Conference Reports

"Who Cares For Lacan: Psychoanalysis and the Cure," Brown University, April 29, 1988

Sponsored by the C. V. Starr Lectureship Fund and the French Studies Department, the conference provided a one day, three-session sequence which began with Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen who was followed by Kaja Silverman, a respondent to Borch-Jacobsen's analysis of Lacan's theory of affects. While the morning session offered two critical appraisals of Lacanian psychoanalysis and its applicability to contemporary cultural critique (especially to feminist issues), the afternoon session gave Stuart Schneiderman an opportunity to discuss the dynamics of psychoanalysis from a Lacanian analyst's point of view. The conference closed with a round table discussion which evoked provocative questions rather than providing definitive answers. In the final interchange that followed Schneiderman's session, Naomi Schor acted as moderator when directing questions to panelists from a recognizably feminist audience that debated the viability of Lacanian psychoanalysis for a study of the classed and gendered subject of historicity. Although the papers presented at the conference were carefully considered, the questions asked incisive, the methodological assumptions varied, I was still left wishing that a Lacanian feminist critic like Ellie Ragland-Sullivan or Shoshana Felman had been invited to further complicate the day's debate by adding an unrepresented perspective to the verbal interchange of assertion and counterassertion.

Pierre Saint-Amand introduced us to the day's proceedings, declaring that the conference was "intended to be a critical one" rather than a celebration of Lacan. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen then spoke about the Lacanian clinic, which he accused of using a lexical magic (we know it as a "talking cure") to help patients through the application of speech.

After describing the subject's relation to language (it does not represent something—the referent—but instead signifies a subject for another signifier) and after discussing the speaking subject in relation to the desire of the Other, Borch-jacobsen claimed that we would be better served if psychoanalysis paid more attention to affects and that, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, what matters is not the experiential dimension of affectivity but how our affective responses accommodate themselves to theorization. He suggested that to avoid a "words, words, words" syndrome we should reconsider variations on the model which predated psychoanalysis, the hypnosis paradigm, which would allow for strategies of subject/object separation only in terms of actual body relations because language-as-mediation would drop out of the inter-subjective equation. In her response to Borch-Jacobsen, Kaja Silverman stressed that, although he raised the specter of interventionalist psychoanalytic politics as an influence in the cure when distinguishing between which type of speech cures, how it cures, and when it effects such a transformation, Borch-]acobsen missed a crucial opportunity to articulate other implications of ideological intervention by psychoanalysis in the therapeutic situation. Silverman, however, had more difficulty agreeing to the primacy of the phallic signifier and the use of the Oedipus complex to, in her words, "reconfirm the symbolic order [which] induces within the female subject a pathological melancholia." Adopting a stance similar to that of Stephen Heath and Teresa de

Lauretis, Silverman argued against the view that the only "entry into language and desire" is through an encounter with the Oedipus complex and subordination to the phallic signifier, an assertion that went unanswered at this conference.

In the afternoon session Stuart Schneiderman presented an intricate account of the Lacanian analytic session. For the Brown audience Schneiderman structured an overview of the Lacanian session from the time that the analysand seeks the analyst's knowledge through the point when desire is analyzed, "recognized because it produces signifiers that structure the desire of others that have made him what he is." Schneiderman explained that there are certain constants, like the *objet a* and the proper name, which persist in calling one back to the real. These constants scar the subject, cutting against the edge of the symbolic with the mark that "cannot be written in language." Schneiderman then noted that one of the aims of Lacanian analysis is to avoid overwhelming the analysand with too many meaningful interpretations; instead, analysis should encourage the analysand to speak,

allow the subject to hear what s/he has said. The analyst should refrain from privileging analytic interpretation, resist judging desire, and enable the analysand to distinguish his or her own words. The hope is that there can be an eventual differentiation of the analysand's stated desire from that of the analyst through the analysand's recognizing the analyst's desire as that which is not what it was thought to be.

