

Inclusion of madness into thinking: the possible dialogue between Lacan and Husserlian phenomenology

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Abstract: Why think madness would have some sense in philosophy? Jacques Lacan's thesis from 1932 gives us a hint. This is because Lacan turns to a case of paranoia and outlines some criticism of Husserl's phenomenology. The objective of this paper is to show that the reflection of what is said as abnormal could open room to rethink Husserl's phenomenology.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, phenomenology, personality, narcissism.

This article aims to conduct a dialogue between the position of from Jacques Lacan's theory on paranoia in his 1932 doctoral thesis and Husserl's phenomenology. This is a dialogue that is only possible because Lacan readdresses, in his way, phenomenology in his thesis. However, as was intended to be shown, Lacan's position can open a space for us to rethink phenomenology itself.

In his thesis, Lacan affirms he develops a *phenomenology* of personality that, briefly, would be the "generic study of the *intentional* functions in which social human relationships are integrated" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 315). Based on these words, we cannot immediately associate his work to Husserl's phenomenological tradition. The term *phenomenology* was used in this context with another objective: to try and comprehend a phenomenon: personality.

Let us remember that the title of Lacan's thesis (*On paranoid psychosis in its relationship with personality*) focuses on a specific pathology: *paranoid psychosis*. He intends to *comprehend* this in relation to personality so as to "provide the key of certain nosographic and pathogenic problems of paranoia and particularly of its relationship with personality" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 151).

With the aim of achieving this comprehension, Lacan seeks to describe the intentional functions that are related with *social order*. After all, what happens with a paranoid individual? A constitutional anomaly? A reactionary deformation? An autonomous disease? Apropos, why are there pathologies that are not explained by issues related to a deficient capacity of the body? What is at stake here?

Lacan seeks to answer this type of question in a most peculiar way: based on a "distortion" of the "normal" personality. A description of a distortion – what is interesting about that?

In fact, we could pose a reverse question: *why would that not be interesting?* Why should we think based on what we consider "normal"?

The normal seems to be the rule for thinking about something. Husserl's phenomenology is a classic example. There seems to be no sense in privileging a pathological conduct. It would not tell us anything about what would be considered normal. *Husserl is never based on a pathology*, which he is keen to point out in one of his final texts (*The origin of geometry*, 1936):

evidently, it is only thanks to language and the vast extension of its consignment, such as virtual communication, that the horizon of humanity can be that of an open myriad, as it is always for men. In the dimension of consciousness, normal and adult humanity (excluding the world of the abnormal and of children) is privileged as a horizon of humanity and as a community of language. (Husserl, 1936/1962, p. 182)

In other words, Husserl is based on a normal and adult humanity to describe what is a tradition and how any subject (obvious: normal and adult) can resume that which others have done and, thus, assume the tradition (and be able to create one from there).

We can find another example in the third chapter of the first part of *Ideas for a pure phenomenology and a transcendental philosophy – second book* (Phenomenological Research for the constitution) (1912-1928/2004). In this chapter, Husserl seeks to describe the subjectively conditioned factors of the constitution of the thing and the constitution of the objective material thing. To this end, he repeatedly emphasizes how this constitution occurs in a normal adult under normal conditions and describes any type of anomaly, any disturbance of the body itself, as a possibility, but not as a point of reference for the constitution of the thing (Husserl, 1912-1928/2004, pp. 91-133).

Husserl therefore looks for an ideal model under the title of normality that lives in an ideal state – something that had always appeared since his first courses. For

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example, in *The Basic problems of phenomenology* (1910-1911/1991), Husserl admits that there is the possibility of disease, but it should be thought as a *possibility/exception* (or a different functioning of the body, etc.) and not as a model for reflection (Husserl, 1910-1911/1991, pp. 97-99). Thus, we may read the constitution of the ego in the phenomenology as the constitution of a normal-model-ego and a point of reference to conceive the other.

Going even further, as we find in his *Articles for the Kaizo journal* focusing on ethics (1923-1924/2014), Husserl's intention is a renewal of man: to create a "new", truly rational, man who follows a rational set of ethics, who has complete rational control of his will and that, therefore, is able to be responsible for all his actions (Husserl, 1923-1924/2014). There is no room here for any possibility other than *modeling* – an "authentic and true man" or the "man of reason", reaching the ideal limit as to the conception of perfection (Husserl, 1923-1924/2014, p. 39).

Nevertheless, we could ask ourselves: "where is the model of adulthood?" (Lacan, 1959-1960/1986, p. 34). What exactly is this model? And if it exists, would it really be interesting for us to think based on it? What would happen if we were based on a pathology (either of the child, or of the mad etc.) and not on what is considered normal?

