is characterised by an image which comes from the outside thus providing the subject with an identification with the others, and alienation is at the origin of the ego. In the absence of a mediating, symbolic element, there is an impossibility to address aggressivity to the Other. Thus the passage to the act suggests something that has to be inscribed symbolically *via* an act which gives the subject a value of existence. Ruiz, following Lacan asks what is sought as an inscription in the passage to the act, and moreover; where is the subject of the act?

Ruiz interrogated this via a case of a young autistic boy who experienced the hallucinatory phenomenon of hearing voices. Ruiz spoke about the boy's acts of breaking as an attempt to resolve something, by the hitting of the image, the rejected self, in the mirror. Moreover, Ruiz spoke about the response on the part of the Other, who punishes without knowing about the intricacies of the hallucinatory phenomena, namely that the voices cannot be punished, and moreover, can be experienced as unbearable. Violence is the eruption

of jouissance and a call for the Other, when there are no words to name it sufficiently.

Ruiz spoke about the challenges this poses for all institutions even those founded on psychoanalytic principles. He explained that sometimes the act is necessary so that interpretation can follow. Ruiz and Conway discussed the instances where voices are not embodied, and how to put a limit to these voices which provoke anxiety in their “radical foreignness”; how to make a symptom of violence *via* the subject’s jouissance [e.g. why the subject hits others? what type of Other is summoned by the act?]



After the coffee break, Conway presented a clinical vignette of a girl, “who says nothing but self-harms by cutting”. The aggressive acts of cutting were discussed in terms of passage to the act and/or an acting out, as a way of showing something. The scar writes something akin to the “traces of the past”; the letter in the cut which in the treatment is connected to understanding something new.

During the afternoon, a panel discussion entitled *Violence Today* took place. The panel was facilitated by ICLO-NLS member Cecilia Saviotti with discussants: Mr Iván Ruiz, Dr. Aoife Twohig (Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist & Psychotherapist), Dr. Gloria Kirwan (Assistant Professor, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin). Saviotti opened the panel by speaking

about the importance of encountering different perspectives. Kirwan introduced her study² which explores the views of mental health service users’ about their participation in key decisions and about their sense of dignity within the field of social work. Twohig highlighted the developmental aspect pertaining to certain aggressive, violent childhood behaviours and that of the role of early parental relationship within Winnicott’s work, as well as his concept of “false self”³. She also stressed that on the one hand there is a need to express aggression, and on the other hand the institutions are marked by a zero tolerance of aggression. Saviotti then introduced a documentary entitled *Her name is Sabine*, a film which depicts, in a forthright yet sensitive manner, a portrait of an autistic woman, Sabine Bonnaire.

Ruiz highlighted the relationship between violence and its treatment, and made a distinction between trauma in psychoanalysis and trauma in institutions. Saviotti reiterated that in terms of the notion of *victim service*, the responsibility of practitioner is to hear something in a different register, and noted that “speaking about something else allows movement”. The identification of mental health service(s) as victim service(s) and the various problems with this, the eradication of the non-productive, as well as the contingency of/ tension between universal-singular, were further explored by the panel and then a discussion with the audience followed.

² Cf. Kirwan, G., *Up Close and Personal: Engaging with Service User Knowledge*, 2012, 6th NAIRTL Annual Conference and 4th Biennial Threshold Concepts Conference, At Trinity College Dublin, Volume: *Threshold Concepts: From Personal Practice to Communities of Practice* [e-publication] http://www.nairtl.ie/documents/EPub_2012Proceedings.pdf#page=153.

³ Winnicott, D. W., *Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self*, In, *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development*, New York: International Universities Press, 1965, pp. 140–57.

Conway closed the day by thanking all who attended. She referred to a quote by Bertrand Russell of “collective fear”⁴ which transmits exclusion, violence and intolerance. Thereby, Conway concluded by underlining the utmost importance of the sharing of experience and knowledge across different modalities of practice.