Judging by the response generated from the round table discussion, I found that Stuart Schneiderman's paper was well received except for his assertion that the proper name and the *objet a* remain unchanged in an analysis of the barred subject. To clarify this issue and others like it, Schneiderman gave lucid, untruncated accounts with subtle distinctions between points in question. On issues made more problematical by the current state of the feminist/psychoanalytic debate in this country, both Borch-Jacobsen and Schneiderman answered intelligently but the absence of the aforementioned Lacanian feminist critics was then most noticeable. For instance, when Naomi Schor questioned why the paternal signifier was privileged in Lacanian discourse, there followed no discussion of gender and difference, no distinction between *a* woman and *The* woman who *n'existe pas* and who, having a *jouissance autre*, has no meaning or signifier in the phallic order. There was no elaboration of these theories, no follow-up on the important point that Françoise Gorog introduced at the Paris-New York Workshop, that "in Lacanian theory men don't have the phallus either." Other feminist critics wanted to know what was the use of such a psychoanalysis if the symbolic structure remained the same for the analysand after s/he has completed analysis. Kaja Silverman perhaps put it best when she said, "I guess the question is whether you are comfortable using psychoanalysis in a way that ultimately reconfirms the existing institutions and structures or whether there would be some attempt to use psychoanalysis in a way that would effect change at the level of names, kinship structures and the larger symbolic order or even the deployment of language." Again, no exchange ensued to clarify what Lacan had said as early as the second seminar: " *Quoi qu'on en pense—le discours que je vous tiens n'est pus en général coloré d'une tendance progressiste—, il y a quand méme des émergences dans l'ordre du symbole*." This last clause was recently translated into English by Sylvana Tomaselli as "one must admit that new things do emerge in the symbolic order"—a statement of significant political consequence if one considers the debate at Brown which reflects the current evaluation of the usefulness of psychoanalysis for feminist theory.

In most countries where Lacanian psychoanalysis has gained an audience, it has been the clinicians who have studied and restudied Lacan's difficult oeuvre. In this country we have an unusual situation because Lacanian psychoanalysis has come to us through the academy with its current concerns for feminist, Marxist, and post-structuralist theories that have repeatedly posed tough questions to psychoanalysis while engaging it in debate. Marginalized for decades by American academic institutions, psychoanalysis should now welcome such intellectual exchange as a way to revisualize itself from the gaze of multiple frames of reference. In return Lacanian analysis can ask that critics read Lacan's demanding prose style rather than accept a critical "translation" of his work by a popularizer. We should not explain Lacan away on the basis of another's evaluation, but listen to what he says in his own name.

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Paris-New York Psychoanalytic Workshop
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Transference and Interpretation in Lacanian Theory and Practice

The formal proceedings convened with an introductory address by Judith Miller, Professor of Philosophy at Paris VIII and Editor of *l'Ane*, who described the recent international activities of the Fondation du Champ freudien. Maire Jaanus then presented her trenchant essay, "The Lacanian Body and the Analytic Cure," which raised two prominent questions: what is the body and what is the real? Jaanus, a professor of English at Barnard College and author of *Literature and Negation*, skillfully listed a variety of psychoanalytic conceptions of the body, among them the imaginary body which has been "exploited, commodified, preserved, repaired, displayed, exercised," the neurotic body which expresses itself symptomatically, and the real body which is "unspoken, unspeakable, unimaginable, impossible." Jaanus asserted that if there were an unconscious body it would be "glimpsed in pieces" yet allow for a "profound, initial inaugural relation . . . to the original cut" or rupture before which no thought exists as a substitute for the loss of an unmediated referentiality. At this point Jaanus raised

the second question pertinent to her critique (what is the real?) by introducing various interpretations of the cut or rupture between "the organic and inorganic" which marks the site of the death drive that returns us beyond the pleasure principle. This cut is commemorated by a residual memory of the impossible encounter of the body and the real, a lacuna "bridged" by the *objet a* or "atomic silver" that can only be conceptualized in relation to an *Autre* that predates us linguistically and organically. Here, at this nexus of the signifier and the body, Jaanus concluded her analysis.

