

[Why is trauma urgent?\[i\]](#) by Julia Evans on 4th February 2019 or [here](#)
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Why is trauma urgent?ⁱ

By Julia Evansⁱⁱ

In announcing the conference theme, *Urgent!*, Bernard Seynhaeve states that ‘that which is urgent can be approached from different angles. It can be looked at from the angle of trauma’.ⁱⁱⁱ

Trauma indicates a breach, which can be seen by uncontained energy. Éric Laurent (27th April 2002^{iv}) describes it as structural and occurring at two levels. Initially, the breach is caused by a failure of neurotic repetition, the defences, or the excitation-proof shield. Sigmund Freud (1926)^v proposes that the breach is covered or filled up with an invention based on a relation to Mother. So the breach is filled and a repetition is put in place (See the ‘fort-da’ game^{vi}) Where there is no invention, the breach is not filled. Lacan called this a ‘troumatisme’ (Seminar XXI : 19th February 1974)^{vii}.

The second level where trauma exists, is where language is imposed. Éric Laurent (November 2004)^{viii} notes that Lacan underlines a sudden cut-off point produced by the coupling between language and living beings, a trauma for the human species. On the fringes of the language system, a number of clinical phenomena are produced which fall within the category of the real, a real that is specific to each speaking being. These phenomena, trauma, hallucination, and the experience of "perverse" jouissance, stand at once on the edge of this system and at its heart (so in two places). They stem from a topology that is more complex than a mere inside and outside. Neurotics too experience moments of anxiety that give them some idea of these phenomena.^[i]^[ii]^[iii]^[iv]^[v]^[vi]^[vii]^[viii]

So the link to urgency occurs when there is a failure of mechanisms to come into place, usually in childhood, and when language fails at the fringes or centre of its system.

This is schematised by Jacques-Alain Miller in 1996^{ix}: i) Language as symbolic surrounded by the real (really symbolic). This is the symbolic present inside the real. If the real is totally separated from sense, then a ‘troumatisme’ emerges.

and

ii) Language as symbolic with a hole in it. (symbolically real) The subject speaks the truth from within the system of language but it is a truth which covers up or has no hole in it. When the system is breached, then anguish or dread results.

Treatments differ for the two levels of trauma.

An example which may give glimpses of both levels and is defined in everyday language & DSM as traumatic - the 2017 fire in Grenfell Towers, a block of flats, London. The inquiry is ongoing, and it is the case that the fire prevention measures were not adequate. Instead of evacuating the flats, tenants were ordered to stay put so died.

In her evidence to the enquiry^x, London's fire brigade commissioner, Dany Cotton, stated that fire was as unexpected as 'a space shuttle landing on the Shard' During the fire Cotton was the monitoring officer, which she said meant she was to provide support, guidance and reassurance to the incident commander. She said she did not take command herself because she was satisfied with the firefighting plan. She could not remember the last time she had received training in operational incident command.

Cotton said she had felt she was not fully doing her job as monitoring officer, particularly when, as the night progressed, she found herself comforting firefighters. "I've never seen a situation on the fire ground where firefighters were openly crying and distressed," she said

In a statement she gave to a police investigation into the fire, Cotton said: "I have had issues with my memory, which I believe is linked to the traumatic nature and sheer scale of the incident. I'm still finding it very difficult to look at visual images and have conversations about Grenfell.

I suggest, as a tentative hypothesis, that the fire fighters suffered a breach at level 2. Their symbolic system suffered a hole in the middle of it. Grenfell fire was incomprehensible. Anguish, as noted by Cotton, resulted.

For Dany Cotton, the breach was at level 1. Language was separated from sense and a traumatism occurred, She has issues with memory.

So even though the trauma was common, each subject's reaction was different.

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ⁱ Developed in the New Lacanian School's Cartels 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' 2016-2018 & 'Trauma' 2018-2019. See <http://www.amp-nls.org/page/gb/24/cartels>

ⁱⁱ An abbreviated copy is published <http://quatreplusone.com/index.php/n10/>
Available <http://quatreplusone.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/41-NUMERO-10-Why-is-trauma-urgent-Julia-Evans.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ [nls-messenger] 2742.en/ Communiqué from the President of the NLS : 12 July 2018 at 18:15:15 BST See <http://www.amp-nls.org/page/gb/49/nls-messenger/0/2017-2018/3314>

^{iv} [Trauma in Reverse : 27th April 2002 \(New York\) : Éric Laurent](#) or [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12265>

^v Sigmund Freud, 1926, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Addendum C, in the SE XX, p. 170, See [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=250>

^{vi} Beyond the Pleasure Principle : 1920g : Sigmund Freud Part II, P283 of pfl : SE II p14–17. Contact je.lacanian@icloud.com for access

^{vii} Seminar XXI, "The Unfooled Err," lesson from February 19 1974 : www.LacanianIreland.com : See [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=807>

[Seminar XXI – Les Non-Dupes Errent : 19th February 1974 : p9 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : ...He fancies that he does not know! What a funny business... But we all know, because all of us invent something to fill up the hole in the Real. Where there is no sexual relationship this gives a 'troumatisme'. One invents. Naturally one invents what one can.

^{viii} See P99 of [On the origin of the Other and the post-traumatic object : 6th November 2004 \(Lyon\) : Éric Laurent](#) translated by Adrian Price : Published p97-118 of Lost in

Cognition : Psychoanalysis and the Cognitive Sciences : Karnac : 2014 : See
or [here](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12272) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12272>

ix p63 of [The Seminar of Barcelona on 'Die Wege der Symptombildung'](#) :
[probably Autumn 1996](#) : Jacques-Alain

[Miller](#) See [here](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12274) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12274>

x <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/27/london-fire-brigade-chief-denies-she-should-have-expected-grenfell-dany-cotton> by [Robert Booth](#) Thu 27 Sep
2018 : The Guardian