



## The invention of delusion<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Jacques-Alain Miller refers back to the Lacanian thesis: every delusion is an elementary phenomenon. They are continuous processes with the same causality; and the *fecund moment* along the push-to-delusion translates the reiteration of such phenomena. He explores the delusion-interpretation axis and explains the *meaning of meaning* applied to the delusive intuition. He invites us to consider them as metaphors or metonymies, inventing an operator for perplexity and defining equivalence between the signifier of transference and the beginning of a delusion. According to the binomial  $S_1$ - $S_2$ , every piece of knowledge is a delusion, and each delusion a piece of knowledge.

**Key words:** elementary phenomenon; delusion; delusion-interpretation binomial.

**Sumilla:** Jacques Alain Miller se refiere a la tesis lacaniana: Cada delirio es un fenómeno elemental. Se trata de procesos continuos con la misma causa; y el *momento fecundo* junto con el empuje-al-delirio traduce la reiteración de tales fenómenos. Miller explora el eje delirio-interpretación y explica el *sentido del sentido* aplicado a la intuición delirante. Nos invita a considerarlos como metáforas y metonimias, inventando un operador para la perplejidad y definiendo una equivalencia entre el significante de la transferencia y el inicio de un delirio. De acuerdo con el binomio  $S_1$ - $S_2$ , cada pieza de saber es un delirio, y cada delirio una pieza de saber.

**Palabras clave:** fenómeno elemental; delirio; binomio delirio-interpretación.

Delusion and elementary phenomenon constitute a binomial. It is a response to the process of differentiation

that occurs between and among elements of a discourse. It is a process that is common to all speaking beings. Such is the case for the general concept of delusion. In the measure of what constitutes the "I" in each of us, there is the possibility that each of us is delusional. One might consider the delusion as an "accentuation" of what each person carries inside. As such it is possible to write it as *delir-I-um*.

Psychiatry distinguishes between rich delusions and poor delusions. Similarly, it distinguishes between delusions and hallucinations, thus making the point that delusion in and of itself is a discourse. It is from this perspective that we get the meaning of the term *elementary*.

Lacan's teachings allow us to further formulate that delusion is an articulated discourse. It is a combination of elements where the intention to situate the elementary phenomenon, supposes a value or a meaning. It detaches (in the grouping of the discourse on delusion) the minimum or primary elements, and delineates the way in which they are constructed, developed, and elaborated. Put this way, while it might seem like a very general claim, it allows us to justify the original notion of the word *elementary*.

For example, we can consider that formalized argumentation becomes useful for formal mathematical logic; and even though it is not common to our practice, it gives us a certain idea. Not only is it possible to deduce many things from that system of formal mathematical logic, e.g., various theorems, it also yields axioms; primary formulas that we take to be foundational to that discourse. In some ways, elementary phenomena are like these axioms. They cannot be doubted.

This argument should be understood as a first attempt, which without a doubt can be subject to criticism. For example, logical inspiration guides Clérambault to propose a certain category of delusions and detached passions, of which he underlined erotomania, properly understood. It includes phrases such as: *she wants me, don't reject me, don't say no*, --which don't modify the initial premise. It concerns the search for foundational elements that operate as absolutes like the foundations of a discourse. Still, how can we retake this theme?

Kraepelin, for example, thought that one could not localize elementary phenomena in psychosis; he postulated paranoia as continuous with personality development. This perspective opposes another in which there are elementary phenomena. That is, something that marks in the life of the subject the emergence of a discontinuity and indicates therefore that it is not about continuous development. Moreover, it presents itself as an opposition between continuity and discontinuity.

We must establish the point that those who viewed elementary phenomena as something localized were organicists. They maintained that the grounds for the birth of these phenomena would have been something organic. They are an effect of a heretofore unexplained element introduced into the psyche. Framed this way, such a proposed category is not situated as a psychical cause of psychosis. Since nothing can explain what will emerge or what awaits; causal evidence of an organic cause imposes itself: the one who becomes paranoid is not the one whom you might suspect; if not for the discontinuity and something totally new that gets introduced

to the psyche. Based on this conception, in the face of this *brute fact*, this strangeness that emerges, the subject reacts, trying to give an account of it, with delusional explanations and constructions.

At the core of this organic formulation conception, a distinction between elementary phenomena as primary and delusions as secondary phenomena gets established. As a corollary there is also a distinction between the proper cause of the elementary phenomenon and that, which corresponds to the delusion. The cause of the elementary phenomenon, as a feeling of estrangement, an uneasiness that invades the subject, does not have its antecedents in personality, consciousness or character. Therefore we must rule out an organic cause. On the other hand, delusion has a psychical cause because it requires an intellectual effort to explain this curious, strange and disturbing intrusion.

