

## PRESENTATION ON ORDINARY PSYCHOSIS

03-03-2011

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I attended the Paris English Seminar in Paris in July, 2008 on 'Ordinary Psychosis'. It was an introduction to a particular orientation of Psychoanalysis that revolutionized my way of thinking about the clinic. So when we were asked to volunteer for a topic on these teaching seminars, I opted for this topic in order to demonstrate why in my view the concept of Ordinary Psychosis is so useful in the clinic.

Ordinary psychosis is about differential diagnosis in psychoanalysis. It was invented and introduced by Jacques Alain Miller in 1998 in order to think about those cases, rare cases at first, that defied easy diagnosis using our classical categories. Ordinary Psychosis is a clinical concept par excellence. In his article on Ordinary Psychosis in *Psychoanalytic Notebooks* 19, Miller believes it a Lacanian clinical category despite it not being Lacan's category. The concept is a direct consequence of what we call 'the late teaching of Lacan'. The concept was developed by Jacques Alain to address clinical deadlocks in the direction of the treatment. However the concept does not have a rigid definition.

You could say why do we need an extra category? Are the categories of neurosis Psychosis no longer adequate for diagnostics? I will try and answer this question.

The concept of Ordinary Psychosis allows us to think in a very specific way about the clinic. Ordinary Psychosis positions itself on the verge of the polemic around psychic structure as a rigid definition of the psyche and psychic structure as a continuum.

For instance, how do we think about the direction of the treatment for those subjects who cannot be easily be categorised as Neurotic but where we do not have evidence of an acute break or extraordinary symptoms such as in a florid psychosis.

Or

What structures the world of a psychotic subject before the outbreak of extraordinary phenomena?

Or

How do you respond to cases in the in between stages where the extraordinary symptom have subsided?

The general definition of Ordinary psychosis is 'Ordinary psychosis is a psychosis which is not evident until triggered'. In other words it refers to all subjects with a psychotic structure for whom there is no evidence of extraordinary phenomena and it allows us to think about the sinthomatic stabilization operating for these subjects. An ordinary psychosis is what Lacan calls 'un désordre provoqué au joint le plus intime du sentiment de la vie chez le sujet' which is translated by Bruce Fink as 'a disturbance at the inmost juncture of our sense of life – of our being in the world. The disturbance is in the way you feel the surrounding world, in the way you relate to your own body and in the way you relate to your own ideas.

Jacques Alain Miller says he invented the signifier to dodge the rigid binary character of the clinic; Neurosis/psychosis. He does however if you read his article in *psychoanalytic notebooks*, maintain a strict distinction. He firmly places Ordinary psychosis on the side of psychosis.

As I mentioned already the question of Ordinary Psychosis is a question centred around the direction of the treatment. In order to be able to direct any treatment in psychoanalysis, the analyst has to have some idea of the structure of the subject presenting for analysis. Why? Because a psychoanalytic treatment consists first and foremost out of the handling of the transference and the handling of the transference is very different in Neurosis and Psychosis. Alan has covered that on the last teaching seminar and I would like to add a few additional points about this handling of the transference in an ordinary Psychosis later in this paper.

To put it briefly in a few words I would say that the handling of the transference in neurosis is about isolating the S1 as opposed to handling the transference in an ordinary psychosis, where the treatment consists above all in listening for those signifiers that operate as the S1 and maintaining these or attempt to create new one's in order to veil an overwhelming jouissance for the psychotic. In other words the aim of the treatment is very different in Neurosis and Psychosis.

Another issue for me in thinking about Ordinary Psychosis was the movement in Lacan's thinking on the function of the Name-of-the-father. Lacan moves from a binary Clinic Neurosis/Psychosis in the 50<sup>th</sup>s to the clinic of the Borromean Knot in the 70's.