The morning session continued with a presentation by Hourik Zakarian, a psychoanalyst who teaches in New York City and at the University of Paris. Zakarian's paper, "The Cause of the Symptom," emphasized the lack of normality and regulation in a Lacanian psychoanalysis of the symptomatic subject. Noting that normality is a symptom and that humans cannot live without a variety of symptoms, Zakarian explained that Lacan defined such symptoms "by the way in which each subject derives *jouissance* from the unconscious insofar as the unconscious determines that person." Thus, if a symptom undergoes change in the analytic session, it indicates an alteration in its relation to a "*jouissance*-value." With this knowledge the Lacanian analyst, who retains an awareness that interpretation is intermingled with the lures and traps of transference-love, should recognize that something in the symptom remains incurable. In a Lacanian analyis, then, transference-love directed at the supposed subject of knowledge becomes a new symptom that masks division, erases the gap implicit in the psychic structure of subjectivity, and enables the analysand to take refuge in "the *jouissance* of the symptom in the real. "It is only at the end of analysis, after the analysand has had the opportunity "to strip the other of false consistency" that masks the supposed subject of knowledge, that the analysand attains an awareness "that translates as loss of *jouissance*." In this way the symptom-as-mask gives way to an acceptance of the symptom-as-product of lack.

The afternoon session was devoted to papers by Ellie Ragland-Sullivan and Jacques-Alain Miller. Continuing the ongoing analysis of transference, Ragland-Sullivan studied Plato's *Symposium* in order to differentiate desire from love, which she examined from the perspective of numerous Greek dignitaries at "the banquet" as well as from that of Lacan, who wrote on the *Symposium* in his seminar on *The Transference* (1960-61). In his eighth seminar Lacan speculated that Socrates knew about the interlinkage of love and transference because

the Greek philosopher could, as Ragland-Sullivan put it, "sustain himself by nothing . . . not by no-thing [but] by the nothing that Lacan defines as pure desire." Unlike Alcibiades, the brilliant military strategist who equated his desire with his fantasies and thereby gave false consistency to desire "that appears and can be designated," Socrates realized that transference-love invariably seeks a response beyond demand, to an "addressee . . . that Lacan named the Other." In this way "a lover is a signifier of lack and thus must look for a response, a sign, from the beloved because Love lies beyond demand." Lacan taught us that Socrates, while still believing in the cohesive relation of humanity to the immortals and the inhnitization of the soul as guarantor of truth, initiated a strategy that, developed in all of its implications, is a discourse of lack and love which acts compensatorily "to appease desire—unappeasable in the larger sense—through love." Lacan and analysts who map his teachings onto clinical situations use transference-love to nudge the analysand along a pathway that is not transparent to itself but fades into a metonymic chain of signification, a substitutional grid that articulates itself in "what is not there," in recurrent desire that takes "shape in the margin in which demand becomes separated from need."

Jacques-Alain Miller began his paper, "To Interpret the Cause: From Freud to Lacan," by discussing the obvious importance of causality for psychoanalysis. Miller asserted that a reading of causality has been integral to psychoanalytic interpretative strategies since Freud began examining the dream structure which exhibits both explicit or manifest content and latent material that hides enmeshed causes and effects which overlap and slide into each other and which interpre-

tation seeks to uncover through an analysis of symptoms. Miller explained that one of Freud's aims in establishing psychoanalysis was to search for such causes. Initially Freud sought to analyze actual causes that were later relocated on the axis of interpretation when he realized that the subject's present behavior was overwritten by past causes hidden from consciousness; these "deferred effects," Freud reasoned, were triggered by recent events precipitating the onset or intensifcation of symptoms. This line of reasoning led Miller to a study of "cause and consent," a pair of concepts he elsewhere referred to as "cause and law." When explaining that scientific investigation has tried to do away with terminological slippage while forming laws that regulate fixed relationships between various causes and effects, Miller showed that, from a scientific viewpoint, laws allow for anticipation and pre-

diction of effects linked to specific causes, and this anticipatory predictability exists precisely because laws are based on regularity of occurrence concurrent with a recognizable continuity of experience. Thus, "when a cause is inscribed in a law, such that you may say the same cause produces the same effect," we witness a chain of necessity, a determinable linkage in which one cause leads to another effect that in turn becomes the cause of another effect, and so on. For the scientist, especially for the deistic practitioners of science in the eighteenth century, the chain of imbricated effects had to be followed back to a first cause that lent credibility to the upstart sciences which would eventually rely less and less on religious precepts. It was this background of laicized causality that Miller traced while presenting an alternate notion of interrelated causes and effects which psychoanalysis employs when tracing the chain of signifiers.

