

## Schizo chaosmosis

“Normality” in the light of *délire*, technical logic in the light of Freudian primary processes — a *pas de deux* towards chaos in the attempt to delineate a subjectivity far from dominant equilibria, to capture its virtual lines of singularity, emergence and renewal — eternal Dionysian return or paradoxical Copernican inversion to be prolonged by an animist revival? At the very least an originary fantasm of a modernity constantly under scrutiny and without hope of postmodern remission. It’s always the same aporia: madness enclosed in its strangeness, reified in alterity beyond return, nevertheless inhabits our ordinary, bland apprehension of the world. But we must go further: chaotic vertigo, which finds one of its privileged expressions in madness, is constitutive of the foundational intentionality of the subject-object relation. Psychosis starkly reveals an essential source of being-in-the-world.

What takes precedence, in fact, in the mode of being of psychosis — but also, according to other modalities, in the “emergent self” of infancy (Daniel Stern) or in aesthetic creation — is the irruption, at the forefront of the subjective scene, of a real “anterior” to discursivity; a real whose pathic consistency liter-

ally leaps at your throat. Must we think of this real as fixed, petrified and rendered catatonic by a pathological accident, or that it was in fact there for all time — past and future — awaiting the activation of a presumed symbolic castration as the sanction of foreclosure? Perhaps it is necessary to straddle these two perspectives: it was already there as an open virtual reference, and it arises correlatively as a production *sui generis* of a singular event.

Structuralists were too hasty in positioning the Real of psychosis topically in relation to the Imaginary of neurosis and the Symbolic of normality. What did they achieve? In erecting universal mathemes of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic — considered as a unity each for themselves — they reified and reduced the complexity of what was at stake, the crystallisation of real-virtual Universes assembled from a multiplicity of imaginary Territories and semiotised in the most diverse ways. The real complexions, for example, those of everyday life, dreams, passion, délire, depression and aesthetic experience do not all have the same ontological colour. What is more, they are not passively endured, nor mechanically articulated or dialectically triangulated to other instances. Once certain thresholds of autopoietic consistency have been crossed, these real complexions start to work for themselves, constituting nuclei of partial subjectivation. Note that their expressive instruments (of semiotisation, encoding, catalysis, moulding, resonance, identification) cannot be reduced to a single signifying economy. The practice of institutional psychotherapy has taught us the diversity of modalities of agglomeration of these multiple, real or virtual stases: those of the body and the soma, the self and other, lived space and temporal refrains, the family socius and the socius artificially elaborated so as to open up other fields of the possible, those of psychotherapeutic transference or even those immaterial Universes relating to music, plastic forms, animal

becomings, vegetal becomings, machinic becomings....

The complexions of the psychotic real, in their clinical emergence, constitute a privileged exploratory path for other ontological modes of production in that they disclose aspects of excess and limit experiences. Psychosis thus not only haunts neurosis and perversion but also all the forms of normality. Psychotic pathology is specific in that for  $x$  reasons the expected toings-and-froings and the "normal" polyphonic relations between the different modes of bringing into being of subjective enunciation see their heterogeneity compromised by repetition — the exclusive insistence of an existential stasis that I describe as chaotic and which is capable of assuming all the hues of a schizo-paranoiac-manic-epileptoid, etc., spectrum. Everywhere else this stasis is only apprehended by way of avoidance, displacement, misrecognition, distortion, overdetermination, ritualisation.... In these conditions, psychosis could be defined as a hypnosis of the real. Here a sense of being-in-itself is established before any discursive scheme, uniquely positioned across an intensive continuum whose distinctive traits are not perceptible by an apparatus of representation but by a pathic, existential absorption, a pre-egoic, pre-identificatory agglomeration. As long as the schizophrenic is installed at the centre of this gaping and chaotic opening, paranoiac délire manifests an unbounded will to take possession of it. For their part, passional délires (Sérieux, Capgras and de Clérambault) would display a grasping intentionality in a less closed, more processual chaosmosis. The perversions already involve the signifying recomposition of poles of alterity which are bestowed from the outside with the power to incarnate controlled chaosmosis, teleguided by fantasmatic scenarios. As for neurotics, they present all the variants of avoidance evoked above, beginning with the simplest and most reifying, that of phobia, followed by hysteria, which forges from them substitutes in social space and the

body, ending with obsessional neurosis which, for its part, secretes a perpetual temporal “différance” (Derrida), an indefinite procrastination.