<p>The classical norms of Lacanian clinical practice with psychosis are defined in-  <b>Seminar III 1955/56–On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis 1957 = Lacan's first theory of psychosis.</b></p> <p>= the privilege of the symbolic dimension over the imaginary and real dimension in the first Lacan</p> <p>= the binary clinic of N&amp;P</p> <p>à the clinic is organised around the central Axis of the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER from now NAME-OF-THE-FATHER. Lacan draws a clear distinction between N &amp; P according to whether the paternal metaphor has operated or not.</p>	<p>The late Lacan-<b>Sem XVIII 1971 On a discourse that would not be a semblance– Sem XX Encore 1972/73</b></p> <p>–Sem XXII RSI 1974/75 (borromean knot)</p> <p>–Sem XXIII Sinthome 1975/76</p> <p>= the Borromean Clinic</p> <p>This approach sets out less from the question whether there is foreclosure or not, but rather from the various possible ways of knotting the three dimensions RSI. The 3 dimensions RSI constitute the subject. These 3 dimensions are unknotted at the start and require a fourth dimension in order to make the knot There are several ways in which the knot can fail and many ways of repairing it.</p>
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I have heard it said during certain psychoanalytic forums that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER no longer operates in our time. I had difficulty with that statement. Does it mean that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER as theorized by Lacan through the Paternal Metaphor no longer operates and we can just forget about that part of Lacan's teaching or are we by that statement merely indicating or talking about a change in the master discourse of our time? Is there a reason to say that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER no longer functions within a changing Master Discourse? Is the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER now defunct or does it still feature within a changing Master discourse? Does the function of the Name-of-the-father as the distinguishing mechanism between Neurosis and Psychosis no longer operate? It is indeed the case that when the master discourse changes, the social bond changes and therefore the symptoms change too.... But does the change in the master discourse then have as it's implication that our diagnostic tools are no longer relevant?

So I really needed to clarify for myself what we mean by the operation of the Name-of-the-father. In Lacan's early teaching NAME-OF-THE-FATHER is the S1, the master signifier which commands the organization of the discourse. The NAME-OF-THE-FATHER has the power of organizing the subject's social bond and the jouissance related to this social bond. It is the power of one element organizing all the other elements. But what exactly is this power? What exactly is this signifier organizing? For me saying that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER no longer operates is akin to deciding that in Law, we are no longer going to refer to the Constitution.

What does it mean to say from a diagnostic point of view that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER is operating or is foreclosed? What does the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER do? In my understanding the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER is a meaning making mechanism or it would be more correct to say that the Paternal Metaphor is a meaning making mechanism that keeps the desire of the Other at bay. In Lacan's later teaching, it is the Names of the Father that keeps the jouissance of the Other at bay. He multiplies the names of the father... in other words... there is a swarm of signifiers operating together but not centralized in relation to one which they would obey. The NAME-OF-THE-FATHER becomes one symptom among many others who now also have the power of organizing the subject's social bond and therefore its jouissance. The NAME-OF-THE-FATHER now has the effect of a nomination. The S1's are identity bearing signifiers that organize the subject's jouissance. They staple one's identity to a jouissance. Naming now has the function of naming the real.

Now what is the implication of the arrival of the names of the father in relation to the position of the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER as distinguishing mechanism between Neurosis and Psychosis?

My position is that the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER maintains its position as distinguishing element between Neurosis and Psychosis but if the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER is foreclosed, the names of the father come to take its place in stabilizing a psychotic structure in the form of a sinthome. And this is where the concept of Ordinary Psychosis receives its usefulness. I will try to explain how I came to this understanding.

We know that Lacan wrote Freud's Oedipus Complex in terms of the Paternal Metaphor.

