



BULLETIN OF THE **NLS**

Nouvelle Ecole Lacanienne de Psychanalyse
New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis

**THE BODY AND ITS OBJECTS
LACANIAN INTERPRETATION**



Table of Contents

Editorial

Pierre-Gilles Guéguen: Lacanian Interpretation.....	5
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Orientation

Éric Laurent: Metamorphosis and Extraction of the Object <i>a</i> in the Pragmatics of the Cure.....	7
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The Congress of Ghent (2008):

"The Body and its Objects in the Psychoanalytic Clinic"

Gil Caroz: Body and Objects on Stage	17
Vlassis Skolidis: Bringing the Anal Object into Play	21
Luc Vander Vennet: What Makes a Body Rush	25
Geert Hoornaert: Little Hans and the Construction of the <i>out-of-Body</i> Object	28
Christiane Ruffieux-Lambelet: Red Rabbit, White Rabbit: Two Sides of the Object	32
Anne Béraud: Object <i>a</i> , Jouissance and Desire	35
Anna Pigou: From the Mouth to be Nourished to the Mouth for Speaking	38
Natalie Wulfig: An "Attachment Disorder"	42
Nathalie Lateur: Leaving the Anonymity of Eternal Agitation	46
Erik Mertens: Body, Identity, Sound and Repetition	51
Sandra Cisternas: What Language Do They Speak?	54
Anne Lysy-Stevens: The Body and its Objects in the Psychoanalytic Clinic. Looking back on the VI th Congress.....	58

Towards the VIIth Congress (Paris, May 2009): Lacanian Interpretation

Text Presenting the Theme of the VIIth Congress:

Pierre-Gilles Guéguen: Lacanian Interpretation	65
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Reference Texts for the Preparation of the Congress:

Jacques-Alain Miller: Interpretation in Reverse	69
Éric Laurent: Interpretation and Truth	76
Éric Laurent: Interpreting Psychosis from Day to Day	83

Announcements and Diary

99



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Interpreting Psychosis from Day to Day

In the Lacanian orientation, interpretation is situated in the tension between two poles of its practice. On the one hand, interpretation is the freest activity of the psychoanalyst. "As an interpreter of what is presented to me in words or deeds, I choose my own oracle and articulate it as I please, sole master of my ship after God; and while, of course, I am far from able to weigh the whole effect of my words, I am well aware of the fact and strive to attend to it. In other words, I am always free in the timing and frequency, as well as in the choice of my interventions, so much so that it seems that the rule has been entirely designed so as not to interfere in any way with my activity as an executor..."¹. On the other hand, interpretation is directed by strict rules. "I will spare myself the task of giving the rules of interpretation. It is not that they cannot be formulated, but their formulations presuppose developments that I cannot presume to be known..."². These two aspects of the relation of interpretation and norms can be knotted together in a proposition whose formulation would be that interpretation is without standards, but not without principles. The principle is stated thus: there is no metalanguage. This principle is especially of value for psychosis on a daily basis.

There is not one level that would be the object language – the material – and the level of interpretation that would be a distinct level to be applied to the segment of "material". We can conceive of all kinds of forms of this application. It could be a long segment of "material" and a short interpretation, or else an interpretation as extensive as the "material". Whichever, in a conception of this type, the two levels are neatly distinguished. This conception of interpretation applied to an object language is the most widespread in the psychoanalytic orientations.

1 J. Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power" in *Écrits*, transl. B. Fink, 2006, p. 491.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 497.

We have an example of this in the last book published by Kohut, *How Does Psychoanalysis Cure?*³ In Chapter 16, Kohut contrasted the Kleinian conception of psychoanalysis, especially in its Argentinean variant, with his theory of the "self". He wanted to contrast two ways of formulating interpretation: either in Kleinian language, or in the language of "self-psychology". Robert Wallerstein tried to found the IPA's eclecticism, what he called at the IPA Congress in Montreal in 1987 its different languages of interpretation, in a both theoretical and epistemological manner, by affirming that one does not have to consider these different languages in terms of either exactness or inexactness, the torment introduced by Glover's article in 1930⁴, nor in terms of depth or surface, but that one should rather comprehend them in terms of metaphor.