Lacan sees a productivity in thinking based on the pathological in Freud's work. This would be a compromise:

the psychological apparatus on which Freud focuses is not the psychological apparatus as is conceived by a teacher behind a desk and in front of a blackboard, that modestly gives him a model, which comprehends everything, such as the air with which it works – it either works well or does not, it does not matter, the important thing is to have said something that seems utterly similar to that which is called reality. According to Freud, it is about the psychological apparatus of his patients, not of an ideal individual, and it is this that leads to this truly blazing fecundity that we see. (Lacan, 1955-1956/1981, p. 172)

In fact, Lacan takes it so seriously that, even in 1946, in *Formulations on psychological causality*, he literally inserts madness into human freedom:

as the risk of madness is measured by the very inclination of the identifications in which man engages at the same time as his truth and his being. Far, therefore, from madness being the contingent fact of fragility of his body, it is the permanent virtuality of a gap that opened in his essence. Far from it being 'an insult' to freedom, it is its most faithful companion, it follows its movement as a shadow. And the being of man not only cannot be comprehended without madness, but would not be the being of man if he did not bear madness as the limit of his freedom. (Lacan, 1966, p. 176)

Traditionally, in medicine, a normal subject is assumed as a reference or a standard. Any "deviation" is considered pathological – usually a deficit. What Lacan does is follow another model of thought. He clearly follows Freud here: it is necessary to study the pathologies to understand what normality would be.

Interestingly, at this moment in time, Lacan is in favor of Husserl's phenomenology. However, in this thesis of 1932, Lacan seems to point to another horizon. It would also be necessary to think about the social aspect...

The problem of the ego ideal

Lacan seeks to comprehend the personality based on intentional functions related to the *social order*. This is essential to us: why is it based on the social order?

Usually (following the enlightenment "spirit"), the personality is thought about while considering three attributes. Namely: *synthesis*, *intentionality*, and *responsibility*. That is, in the common sense, there is an identity concept of personality: one is able to synthesize one's own life story, to recognize oneself in one's past intentions, and to take responsibility for them – which tells us of a liability and of the voluntary nature of the action. Thus, a personality bears an autonomy and identity. Nevertheless, there are cases, such as psychosis, in which we question whether the subject is capable of these attributes: would he, in fact, be autonomous? And if the answer is no, why would we use such a case to think about normality?

Lacan has a strategy to seek to answer these types of questions: "the common belief about the personality, its substantiation by metaphysics, the impossibility of founding on it a rigorous scientific definition, this is the path that our exposition seeks to follow" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 35) – here reminding us of one of the central movements of phenomenology: the suspension of common sense (of the natural attitude in general). After all, what kind of presupposition does common sense have when thinking spontaneously about the belief in personality as a synthesis, intentionality, and responsibility? It is exactly this kind of question that Lacan has in mind: "what do we comprehend of an individual who, as they say, 'has a personality?'. Does this formula not mean, firstly, an autonomy of conduct, with regard to accidental influences and, at the same time, its exemplary value, that is, moral value?" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 41). We could also ask ourselves: what happens when one no longer recognizes oneself in a continuity between one's past and present? That is what the clinic can show us: no longer conceiving the subject as a succession of conscious acts, as "after some of these crises [in which one believes to be identical to oneself] we do not feel responsible for our old desires, nor for our own past, nor for our dreams, not even for our acts" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 37).

Lacan reminds here us of one of the central Freudian mottos: there is an ego ideal that guides the

subject. In other words, what is taken as a person, which synthesizes oneself, is, essentially, an *ideal – the subject is guided by an imaginary model of himself*. However, with paranoid psychosis, this ideal is put at stake.

Let us observe that the conception of an *ego ideal* is not strange to Husserl:

man qua man has ideas. But it the creation for himself and for his whole life of an ideal as this personal self is of his essence, and even a double ideal, an absolute ideal and a relative ideal, and having to put his effort in the maximum possible achievement of this ideal; he has to put it, if he is to have the right to recognize himself – in himself and in his own reason – as a rational man, as a true and authentic man. This *a priori* that lies in him creates him, therefore, in his most original form, from himself, as his *‘true self’* and his *‘best self’*. He is, in his absolute composition, the ideal of his own self living in acts that are absolutely justified in relation to himself, living only in acts to be justified absolutely. (Husserl, 1923-1924/2014, p. 42)

As observed, the ego ideal would be something that one oneself determines for oneself based on one’s self-awareness.

Here we find something new to rethink the phenomenology. If Lacan is correct, it is impossible to make a reduction to the self, as appears in the “principles of the principles” of Husserl’s phenomenology. After all, what is the meaning of the absolute consciousness or an absolute sphere of being according to Husserl?

It means that consciousness is an absolute *concrete*, that is, it is a consciousness independent of any other consciousness at least at the first moment of reduction – and only later it is necessary to “confess” that a consciousness *has always been* in an inter-subjectivity. While absolute, the consciousness is not dependent on anything that is exterior to itself, because nothing is exterior to it (this is the idea of intentionality). Hence Husserl’s difficulty to explain inter-subjectivity: how is it possible for the self to have access to another one that, supposedly, is also an absolute self? How can one think about inter-subjectivity based on a “purity of self” as it appears in these lines:

in my own spiritual sphere, am I, however, still an identical pole of my multiple pure experiences, those of my intentionality, both active and passive, and of all the habitualities that in this way have been or will be established? (Husserl, 1929/2013, p. 136).