Report by *Lilli Klint*

⁴ “Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd.”: Russell, B., *An Outline of Collective Rubbish*, In. (2009/1950) *Unpopular Essays*, Routledge Classics, London and New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959, p. 109

Review of Gate Theatre production of Hamlet, Dublin, 2018.

*The time is out of joint, Oh cursed spite. That
ever I was born to set it right!*¹



Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was staged in the Gate Theatre as part of the 2018 Dublin Theatre Festival. Always popular, this original production of the play did not fail to attract a large audience. One of the main attractions of this production was that Oscar nominated Ethiopian-Irish actress, Ruth Negga, played the character of Hamlet who was depicted not as a woman but as a young man, an androgynous figure with short cropped hair, attired in a suit and having a precise expressive face.

The play opens shortly after the mysterious death of Hamlet's ideal father, the King, Hamlet. Within two months, Hamlet's mother has married Claudius, his father's brother, the one who bars Hamlet from the throne and from his mother, Gertrude. Hamlet's father appears as a ghost, to tell Hamlet that he was betrayed by Claudius who had killed the King by pouring a poisonous liquid called Hebenon into his ear. Hamlet is thus called upon to fulfil the task of revenge that is assigned to him, but Hamlet cannot yet act. Throughout the play he is suspended in the time of the Other. He is unable to take vengeance against the man who killed his father and, by marrying Gertrude, taking the place of the father Claudius, the man, enacts and

shows the repressed wishes of Hamlet's childhood as realized. The drama is the encounter with death.

The play *Hamlet* is important to psychoanalysts and particularly to Lacanian analysts. Hamlet's will is not his own, as he is subject to the obligations corresponding to his royal birth. In Seminar VI Lacan tells us that the character Hamlet has a problem with desire. Hamlet does not know what he wants. He is caught up in a desire different from his own, namely, that of the desire of the mother. Hamlet remains caught in his mother's desire, one that combines the symbolic phallus of the monarchy and the real phallus of Claudius. This brings a question to Hamlet: "to be or not to be", a depiction of Hamlet's position in relation to the phallus; it is a question of being that is posed. Hamlet denies his own desire, because, he will not pay the price of not having it, in order to be.

In this Gate Theatre production, the turmoil and the intense relationship played out between the characters of Hamlet and Ophelia (played by Aoife Duffin) is incontestable; Hamlet, resembling a perplexed and sometimes agitated angry adolescent who is trying to find his place in the world of adults and the world of love. It is by way of Ophelia that a measurement of Hamlet's desire can be marked. She is referred to as the cause of Hamlet's unhappy state. As the play progresses she falls from the position of the ideal woman; his counterpart. Then for Hamlet, in coming to represent his mother, Ophelia becomes a substitute for the mother for him. It is as this substitute figure for his mother that Hamlet degrades Ophelia, rejecting her in a very sarcastic and cruel way. In this production, Ophelia is palpably distressed and evidently mad following the death of her father by Hamlet's hand and also by Hamlet's own rejection of her. These scenes were superbly acted. Ophelia dishevelled and ghost-like exits the stage. It is only after her death that she takes on her value again for Hamlet, she is now an impossible desire. Lacan has told us that the obsessional subject (Hamlet can be understood as obsessional) arranges things so that the object

¹ Shakespeare, W., *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, The Complete Oxford Shakespeare, Vol. III: Tragedies*, Eds. S. Wells and G. Taylor: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 1133.

of his desire takes on the essential value of a signifier of this impossibility. It is only on hearing of Ophelia's death and on seeing Laertes mourning her loss that Hamlet can commence mourning, and it is this which makes it possible for him to name himself: "I Hamlet the Dane"².



and only then is he enlightened and he sees the truth, he immediately punishes himself which makes him finally appear as castrated. For Hamlet the crime has occurred in the preceding generation, he is told by his father's ghost that Claudius has committed the crime, there is a command or demand to avenge his father's murder, so Hamlet has knowledge of the crime. Hamlet is unable to act as he remains caught in the desire of his mother. The Oedipus complex marks the articulation and turning point which organizes the passage from the level of demand to that of desire. It is only at the end of the play, when Gertrude is dead and when Hamlet receives a mortal wound that he can then constitute himself and act. He kills Claudius, demonstrating that he, Hamlet is symbolically castrated. Castration is involved as soon as desire manifests itself.