This term "metaphor" stems from the appropriation of the works of Lacan in the seventies by East Coast psychoanalysis in the United States. The vehicle for psychoanalysis was the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* journal. It met up with certain epistemological preoccupations in philosophy, such as those of W.V.O. Quine and the radical pragmatism of Richard Rorty.

Wallerstein's position was that the interpretative languages that call upon theories of a high level of abstraction (those that concern subject, object, aim, etc.) are metaphors. The common grounding, the reference, is clinical theory, which is minimal, with a low level of abstraction. Clinical facts get interpreted in different languages, and all of these languages are metaphors. This is a fairly simplistic epistemological model, which starts from a guaranteed reference point, the common ground of clinical theory. Metaphor means that there is a signifier here, which is translated into different languages, all of them referring to the same point. This is what Horacio Etchegoyen would respond to in 1991, considering this position a dangerous one.⁵

For Etchegoyen, a true interpretation is not a metaphor that refers to a clinical theory, even one of a low level of abstraction. A true interpretation refers to a real. According to his terms "it has to account for a psychical reality that at that moment exists in the patient's unconscious". It is a proposition of the kind: "The sentence P is true if and only if P is true". Etchegoyen maintains that the interpretation

3 H. Kohut, *How Does Psychoanalysis Cure?*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984.

4 E. Glover, "The therapeutic effect of inexact interpretation: A contribution to the theory of suggestion" in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Issue 12, p. 397-411, 1931.

5 H. Etchegoyen, "Psychoanalysis during the last decade: clinical and theoretical aspects" in *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, vol 11, Issue 1, 1991, pp. 88-106.

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is true if and only if it describes exactly what exists in the head of the
subject at the moment the interpretation is given.

This is the whole problem of a theory of truth that affirms the corre-
spondence between the unconscious ego [*moi*] and reality. It amounts
to constructing an agency, even if it is qualified as an unconscious
ego, as the locus of what gives equivalence [*adéquation*] to the drive
and the signifier, without any remainder. Saying that there is a place
where someone has something in their head amounts to being op-
posed to the statement according to which the drive is acephalic. This
conception of a psychical reality as a locus where one could draw
up an inventory of what it contains implies a topology separating
the inside from the outside by way of a strict limit. This conception
is at odds with the Lacanian topology of the subject and the Other
governed by extimacy.

The logical positivist critique of interpretation as metaphor

In the sixth chapter of his book, Kohut recounted the following sequence,
which he had come to hear about in supervision with an analyst whom
he presents as a South American of Kleinian orientation: "At the end
of the session this analyst informs her patient that in the near future
she will have to cancel a session. The following day the patient remains
silent and distant and does not respond when the analyst invites her
to speak. Then the analyst tells her that the announcement she had
made in the previous session has transformed her from being a good
breast into a bad one. She adds that since then the patient has been
consumed with rage; she wants to destroy the bad breast by biting it,
which provokes an oral inhibition that prevents her from speaking".

This sequence ties the oral drive to its consequence – inhibition.
Here we meet up with the principle of interpretation that had guided
Melitta Schmideberg in the case of "the fresh brains man"⁶. Accord-
ing to Schmideberg, in the Kleinian tradition, intellectual inhibition is
linked to inhibition of the drive. That subject had a strong oral drive.
In his childhood, he used to steal food from the fridge. This impulse
then turned into an inhibition, which has transformed into intellectual
inhibition.

As for Kohut, he thinks it might have been better to cast things in the
terms of self-psychology, or even ego-psychology. In ego-psychology
one does not go straight to the object but via the Oedipal conflict. One

6 J. Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment...", *op. cit.*, p. 502.

therefore says to the patient: "You felt the announcement I made yesterday in the same way as when your mother closed the door of the room in order to sleep with your father". Here is the Oedipal conflict: the patient is mad with rage to see that her mum is interested in something other than her.

In the terms that self-psychology employs in the case of narcissistic personalities, or what we would call ordinary psychoses, it would have been necessary to reformulate things in terms of interpretation focused on the self by speaking about self-esteem. In Kohut's theory, the narcissistic analysand's *self-esteem* cannot tolerate conflict since, strictly speaking, he has not developed an Oedipal conflict. It would therefore be necessary to have the following formulation: "Your self love was shaken by the news I announced yesterday in the same way as on the day when your mother, cold and distant, sent away the warm-hearted cook who used to let you in the kitchen to help her and used to praise you."