This is why psychoanalysis might be interesting here: thinking about the ego ideal, the self, *in essence*, is constituted based on another – which will lead Lacan to affirm that *the self is another one*. In fact, this is an issue that Lacan never gave up: “‘alone, what does this mean? For a subject? Is it possible that the subject can be

alone?’” (Lacan, 1964-1965, p. 434). How could the subject be alone? How does it have a name?

Comprehend the development of the personality

It is true that, if we think based on a theory about the development of personality, it is taken more easily from the objective point of view: as something to which the subject becomes attached: an identity. By doing so, the subject develops around an ideal of self (the subject would be this ideal identity) as all acts of the subject would be recognizable. Lacan corroborates: “then the objective data make the personality a certain unity, that of a *regular and understandable development*” (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 39).

But where would this unity come from? How would it be possible for the subject to say I? Simply by self-recognition in this unity? In fact, how can one explain the subject’s intentionality and supposedly voluntary acts? According to a will that is recognized in this self?

From Lacan’s point of view, the objective analysis takes into account an image of self that is part of our experience. But then a problem arises: would not there be, therefore, a conflict between the self and the ego ideal?

Naturally, following our common sense, we would answer that no – we would say that that which we intend in an action would be exactly a reflection of that which we are. Our intentions would be a projection of our personality, as we are identical and responsible for our story. Just ask one to do something contrary to one’s personality and there would be a moral resistance: “that should not be done for this or that reason.” Clearly, there is an incorporation of an ideal of what is correct or incorrect to do. However, since Freud it is common place to show how – even though we say that this or that is absurd –, in essence, we wish to accomplish something that sometimes conflicts with our ego ideal.

According to Lacan (1932/1975), we certainly could not explain this type of conflict psycho-physiologically. His suggestion is to seek to comprehend *the development of the personality*. For example, as occurred in education, in the modes of relationship on which the subject mirrored himself to develop some kind of ideal, etc; in essence, show how the *development of the personality is a social phenomenon*.

Lacan is based on a case (paranoid psychosis). He analyzes it on three levels: based on the development of the personality; on the conception that one has/assumes of oneself; on the respective tensions in social relationships. Once again Lacan can affirm that “the economy of the pathological seems, thus, grounded on the normal structure” (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 56), as the same analysis would occur in the case of a “normal person.”

What Lacan observes in this case “is the continuation of the ideals and the personal tendencies (namely: of the intentional phenomena), before and during psychosis” (Lacan, 1932/1975, pp. 56-57). In fact, when thinking about the development of the person, in psychosis,

delirium becomes a part of personality. Lacan can then associate paranoia to a reaction of personality.

And what would be our interest in this kind of analysis – thinking about paranoia being related to personality?

One answer would be this: “these reactions [of paranoia] are characterized by their incorporation into a *comprehensible* psychological development, by their dependence on the *conception* that one has of *oneself*, of the tension associated with the relationship with the social milieu” (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 105). That is, the whole of Lacan’s analysis aims to show how the delirium in psychosis can only be comprehended according to the tensions experienced by the subject in the social order. This is why Lacan turns to one of the enthusiasts of Existentialism in Psychiatry (Karl Jaspers) to explain what is at stake here.

Jaspers (1913/1973) introduces something new in the study of psychological pathologies. He affirms that there are psychological processes that cannot be explained based on the natural sciences. These processes would lead the patient to perform a new mental synthesis or a new type of *relationship of comprehension*. In other words, in psychological processes there would be a change in the psychological life that is not followed by a (organic) disaggregation of the mental life. Therefore, there would be a general alteration of the personality and consciousness. What does that mean?

Here is Jaspers’s classic paragraph on this topic found in his *General Psychopathology*:

whereas, in the natural sciences, *only* causal connections can be found, knowledge comes to be satisfied, in Psychology, which is also in the apprehension of entirely different connections. The psychological ‘results’ from the psyche in a way that is comprehensible for us. Someone who is attacked becomes angry and practices defensive acts; someone who is deceived becomes suspicious and this production of the psychological event by another psychological event *we comprehend genetically*. Hence we comprehend the existential reactions, the development of the passions, the formation of the error; hence we comprehend the content of the dream and delirium, of the effects of suggestion; hence we comprehend an abnormal personality in its own essential connection, and comprehend the vital course of an existence; even more: the way the patient comprehends him/herself and why the way he/she comprehends him/herself becomes a factor of further psychological development. (Jasper, 1913/1973, p. 363)

Psychosis could only be explained based on the psychological processes that are comprehensible to us. These are processes that maintain certain coherence in the regular and comprehensible development of personality. Hence we read a passage such as this: “we comprehend,

we understand that as giving human sense to the conducts we observe in our patients to the mental phenomena they show us” (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 309). This is the concrete character of the new science: *a relationship of comprehension that takes the person as a whole, as something positive and organized, even in the case of paranoia*.