The Freudian cause, then, is not founded on the law of regularity and continuity because if you have a continuity of cause and effect, the very notion of a chain prohibits one from pinpointing a cause that is separable from the sequence of its transmission. This relationship of the cause to a transmissible sequence involves, of necessity, a deconstruction of the chain of causality based on the dismissal of a first cause that is somehow singular, not overdetermined, not an effect as well. In Miller's words, "the question of the cause can only appear when there is a breaking up of the chain," which might lead one to wonder "where is the cause when there is only this lack"? Following this logic, one can determine that a psychoanalytic notion of causality involves a discontinuity of relationships, which, if it is translated through the Lacanian chain of signifiers as the lack symbolized by the barred subject ($), presents "the removal of one link" conceived as the subject itself and implied by the very structure of causality, the subject as lack or missing link.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, such reproduction of cause and effect (and the lack thereof in the sexual relationship) also structures the transmission of sexual knowledge from parents to children even as it indicates a traumatism that analysts label castration. When Lacan says that there is no fixed signifying formula for the sexual relationship, he means that there is no possibility for a structural transmission of sexual knowledge from parents to their children and that a child cannot translate, through a reading of causality, the sexual relationship of the mother and father as a deictic formula indicating what it means to be a man or a woman. There is a traumatism, then, precisely

because the “observation of parental copulation" is insufficient to allow one to divine what it means to be a woman for a man or vice versa, i.e. to codify a coherent structural knowledge of sexual relations from the heterosexual parental model. Miller reminded us that what appeared to Freud as a traumatism reappeared to Lacan as an axiom, a structural reoccurrence verifying that there is no *rapport sexuel* or fixed formula of sexuality for humanity. In other words, though individuals do have specific emotions and perceptions that generate erogenous feelings, these are individual responses evoking specific reactions rather than a formulaic species response. It is not coincidental that this "fundamental breakdown of the symbolic order concerning humanity" provides a rationale for psychoanalysis itself.

The morning session of the second day began with three papers on psychosis. The first essay, on erotomania, was presented by Francoise Gorog, a psychoanalyst from the school of the Freudian cause in Paris and the medical director of psychiatric services at *l’Hôpital Saint Anne*, which is affiliated with the *University Paris VIII* where she also teaches. At the outset Gorog showed that Freud’s initial insight into erotomania, "I a man, love him a man," is contradicted by a series of substitutional declarations, "I don’t love him, I love her." This studied contradiction leads to an instance of classic projection, "I love her be- cause she loves me," which in turn gives way to the final contradictory statement in this intricate formula, "I don’t love him, I love her because she loves me." Gorog noted that Freud inserts a caveat to this formulation when he recognizes that other "cases of erotomania could be apparently explained by heterosexual fixations," but such love doesn’t start with an internal recognition of love but with "a perception coming from outside that one is beloved." Gorog specified that erotomania is dissimilar to persecutory delusions because in the former there is a love/hate dichotomy indicating that such substitutional propositions as "I don’t love him, I love her" are noncontradictory, conscious thoughts for the subject; it is this consciousness of noncontradiction that indicates a difference between erotomania and persecutory delusions, although in the former the love-object that eventually fades into nonrecognition is the Other that loves first, and sometimes, "is the only one that loves." Gorog then identified her study of this phenomenon with Schreber’s case history, which was, according to Lacan, an instance of "divine erotomania." Those familiar with this case know that Schreber believed that God wanted him for his wife, "and from this a human race would be born." Although

Schreber initially feels persecuted by men, eventually "in the symbolic he has a name—God’s wife, in the imaginary . . . he thinks his is a woman’s breast, in the real his enjoyment is feminine." This tripartite equation left Schreber, according to his own words, first groping with, then in adjustment to a universal order so that "to become a woman against his man’s will and honor is now rather peacefully conformed to the order of the universe"; this point of reconciliation with the time-bound world enabled Schreber to designate himself as the "woman that God lacked," a transposition which Lacan links with the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father and "its consequence, the lack of phallic signihcation in the imaginary." When working with an analysand like Schreber, Gorog suggested that the analyst should consider the ramifications of psychotic transference and therefore not place him or herself in the position of the Other that is usually (mis)understood as the loving object and site of enjoyment.