Lacan writes it as follows

NAME-OF-THE-FATHER

DESIRE OF THE MOTHER

What does the paternal metaphor do? It signifies the desire of the mother. In early Lacan and Freud the paternal metaphor signifies the desire of the Mother in terms of a prohibition. The Mother is out of bounds for the child and it is precisely because there is this NO that desire can surge up. It is because there is prohibition that there is desire. Because of this NO we are also no longer at the mercy of the desire of the Other. Another way of saying this is that the paternal metaphor grasps the real and therefore we can have a handle on our experience. Desire or jouissance is signified. It is elsewhere! ...In Lacanian algebra, if you speak in terms of the phallus, it is written as follows:

–  $\square$ the complete imaginary phallus

–  $\square$ which means castration and which is the Freudian word for the subtraction of jouissance [1].

It is precisely this operation of the Name-of-the-father as a subtraction of jouissance that does not operate in psychosis. The paternal metaphor which is supposed to create a separation from this invasive jouissance is not there. In psychosis the desire of the Other is not signified elsewhere and thus the subject remains at the mercy of the overwhelming jouissance of the Other. What I am emphasizing here is that the most distinguishing feature between a psychosis and a neurosis is that language operates in a very different way in relation to its ability of capturing jouissance. It is precisely this ability of language to capture jouissance that is theorized very differently by Lacan throughout his teaching. In the course of his work Lacan is going to modify his definition of the unconscious substantially. The unconscious before Seminar XX is the unconscious as structured like a language and 'Jouissance is prohibited to him who speaks as such' (Subversion of the subject 1960). The definition of the unconscious in Seminar XX (Encore 1972/73) is very different. I quote 'The unconscious is not the fact that being thinks . . . the unconscious is the fact that being, by speaking, enjoys, and, I will add, wants to know nothing about it at all'. Lacan follows Freud in this movement from the symptom as a formation of the unconscious that is essentially decipherable to the dimension of the drive or jouissance. In the definition of the unconscious is structured like a language, jouissance is subordinate to the signifier. From seminar XI onwards Lacan will gradually link the signifier to the drive. In seminar XI he asks how is it possible for the symbolic to impact on the real? With Seminar XX Encore there is a devaluation of the concept of language in favour of alanguage. With the concept of language Lacan is emphasizing the ability of the signifier to grasp or to carry jouissance.

So we have a movement between

"Jouissance is prohibited to him who speaks as such" ("Subversion of the subject") where the signifier deadens jouissance and

"There, where it speaks, it enjoys" (Encore) where it has an effect of jouissance. From then on jouissance becomes central. Humans are first and foremost 'speaking beings' and when we are speaking we are producing jouissance. There is not one word spoken without jouissance. Even if you just say hello, you produce jouissance[2].

The change in the definition of the unconscious has an implication for the direction of the treatment. There is now a change of emphasis on the analytic session as a semantic unit i.e. to the analytic work as a-semantic. The analytic work no longer consists of punctuating the signifying chain (cutting the S1 from the S2) to free imprisoned meaning or to allude to a desire that cannot be spoken, to the cut. The analytic intervention of the cut now is designed to isolate in the speech of the analysand a way in which their jouissance is organized,

governed or as Rik Loose proposes administered. In other words, in Lacan's definition of the unconscious in seminar XX, what is taken up in the words, in the speech of the analysand is jouissance. Jacques Alain Miller explains in his article 'interpretation in reverse' that the job of the analyst moves from punctuating meaning to isolating a particular mode of jouissance.

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I am now quoting from JACQUES ALAIN MILLER'S article Transference, Repetition and the Sexual Real.

"It is certain that Lacan approached the relations between signifier and jouissance in many ways before fully working them out. For instance the second part of 'Daniel Lagache' is an effort to situate the subject in relation to jouissance. In Seminar XVII knowledge is repetition in so far as it is in relationship with jouissance..., to say that knowledge is the means of jouissance is to say that even as it works towards its articulation, knowledge continuously produces and reflect the loss of jouissance and thus jouissance flows under the signifier. Henceforth this jouissance that flows under the signifier is the equivalent of meaning. This is what will lead Lacan to speak of jouis-sens, in the sense of meaning enjoyed.

Lacan previously made meaning and desire equivalent to one another, whereas this new definition makes meaning and jouissance equivalent to one another.'