Sheila Power

The play concludes with Hamlet being tempted into a fencing match with Laertes (played by Gavin Drea); another counterpart for Hamlet. Receiving a mortal wound is what makes it possible for Hamlet to kill Claudius and thus constitute himself as subject.

Hamlet, as a play, revolves around the death of Hamlet's father; his torment of having being struck out from his just rewards. Hamlet was unable to avenge the wrong doing. Hamlet is anguished by this and has difficulty accepting loss. What is required is the unconscious process of the acceptance of loss, this involves the subject to relinquish control and accept the castration of the mother. Lacan in Seminar VI equates Hamlet with the Oedipal drama. Oedipus is completely innocent, he acts immediately with no delay. For Oedipus it is an unconscious wish to kill his father, he does not know what he is doing, there is no talk about it. Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother

² Ibid., p. 1156.

EVENTS	What's Coming Up?	WHERE/ WHEN
JAN 11th FRI	ICLO-NLS SIG Child & Adolescent Lacanian Psychoanalysis with Joanne Conway	TBC
JAN 19th SAT	States of Segregation - Open Event With Rik Loose, Susan McFeely and Linda Clarke plus guests	PSI Grantham St. D2
JAN 25th FRI	ICLO-NLS Teaching Seminar #1 <i>"The Course of an Analysis"</i> with Rik Loose and Florencia Shanahan	PSI Grantham St. D2 7.00 - 9.00 pm
FEB 08th FRI	ICLO-NLS Teaching Seminar #2 <i>"The Course of an Analysis"</i> with Rik Loose and Florencia Shanahan	PSI Grantham St. D2 7.00 - 9.00 pm
FEB 22nd FRI	ICLO-NLS - Seminar of the School <i>"Space Formation of the Analyst"</i> with Oscar Ventura	PSI Grantham St. D2 7.00 - 9.00 pm
FEB 23rd SAT	ICLO-NLS - Clinical and Theoretical Seminar <i>"Violence Today"</i> with Oscar Ventura	PSI Grantham St. D2 10.00 - 1.00 pm
MAR 01st FRI	ICLO-NLS SIG Child & Adolescent Lacanian Psychoanalysis with Joanne Conway [SIG MEMBERS]	TBC

MAR 08th FRI	ICLO-NLS Teaching Seminar #3 <i>"The Course of an Analysis"</i> with Rik Loose and Florencia Shanahan	PSI Grantham St. D2
MAR 22nd FRI	ICLO-NLS - Members Seminar	PSI Grantham St. D2
APR 06th SAT	ICLO-NLS - Study Day - NLS Congress Theme <i>!Urgent!</i> With Bernard Seynhaeve , President of the NLS	PSI Grantham St. D2
APR 12th FRI	ICLO-NLS - Members Seminar	PSI Grantham St. D2
MAY 11th SAT	Discourses of Wellbeing - " <i>Violence Today</i> " Open Event	PSI Grantham St. D2
MAY 25th SAT	ICLO-NLS - Cartel Event	PSI Grantham St. D2
JUN 08th SAT	PIPOL 9 Event <i>"The Unconscious and the Brain: Nothing in Common"</i>	PSI Grantham St. D2
JUN 30th- JUL 02nd	NLS Annual Congress: <i>!Urgent!</i>	Tel-Aviv, Israel
JUL 13th - 14th	PIPOL 9 <i>"The Unconscious and the Brain: Nothing in Common"</i>	Square Brussels Meeting Centre

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Scríob: Dineen, P.S., (1902). Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla: Irish-English Dictionary, being a Thesaurus of the words, phrases and idioms of the modern Irish language. The Educational Company of Ireland for The Irish Texts Society, Dublin, 1927. (Original photograph © Raphael Montague, 2017)

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