The analyst who gives the Kleinian interpretation, the one focusing on the object, notes that following the interpretation the patient was more relaxed. She started speaking more freely and realised she had spent the whole previous session with clenched teeth. Kohut comments that regardless of the positive effect of the interpretation, it is necessary to note the distance between the message, which was correct, and the false theory.

What was the essential message? It was: "You are profoundly disturbed by the fact that one of your sessions has been cancelled. I acknowledge this." According to Kohut, it was necessary to say: "It's legitimate, you've got the right". Kohut's theory – its fundamental message – is empathy, welcoming the other. How does psychoanalysis cure? Kohut's answer consists in saying that it cures with the smile of the mother. It is the fundamental *Yes* that Kohut considers the essential element in the psychoanalytic operation. He attributes it to the mother, but it concerns more profoundly the function of *Bejahung*, which Lacan attributed to the *Witz*.

Etchegoyen is opposed to Kohut's propositions. He maintains his opposition between theory and formulation but he turns it on its head. The theory was correct, that of good and bad breast, but the analyst's formulation was not correct for several reasons. The first rule of interpretation according to him is to start off strictly from the patient's statements. Therefore the cancelled session should not be mentioned because it had not been mentioned by the patient. She should have simply put words against the silence: "Something's troubling you, and you're unable to express it". And then, "if she had said she was keeping quiet because since the previous session her jaw had been

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clenched, and if she had added a few biting words to address the analyst, then there would have been a verification." The fact that the jaw was mentioned shows that the oral object is present in the psychical reality. The proof is the proof given by subjects' relaxing. Only then might one say: "You felt the previous day's announcement as if the breast had been taken away from you, and you reacted with fear and the wish to bite it by clenching your teeth and uttering words that could also bite".

Etchegoyen continues: "If the analysand had said that while she was keeping silent she was thinking of an unpleasant incident that had taken place the night before with her five-year old daughter who wanted to stay in her parents' room instead of going to sleep in hers, and that the patient had ended up getting annoyed, and had taken her daughter away to bed by force, and if she had added she was already annoyed because, on leaving the session, she had had an argument with a taxi driver who did not want to give her change, then I would not have hesitated in telling her that this anger she was speaking about concerning her daughter was her way of informing me of her reaction to the announcement I had made to her; and that she had argued with the taxi driver because he did not want to give her something; and that, in speaking about her daughter, she was expressing her own infantile reaction: she felt like I was her mother who used to drive her violently out of her room in order to sleep with her father". In the end: "If the analysand had brought along a dream, reproducing the traumatic infantile situation in which her mother had sent away the nice cook", I would have said: "indeed, it was like your mother..."

But Etchegoyen adds: "I would never have had the nerve to say "your cold and indifferent mother" because an interpretation must always bear on the subject, and never on the people around the subject. On that point, my disagreement is categorical." This type of disagreement evokes the quarrels the psychoanalytic movement has known. Should one see the parents of a child or not, should one see people from the subject's entourage? It seems difficult to put forward universal propositions, positive or negative, about what is to be done. There are always cases that pose objections to these prescriptions. One can see here the advantage of the indication Lacan gives us when he says that interpretation must bear only on the object and on the mode of *jouissance*. This may include bringing people in the subject's entourage into play.

Let's get back to Etchegoyen. He concludes: "The three hypothetical interpretations (given at these different levels) include fragments of theory at a high level of abstraction, but they are not metaphors to the extent that they correspond strictly to the material of the supposed

session". Thus, in his view, the problem is not one of discussing the profundity or efficacy of these interpretations but of knowing whether or not one thinks they really refer to something, to a state of mind, that is formulated in the psychical reality of the patient. When he formulates an interpretation, "the analytic work establishes conditions of truth in the psychical reality". This is very subtle: if one has a psychical reality, one must still furnish it with a truth table. "...At this moment the interpretation ceases to be a figure of discourse and takes on a precise signification isomorphic with what is really taking place in the mind of the one receiving it". Everything is laid out in this short sentence. Firstly, "the truth tables are introduced into a reality". Then, in using the terms "isomorphic" and "condition of truth", Etchegoyen safeguards a denotative theory of truth. This conception therefore allows Horatio Etchegoyen to go even as far as a sort of logical positivism of interpretation. Indeed, at one point, interpretation has an isolatable signification and aims at a guaranteed correspondence. Lacan will say in a wider epistemological framework that the analyst "adds his logic" to the unconscious discourse of the analysand.