This opens two avenues; one in which there are no elementary phenomena and instead what becomes evident is personality development that accentuates its *cuts* during crucial situations or in traumatic moments. The other avenue is that there are elementary phenomena, or better stated, the intrusion of a heterogeneous element of organic origin that requires the subject to provide a great deal of delusional interpretation to explain it.

The curious thing about Lacan is that in his dissertation, he maintains the position that there are elementary phenomena, but at the same time, he includes these phenomena into a theory of personality. This is the paradox of his dissertation; that he explains very well in chapter three and in the first part of chapter four. In the third

chapter he conceives of paranoia as the result of personality development, while in the forth chapter it appears to be the result of an organic process. The two views oppose one another. Therefore, it is precisely in this chapter, that he presents the theory of elementary phenomena emphasizing its causal quality rather than it being a specific part of the personality.

In his elaboration of the case of Aimée he resists the organic rationale. In the case, *personality* is the fundamental term that we find in the title of his dissertation - *Paranoid Psychosis and its Relationship to Personality*<sup>3</sup> - in which he defends a personalist conception of paranoia and introduces into it the elementary phenomena although they are consistent with an organicist's view. One can say quite a bit about this, because it relates to a holistic perspective, but at the same time it really does not fit all that well. This is when it becomes interesting. It is an arid question. However, it is Lacan's dissertation - our understanding of which is aided by a work of Silvia Tendlarz entitled *Aimée with Lacan* - and we should consider it the basis of our discussion when we refer to this theme.

What can this curious position taken by Lacan respond to? Perhaps we are on the terrain of Lacan's personality seeing that it puts in play his relationship with Clérambault, his mentor. So it is a very delicate matter, since we have already been furnished with the details to understand this topic. But we will put this aside for the moment and take up the debate and arguments of today.

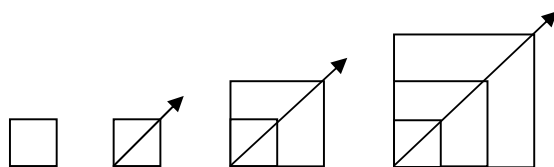
Certainly, we have concentrated a great deal on how to understand the concept of delusion and elementary phenomena.

To further this understanding the metaphor of a plant was used by Lacan in *Seminar III*. Claudio Godoy<sup>4</sup> indicates that the plant metaphor can also be found in Lacan's dissertation. It is where Lacan points out that in the past he made reference to annelids but shortly after that began to use the plant metaphor.<sup>5</sup>

In previous work on the structure of paranoia, written two years earlier, Lacan used Clérambault's term *annelids*, a term which he stops using. As underscored by Juan Carlos Indart<sup>6</sup>, Lacan continued to use the plant metaphor in his writings including in famous 1958 essay, "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power"<sup>7</sup>. To restate, the example of the plant is present in his dissertation, in *Seminar III*, and in 1958; and one finds it not only in relation to psychosis but also in relation to neurosis. Perhaps it is something that we can use to our advantage.

The phrasing in *Seminar III* is "*delusion is an elementary phenomenon*"<sup>8</sup> - if we agree to this abridged quotation -, and follows somewhat more necessarily so in the first sense of the phrase; the elementary phenomenon, consistent with the organicist conception, is totally distinct and heterogeneous in relation to delusion. By the sole fact of transferring it into a theory of continuity and of personality development, Lacan reestablishes a continuum between the elementary phenomenon and the delusion. From my point of view, Juan Carlos Indart indicated the way to translate this phrase. Once immediately after speaking of delusion as an elementary phenomenon, Lacan added: *as long as element signifies structure.*

We ought to be able to translate this phrase in the following form and submit it for discussion. We ought to understand that *the delusion is an elementary phenomenon given that delusion has the same structure as an elementary phenomenon*. In this sense, the term *generative element* used by Roberto Cueva<sup>9</sup> is interesting. It is something that could be understood, for example, though the model of Greek *gnomon*.



We make a figure, we take a diagonal and we can construct a series of figures that respond to the same proportions. In the sense that as a result of the initial cell, we find more and more extensions of the same structure.

When Lacan alludes to the famous plant in "The Direction of the Treatment" – the text in which he would analyze the dream of Beautiful Butcher –, he points out none of this is microscopic; there is no necessity to have a special instrument to recognize that the leaf has traces of the structure of the plant to which it is related. In other words, he considers the dream of a hysteric as indicative of the whole *plant* of hysteria. He clearly relates this unconscious formation – that is the dream – with neurosis, and affirms that the structure of neurosis is present in a minuscule unconscious formation, just like a dream.

