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One Conjuncture of Release from the Institution

«The binary ‘clinic of admissions-clinic of release’ can be considered as constituting two faces of the same coin, which makes the passage of a child in institution a crossing, which supposes an encounter which...takes place or doesn’t.»¹ This crossing supposes a reference to a trajectory, to a proposed path. It supposes the idea of a course that has no end in and of itself, but which nevertheless aims at conclusion. An encounter that might fail to take place supposes that one doesn’t fall into the impasse of the real of the clinic: no knowledge supposed beforehand that would speak for the clinic.

The clinic of surprise has been evoked by Veronique Mariage during Opening Day at Courtil.² To let oneself be surprised in the field opened by Freud and by Lacan is to put to work a desire to know in an encounter with the subject as response to the real which is encountered there. And at all times, there are necessary conditions. Alfredo Zenoni uncovers them in setting out from the very goal of the end of analysis:

...that of a modification of the relation to knowledge, of passing from a relation of the supposition of knowledge -- which maintains the knowledge at a distance while making of it a love object -- to a relation of effectuation, of production, and putting to the test; the passage from the love of knowledge to the desire to know.³

This is what has brought me to take up the question of conjunctures for release, proposed for study on the bias not only of what must be concluded in a clinic centered on a real that teaches, but also to envision in the same move this clinic. Henceforth, the conjuncture for

release of a child will permit us to situate the aim of our work, an aim that differs according to whether it concerns a neurotic or a psychotic subject.

I will start with the clinic of psychosis. In «The Psychotic Subject in Psychoanalysis,» Colette Soler situates the conjuncture of work with the psychotic subject as starting with the configuration of the encounter of psychoanalysis with psychosis.⁴ The coordinates are summed up: in 1903, Schreber, writing his memoirs, addresses the science of the future; in 1911, Freud, man with a new knowledge, deciphers the text, interprets it. It is an interpretation which does not make an analysis, but which instructs Freud, himself animated by a request for knowledge.

In referring to Colette Soler's article, I would like to point out the particularity of the encounter with a psychotic subject: not a work linked to a transference situation as with neurosis, but a work linked to a place that one occupies in such a way that it permits the psychotic to testify about his Other who knows and enjoys, and of whom, at best, the psychotic can try to interpret or treat it. One manoeuvre is possible: it requires an opening in surprise to find the place which supports the psychotic subject in the treatment of his Other. His passage in institution will then be a proper crossing to sit in this place from which he can treat his Other, lighten himself of its burden.

Michael's crossing

conjuncture of admission

The ravaging nature of Michael's relation to his mother would bring her to request her son's admission as in-patient. Michael is five, and the mother, completely overwhelmed in the face of her son/tyrant, isn't always able to separate herself from him at this point. However, consultations are begun with her. During the hour of his mother's meetings, Michael is received in the institution, where he lets it be know that «Here, no mommy.» His tyranny, and, on the other side, her complete submission to the request of the Other, are his defenses in relation to the omnipotence of this Other. He is either the Master of the Universe, or he is absent and submissive, sometimes completely mute. Michael would be admitted three years later as in-patient at Courtil, at the age of eight. His admission thus necessitated a long work beforehand, not only with Michael, but also with his mother.

First off, at Courtil, he presented himself to us like a dictator, rendering particularly difficult the functioning of one workshop and sometimes

rendering daily living unbearable. The only way to stop him was to exclude him from the field of the Other, but then he collapsed. In this context, I surprised myself in saying to him, one day when I was overwhelmed by his scuffles that started right off the bat, that I was not his mother, but that I came to work at Courtil with the children. I added that I wasn't going to let him prevent me from doing this, that I would put him outside if I must. He stopped, as surprised as I was by the vehemence of my intervention, and from then on set to work in the workshops in which he encountered me. The surprise intervention had recast what he himself had brought to the conjuncture of admission: «Here, no mommy.»

The conjuncture of release would bring out, however, that if one can take a place with regards to him, it still isn't without his mother. But at the entry, during our setting to work with him, he would have heard this no to the *jouissance* in his relation to the Other -- a no which doesn't situate him as the object of the request of the Other, but a no which marks a desire elsewhere, with others, and in the signifier «work.» This signifier had taken for him the form of a preoccupation with drawing, writing and deciphering of letters and words. He solicited us with insistence to master a code, a message, which came to represent him in regards to another. He rejoiced when he could thus produce a trait which would be decipherable by another and which would in some way represent him in the Other. But, above all, he was enthusiastic for the creation of objects and for gardening, and the important thing is our place as witness in regards to what was elaborated there.