Metaphorical interpretation according to Lacan is not a relativism

The disagreement bears on the fact that, with the theory that there is an equivalence between interpretation and what "really" happens in one's head, when the drive is aimed at, one comes across the very aporias that Lacan denounced in "The Direction of the Treatment...". Interpretation is not something isomorphic, it "makes something heard". Lacan leaves the epistemology of equivalence aside. He situates interpretation as evocation – it "makes something heard". What it is a question of making heard is determined by the direction of the treatment. According to Lacan, interpretation is not an equivalence, it is creationist and it determines what the analysand has to be made to hear. In the case of the fresh brains man, *he should have been made to hear that he steals nothing*.

Back in the "Function and Field of Speech and Language", Lacan situated interpretation far away from a metalanguage. It is a dimension of speech in which speech and language are knotted together in a special way. Based on the foregrounding of "the instance of the letter", and to the detriment of the function of speech, Lacan reformulates his fundamental thesis in the form: "desire is its interpretation". This formulation is opposed to the definition of an unconscious desire that defines the level of an object language, and is opposed too to the interpretation of that unconscious desire as the language that would decipher it by overhanging it. Saying that "desire is its interpretation"

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amounts to making the two levels coincide. Unconscious desire can no longer be separated from the level of interpretation. It also amounts to saying that the deployed interpretation is supported by a desire, on occasion by the psychoanalyst's desire to interpret.


Another way of reformulating the principle of interpretation is to say that interpretation is a punctuation. This is a fact that Jacques-Alain Miller has brought out forcefully. He even succeeded in upholding it on the radio, on *France-Culture*. The punctuation is placed at the very level of the unconscious structured like a language. Punctuation makes for interpretation because it is situated at the same level as unconscious discourse. The unconscious is a language with punctuations. Back when he was the media darling with his *The Name of the Rose*, someone asked Umberto Eco: "Who are you in the novel?" He replied: "I'm the semi-colon". Giving oneself the place of the one who punctuates, giving oneself the place of punctuation itself, is a very Lacanian response. It is an interpretation-punctuation formulated in a gulf.

Jacques-Alain Miller formulates this in a striking fashion by saying that the analyst is the editor of the analysand's text. It is a further reformulation of Lacan's thesis that appears in *Seminar XI*: "The analyst is part of the concept of the unconscious"⁷. It is structured in the same way. There is no unconscious without its punctuation, without its editor, without the one who makes it appear. The unconscious is not a thing that is already there. It appears in the course of the very practice of the psychoanalysis that allows for the emergence of this unconscious, inseparable from its level called interpretative. That is why the structure of the subject is that of a Moebius strip and not that of a superposition of planes across two levels on which there could be applications.

This structure, "There is No Metalanguage", is crucial in the question of the locus of the Other. The Other is a locus with very strange properties. In "The Direction of the Treatment" Lacan says: "In order to decipher the diachrony of unconscious repetitions, interpretation must introduce into the synchrony of signifiers that come together there something that suddenly makes translation possible – this is precisely what is allowed by the function of the Other in the possession of the code, it being in relation to that Other that the missing element appears."⁸ The locus of the Other is a magical place. It is always possible for a new element to emerge even though it is not there. It is a locus where this is inscribed in such a fashion that, based on the synchrony of signifying elements,

7 [Cf. J. Lacan, "Presence of the Analyst" in *The Seminar Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Penguin, 1977, pp. 123-135.]