What interests us here is to remember how Lacan can associate diverse trends of the French thought that anticipate, in a way, what Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for example, would achieve in the *Phenomenology of perception* (1945/1967). By thinking of psychosis based on the development of the personality, Lacan clarifies the need to comprehend the concrete story of the subject in relation to the respective social tensions: “psychosis depends strictly on the subject’s story experienced, the individual character, in a word, personality” (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 267). That is, the subject’s concrete story or *narrative* as denominated by Georges Politzer (1928/1968) in his book *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology*.

The comprehension of a drama: the subject’s concrete story

It is hard to describe the extent of Politzer’s importance for the first generations of thinkers in France in the 20th century. He was the author of beside books of Georges Canguilhem, Lacan, Merleau-Ponty, etc. His ideas, revolutionary in nature, marked this generation and appeared in Lacan’s work.

However, although Politzer is clearly featured in his work, he is not mentioned in his thesis. Simanke (2002) suggests a reason for there being no mention of Politzer in this period of Lacan’s work:

even though Politzer’s name is not mentioned even once [in the 1932 thesis] – for which one can imagine many reasons, from the little goodwill of the circumspect University psychiatry towards a foreign, communist, and frankly ill-behaved author to Lacan’s already evident disregard as to clarifying his sources –, his ideas, his vocabulary, and the tone of his criticism permeates much of the Lacanian elaborations made there. (Simanke, 2002, p. 165)

Furthermore, Politzer is present and guides the comprehension of Lacan’s thesis and brings him closer to the bibliography of the French phenomenology, especially that of Merleau-Ponty (who sees no problems in mentioning Politzer). But, after all, what would Politzer’s *controversial* ideas be?

Despite the fact that Politzer’s work is extensive and that several of his ideas marked that generation (such as *The End of a Philosophical Parade: Bergsonianism* (1929)), it is his work *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology* (1928/1968) that interests us here. As its title says, it is a critique of the foundations of Psychology.

Politzer (1928/1968) highlights the importance of new psychologies such as *behaviorism* – which would have finally established a true positive science (by thinking based on the behavior); the *Gestaltheorie* – that would have severely criticized the classical psychology by reconstituting the totality of the sense and form of human actions; and, finally, what matters most to Politzer himself, the psychoanalysis of Freud – who would have, definitely, shown a new psychology.

This new psychology, psychoanalysis, would have the merit of having followed what was taken as a motto in French thought: *go towards the concrete* (a path opened by Jean Wahl and disseminated by Gabriel Marcel and by Politzer himself). Psychoanalysis would have the merit of being concrete in thinking of man's dramatic life and, especially, by thinking of it in the first person (what the subject says) and not in the third person (as if it were an impersonal subject) as traditionally occurred in classical psychology. That is, when listening to the subject's story, psychoanalysis listens to the most concrete: what is really transpiring in the life of the subject? Here is one of the passages that interest us here:

the act of the concrete individual is *life*, but the singular life of the singular, transient, individual *the life*, in the dramatic sense of the word. This singularity must be defined, it is also concrete and not from the formal point of view. The individual is singular, because his/her life is singular, and this life, itself, is not singular but for its content: thus, its singularity is not *qualitative*, but rather *dramatic*. The requirement of homogeneity and of first person will be respected if the notions of psychology remain on the plane of this 'drama': the psychological facts must be the *segments of the life of the particular individual*. (Politzer, 1928/1968, p. 51)

Therefore, the interpretation would be a privileged mode to understand this singular drama, with it being necessary to listen to the subject's story without any *a priori* theory that could guide what would be at stake in his/her discourse. In this story, Politzer denominates *narration*.

This theory deeply influences Lacan. When Politzer (1928/1968) affirms that knowledge could not be explained by the schemes in the third person, Lacan's interest in this conception of psychology is clear, as argued by Simanke:

formula [third person; first person] which cannot have escaped the attention of a theorist of psychiatry [Lacan] interested in reintroducing the reference to the subject into a reflection that is oriented towards conceptualizing the clinical facts of paranoia as 'knowledge phenomena'. (Simanke, 2002, p. 177)

In order to comprehend the subject's narrative that Lacan seeks to interpret, he also has another strategy: collecting the maximum amount of information from relatives and acquaintances of his patient so as to *reconstruct* the story of the development of the subject's personality. His objective is to show how the development of the personality is directly related to the social order. Thus he can show, for example, that there is an evolution of the delirium in relation to certain traumatic events that is associated with the person's vital conflict – a kind of fixation and systematization of the delusional ideas.