This theme of chaomic immanence and these nosographic variations need to be developed; I have only introduced them here in order to suggest the idea that the ontological apprehension belonging to psychosis is in no way synonymous with simple chaotic degradation, with a trivial increase in entropy. It would be a matter of reconciling chaos and complexity. (It is to Freud’s credit that he showed the way in the *Traumdeutung*.) Why describe the homogenesis of ontological referents — and, by extension, the latent homogenesis of other modalities of subjectivation — as chaotic? It’s because, all things considered, worlding a complexion of sense always involves taking hold of a massive and immediate ensemble of contextual diversity, a fusion in an undifferentiated, or rather de-differentiated, whole. A world is only constituted on the condition of being inhabited by an umbilical point — deconstructive, detotalising and deterritorialising — from which a subjective positionality embodies itself. The effects of such a nucleus of chaosmosis is to make the ensemble of differential terms (distinctive oppositions, the poles of discursivity) the object of a generalised connectivity, an indifferent mutability, a systematic dequalification. At the same time, this vacuole of decompression is an autopoietic node on which existential Territories and Incorporeal Universes of reference constantly reaffirm and entangle themselves, demanding and developing consistency. This oscillation at infinite speed between a state of chaotic “grasping” and the deployment of complexions anchored within worldly coordinates takes place before space and time, before the processes of spatialisation and temporalisation. Formations of sense and states of things are thus chaotised in the very movement of the

bringing into existence of their complexity. At the source of a world's constitution there is always a certain modality of chaotic discomfort in its organicity, functionality and relations of alterity.

Unlike Freudian metapsychology, we are not going to oppose two antagonistic drives, of life and death, complexity and chaos. The most originary, objectal intentionality defines itself against a background of chaosmosis. And chaos is not pure indifferenciation; it possesses a specific ontological texture. It is inhabited by virtual entities and modalities of alterity which have nothing universal about them. It is not therefore Being in general which irrupts in the chaosmic experience of psychosis, or in the pathic relationship one can enter into with it, but a signed and dated event, marking a destiny, inflecting previously stratified significations. After such a process of dequalification and ontological homogenesis, nothing will be like it was before. But the event is inseparable from the texture of the being brought to light. This is what the psychotic aura attests to when a feeling of catastrophe about the end of the world (François Tosquelles) is associated with an overwhelming feeling of imminent redemption of every possibility or, in other words, the alarming oscillation between a proliferating complexity of sense and total vacuity, a hopeless dereliction of existential chaosmosis.

In the pathic apprehension of délire, dreams and passion, it is essential to realise that the ontological petrification, the existential freezing of the heterogenesis of beings which manifest themselves there according to particular styles, is always latent in other modalities of subjectivation. It is like a freeze-frame which both indicates its basic (or bass) position in the polyphony of chaosmic components, and intensifies its power relative to them. Thus it does not constitute a degree zero of subjectiva-

tion, a neutral, passive, deficient, negative point, but an extreme degree of intensification. It is in passing through this chaotic "earthing," this perilous oscillation, that something else becomes possible, that ontological bifurcations and the emergence of coefficients of processual creativity can occur. The fact that the psychotic patient is incapable of a heterogenetic re-establishment does not in itself obviate the richness of ontological experimentation with which he is confronted despite himself. This is why delirious narrativity, as a discursive power finalised by the crystallisation of a Universe of reference or a non-discursive substance, constitutes the paradigm for the construction and reconstruction of mythical, mystical, aesthetic, even scientific, worlds. The existence of chaosmic stases is certainly not the privilege of psychopathology. Their presence can be detected in philosophy — in Pascal or even the most rationalist authors. The Cartesian sequence of generalised doubt — which precedes an encounter of the utmost urgency with the Cogito, to be succeeded by the reunion with God and *the refoundation of the world* — is akin to this schizo-chaotic reduction: the fact that complexity and alterity are tempted (by the evil demon) to throw in the towel confers on subjectivity the supplementary power of escaping from spatio-temporal coordinates which are otherwise reinforced. More generally, we can see that a collapsus of sense will always be associated with the promotion of a-signifying links of discursivity dedicated to the ontological weaving of an auto-consistent world. The event-centred rupture thus happens at the heart of being and it is from there that it is able to generate new ontological mutations. Distinctive oppositions, syntaxes and semantics relating to codes, signals and signifiers, pursue their rounds — but to the side of their strata of origin. As in *délire*, signal-systems and semiotics take off. Schizo chaosmosis is a means for the apprehension of abstract machines which work transversally to het-

erogeneous strata. The passage through chaosmic homogenesis, which can be a path to complexual heterogenesis (but this is never mechanically or dialectically guaranteed), does not constitute a translucent, indifferent zone of being, but an intolerable nucleus of ontological creationism.

By dismantling the ontological heterogenesis which confers its diversity to the world and its distraction (in Pascal's sense) to subjectivity, schizo homogenesis exacerbates the transversal power of chaosmosis, its ability to traverse strata and break through barriers. Whence the frequently observed capacity of many schizophrenics to reveal, as if by accident, the best guarded intentions of their interlocutors, to somehow read the Unconscious like an open book. Complexity released from its signifying, discursive constraints is embodied in mute, immobile and stupefying, abstract machinic dances. We should be wary of the simplifying and reifying use of categories such as autism and dissociation to describe schizo strangeness, the loss of vital feeling for depression, glischrogeny for epilepsy.... Rather than global and standard deficit alterations of normal subjectivity, we are actually dealing with modalities of autoalterity that are at once plural and singular. I is an other, a multiplicity of others, embodied at the intersection of partial components of enunciation, breaching on all sides individuated identity and the organised body. The cursor of chaosmosis never stops oscillating between these diverse enunciative nuclei — not in order to totalise them, synthesise them in a transcendent self, but in spite of everything, to make a world of them. So we are in the presence of two types of homogenesis: a normal and/or neurotic homogenesis, which stops itself from going too far and for too long into a chaosmic, schizo type of reduction; and an extreme pathic-pathological homogenesis leading to a positioning point of worldly complexions, where not only do components of sensibility (fixed in a time and a

space) and those of affectivity and cognition find themselves conjoined, but also axiological, ethical and aesthetic "charges" as well. On the passive side of schizo ontology we thus find a reductive homogenesis, a loss of colour, flavour and timbre in Universes of reference, but on the active side we find an emergent alterification relieved of the mimetic barriers of the self. Being is affirmed as the responsibility of the other (Levinas) when nuclei of partial subjectivation are constituted in absorption or adsorption with the autonomy and autopoiesis of creative processes.