8 J. Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment...", *op. cit.*, pp 495-6.



it is always possible to make another one emerge which, from that point on, will make the translation of the sequence possible. Freud spoke about the magic writing pad, the little children's slates where a text is erased and yet remains inscribed, to note the relations between consciousness and the unconscious. Lacan has furnished the Other with a more complex topology. Indeed, it is a magical place because it has the structure of a Moebius strip. Starting on the opposite side it is always possible for another signifier to emerge and for it to render the chain translatable. Situating interpretation as translation is both very Freudian – in Letter 52 to Fliess, Freud speaks of discreet elements that undergo translation from epoch to epoch – and very radical. It is a subversion of interpretation as a supplementary language [*langue*]. From thereon the subject can recognise what used to be alien to him as being part of him. It is a sort of translation of the subject within the text that is concerned, and not a translation of a message from one language into another. Moreover, Lacan was particularly interested in the elements that mark the place of the subject of enunciation in the text, at a time when the linguistics of enunciation was drawing attention to this question. For example, he was interested in those words scattered in a language that do not mean anything but which signal enunciation. Some grammarians consider that between “*Je crains qu’il ne vienne*” and “*Je crains qu’il vienne*” there is no difference at the level of meaning. Lacan, on the contrary, considers with the grammarians Damourette and Pichon that the expletive “*ne*”, which can be done away with, which can always be added to a verbal group expressing a wish or necessity, is the translation of the subject structured as being able to be added, or not, to a message. The subject is a locus as magical as the locus of the Other. It can be added to a sentence without changing its meaning and, nevertheless, changing it entirely. This structure is that of Russell's set. Jacques-Alain Miller chose to highlight this structure by affirming the thesis: “The unconscious interprets”, and not the analyst. He did this in a context where our community, working on the question of interpretation, had managed to get tangled up: we were getting clinical cases for which the papers presented first the material brought by the analysand and then the analyst's interpretation, which suggested an erroneous perspective. If one does not grasp what a dialogue really is deep down, if in the clinical case we do not manage to restore the structure according to which one receives from the Other one's own inverted message, we are not respecting the structure of “There is No Metalanguage”. We fall into errors of perspective and into the idea that interpretation is the analyst's word. So, it was crucial to re-establish the fundamental structure of “There is No Metalanguage” in “The Unconscious Interprets”.

The unconscious interprets, and especially so in psychosis, since psychosis more than neurosis highlights the structure of the locus of the Other. The locus of the Other presents itself first of all with this

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property of a Russellian set, namely that a supplementary element can always be added to the set of this locus where inclusion and exclusion are knotted in such a particular way. In Lacan's teaching, the Other is first of all furnished with the paternal metaphor which qualifies what belongs to the register of neurosis. The paternal metaphor, the Name-of-the-Father, then comes to guarantee the consistence of signification in the Other. The father is first of all the one who introduces the limit, the one who supports the place of "It's like that because that's how it is". If one approaches the structure of the Other from the point of view of neurosis, one does not see how much interpretation is made in the Name-of-the-Father. The Name-of-the-Father allows for there to be a limit point with S_1 being complemented by S_2 and for things to be arranged in such a way that speech is brought to a halt thanks to this function. There is a silence included in the language which means that the unconscious text is able to find a breathing space that allows the subject, as president Schreber put it, "not to think about anything", to be able to breathe. This means being able to act without being permanently bothered by "thought", by invasive hallucinatory formulations.

It was not by chance that in these reflections on psychoanalysis the question posed by Wittgenstein to Freud bore on the stopping point. It was not by chance that Wittgenstein, who was psychotic, who absolutely did not believe in the father, undertook his entire oeuvre to find out where to stop. Next, Lacan structured the question of interpretation ever more on the basis of psychosis, especially from the moment he pluralised the Names-of-the-Father. What Jacques-Alain Miller has called the second metaphor in Lacan consists in *jouissance* being taken charge of by the Other. It is language [*langue*] itself that significantises *jouissance* by transforming it into odds and ends of *jouissance*, such as the object *a*, an element of *jouissance* which nevertheless behaves like a letter. It can link into a chain, it can enter a series, it can be substitutable, and it can be in the place of cause.

Thus our question becomes: how can one come to a halt if it is in language itself that the significantisation of *jouissance* is taken charge of? What constitutes its stopping principle? This is the key question of the Lacanian approach to psychoses.

What interpretation is involved in psychosis from day to day?