It is that sometimes patients relate three or four dreams in one session, if we were to believe that a dream is a small thing in the total trajectory of an analysis; but the

thesis of Lacan is that, as a result of the leaf, we can know a plant or a tree, or as a result of a bone in a claw it is possible to reconstruct a dinosaur.

In the line of argument we are elaborating, my proposition is simple: in a certain sense, the elementary phenomenon represents for psychosis, what the unconscious formation represents for neurosis; even though the scale is reduced, it shows us the structure of the sickness. Not only is it a bit simplistic, and also perhaps a bit excessive, but it suggests that we have to work in order to compare the unconscious formation with elementary phenomena. This comparison is valid due to the concept of a structure, in which it does not matter if we take an enormous text or only one page as long as the structure is there in one form or another. Consider what happens when something happens to one's vision. In diplopia, for example: upon closing one's eyes, or looking at a page or a room, the diplopia does not disappear. The object that you see can change but the fact of the structure is there, like a specific torsion.

Let us take as an example, the work of the *pass*, in which in a very short time, one hour, half an hour, someone recounts an analysis of another person, which lasted ten years! How is it possible, this work, and besides this, how can we evaluate it? Simply because we believe in the structure, or better stated, one can make a good extraction and succeed in appropriating the structure in a fragment. It was Roberto Cueva who tried to show this by taking an example of an elementary phenomenon in the case of Aimée and indicating that the phenomenon repeats itself in the course

of the elaboration of the delusion. He anticipated this question.

So, a short circuit is presented: what is the structure of the formations of unconscious?

Lacan's answer allows us to affirm that its foundation is the alienation of the signifier - the signifier represents the subject for another signifier - and sometimes, when a signifier "calls" another, this suggests to the subject a lapse and the subject is surprised that the subject itself produced it.

We can advance the argument as a result of the structure of the unconscious formation. Let us try to elaborate the structure of the elementary phenomenon in opposition to it.

**Unconscious formation ~ neurosis**

**Elementary phenomenon ~ psychosis**

The elementary phenomenon represents something, albeit we don't know much about what it is. We say that it represents that which is not known for someone, for a subject. Accordingly we will remember, it relates to Pierce's definition of a sign of which Lacan's insight was that *the sign represents something for someone*.

Returning to the earlier point, Lacan maintained that, in unconscious formations, the signifier is linked with another signifier and the subject emerges as an effect of this linkage. Consequently, the subject is not aware of the procedure; the signifiers are linked and the subject staying somewhat relegated, conforming to what we verify as the lapse.

With the elementary phenomenon the, *for someone*, is interesting because it is concerned with personal signification and is directed at the subject. In addition, perhaps we can affirm, in a first approximation, that with the elementary phenomenon, the fundamental sign represents an  $x$  for the subject. This formulation presents a problem that must be resolved: how to formalize the elementary phenomenon in light of Lacan's formula for unconscious formations?

We can continue on a little further with these questions. For the time being we will try to indicate a path we can follow to continue working, once we agree not to dismiss the work as having been terminated. In the way that Lacan was inspired through some examples to construct his formulas, we, ourselves, are inspired with Lacan's formula to make our own work.

Thus we come upon a concept that is very useful to introduce into the debate. We speak of the elementary phenomenon and we doubt in that very moment where it arose from because Lacan indicates that it came from Clérambault, when in reality we don't find it there. There are approximate formulas in Jaspers work, which Lacan critiques. Other than that, there is an exclusively Lacanian concept used clinically in relation to psychosis, which is that *moment of fecundity*.

What is this fecund moment? With this idea, Lacan signals the push-to-delusion. In a given moment the subject appears embarrassed, when giving light to a new delusional episode. There is therefore, a moment of calm and a moment of push. The conception of these fertile moments is precisely situated like the repetition of elementary phenomena. The

subject is agitated, feels that something will happen. Afterwards there is a precipitation, a crystallization, and a conclusion. Therefore, the fecund moment is this gnomonic reiteration of the structure of the elementary phenomenon that furnishes, at the same time, the idea of a continuation. The concept of structure reformalizes and redistributes the field in which the concepts of personality and organism oppose one another. In this case the element is the structure that repeats itself like a *gnomon*, in distinct levels.

In the beginning Lacan developed the idea that the element is the structure. The elementary phenomenon appeared as it did because of its simplicity and its immediate and brute character. Godoy cites it in relation to the text about the structure of paranoid psychosis, when in connection with the interpretation of the delusional, Lacan points out that it is made up of primary data, almost intuitive, without being rationally organized. The disorganized character of the phenomenon in the interpretation of the delusion appears as a specific aspect of the elementary phenomenon. Here one can establish a comparison with Clérambault, with the metaphor of the annelids, small worms equally without articulation, structure, or organization.