Dr. Gorog was followed by the Canadian psychoanalyst Danielle Bergeron, who is director of the *Centre de psychothérapie psychanalytique de psycboses à Québec* as well as the clinical board of GIFRIC, an interdisciplinary Freudian research group for intervention both clinical and cultural. Bergeron's essay, "Transference and Psychosis," discussed the installation of the transference in her work with psychotics: working like artists, she said, "we set things up, we prepare montages to achieve an effect using the signifier." Through this installation of transference, the "analytic mechanism" is established in such a way that the psychotic subject is put to work, enabling the patient to produce "a fictional substitution in order to complete the symbolic and stop the *jouissance* of the Other." In this way the structure of transference is established as a "fictional montage" used to evoke specific effects in the unconscious. Danielle Bergeron, Willy Apollon, and those other analysts who work with them constitute their psycho-analytic center as "a signifier that can be used to name the law of the symbolic." The center acts in the capacity of the Name-of-the-Father or a substitute for it, which is especially important in the treatment of psychotics because "the Oedipus was never set up [with them] due to the fore-closure of the Name-of-the-Father," which means that the "father never gave a name to the symbol." According to this analytic strategy, the transference would establish specific conditions which, considering that the Father's Name had hitherto been foreclosed, would allow the analy-sand access to the symbolic law. This type of treatment attempts to liberate the psychotic from being the object of the Other's

jouissance through the gradual installation of transference and through the psychoanalyst's tendency to oppose "a questioning form of listening to the patient's delusional conviction," which, rather than shutting down transference with so many analytic dicta espoused by the subject of certainty, "keeps open in the mind [an interstitial] space where the enactment of the unconscious can take place." In this way the transference helps to create a fictional montage that, in a play of chiaroscuro, focuses on certain objects while others are "left in the dark, but in exis-tence." Thus, the installation of transference helps to transform "existing structures while enab-ling others to appear."

The next speaker was Willy Apollon, a psychoanalyst who is the founder of GIFRIC and the director of the training sessions at the Psychoanalytic Center for the Treatment of Psychosis. In "Transference and Interpretation" Apollon considered the clinical aspects of the transference as he specified "a logical approach of that ethical limit in psychoanalytic interpretation." According to Apollon, in the psychoanalytic session the analysand encounters the analyst's desire in a transferential interchange based on "the signifying chain as represented by the signifier of knowledge in the very support of transference as far as it is conceived" in relation to the supposed subject of knowledge. In such an analytic session interpretation proceeds along a signifying chain toward the real which, since it is uninterpretable, stands for "a failure in knowing contained by the analyst" on the basis of his or her desire. This failure "causes the answer of the dream as a reopening of the unconscious" in as much as the evocation of love activates a type of closure. Seeking love "as an anecdote toward bondage of the *jouissance* seems to be an obstacle to transference until the signifier is hooked to the analyst's desire waiting for an opening to the reality of the unconscious." The analyst's position in the treatment is not to re-inforce the symptom—a *jouissance* denied by the symbolic order that returns "in the imaginary as a failure in the body." Nor should the analyst seek to evoke love in the transference, but rather

await a “signifying chain" surrounding the *jouissance* which locates it out of the body in the site of the real. While the analysand faces anxiety in the transferential relationship, the analyst can help the patient face the "hole in the trace" by "holding up the signifiers to provide an edge which limits failure" even as the analyst requests that the analysand "apply speech where the death drive passes to symbolic representation." In this complex process, the analyst must avoid a mechanized response based on a performativity of preconceived or predigested sci-

entific formulas; in its place should be a recognition that such a process is established in relation to the analyst’s desire as "the site of an ethical requirement" even as the symbolic order is "the site of the Other of the law that hinges the *jouissance*, opening its way to the desire as the Other’s desire."