If one speaks of interpretation in psychosis, it is indeed the case that the psychotic subject always precedes us. He interprets in an original way. He believes in his interpretation. He is ready to impose it on the

world. He passes through the experience of imposed words [*paroles imposées*] which are the interpretations that impose themselves upon him. To interpret psychosis is to recognise the “out in the open” unconscious⁹ as an interpretative device, as a piece of permanent work where the unconscious translates itself over and over. Therefore, in order not to be carried along in the delusional movement, it is a matter of focussing the subject back onto the elementary phenomena, the isolated master signifiers (S_1) that impose themselves on the psychotic subject. He vouches for a flesh to which phenomena of jouissance occur, and for the incessant work of this production, whether this jouissance comes from his own body in the schizophrenic, or whether this jouissance is the bad jouissance of the Other, which is the paranoid’s supposition. This incessant work has points of homeostasis – stopping points and points of suspension. Even in the most florid interpretative psychoses, in what Lacan called the stabilisation of the delusional metaphor there is a moment when the subject finds moments of calm, moments of appeasement, after the moments of interpretative work, the moments of exhausting productive work.

In the stabilisation of the metaphor, the signifier and the signified (in the first formulation of the metaphor), jouissance and the Other (in the second formulation of this metaphor) find a way to hold together, the object *a* finding a place. It is in lending an ear to psychosis itself that we find the elements that now make for the stake of Lacan’s second clinic. It is a question of seeking out how signifier and jouissance can hold together in the non-standard variants that the different psychoses present. During the *Conversation d’Arcachon*, Jacques-Alain Miller remarked that “the metaphor as structure can seize and put into function classical elements [...] but it can also seize non-standard elements, the rare and purely individual elements. The Name-of-the-Father is a standard in our civilisation. But the metaphor can very well articulate elements that only belong to one subject.”¹⁰ We can find these elements, for example, in Joyce who wants to become the re-founder of a language, the artificer of the production of a language. One can find in these singular elements the most varied elements: for the subject it is a kind of factory through which a highly non-typical, very particular element is put into the function of the Name-of-the-Father. We can push it to the point where a noun that elsewhere is a common noun is put, for the subject, in the position of a proper name. As Lacan says in “Subversion of the Subject...”, a proper name is an extraordinary signifier where the signifier and the signified balance

9 [J. Lacan, *The Seminar, Book III, Psychoses*, Routledge, 1993, p. 59.]

10 [IRMA, *La Conversation d’Arcachon, Cas rares : Les inclassables de la clinique*, Agalma/Seuil, 2005, p. 281.]

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at the different psychoses
non, Jacques-Alain Miller
re can seize and put into
also seize non-standard
elements. The Name-of-
But the metaphor can very
to one subject."¹⁰ We can
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most varied elements: for
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ction of the Name-of-the-
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ct", a proper name is an
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out and become stabilised.¹¹ The proper name is a successful delu-
sional metaphor since the proper name has extraordinary properties
in language: it does not translate itself any more. In this sense, the
operation of the proper name is of the order of a successful metaphor.
It holds in place; it conjoins in such a way that translation can come
to a halt. You do not translate any further. That's it, it's named it. It is
likewise the structure of the elementary phenomenon.

In psychosis we have to accomplish a double movement. On the one
hand, we accompany the taking charge of jouissance by language, the
interpretative work, the production in the locus of the Other of the
psychotic's work. This does not happen without us, we who are the
bearers of the analytic discourse. The analytic discourse conveys with
it the locus of the Other. It installs it and gives it its function. Through
the installation of the locus of the Other we authorise the place that
can enable translation. The work of translation continues but, at the
same time, we must know that what we are seeking to obtain is a
stabilisation, a homeostasis, a punctuation. A contrast has been drawn
that is too strict, even caricatural, between the idea that you make the
neurotic speak and you make the psychotic shut up. It is a caricatural
contrast because it is not about making anyone shut up. It is about
stabilising, it is about aiming at the possibility of a cut being introduced,
the possibility of language no longer being compacted, holophrased,
the possibility of there not being simply a series of signifiers $S_1, S_2, S_n \dots$
without the commas. It is about obtaining the possibility of com-
mas. Therefore, we make these commas in the session. We target the
sinthome. "A practice that targets the sinthome in the subject does
not interpret like the unconscious. To interpret like the unconscious
is to remain in the service of the pleasure principle."¹²