Discovering that the elementary phenomena are structures that include a certain combination hinders us from contrasting them to the notion of delusion with the argument that the delusion is an articulation, whereas the elementary phenomenon is not articulated. It is a question of a simple element, isolated and different from a ring. Here is Lacan's discovery: the elementary phenomenon is a structure and its structure is that of a language, as is the case with a

delusion. Therefore, there is for both the commonality of structure. In general, one can say that the delusion is an elementary phenomenon is a delusion since both are structured like a language. However, lets go further, beyond this point.

We will now consider a level upon which we oppose hallucination and interpretation. In this sense, the intervention of Robert Mazzuca includes a precious reference to Lacan. If you reread the "Response to the Comments of Jean Hyppolite" you will see what radically differentiates the hallucination from the interpretive phenomenon. Yet, a little later as Mazzuca points out, Lacan seems to forget that and mixes both notions. Therefore at a certain level, we understand that there is an opposition between an interpretation and hallucination that concerns a perceptive phenomenon. We know we are facing a real psychotic hallucination when what appears to present itself has the character of certainty and we can say that the subject is passive while suffering from a hallucination independent of him. The logic of interpretation for personal experiences is totally different; there, the subject is active, does not suffer, but instead acts and has moments of doubt. The interpretation is that of the subject.

To the degree that these two phenomena have many distinct traces, but at the same time, following what Lacan discovers, what accounts for the evident phenomenological differences is that hallucinations have the structure of language.

The entire essay "A Preliminary Question" serves to indicate that if we study verbal hallucinations we will see that they respond to a structure of language, and that we

find a difference between signifier and signified and between the message and the code. Evidently, interpretation is also grounded in a linguistic phenomenon.

In spite of all the phenomenological differences that exist between hallucination and interpretation, the structural perspective allows us to treat them jointly. Accordingly, Mazzuca points out that Lacan can support the notion that something that is valid equally for hallucination as it is for interpretation, and that both are completely distinct at a certain level, but that in another way the difference does not matter because they respond to the same structure.

To expand our point of reference in relation to our theme, we can again take up the text "Response to the Commentary of Jean Hyppolite" in which Lacan maintains that hallucination and interpretation are distinct. He proves this with the Freudian case of Wolf Man with regard to the hallucination about the cut finger; and introduces immediately the famous case of the Man of the Fresh Brains, that is, an example of *acting out*. Yet, in what terms does Lacan speak of the phenomenon of *acting out*? He refers to it as interpretation. He shows that *acting out* is structured like a hallucination, and that in the case of the Wolf Man the lack of a signifier in the structure of the subject makes it such that what is foreclosed, returns in the real. That notwithstanding, with the *acting out* Lacan shows, if one knows how to read him, that a signifier is lacking in the interpretation by the analyst and the fact that what emerges in the conduct of the subject is an act which he/she is not able to understand; we can almost presume that there is a

foreclosure. Lacan formulates this as a refusal of an oral relation which, unsymbolized, returns as if it were a hallucination.

All the same Lacan works with this enormously important topic in his seminar: *acting out* is equivalent to a hallucinatory phenomenon of the delusional type. He says this clearly and explains that it is produced when analysts impel something at the level of the real and not within symbolic register; this means that they encounter the same causality in both of the phenomena. In the same text, he opposes hallucination and interpretation, using an example of hallucination and another of *acting out* in its linkage with the analytic interpretation, and finally constructing the same structure for both. In this way, justifying a distinction between difference levels. On one level, hallucination and interpretation oppose one another. On another they have the same structure. It would not be a contradiction, if not for this distinction between different levels.

We again take up the history of the relationship between Lacan and his mentor Clérambault, which is a topic all on its own. In the *Écrits*, Lacan anticipates precociously that Clérambault is "my only mentor in psychiatry". As I did not know of Clérambault in 1966, when the *Écrits* came out, I began to read his work. Some years later, in a presentation that I did on one of Lacan's texts in which he discussed Clérambault, I understood that Lacan had introduced his work in such away in France, so as to spark a gradual interest in Clérambault's personality and in his above mentioned work in psychiatry.

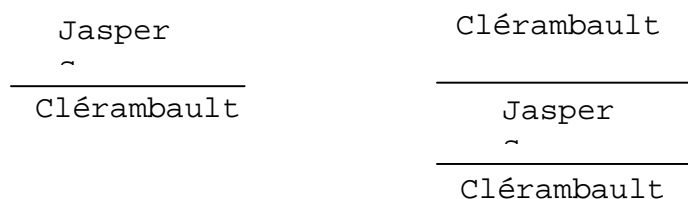
In a seminar that I gave in 1998, I sought to convince those in attendance that Lacan's thesis is Jasperian. But it is very curious that in his essay entitled "On My Antecedents" in the *Écrits*, Lacan does not say one word about Jaspers.