In other words, meaning making is part of the language apparatus that we inhabit.

The language apparatus that we inhabit produces meaning. So you could say that the unconscious ciphers and that the interventions of the analyst may have a deciphering effect. But what exactly is being ciphered? What is taken up in the speech of the analysand is jouissance. Language is thus a treatment of jouissance that makes this jouissance livable for the subject.

And it is here where the distinction between Neurosis and Psychosis based on the operation of the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER has its implication here for the direction of the treatment. The work of the analyst is not to understand what someone says .. but to come to grip with how he or she makes sense.... And this how is connected with listening for how this person positions himself in relation to the enigmatic desire of the Other. In the face of something which does not make sense... the subject makes sense in a particular way. In the last teaching Lacan is very close to saying that all of the symbolic order is a delusion, including his own construction of the symbolic order. In fact life does not make sense.... Making sense is already delusional. Understanding someone is being captured by his way of making sense.

In psychosis the delusion operates as a Name-of-the- Father, a sinthome[3]. It tries to do the same thing. It tries to make sense. That is why Freud said that Schreber's delusion was a cure. It contained something and by that kept the overwhelming jouissance of the Other at bay. In Lacan's teaching we have a change of emphasis from the foreclosure of The-Name-of-the-father[4] to the operation of a Name-of-the-father. In psychosis a delusional metaphor operates. However the important point is that a delusion is nevertheless symbolic. It attempts to do the same thing. It attempts to order the world and to create a separation from the jouissance which is not only in excess but which is everywhere. In other words, the delusional metaphor that operates in psychosis as a compensatory make belief has the same function of the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER... to make do with jouissance. The question then what is it about the production of meaning in the psychotic that makes it less useful for keeping jouissance at bay? We know for instance that going in the direction of meaning immediately becomes a problem in psychosis. In the classical extraordinary psychosis of paranoia with delusion, we have to avoid meaning rather than supplement it with new meaning. In other words, we must not escalate the delusion which already has enough meaning. The main difference is that the production of meaning in a psychosis does not produce the – □ There is no subtraction of jouissance. It is either too subjectified such as in paranoia or not subjectified as in schizophrenia. For instance there may be an experience of a jouissance in a part of the body but it is not subjectified as belonging to the subject so it has to be cut of.

In psychosis the stake is more in the direction of limiting meaning, making an obstacle to meaning, or localising the meaning.

What does that mean from the point of view of ordinary psychosis and the direction of the treatment? Lacan emphasizes in his later work the isolation of what he terms the S<sub>1</sub>, the encircling of the signifier of the elementary phenomena of the subject. These S<sub>1</sub>'s are identity bearing signifiers that organize the subject's jouissance. (point de caption).

Miller in his article on interpretation in reverse emphasizes in neurosis the cut between the S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> in order to target those essential core signifiers that expose the mode of jouissance for a particular subject. In psychosis we find out which S<sub>1</sub> are capable of limiting jouissance. Which signifiers have the effect of a nomination. The process of analysis then is the process of naming the S<sub>1</sub> or of highlighting these S<sub>1</sub> because they become the identity bearing signifiers that organize that subject's jouissance. The process of analysis consists out of strengthening these. What is foreclosed is the power of naming to limit jouissance of creating a veil. In other words what is foreclosed in the psychotic structure is the organization of this jouissance. The analytic treatment for a subject with a psychotic structure then consists of looking for signifiers that

1. help the analysand to use language to structure the world.
2. encourage empathy
3. encourage symbolic identification i.e. I am not a thief.
4. aim at restoring the subjectivity.
5. To look for ways of doing by the analysand which embody the patient's jouissance.
6. help to build a substitute family romance.
7. produce a subjective localization which has the effect of appeasing anxiety and that localize the subject in the social bond. That is why it is sometimes said that the social bond is the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER today.