Targeting the sinthome amounts to underlining, coming back to the
signifiers, isolating them, separating them from the chain, giving
them their place, operating their disengagement with regard to the
signifying chain. Let's imagine a fictitious dialogue with President
Schreber. We would say to him: "You said bellowing, bellowing mira-
cle? Tell me more about that. What is this bellowing miracle?" You
target the signifier "bellowing", you wrest it from the series and you
ask him to focus on the bellowing miracle. It is not about reviving the
 $S_1 - S_2$ chain, but rather about focusing on the body event that the
"bellowing miracle" represents. The subject is invited to say in his own
particular way how he defends himself against the miracle by way of

11 [J. Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire", in *Écrits*, op.
cit., p. 694.]

12 J.-A. Miller, "Interpretation in Reverse" in *The Later Lacan: An Introduction*, ed.
V. Voruz and B. Wolf, Suny Press, New York, 2007, p. 6.

a particular invention. President Schreber would then have spoken to us about his use of the piano. We therefore focus the interpretation on the ordered pair (S_1, a) .¹³

This can also be the case with a psychotic child who has three elements: a tumbler, some water and hitting himself. You take one element in the series, the tumbler. You pick it up, bring it over near the water, fill it up, empty it, and then watch it being filled and emptied out over and over, and afterwards you bring in a second tumbler, and a third one and put them into each other. Starting with isolated signifiers, you construct a series. The method is the same: you extract an element that is part of the chain of the child's *jouissance*. It could be his distraught look in front of the window. In this case, you pass something between the window and him, you try to extract the gaze, to bring the gaze into function. The punctuation consists in obtaining something like an appeasement. The most implausible and the most inventive constructions made by psychotic subjects hold up through equilibriums where the body is implicated. This is what you try to obtain in various ways. In the interpretation of psychosis we do not let ourselves be led by a mad speech in the name of the fact that "delusion is a road to recovery". You do not leave a subject in his delusion until he is exhausted, whether it be that of a maniac or of a paranoiac. We know that naming, giving a name, can consist in striking the other. The "thou art that" is a form of naming. Lacan emphasised a great deal how much the "thou art", the *tu es* is at the same time a killing, a *tuer*. This homophony refers to the signifier as murder of the thing through the name that designates it, whether it is present or absent, alive or dead. The hetero-aggressive or auto-aggressive *passage à l'acte* is also a way of giving a name. We make use of the signifying elements that the subject gives us. It is a matter of what he says, but also of the signifying elements of his conduct, his *acting out*. These are a host of elements that allow us to be guided in the dialogue with the subject on what speaking means. We aim at the effect of silence, of pause, of stabilisation on the horizon. This is what means that on some occasions with psychotic subjects the session is a moment of pause, of silence, of not thinking about anything.

One colleague described a mode of limit session with a psychotic subject who does not say anything to him in the session. He sits down and does not say anything. After a while the analyst walks him to the door in a very ceremonial fashion. And the subject says: "Well, that

¹³ This paragraph was modified and made more precise following the discussion with J.-A. Miller during the conversation of the CERC of the Clinical Sections, on 23 June 2005.



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the session. He sits down
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was a good session today". This is an example of an extreme kind, it
is a passage on the limits. This subject is taken up in an important
production of work, but during the session there is a moment when
he does not think about anything, a moment when he does not say
anything, and for him this is what introduces the function of pause. It
is his moment in the day for not thinking about anything, alongside a
master signifier. This very strange device gives us the idea that Lacanian
interpretation has to aim at silence and has to include silence. When
Jacques-Alain Miller's article on interpretation was published in a col-
lection in Argentina, he entitled the collection *Entonces Sssh!*¹⁴. This
is also what the following sentence tells us: "The silence that follows
a Mozart symphony belongs to Mozart". The silence has to belong to
the interpretation. An interpretation has to include its silence or its
enigma. Interpretative equivocation does not mean that it is a question
of an interpretation where nothing is understood, an interpretation
open to all kinds of meaning, as Lacan said. Equivocation does not
mean that all meanings are possible. Equivocation means that the play
on meaning is sufficient for there to be some silence, for the signifier
to be able to be decomposed, to be broken, for there to be neither an
endless concatenation nor a frozen signification.