Lacan defended his doctoral dissertation in 1932 after interning with Clérambault. The dissertation he completes is Jasperian but in the *Écrits* he only makes reference to Clérambault. On the other hand, in the first lesson of *Seminar III* he speaks of Freud, renders homage to Clérambault and then radically critiques Jaspers. Lacan had already praised Clérambault in the essay "Presentation on Psychological Causality" in the following terms: "I intend for my dissertation to respond to Clérambault's method."

What conclusions can we extract from all of this? In one moment Lacan positions himself as disciple oriented by Clérambault. The reference is in an article published in issue no. 6 of *Ornicar?*, when he refers to the use of the image of the annelids - that two years later he substituted with the metaphor of the plant - and underscores that he uses this image which encapsulates the elementary phenomenon taught by Clérambault, to whom many things are owed in relation this method and that, to not run the risk of being a plagiarist, it is necessary to pay homage to him for each one of our terms "that is, for everything, everything I said would have been in homage to Clérambault."<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the dissertation he was to write two years later, argues against Clérambault, even though he does not make it explicitly evident, it is Jasperian, as a result of how it was understood. It is a thesis that is anti-

organicist, since that is how it would be remembered, Clérambault thought in terms of a fundamentally organic cause. In some ways, the Jasperian thesis *kills* Clérambault, which in the meantime, returns and *kills* Jaspers. In this dynamic, Clérambault first appears metaphorically through Jaspers, and finally Lacan returns to him in terms of "my sole master."



On this note there is continuity: he praises and recommends Clérambault's method; moreover, he affirms that this was always the certified method in psychiatry but at the same time, Lacan distances himself from organicist theses. We have to think that, as an organicist, Clérambault also was searching for elementary phenomena.

Surely in 1931 there was a collision between both of these views. We can infer this from the homage that Lacan pays to him, for without a doubt Clérambault would have been quite sensitive to appropriation of the categories he developed, which complicates things for us at level of history; but therefore explains that the expression *elementary phenomenon* found in Jaspers was ultimately attributed to Clérambault.

After this intellectual journey by way of our antecedents, we can return to the topic of the structure of

the elementary phenomenon. On this point we find discussions about which Lacan expounds upon in a famous paragraph from "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" where he refers to the *signification of signification*<sup>11</sup>, which offers a new interpretation of the elementary phenomenon. On this question, the title of the seminar that I gave - "The Enigmatic Experience in Psychosis" - continued to be an enigma for other professors, and I justified it by commenting on Lacan's phrase about the *signification of signification* and its enigmatic emptiness. I extracted this adjective of the above phrase and explained what it meant. It addresses something that later is found well explained in an article by Collette Soler.

Now we interest ourselves again in Lacan's commentary in a different way than in my seminar. Lacan does not speak of the elementary phenomenon nor of elementary phenomena in the text "On a Questions Prior to the Possible Treatment of Psychosis" except that he refers to the necessity of reformulating intuitive phenomena. In my opinion, he says *intuitive phenomena* because he wants to pay attention to the signification in elemental phenomena and leave open that in some, they may not be present. It is possible to extend signification, the domain of elementary phenomena, to perceptive phenomena, pseudo-hallucinations, where the question of signification is not as evident and not as pure.

With all this, Lacan refers to these intuitive phenomena which are elementary phenomena evidently connected to questions of signification where the thing appears in its pure form. In the seminar that I gave, I used the example of a red car in which the subject maintains: "It says something

to me, this is directed at me" or some other thing like "The obelisk is speaking with me". In this way, it remains a bewildering mystery: the intuitive phenomenon to which we add the delusional intuition, which implicates it. In these phenomena there is not only an emptiness; in a determinate moment, an illumination appears: Madame Z persecutes him/her or the writer P.B. These are related to a signification that invades. Finally, I believe that he alludes to such a sector of elementary phenomena, which are valid for all the rest besides which he puts them into evidence.

So, what are we dealing with? We say that it is a question of a curious moment, a product of signification, a production - which is unfinished or difficult - very special. My proposition for today is to think of this movement in the context of metaphor and metonymy. Yet, why? Because, they are the two major mechanisms in the production of meaning. Using this as a point of departure, we then situate the elementary phenomenon, the intuitive phenomenon. We know that in metaphor there is substitution and that, according to Lacan, it produces a positive effect of meaning and the emergence of a new meaning. While in metonymy, like the connection between one signifier to another, the meaning cannot emerge and lodges a lack of being in relation to the object and the meaning slides forever in the chain of signification.

metaphor	S'	(+ ) s
	—	
	S	

metonymy	S.....S'	(- ) s
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What can we say about these phenomena the *signification of signification* described by Lacan? In some way we can say that, in the moment of perplexity, the meaning doesn't appear to be satisfactory. It is a moment of waiting for meaning, that is enigmatic, and that does not satisfy. We recall that Wittgenstein maintained that the criterion of understanding is satisfaction. Hence for the enigmatic there is no satisfaction, but rather, a bit less of the lower case *s*, (-*s*). Neither is it a question of metonymy, to the degree that it does not slide but rather, remains fixed, immobilized. Many times a unique signifier emerges that fixes the subject in the moment and can encircle it, without the entire meaning being made to appear.