Man's own environment: the social environment

At the end of the second chapter (*The 'Aimée' case or the paranoia of self-punishment*) of his thesis, Lacan affirms:

we observe the behavior of a living organism: and this organism is a human being. As an organism it presents *total* vital reactions that – whatever its intimate mechanisms are – have a character that is *oriented* towards the harmony of the set; as it is a human being, a considerable proportion of these reactions take their *meanings* depending on the social milieu at stake in the development of the man-animal as a primordial role. These vital social functions, of direct *relationships of comprehension*, and that in the representation of the subject are polarized between the subjective ideal of self and the social judgment of the other, these are the same ones that we define as *functions of the personality*. (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 247)

Lacan affirms in this passage:

(1) that there are total reactions of the organism and that they have an orientation – something that was fundamental in Husserl's phenomenology (the relationship between the part/whole) and it was this that influenced works such as that of the *Gestaltheorie* in general, such as Kurt Goldstein, and of philosophers such as Georges Canguilhem, Merleau-Ponty, among others;

(2) that this orientation towards the whole has a meaning in the environment in which the organism lives. Here Lacan makes an unusual association between two authors: Jakob von Uexküll and Aristotle. His interest in the first is in the assertion that all organisms live in their respective environment; in the second, in insisting that *man's own environment is the social environment* – which makes it *impossible* to think of man outside social conflicts. Thus, the human environment is not only the common surrounding world, because each subject would be at the center of his own world constituted from identifications that were initially made in the family institution. It is worth quoting this passage in full – although Lacan chose to include it in a note:

a biology school of utmost importance fully elaborated this notion of the own *environment* of a given living being; the environment, defined by this doctrine, appears so connected to the specific organism that, somehow, it is part of it. We see that in our conception, here according to Aristotle, the human *environment*, in the sense given by Uexküll, would, par excellence, be the human *social* environment. It is unnecessary to emphasize how this conception is opposed to the doctrines, apropos, ruined, from the 18th-century individualist anthropology and, particularly, to a conception such as that of Rousseau's 'Social contract' in which the deeply erroneous character reveals the paranoid mental structure particular of the author more directly. (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 337)

(3) that the reactions that are aimed at an orientation in the human environment (social) have a meaning; they are part of a relationship of comprehension;

(4) and that, for having a sense in a social environment – this environment that is man's own – it is related to an ideal of self and to the judgment of the others.

This passage is crucial to us because it shows us how it would be improbable to think about man in isolation if we are to think about him concretely, and not only his life story, but also in a determined social environment – psychoanalysis would provide us this with means of comprehension.

Apprehending this new discipline, there seems to be some suspicion of the conscious character of any intentionality, since, as Lacan proposes, at this time, that there is also an *objective* value in nonconscious conducts, as in dreams – something that phenomenology generally ignored. That is why we are interested in the case that Lacan exposes: there is a self-punishment mechanism in Aimée that could not be explained by the intentionality of consciousness. There seems to be something that could not be comprehended by the description of the acts of consciousness.

Moreover, Lacan insists that this "something" that leads Aimée to act in one way or another disregards a social character that is hard to explain based on a monadological intersubjectivity: why does she perform self-punishment? Lacan's answer is: "these mechanisms have a social genesis, and this is what is expressed by the term *self-punishment* through which we designate it, or that of a *feeling of culpability* that represents the subjective attitude" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 251). It is as if it is stated that it is only by taking man's environment into account that we can comprehend this symptom. *The premise is not to "isolate" an I, in a reduction, but start from a "we" to understand what would be the "I."*

Lacan proposes that the *personality phenomena* have an origin and a social significance. These are the phenomena that can explain the *sense* of Aimée's delirium. This becomes clear when Lacan (1932/1975) names his subtitle of chapter 4 from part II: "That conceiving these

self-punishing mechanisms according to the Freudian theory as a certain evolutionary fixation of the psychic energy called libido, we realize the most evident clinical relations of the subject's personality" (p. 254).

In other words, there is a psychic energy, a libido, which pervades the subject. He is affirming that dealing with this energy is part of the comprehension of what having a personality is. He is announcing, through Freud's voice, that *there is something that cannot be explained only in terms of intentionality*.

It is certain that Husserl had already conceived of the idea of a personality, more exactly to show its conscious character. A personality would be a sort of style, of identity in the decisions in which we recognize ourselves in them – something that makes one feel identical to oneself in the flow of one's life. Hence Husserl speaks of a personality and a style:

While, from the own active genesis, the self is constituted as an identical substrate of permanent egoic properties, it is also constituted, subsequently, as a *stable* and *permanent* personal-self [Following this, the self would be] a permanent style, with a pervading unit of identity, which shows a *personal character*. (Husserl, 1929/2013, pp. 105-106)

Lacan suspects that this personality could not be thought of in isolation. It is true that we must take into account the individuality and its structure; but it is also true that there is a social pole:

Effectively, we define an order of phenomena by their humanly *comprehensible* essence – that is, by a social character whose genesis, that is social itself (mental laws of participation), explains the existence in fact. However, these phenomena have, on the one hand, the value of phenomenologically given *structures* (*typical* moments of the historical *development* and of the dialectics of intention); on the other hand, they stand out for a specificity that is only *individual* (*unique* moments of the individual *story* and *intention*). These three poles – the *individual*, the *structural*, and the *social* – are the three points from which we can observe the phenomenon of personality. (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 313)

By thinking on these poles, in fact, Lacan believes himself to be approaching Husserl. He affirms, for example, when describing what the structure pole would be, that "the point of view of the *structure* in the personality phenomenon takes us, immediately, to the metaphysical consideration of essences or, at least, to the phenomenological *Aufhaltung* of the Husserlian method. It is in itself strange to the *existential* determinism that defines every science" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 313). Furthermore, we observe how Lacan believes, in this

first moment, himself to be close to the Husserlian phenomenological method.

However, the social pole seems to have such relevance in comprehending the personality that it seems to go against phenomenology: not founded on a pure self, but on a self that is, above all, social. Hence, the social pole is therefore so fundamental in order to comprehend the personality. A concrete science would be that which assumes the social as a fact:

the *social* point of view, in the personality phenomenon, provides us, on the contrary, with a double scientific assumption: in the mental structures of comprehension that it engenders in fact, it provides a communicable *conceptual armor*; in its phenomenal interactions that it presents, it provides *facts* that have *measurable* properties, because they are moving, they are extensively measurable. These are the two essential conditions to every science, and therefore to every science of personality. (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 313)

This is a concrete science according to Lacan: a science that assumes the subject as a whole in his environment (both pulsional and social). This would be Lacan's "phenomenological" mode of thinking regarding the subject: "this science, according to our definition of the personality, has for an object the *genetic* study of the *intentional* functions that integrate human relationships of *social order*" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 315).

We found something similar in reading *Beyond the Reality Principle*. It is curious in this text from 1936 that Lacan is based on what he calls a phenomenological analysis to criticize the associationism, the atomism, etc. in the psychological theories of his time. Thus he seeks to show a metaphysics hidden in the lines of psychologists and even affirms that: "this excludes them from the framework of an authentic psychology, which knows that a certain intentionality is phenomenologically inherent in its object" (Lacan, 1966, p. 78).

However, Lacan also resorts to psychoanalysis in this text. In doing so, he "shuffles" from his starting point, because it is no longer a phenomenology, at least in the "classic framework" that we inherited from Husserl. He describes what, in his view, is the revolution of the Freudian method – as if affirming that the phenomenological analysis helped us to criticize classical psychology, but that the Freudian revolution was necessary so we would create, in fact, another way of thinking: *that every psychic phenomena has a relationship with the function of the social relationships*. If this is true, as Husserl sometimes flirtingly affirms, a transcendental reduction would never be possible: a complete reduction of the world to a transcendental consciousness, achieving a sort of voice of the monadological consciousness.

On the other hand, following the Freudian revolution, we could not affirm that there is a soliloquy of the consciousness. Essentially, every psychological

phenomena, as much as it appears to be a soliloquy, is always a social phenomenon, *it always address to the other*. At this moment Lacan announces that psychoanalysis, thinking on this addressing to the other, even if unconscious, could teach something to any theory of the consciousness (Lacan, 1966, p. 83).

Even so, Lacan says he is complementing the phenomenology: "we can say that it [the phenomenology of the personality] is the philosophical complement of positive science, a complement that is so much more useful that, by ignoring this domain, we create a risk in these delicate matters of introduction ... of serious methodical confusions" (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 315). In my view, this is not a complement, but a critical proposal that goes beyond the phenomenology.

Lacan does that which Martin Heidegger feared: a fashion! Since 1923, the philosopher said to his students that:

the phenomenological research, which should be the base of scientific work, merges with thoughtlessness and speed, turning into current philosophical fashion, a clamorous fashion, being a public scandal of philosophy. The scholastic tradition makes it impossible to come to grips with this. The circle of George, Keyserling, anthroposophy, Steiner, etc. – everything seems to have something to do with the phenomenology. The extent to which this reached is demonstrated in a recently published book: *On the phenomenology of Mysticism*, published by a recognized publisher and with sponsorship of the most authorized. It is worthwhile to state a warning here in this regard. (Heidegger, 1929/2013, p. 81)

Heidegger warns of a certain "ism." The phenomenology is not a "phenomenologism." What was proposed by Husserl is the phenomenology – and that means *transcendental phenomenology*. Following Heidegger's notations (1929/2013) on Husserl, it would be impossible for there to be a personality phenomenology, as was proposed by Lacan.