The afternoon session featured two speakers, Evan Bellin and Stuart Schneiderman. Bellin, a psychoanalyst from New York City, presented a paper on John Merrick, otherwise known as "the Elephant Man," an "anatomical anomaly" whose mother was knocked down by an elephant while she was pregnant with John. Short, lame, and so deformed that the circumference of his head was equivalent to that of his waist, Merrick often ventured out into public with a veiled torso and masked face to avoid the disruption that his presence caused those who were disturbed by his appearance. What struck most onlookers who saw Merrick was his "descriptive, totemic presence," not his proper name. To the scientific community, the question of maternal love or the lack thereof (that is, whether his mother loved him too much or rejected him entirely because of his disfigurement) became the central issue tied to the figural prominence of "the Elephant Man." That explains why both of Merrick’s most noted biographers positioned "themselves on the object-relations axis of whether internalization was of a bad mother or a good mother; both biographers, however, were in theoretical agreement with Saint Augustine and common sense that words referentially stand for things." Merrick’s biographers were oblivious to the recognition that the proper name designates its referent differently than does a picture. When exploring what implications the proper name had for John Merrick, Bellin followed Wittgenstein in suggesting that we should not confuse the meaning of a name with that of its bearer, for instance, that meanings attached to Shakespeare’s name have continued to signify long after its bearer died. For Wittgenstein and Bellin, naming something is analogous to attaching a label to it; in this way objects reveal marks that signify—scars, that Lacan tells us, introduce the mark of the iron of the signifier on the speaking subject, and with it, the introduction of the real. In introducing the parallel of dream mentation, Bellin reminded us that the dream is a lexical system of signification "following the laws of the signifier," not just a lure to fixate us on a "figurative semiology." What is true of dreams holds for Bellin’s analysis of "the Elephant Man" for he does not read Merrick as an imaginary text. Instead, Bellin understands that imaginary figurations have invariably led to disfigurations in the

dream-text as well as in the textual reconstructions of Merrick’s life. This recognition brings with it a sighting of the scarred text, which, coming from the site of the Other, “dislocates the subject from the certainty of presence." From this Other site a third term is manifested that resists the traditional "colonization of the observable" by opposing a degradation into the imaginary

with a recognition that the symbolic register disallows "the degradation of the proper name, john Merrick, into the figurative image of an animal-like creature with the attributes of human dignity."

The final session of the conference featured Stuart Schneiderman, whose essay, "Who is Being Transferred?," introduced the analogy of psychoanalysis as a language game in which the analyst must determine his or her allies—speech and language-—from such false friends as "understanding, personality, and ego" even as the analyst combats an opponent—the neurosis—"a seasoned player [that has] won a certain number of matches" or it "would not have gotten to your door." In this language game the-analysand-as-speaking-subject is required to articulate something of value, "but not if he thinks to say something." Schneiderman indicated that there is no escape in the talking cure from speech, and once the words are out, the analyst can help separate the speaker from what is spoken, thereby introducing "a cut, which is represented by a cut at the end of the session." These words addressed to the listener/analyst cannot "be loved by the patient as though they were his very self" once they enter into analytic interchange. One tenet of this game, then, is to avoid the search for a centering confluence of images and affects that, woven together on the projectile of expectation and the tail of memory, should not be mistaken for the "self." Schneiderman explained that, to the contrary, in neurosis one primary signifier attains the status of the self, the signifier we call the phallus, "and to take it to be the self belies an intransigent form of narcissism well-supported by theorists." A Lacanian analysis instead would stress the illusory quality of such a construct rather than help the analysand to clone a more compliant self who opts out of the language game by becoming the-good-enough-analysand that attempts to please the analyst by confirming given interpretations.

At the third annual meeting of the Paris-New York Psychoanalytic Workshop, there was one conspicuous point of agreement between Schneiderman, Apollon, Miller, Ragland-Sullivan and other analysts and literary critics who presented papers: that the Lacanian analyst

should listen attentively to the particularity of the symptom and not subsume the analysand's language to an imaginary metalanguage within an object-relational grid of normative development. Put another way, the analyst should resist rushing to judge a case history or piece together the materials of an analysand's life so that they fit some generalized metatheory accumulated over the years in the self-confirming literature of psychoanalysis. In this deceptive, make-believe world we don't need any more prejudged, self-confirming analyses with "ersatz patients" taught to become "ersatz citizens" who believe the particularity of the historical symptom can be overcome if one is willing to accept the viability of an abracadabra, conflict-free sphere in this anything but conflict-free world.

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Fifth International Encounter of the Freudian Field, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 13-16, 1988

The theme of the conference was: "Differential Clinic of Psychosis." It was the most recent in a series that began with the First International Encounter in Caracas, Venezuela in 1980, the only one which Lacan actually attended and presided over, in the year after he established the Foundation of the Freudian Field. At that time, he invited all participants to the Second (held in Paris in 1982, following his death); and the Third and Fourth Encounters (Buenos Aires, 1984; Paris, 1986) met subsequently at two-year intervals. As with previous Encounters, the subject of this biennium was related to *clinical* aspects of psychoanalytic work: the difference between neurosis and psychosis and, more importantly, the distinctions between forms of psychosis. The papers presented an exhaustive look at current research on psychosis derived from Lacan's teachings.