In the way that the elementary phenomenon likens itself to an immovable metonymy, if we are permitted this oxymoron, or it presents itself as an impotent metaphor. The metaphor locates a signifier that permits the emergence of meaning: it is the uniqueness of the signifier, albeit impotent, that makes meaning emerge.

The elementary phenomenon, as an immobile metonymy in place of a sliding, produces a state of diffused confusion and like an impotent metaphor, an absolute fixation.

But how do we write and formulate this curious meaning? We could write that what emerges is not the meaning, but rather the minus; that is to say we use Lacan's connectors: *s0* - zero meaning - for the enigmatic experience (we establish a comparison with a metaphor and a metonymy); and

it can augment a logical sign, a question mark, an operator that signifies the question that it introduces.

(?) s      Operator of perplexity

Perplexity is this operator of perplexity in its simplest form, as you can see. So we affirm that it is always so, explicit or implicit, a signifier of the elementary phenomenon, or something that would have this curious effect of questioning the meaning. It would be a special type of link of the signifier and the meaning of the elementary phenomenon.

S (?) s

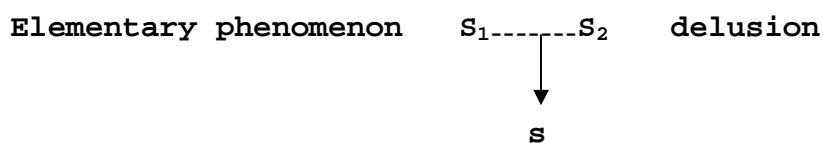
We invent this special operator, the operator of perplexity, and point out that it is the normal situation of human beings to come under the effect of the signifier, in as much as all subjects have decipher a signifier. This is consistent with Lacan's theory, which indicates that the structure reveals itself in psychosis and that we have to take into account the veil of the neurotic. As such, the assertion that desire and discourse are of the Other in the phenomena of mental automatons presents itself as an open question. By the same token, it is axiomatic that the elementary phenomenon makes evident our relationship with the signifier.

It is possible to speak of an initial paranoia of every subject or understand that, for example, in the beginning of an analysis something is produced such that the analysis can

begin. It addresses what Lacan designates as the *signifier of transference* that precipitates the emergence of subject supposed to know, sustains the interpretation, and to which its relationship with the elementary phenomenon led me to maintain that such a signifier is equivalent to the initial moment of a delusion.

When Lacan studies the structure of unconscious formations he establishes this first moment, pointing out that "this speaks of it"<sup>12</sup>. The beginning for every subject is that of speaking too much of it. This is why, our fascination with the apprenticeship of language should be questioned, since it is the case that what is important is that others and the Other speak. We observe that sometimes, one speaks more of a child before it is born than after it is born. However, we will see more of this shortly.

The One signifier,  $S_1$ , the lone signifier, is always elementary, that is to say it doesn't know what it signifies. Only when signifier Two appears,  $S_2$ , can the signification of  $S_1$  emerge. We translate therefore what role the signifier has in interpretation. And I conclude by approximation that what we have called the elementary phenomenon puts us in the presence of an  $S_1$ , and for this reason the signification does not unfold. In contrast, the delusion is equivalent to the  $S_2$ . That is, the meaning happens as a result of the delusion, which corresponds to the description about the first, the second, etc.



As a result of these insights, what we observe is a short circuit. Consequently, upon placing the delusion in the place of the  $S_2$  - that is, of knowledge - it shows us that all knowledge is delusion and delusion is a type of knowledge. Listening repeatedly, what Lacan affirms is interesting about the invention of knowledge, the psychotic would present as a delusional that does not retreat in the face of the elaboration of knowledge with the element of delusion that is always part of the invention. Remember, on the other hand, that it is also said that the analyst must never retreat in the face of the psychotic.

In this sense, we are few who think that Lacan was not deluded. Mr. Bunge, for example, thought that Freud was delusional. In the same vein, there are many delusional things about Newton, who dedicated more time to alchemy than to mathematics, and was passionate about deciphering the book of Daniel and the theme of the Apocalypse in the Bible. Mr. Bunge does not think in this way and as a result, devalues it. It is true that Newton did know as much as him. Newton was a man of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and had a passion for deciphering the significance of the Bible in order to know the future. Without a doubt there is always a risk in science because it can be a delusion. Accordingly, Lacan maintains that it was Sputnik, this first object launched into space, which verified many things, is, in this sense, a certain type of elementary phenomenon.