So to summarize the difference in the direction of the treatment between a neurosis and a ordinary psychosis is that

1. In neurosis we deconstruct the symptom to construct the fundamental fantasy. We cut the signifiers to expose mode of jouissance.
2. In psychosis the direction of the treatment is in binding, fixing, stapling the jouissance to the signifier to build a symptom in order to localize the jouissance and limit it.

In my understanding, it is clinically imperative to maintain the neurosis, psychosis distinction for the direction of the treatment. However Lacan's movement in his thinking appears to me as an invitation to focus ever more diligently on the unique way in which each subject finds to knot the three registers together. So in ordinary psychosis we listen for what it is that has a stabilizing effect for the subject. It is acting as a 'suppletion', a suppliance, for the failure at the level of the symbolic. What can act as a suppletion in ordinary psychosis is the presence of the analyst himself. Writing could fill the role of suppletion. Suppletion effectively delays or even prevents the onset – triggering – of the psychosis from occurring at all or prevents it from occurring in the dramatic form of classic psychosis.

Ordinary psychotics like ordinary neurotics manage to live their lives successfully because the sinthome operates successfully. It is only in cases of excess suffering that these people find themselves in our clinics.

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[1] Although here I ran into a bit of confusion if relation to the symbols because Jean Gerard Bursztein in his presentation of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2010 seemed to use these terms differently. In his seminar 'The Formations of the Unconscious' (1957/58) Lacan formalizes the hysterical demand of the Big Other? These formulae are the essence of neurosis. The hysterical part is written with a  $\phi$  and refers to the image of the body.

$\phi$  is a reformulation of what Freud called narcissism. What is narcissism? Narcissism is the fact that the subject of the unconscious has an image. This image is always constructed in a kind of phallic value. It is an imaginary image and not a symbolic image because it is an image constructed in relation with the mirror of the

mother. Narcissism is an image. Narcissism has phallic value which is indexed as a minus. In other words, you can't be the almighty phallus with your image, The almighty phallus (Big Phi) is a symbolic value. In other words, all the jouissance you have not and you expect, is in relation with the symbolic value. It is a signifier. You can't make an equivalent between your image which is always indexed by a value of minus with a signifier in a symbolic way. It simply means you can't be God. (It means you can't be it for the other). The symbolic phallus is an almighty power. It is the power of language itself. The symbolic phallus means the possibilities of surmounting the lack of jouissance. We expect to surmount, to overcome the lack of jouissance. By what? We try to overcome the lack of jouissance by trying to reach the symbolic phallus which is equivalent to the mother of your all time desire, to the desire in itself. The symbolic phallus means desire in itself – to overcome lack. It is a signifier which can never be reached. It is a signifier which works in the subjectivity. In relation with this signifier, your image (-y), your narcissism is always lacking. We try to identify our image (-y) with what we think the big other wants in order to be his object.

[2] The term jouissance is linked both to enjoyment and suffering. It is better to use the term 'jouissance' rather than 'enjoyment' because jouissance is linked to suffering. The most desirable thing in jouissance is suffering. This is a reformulation of Freud's notion of an original (primary) masochism. At the same time this jouissance is unconscious. There is a will not to know about this jouissance. When we speak there is jouissance and we don't want to know about this jouissance. These two things together, jouissance and the will not to know about it is what Lacan called the unconscious.

[3] Lacan in the later part of his teaching plays on the word *sinthome*. There is something about the symptom that cannot be gotten rid of. This is different from the troubling kind of symptom that one's suffers from but that has to do with fundamental points of identification. A *sinthome* defines your way of being in the world. If you are obsessional, an analysis cannot not make you an obsessional or hysterical. You may become obsessional in a different way. The *sinthome* has to do with with subjective identity.

The symptom as "an event of the body" has a fixity which it owes to its character as knot of jouissance and *lalangue*

What is a *sinthome*? It is symptomatic jouissance, made outside meaning. The *sinthome* of jouissance as a necessary way of life.

[4] The concept of the foreclosure of the NAME-OF-THE-FATHER implies a lack, the lack of the paternal signifier in the symbolic order.