In greater measure than earlier Encounters, the Buenos Aires meeting had foreign representatives from eighteen countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Great Britain, Italy, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, United States, Venezuela and Yugoslavia), who read almost sixty papers, as well as over 200 clinical contributions. There were some 1,400 participants in

attendance. The theoretical papers are available in a volume printed in French and in Spanish translation.

These participants came not only from different countries of the world, but also from many different groups that form a real network in the Foundation of the Freudian Field. Each group works independently and—despite certain unavoidable problems characteristic of the institutional apparatus created for the transmission of psychoanalysis—the groups met in Buenos Aires to share current research in the belief that, when the time comes for the International Encounter, psychoanalysis and its transmission is *all* that counts, and the rest ("to split or not to split") would be set aside for a while.

These Encounters constitute, then, a "fundamental place" in the widening of a Lacanian orientation in psychoanalysis. Once the subject of the Encounter was proposed, "it became the pivot of common work for these different groups that cohere into an international network in various countries and various languages" (Cf. Ricardo Nepomiachi, "Towards the Fifth International Encounter" in *Correo del Campo Freudiano*, the Argentinian equivalent of the *Newsletter of the Freudian Field*). The work of preparation began over a year ago, consisting of workshops, seminars, lectures, etc. In this sense, the Fifth Encounter provided an enriching atmosphere in which to hear about how Lacanians understand psychosis and its treatment. To say "how Lacanians understand psychosis," however, is a generalization that implies an oversimplification. It suggests that all Lacanians think in the same way, and that is not the case. At the Conference, for example, there were those who think it is possible to treat and cure a psychotic patient psychoanalytically (Willy Apollon), and there were those who do not think so and who refer to the analytic act as having an effect of suggestion (Colette Soler). Nevertheless, and again despite the differences, Lacan's teachings function here more as a compass that indicates a direction, than as a fixed point near port that serves as anchoring-place.

On the evening before the Conference started, the Seminar of the Freudian Field in Argentina held a meeting in which three papers were presented. Eric Laurent talked about the "Problems of Melancholy in the Teachings of Lacan," in which he went over the concepts of melancholy and mania in Lacan's *Écrits* and Seminars. The second paper was Colette Soler's

"The Work of the Psychotic," in which she presented two possible "solutions" for the psychotic: solutions via the Symbolic and solutions via the Real, each one determining a different

approach in treatment. Finally, the third paper of the evening, presented by Serge Cottet, was called "A Directed Paranoia." Here, Cottet made a case presentation preceded by the question: What is the analysis of a paranoia? Part of the answer is: ". . . it is necessary to go case by case to measure the disturbance provoked by the presence of the psychoanalyst as Other, taking into account that the Other is not constituted symbolically . . . ."

The next morning, J.-A. Miller officially inaugurated the Conference. His opening speech included a proposal to create a ". . . universal clinic of delusion . . . . " At the end of the delivery, his voice grew softer, his tone became familiar as if he were talking personally to each one of us participants, present in that huge conference room. He said: ". . . and do not forget that, when you were in the position of 'analysand,' you too used to talk about things that did not exist . . . . " Those words showed in a simple, yet profound way how humble our position must be as psychoanalysts before a psychotic patient. Humble not in a "Samaritan" sense, but in a way that implies that, allowing for all the differences, there is almost no difference at all.

During the ensuing days, in case after case, paper after paper, questions were raised. What is psychosis? When is it really psychosis, and when is it a hysterical psychosis? What is a differential clinic of psychoses? How does Lacanian psychoanalysis differ from IPA standards in the approach to and treatment of psychosis? What are the limits of/ in psychosis? Is psychosis a plural or a singular noun? The answers to these questions will create more questions, which we shall try to answer in Paris in 1990 when we meet again to talk about "Perversion," the subject of the Sixth International Encounter of the Freudian Field.

It is interesting to note that most participants at the Conference were practising psychoanalysts who apply their knowledge of Lacanian concepts to clinical practice in their daily work. I was personally enriched by the opportunity which this Encounter gave me to seek out valid interlocutors. It made me think how vastly Lacan's thoughts have influenced psychoanalysis in Argentina, even in the milieu of the APA (the Argentinian Psychoanalytic Association, affiliated with the IPA), and I wish we could do the same here in the United States.

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