Returning then to the coherence between knowledge and delusion, let us ask what this implies. To speak of delusion is not only to speak of delusions of interpretation but

rather, that the delusion itself is an interpretation. One finds this formula in "Of Paranoid Psychosis and its Relationship to Personality". It is the most Lacanian phrase of the thesis, because in that text not everything is Lacanian. Lacan commented that he did not want to publish it and only did so because the editors requested that he do so. In a short preface, he indicated that he published it with reticence and consequently did not consider that everything in it was Lacanian. Nevertheless, the most Lacanian aspect of the thesis is the phrase *the delusion is an interpretation*, which points out that in the actual text of the delusion we find it to be an explicit truth and almost meaningful. The delusion is a perfectly visible duplicate of that which was put under theoretical investigation, which is coherent with the whole Freudian concept of the theory of the libido; it is something analogous to the theory of divine nerves in the Schreber case. We note also that Lacan undoubtedly finds himself facing a certain type of homogeneity between structure, delusion, and knowledge.

Hence, to confirm what I expanded upon in relation to metaphor and metonymy, it is necessary to take up again Lacan's text "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" and observing that he uses *metaphor* only in reference to the paternal metaphor. Yet, in his seminar he opposes speech with formula, arguing that in the case of Schreber's delusions there are sayings that are full of meaning, of incredible density, and there are also formulas both empty and repetitive. I believe it organizes along the lines of metaphor and metonymy. Speech, which condenses all meaning has the structure of metaphor, denoting the emergence

of meaning under a form of intuition that fills in the subject; and the formula repetitive and empty remains more on the side of metonymy.

Therefore, we are going to introduce metaphor and metonymy, as a binomial operation in order to consider the concept of delusion. To finally clarify things in relation to the elementary phenomenon, we can confirm that we face the absence of an  $S_2$ , in the initial moment, and this produces the phenomenon of zero meaning, the emptiness of signification.



It is this point that the neurotic - the normal pole - brings itself the  $S_2$  that it needs. That is, in certain circumstances the neurotic knows what it must say. This is our quick read of it. Lacan invites us to be a bit more psychotic, a bit more perplexed. He helps us with his style that produces perplexity. He teaches us not to close off the moment of perplexity and not to rush out with our  $S_2$ , our knowledge based on our fantasy, to decipher and affirm that we have no difficulties and that we understand everything that is going on. To try not to understand what is going on is in itself a discipline. Because not translating in this way is kind of a foreclosure of the Name of the Father, a foreclosure of this  $S_2$  that for the neurotic permits him to decipher everything without perplexity? In the neurotic, this is called normal, and emerges so naturally. If you will

permit me, for the psychotic this implies an enormous amount of work, so he must make an interpretation of knowledge that is not so natural.

Even though I have given high praise to delusion, we must not forget that it is not something grand or magnificent, but rather that many times, it is very repetitive. Why?



Because this empty symbolic register absorbs the structure of the imaginary,  $a-a'$ , as a result of which delusion develops, for example, in paranoia. This is what Lacan demonstrates in the case of Aimée; the rivalry she has with her sister repeats the dismantling that began with her mother. Even though Aimée's relationship with her mother was good, the dismantling repeated itself throughout all of her delusion, and on this point the delusion was repetitive. When we plot it on this slope of barren and repetitive delusions, it makes room for what Lacan describes in the *Écrits* with his function of the screen. In this sense, the act carried out by Aimée caused the fall of the delusion as a screen. This prospect accentuates her role part of the scenery. Therefore it is necessary and indispensable to establish a dialectic between interpretive knowledge and delusional as scenery,

consistent the expression used by Lacan in *Seminar III* regarding the psychoses. Nevertheless, we will not involve ourselves with that now.

Lacan modifies the view about elementary phenomena. It is not a matter of time and chronology being unrecognizable to us, nor is it a matter if the initial moment of psychosis. It happens that the structure indicates that psychosis already exists. In all cases the question is to know the moment in which it triggers. For this reason in *Seminar III*, Lacan theorizes that psychosis does not have a prehistory. He completely abridges its history and this is precisely the theory of the Name-of-the-Father: the structure exists and what is lacking is the signifier that the subject should have at his disposal. The question is to know what happened to him, to this particular subject, such that everything gets placed into motion and triggers the psychosis.