However, the interesting aspect in having some "isms" is exactly that we can think differently, that we can *stimulate the thought*. Lacan seems to propose this. Let us see, for example, this passage:

the paranoid psychosis of self-punishment, in fact, does not only reveal its value of personality phenomenon for its coherent development with the subject's story as lived, [but also] its character of expression that is at the same time conscious (delirium) and unconscious (self-punishing tendency) of the *ideal of self*, and its dependence on psychological tensions that are particular to *social relationships* (tensions translated immediately both in the symptoms and contents of the delirium and in its etiology and its reactionary outlet). (Lacan, 1932/1975, pp. 316-317)

What is incredible in this passage is how Lacan associates consciousness to a delirium. *This suggests that a philosophy of the consciousness would, somehow, be in the sphere of delirium.* And the unconscious would be something directed or influenced not by consciousness, but by an ideal – something that leads us to think that an image (something to which I project myself) tells us about the possible modes of socialization...

A blind spot: narcissism

What is a person, after all, in the eyes of Lacan?

According to Lacan, a person can only be comprehended by considering his or her individual story, structure, pulsions, and the situations that translate social behavior. But something seems to be left out in this comprehension. In fact, the left out item is one of the blind spots of psychoanalysis: *narcissism*. As we know, this was one of Freud's most controversial concepts, since Jung's criticism of Freud was never fully answered. In this regard,

narcissism is in fact presented in the economy of the psychoanalytic doctrine as a *terra incognita*, which the research means from the study of neuroses enabled delimiting in regards to its borders, but that in its interior remains mystical and unknown (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 322).

This “terra incognita” warns us that there is something that has not yet been unveiled. Something that Lacan sees through the eyes of Espinosa:

we mean by this that the *determining conflicts*, the *intentional symptoms*, and the *pulsional reactions* of a psychosis disagree with the *relationships of comprehension*, which define the development, the conceptual structures, and the social tensions of the normal personality, according to a measure that determines the *story* of the subject's affections. (Lacan, 1932/1975, p. 343)

For purposes of having a horizon of thought, let us remember one of Lacan's texts from 1948 (*Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis*). Regarding our theme, it is interesting that in that study his thesis IV is announced as follows: “aggressivity is the correlative tendency of a mode of identification we call narcissism and that determines the formal structure of man's self and of the apprehension of characteristic entities of his world” (Lacan, 1966, p. 110). In fact, Lacan announces in this thesis that there is something in psychoanalysis that eludes the phenomenology: “now going from the subjectivity of the intention to the notion of a tendency to aggression is leaping from the phenomenology of our experience to metapsychology” (Lacan, 1966, p. 110). That is, it is only by focusing on Freudian metapsychology that we could comprehend aggressivity – this specific mode of identification with an image.

Lacan seeks to develop this *terra incognita* by affirming that there is a sphere of human knowledge that is *totally projective* (as the subject is unaware, in the projection, of the identification with the social values that make him what he is). That is, a form of projective-imaginary knowledge that has the same structure of paranoia. Let us note that this is to say that there is something paranoid in the form of human knowledge in general (Lacan, 1966, p. 111). His thesis is that man attributes, projects a reality to images doing in the same as delusional people in relation to their beliefs in their hallucinatory formations. A type of formulation that makes a paranoia of the center of human reality, as if it were immanent to it.

Following this reasoning, we could understand the reason why Lacan will affirm in 1975 the reason behind his strong resistance against republishing his 1932 thesis: “because the paranoid psychosis and the personality have no relationship due to the simple reason that they are the same thing” (Lacan, 1975-1976/2005, p. 53). This sentence is confusing because it indicates how Lacan radicalizes the configuration of the relationship between the normal and the pathological.

Perhaps this is one of the crucial moments in which to comprehend Lacan, since his thesis from 1932 goes against the phenomenology and opens a space to rethink it: in seeking the genesis of the self, Lacan can show us *something unthought-of in phenomenology* – in the Husserlian phenomenology at least, as it is always conceived based on a normal adult. Conversely, Lacan seeks to think based on what is considered mad, in the child, on what is said to be “primitive” etc.

What Lacan proposes is that *the self is formed from an identification with the image of the other*. A formation that has the same paranoid structure of projection – which leads us to think that the social bonds would be in a sphere in which the identification between the subjects would be guided by idealized images, marked by a logic that is particular of the imagination, of projections and introjections: that which is known as *narcissism*. Hence the reason why Lacan uses this phrase by Rimbaud as a central operation in his reflection: *Je est un autre* – something that would have decentered our way of thinking. We could summarize it in these words: “in every narcissistic relation, indeed, the I [*moi*] is the other and the other is I [*moi*]” (Lacan, 1954-1955/1978, p. 120).