The point of this is certainly not to make the schizo a hero of the postmodern and above all not to underestimate the weight of systemic components (organic, somatic, imaginary, familial, social) within the psychotic process, but to indicate the effects of inter-componential inhibitions which lead to a stand-off with chaosmic immanence. Social stratifications are set up in a way that avoids, so far as possible, the disquieting strangeness generated by a too marked fixation on chaosmosis. We have to move quickly, we mustn't linger on something that might bog us down: madness, pain, death, drugs, the vertigo of the body without organs, extreme passion.... Of course, all these aspects of existence are the object of a functional awareness by the dominant socius but always as the correlative of an active misrecognition of their chaosmic dimension. The reactive approach to chaosmosis secretes an imaginary of eternity, particularly through the mass media, which misses its essential dimension of finitude: the facticity of being-there, without qualities, without past, without future, in absolute dereliction and yet still a virtual nucleus of complexity without bounds. The eternity of a profoundly infantile adult world that must be opposed to the hyper-lucidity of the child in solitary meditation on the cosmos, or the becoming-child of poetry, music and mystical experience. Only when chaosmosis congeals, implodes

in an abyss of despair, depression and mental derailing — rather than revitalising complexions of alterity and rekindling processes of semiotisation — must we of course pose questions about a recomposition of existential Territories, “grafts of transference,” dialogic relays and the invention of all kinds of social welfare and institutional pragmatics. Not a heroism then of psychosis but, on the contrary, an unindulgent indexation of the chaosmic body it carries to incandescence and whose bruised wrecks are today eaten away by chemotherapy — now that it has ceased being cultivated in the traditional Asylum, like so many monstrous flowers.

The delirious primary pulverisation or the grand narrative constructions of paranoia, the unstable paths healing the intrusion of the absolute, cannot be put on the same level as those well socialised systems of defence such as games, sports, the manias supported by the media, racist phobias.... However, their mixture is the daily bread of institutional psychotherapy and schizoanalyses.

It is thus equally from a hotchpotch of banalities, prejudices, stereotypes, absurd situations — a whole free association of everyday life — that we have to extricate, once and for all, these Z or Zen points of chaosmosis, which can only be discovered in nonsense, through the lapsus, symptoms, aporias, the acting out of somatic scenes, familial theatricalism, or institutional structures. This, I repeat, stems from the fact that chaosmosis is not exclusive to the individuated psyche. We are confronted by it in group life, in economic relations, machinism (for example, informatics) and even in the incorporeal Universes of art or religion. In each case, it calls for the reconstruction of an operational narrativity, that is, functioning beyond information and communication, like an existential crystallisation of ontological heterogenesis. The fact that the

production of a new real-other-virtual complex ion always results from a rupture of sense, a short circuiting of significations, the manifestation of non-redundant repetition, auto-affirmative of its own consistency and the promotion of partial non-“identifiable” nuclei of alterity — which escape identification — condemns the therapist and mental health worker to an essentially ethical duplicity. On one hand they work in the register of a heterogenesis of bits and pieces in order to remodel existential Territories, to forge transitory semiotic components between blocks of immanence in the process of petrification.... And on the other they can only claim pathetic access to the chaomic thing — within psychosis and the institution — to the extent that they in one way or another recreate and reinvent themselves as bodies without organs receptive to non-discursive intensities. Their potential conquests of supplementary coefficients of heterogenetic liberty, their access to mutant Universes of reference and their entrance into renewed registers of alterity, depend on their own submersion in homogenetic immanence.

Nosographic categories, psychiatric and psychoanalytic cartographies, necessarily betray the chaomic texture of psychotic transference. They constitute so many languages, modelisations among others — of *délire*, the novel, the television serial — which cannot aspire to any epistemological preeminence. Nothing more but nothing less! Which is perhaps already a lot, because they themselves embody roles, points of view and submissive behaviour, and even, why not, liberating processes. Who speaks the truth? This is no longer the question; but how, and under what conditions can the best bring about the pragmatics of incorporeal events that will recompose a world and reinstall processual complexity? The idiosyncratic modelisations grafted onto one-to-one analysis, self-analysis and group

psychotherapy ... always resort to borrowing from specialised languages. Our problematic of chaosmosis and the schizoanalytic escape from the prison of signification is directed — to compensate for these borrowings — towards a necessary a-signifying deconstruction of their discursivity and towards placing their ontological efficacy into a pragmatic perspective.