In his commentary about Schreber, Lacan suggests that when something from everyday reality calls this signifier that is lacking, which should be mobilized, it becomes evident that it is missing and the catastrophe begins, and undoes the imaginary. The manner of which the "I", captured in the Symbolic register, imprisoned, escapes and modifies its distribution and the distribution of its libido. This is the first attempt by Lacan to use the idea of *jouissance*. Why? Where is the *jouissance* in this history? When we speak in these terms we must understand that *jouissance* circulates between  $a-a'$ .

For Lacan, elaborating on his first theory, libido is within the imaginary register and circulates between the world and the "I", with a differentiation being made between

ego libido and sexual libido. But we will not address this theme. We can set out here that jouissance is in the foreground, and if it circulates to this extent we can presume that it contributes to the interpretation of the delusion

Now we move to the topic mentioned by Cecilia D'Alvia<sup>13</sup>. It is a difficult question because it was done by a very close reading of a text that pointed out how Freud does not situate delusions of grandeur in exactly the same place. The Freudian construction is grounded in the parallel between psychosis and neurosis of transference, with the objective of comparing the two. He does not situate it exactly in the same moment as the delusion of grandeur: the moment of pathological process and mode of treatment, libidinal state and the intention to channel it, mode of treatment. One does not know if the delusion of grandeur is a sickness that must be treated like other delusions or if it is its own mode of treatment. So the delusion appears as a mode of treatment that is different than a delusion as a screen.

The delusion of grandeur is, in a certain way, the fundamental delusion, to the degree to which it is the delusion of the excellence of the "I". Everyone has a delusion of grandeur including what could be described as "*I am nothing*" or rather "*I can nothing*" which already expresses the capacity of the subject always establishing a comparison with the ideas that suppress anything abundant or pleasing. Even if it is interpreted as a complaint, it still pertains to a delusion of grandeur in the sense of the delusion of the "I".

It is important to clarify this duplicate position of the delusion of grandeur that escapes at a certain level, what is produced when the signifier, the symbolic register, cannot capture the "I" and give it its place; this is precisely the sickness. However, like the delusion, and the interpretation, it also represents domination over the libido, and Freud expresses it as such. Therefore, on this point it is possible to acknowledge both perspectives. It is true that in Freud's text it is formulated quickly, and so we can interpret that they do not say the same thing. We would propose therefore to distinguish between levels and as such I suggest the hallucination - interpretation. On one level, the delusion of grandeur presents itself as escaping, without brakes; while at another level, a delusion implies dominance over the libido, a term that Freud uses and had to be verified in the original text in German. It teaches, therefore, that a delusion reaches a certain domination over the libido, or in our lexicon, a certain encoding of jouissance.

*Translation: G.S. Marshall*

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<sup>1</sup> This conference was held in Buenos Aires, in 1995. The title was suggested by Leonardo Gorostiza. Transcription and text edition by Oscar Sawicke. Published in Spanish in: Miller, J.-A. et. al. (2005[1995]). *El saber delirante*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.

<sup>2</sup> Psychoanalyst, Director of the Department of Psychoanalysis - Paris VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Lacan, J. (1987). The case of Aimée, or self-putative paranoia. In J. Cutting & M. Shepard (Eds.), *The clinical roots of the schizophrenia concept: Translations of seminal European contributions on schizophrenia*. (pp. 213-226). New York: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published in 1932).

<sup>4</sup> Godoy, C. (2005[1995]). "Automatismo, fenómeno elemental y delirio". In *El saber delirante*. *Op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

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<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (1955-1956 [1993]) *The seminar of Jacques Lacan, book III: The psychoses* (R.Grigg, Trans.) New York: W.W. Norton, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Indart, J.C. (2005[1995]). "Discusión". In *El saber delirante. Op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Lacan, J. (2006[1958]). "The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power" In *Écrits* (B.Fink, Trans.) New York: W.W. Norton.

<sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (1993[1955-1956]). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan, book III: The psychoses* (R.Grigg, Trans.) New York: W.W. Norton . *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Cueva, R. (2005[1995]). "Fenómenos elementares y delirio en la tesis doctoral de Jacques Lacan". In *El saber delirante. Op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Lacan, J. (1988[1931]). "Structure des psychoses paranoïaques". *Op. cit.*, nota n.6, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (1998[1957-1958]). "On a question prior to any possible treatment of psychosis" In *Écrits* (B.Fink, Trans.) New York: W.W. Norton. *Op. cit.*, pp. 544-545.

<sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (1966[1964]). "Position de l'inconscient au congrès de Bonneval. In *Écrits*. Paris : Seuil, p. 835.

<sup>13</sup> D'Alvia, C. (2005[1995]). "Comentário de um párrafo de 'Introducción del narcisismo'". In *El Saber delirante. Op. cit.*, pp. 19-31.