Years later, Lacan would formalize it in his famous text *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I* (1966) seeking to describe the function of the I in the psychoanalytic experience. From the first paragraph he affirms that this is an “experiment in which it must be said that it [this theory on the mirror stage] opposes us to every philosophy directly arisen from the *Cogito*” (Lacan, 1966, p. 93). In other words, Lacan goes against any philosophy that thinks that it is possible to isolate a “pure I,” in solitude, in a soliloquy. In addition to being addressed to Jean-Paul Sartre, this passage is also critical to the phenomenology in general if thought of as a philosophy of

the consciousness. Let us recall, for example, this passage in which Husserl affirms that the real phenomenology is egological (*Phenomenology and Anthropology* (1931)):

a new step that is more important now: it is not in vain that I emphasize “this ego”. Upon reaching this point, I notice that a *true revolution* is produced with my philosophizing ego. . . . Thanks to this epoch, *human loneliness* is radically transformed, turned into *transcendental loneliness*, loneliness of the ego. Qua ego, I am not for myself the man in the existing world, but the I that brings the world into question as to its being and its being-such, or the I that, persisting in living the universal experience, puts the ontological validity in parentheses. (Husserl, 1931/1993, pp. 63-64)

Thus, Lacan’s thesis is opposed to *every philosophy of the consciousness* that follows the Cartesian tradition, since a philosophy arisen from the *Cogito* would not easily accept the thesis that “the I is another;” that *the I has a constitutive dependence in relation to the other*.

We could, apropos, recall this passage from Lacan, which is not directed to the phenomenology, but to the current belief in the autonomy of self (of the individual and of the social):

this conviction [of autonomy] transcends the individual naivety of the subject who believes in himself, who believes that he is himself – a quite common madness and which is not a complete madness, as it is part of the order of beliefs. Evidently, we tend to believe that we are ourselves. But we are not safer than that, look at it closely. In many circumstances, very precisely, we doubt, and without suffering, for such, any depersonalization. Therefore, it is not only to that naive belief that we want to re-conduct ourselves. This is a phenomenon that is actually sociological

which concerns the analysis as a technique or, if you will, ceremonial, sacerdotal, determined in a certain social context. (Lacan, 1954-1955/1978, p. 20)

Let us take Husserl as an example again. In *Ideas II...*, in a subparagraph in which he reflects on the “foreign influences and the freedom of the person”, he comes to the following conclusion:

the autonomy of reason, the ‘freedom’ of the subject as a person, consists, therefore, in that which I do not allow passively to the strange influences, but that, rather, I decide for myself. Moreover, in that which I do not let myself be ‘dragged’ by other inclinations, by other pulsions, but that I act freely and rationally. (Husserl, 1912-1928/2004, p. 364)

On the other hand, what Lacan wants to show us is that *the I is unaware of his own genesis and acts according to a projection of an image of himself in the world* – which will lead Lacan to affirm in 1955 (in *Seminar II – The Ego [moi] in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*) that “the image of his body is the principle of every unity he perceives in objects” (Lacan, 1954-1955/1978, p. 198). It is interesting to observe here that the ego is not something given, but is a unique acquisition during child development.

Considering again that passage from Heidegger in which he warns his students concerning the “isms,” perhaps the “isms” are not always counterproductive. They, sometimes, force us to think and, often, force us to rethink... Lacan’s thesis from 1932 grants us the possibility of rethinking some central points of the Husserlian phenomenology.

The possibility of madness does not seem to be an issue for Husserl. I “simply” have to think that this possibility is erased. But does a madman not think? Would the thought be unthinkable without the possibility of its maddening?

Inclusão da loucura no pensar: um diálogo possível entre Lacan e a fenomenologia husserliana

Resumo: Por que pensar a loucura teria algum sentido na filosofia? A tese de Jacques Lacan de 1932 nos dá uma dica. Pois o autor se volta a um caso de paranoia e esboça algumas críticas à fenomenologia husserliana. A aposta desse texto é tentar mostrar que a reflexão sobre o que é dito enquanto anormal pode abrir um espaço para repensar a fenomenologia husserliana.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise, fenomenologia, personalidade, narcisismo.

L’inclusion de la folie dans la pensée : un dialogue possible de Lacan avec la phénoménologie de Husserl

Résumé: Pourquoi penser que la folie peut être intéressant à la philosophie ? La thèse de Jacques Lacan de 1932 nous donne des pistes, parce que Lacan travaille dans un cas de paranoia et essaye quelques critiques sur la phénoménologie husserlienne. Ce texte veut montrer que ce qu’est dit anormal peut ouvrir un espace à repenser la phénoménologie husserlienne.

Mots-clés: psychanalyse, phénoménologie, personnalité, narcissisme.

Inclusión de la locura en el pensar: un posible diálogo entre Lacan y la fenomenología husserliana

Resumen: ¿Por qué pensar la locura tendría algún sentido en la filosofía? La tesis de Jacques Lacan, del año 1932, nos ofrece una indicación. Ya que el autor se vuelca en un caso de paranoia y esboza algunas críticas a la fenomenología husserliana. La apuesta de este texto consiste en tratar de mostrar que la reflexión acerca de lo que se entiende como anormal puede abrir un espacio para repensar la fenomenología husserliana.

Palabras clave: psicoanálisis, fenomenología, personalidad, narcisismo.

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