This is why when a psychotic subject comes to see us we lend an ear
to the psychosis in order to learn from him the non-standard elements
that he is making function as stopping points. When listening to him,
we ask ourselves what constitutes a quilting point for him. We have
to learn from the psychotic subject how he succeeds in not thinking
about anything, how he succeeds in introducing silence, and we have
to be able to know how we can help him to introduce the cut and how
to handle it. To cut into the signifying flow is to manage to make it
hold together, to obtain the "that's it". Thus, for us it amounts to mov-
ing closer to the structure of the signifier all on its own. "The unary
signifier, which as such is nonsensical, means that the elementary
phenomenon is primordial. The reverse of interpretation consists in
circumscribing the signifier as the elementary phenomenon of the
subject, and as it was before it was articulated in the formation of the
unconscious that gives it the sense of delusion."¹⁵

The trait has to be found via which one gets closer to separation.
The point of separation has to be targeted. In his *Cours* of 2003/04,
Jacques-Alain Miller contrasted in a decisive way the signifying trait
and the cut of separation. How can one help the subject to be able to

se following the discussion with
the Clinical Sections, on 23 June

14 J.-A. Miller, "La interpretación al revés" in *Entonces Sssh!*, Eolia, Buenos Aires,
1996.

15 J.-A. Miller, "Interpretation in Reverse", *op. cit.*, p. 7.



separate? This can be, for example, by choosing silence, by authorising him to choose silence. As we have seen, this can be oneself by taking a very directive position, for example, when the subject is perplexed or on the verge of depersonalisation. Then it is necessary to emphasise, to settle the possible meaning of a word or an expression. In each case we have to invent what has to lead to interpretation as a separation from the Other.

Already in *Entonces Sssh!* interpretation, as a cut that produces perplexity, is distinguished from punctuation, which is on the side of the Name-of-the-Father. "The question is not to know whether the session is long or short, silent or wordy. Either the session is a semantic unity, in which S_2 comes to punctuate the elaboration – delusion in the Name-of-the-Father (as many sessions are) – or the analytic session is an asemantic unit returning the subject to the opacity of his jouissance. This implies that it be cut before it can loop back upon itself."¹⁶

Beyond a strict distribution between punctuation-neurosis and cut-psychosis, let's say that the interpretation-cut is an interpretation compatible with Lacan's second clinic which allows it to encompass the first one. The discourse of the analyst is this operation of cutting the unconscious. It aims to produce it.

So, the place of the analyst is defined as being part of the concept of the unconscious. In his interrogation of the analytic act, Lacan remarks that the true originality of the analytic method is not to have produced a new classification but to ascertain that the analyst is already there in the history of the subject. "When the analyst wonders about a case, when he writes up an anamnesis, when he prepares it, when he starts tackling it and once he goes into it with analysis... he, the analyst, was already there at any such point of the history of the subject... There is something that was already there. This would give him an entirely different way of tackling the diversity of cases. Perhaps, starting with this moment, he might manage to find a new clinical classification, different from that of classical psychiatry which he has never been able to touch or undermine, and for good reason. So far, he has never been able to do anything other than follow it."¹⁷ Lacan had named this "already there" before as the "signifier of transference"¹⁸. Jacques-Alain Miller has recently remarked on

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷ [J. Lacan, "Le séminaire XV, L'acte psychanalytique", (lesson of 27 March 1968), unpublished.]

¹⁸ [Cf. J. Lacan, "Proposition of 9 October 1976 on the Psychoanalyst of the School" in *Analysis*, Issue 6, 1995, pp. 5-6.]

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France-Culture that to come to see an analyst, a subject has to have experienced some perplexity in his existence; if this is not the case, he will not come. It is the signifier faced with which he had been perplexed that will be the signifier of transference. It is the moment at which the subject will experience himself as separated from the Other that will allow for the inscription of the subject in the analytic act. The analyst will already have been there. In the everyday of the interpretation of psychosis, it will also be upon this presence that is “already there” that the analyst will be able to sustain his dialogue with the one who comes to find him.

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