In the series, the signifier garden would take on a particular consistency: the products he cultivated there introduced him into the circuit of exchange with the Other. He distributed the products, he was Master of the circuit, but also negotiator for whom the rules of mathematics and counting and money would have great importance. Well beyond the gardening workshop, he testified to this preoccupation with negotiation and solicited us to take a place which permitted him to treat in this way his relation to the Other.

The conjuncture of admission for this psychotic subject indicates that the institution would have as its function to be the place of asylum, a function Alfredo Zenoni attributes to the institution oriented by psychoanalysis. One has to ask oneself if it isn't

...the only practicable response to the consequences of the status of the real in psychosis and besides that as the only possible chance for

a lightening of the being caught in the knowledge and jouissance of the Other relative to the familial milieu from which the subject has issued.⁵

In referring to the formula for the paternal metaphor:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & . & A \\ & & \text{--->S} \\ & & x \end{array}$$

we can write what would be for this subject a first exit, in work:⁶

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Here} & & S_1 \\ & & \text{---> ---} + S_1 + S_1 \dots \\ & & x \end{array}$$

In her article, «Clinical Varieties of the 0 », Veronique Mariage evokes Michael's case, making the link between the end of his nocturnal encopresis and the separation with his mother when she had to be hospitalized. He was twelve at this time. Veronique Mariage emphasizes how this encopresis was linked to the impossibility for him to symbolize the lack through a recourse to phallic signification. In default of the power to introduce an object of exchange and to symbolize loss, the Other's request for cleanliness was none other than the request for a morsel of his body that was impossible to detach, constraining Michael to the inability to release his sphincters except while he slept.⁷

His entire morning ritual already allowed him to treat the Other, in addition to Michael's introduction to negotiation, pocket money allowance and debt. In this way, it was possible to introduce a symbolic object in the exchange and to symbolize loss: a present could also take the place of excrement. In this context of symbolization, in which a bit of him circulated in exchange with the Other, we envisioned his release to a place where the signifier garden could be deployed, in a trade which would give more consistency to exchange and negotiation with the Other and which at the same time would give him the means to introduce himself more thoroughly in the social bond.

Conjunction of release

When Michael spoke to his mother of his release from Courtil during a weekend at home, she collapsed. Confronted with his mother's difficulty symbolizing a separation, he encountered a hole in the Other. From that moment on, nothing would be negotiable for Michael, and the jouissance of the Other came down hard on him. The phrase «Courtil is nothing,» which he endlessly proffered on his return from the weekend and that he realized by breaking everything and beating up on children and intervenants, says indeed that the separation can only be made in the real, by blows and by a physical distance: a hospitalization.

In this conjunction for release, as in the admission, a treatment of the mother's difficulty to symbolize separation had to be undertaken. During the process of working with her toward her son's release from Courtil, she would say why she hadn't been able to accept his admission to Courtil, when he was five. On his return from a week of observation at Courtil, he had beaten her. She had interpreted his violence as «he can't separate from me, and he hates me for it» rather than as what it appeared to be in the logic of his conjunction of admission: mother, because she had taken consistency in this first separation, couldn't be put at a distance except by blows.

From then on, separation could not be symbolized for him in the maternal Other. The same thing was repeated at the conjunction for release: the separation from Courtil, as with the separation from his mother at his admission, was made in the real. But if the violence unfurled at Courtil necessitated a hospitalization and medication, a distancing of jouissance remained possible in the places outside Courtil that Michael frequented: school, vacation camps, the hospital, the family.

The accompaniment of the mother in this conjunction for release would permit Michael to symbolize and negotiate the separation, from which point he would begin to speak of his future projects as well as his past.

Thus one might formalize the second release for this subject, a release from Courtil that reverses the first formula proposed:

$$\begin{array}{c} 0 \quad S_1 \\ \text{---} \text{---} > \text{---} \\ x \end{array}$$

Zero is equal to «Here, no Courtil,» which permits a place to be constituted elsewhere, implying the support of the mother so that another place becomes «here.» This permits an entry into a work in which Michael constitutes his master signifiers, unary traits which represent and situate him in the social bond. That is what this subject taught us of his particular mode for treating the Other.

¹ Dominique Holvoet, «Proposition for work made on Opening Day.» l'Agenda du Courtil Sept. 4, 1993.

² Veronique Mariage. «Le Courtil une experience de la surprise.» Les Feuilletts du Courtil #8/9; pp. 13-20.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Colette Soler. «Le sujet psychotic dans la psychanalyse.» *Psychose et Creation*; pp. 23-30.

⁵ Alfredo Zenoni. «Inventer une institution.» *Les Feuilletts du Courtil #8/9, 1994*; p. 215.

⁶ Alexander Stevens. Proposition made for Opening Day of Courtil. Sept. 4, 1993.

⁷ Veronique Mariage. «Varieties cliniques de o_0 » *Les Feuilletts du Courtil #6, 1993*; pp. 85 - 86.