

**‘THE HUMAN REMAINS TO BE DISCOVERED’
AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLY APOLLON¹**

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AM: The topic of this issue is Freud’s Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. I’d like to stay close to the topic of mass psychology, both in Freud’s text and in terms of our contemporary situation but thought we might start on a more general note. You’ve indicated in your work that a series of factors impose the necessity of a rereading of Freud’s trajectory as well as a reconsideration of his metapsychology. Such a task, which you’ve pursued over the last several decades, unfolds in the wake of Lacan and the theoretical and clinical advances that were accomplished in his work, but also seeks to move beyond where Lacan left off, or at least to take things up from a different angle. In particular, you reference the clinic of psychosis, on the one hand, and the nature of the historical period that we’re living in, what you refer to by way of the term mondialisation², on the other, as the two primary factors that compel the ongoing renewal of psychoanalysis. I wonder if we could start with the first of these two

1. Interview conducted and translated by Alexander Miller. Edited for clarity and length.

2. *Mondialisation* is to be distinguished, for Apollon, from *globalisation*, which evidently makes translating it into English as globalization impossible.

topics, the clinic of psychosis. Can you begin by telling us something as to how or why it is that the sustained encounter with the psychotic subject has necessitated a reconsideration and reformulation of Freudian metapsychology? What is it in particular that the work with psychosis makes clear that a psychoanalysis based on the clinic of neurosis doesn't have access to?

WA: It's important to be clear from the start: I am Freudian, I am Lacanian. What I say is simply that today we are in a different context, a context that Lacan never saw, and that Freud couldn't even have imagined. This is what's at stake in the question of metapsychology today. What's at stake in psychosis in particular wasn't really accessible in the cultural context of Freud, nor was it truly approachable in the civilizational context of Lacan. You notice that when I speak of Freud, I speak of culture, and when I speak of Lacan, I speak of civilization. For us, psychosis is a reaction of a subject who takes note of the insufficiency of what any given civilization proposes concerning the human. There is, in the case of the psychotic subject, an experience that gives him or her a sentiment of the human for which they do not find a space within civilization.

In the 1990's, when I was putting in place a metapsychology that could found a true clinic of psychosis, the concept that I advanced was 'the defect of language (*le défaut du langage*).' What I want to underline with this concept is that the human being has the experience – beginning in adolescence especially – of a dimension to which nothing in language (*le langage*) corresponds. There is an entire dimension of human experience for which the means afforded by language cannot possibly account. What I'm referring to as language, however, is not *la langue* but the structure of the social link. For us, the function of language is to organize companionship. Language supposes a moment in the history of *homo sapiens* in which we're no longer living in groups of 15-20, but rather, in order to survive, begin living in groups of 500 and more. It's at this moment that humanity creates language. Scientists place that moment at about 50,000 years ago. When I speak about language, I'm referring to this, this structuration of the social link, of companionship. At the moment at which humanity creates language, humanity had already existed and had already been creating what it needed to survive for well more than 100,000 years. What I refer to as the human quest, that which truly pushes the human, had already existed and had already taken all sorts of forms. It precedes

language, but also creates language as the constitutive structure of the social link.

What needs to be recognized is what the stakes of language were for the collectivities that were then forming. In order to create a social link, companionship, the individual has to be controlled. What emerges in the individual and expresses this quest that pushes humanity forward has to be controlled. The collective will exercise this control over the individual by way of culture. More specifically, it's at the moment of puberty that what I refer to as a censorship of the feminine is realized, in order to grant primacy to the maternal over the feminine. The stakes of it are simple. Every human being passes through the stomach of a woman. The question of knowing who can establish a relation with a woman becomes a question that a collective cannot leave to the liberty of the individual.

AM: To some extent, this is the terrain of Totem and Taboo, the genesis of social organization, and also of course of an aspect of the work of Lévi-Strauss – in both cases, the question of exogamy and the symbolic systems that assure it. But for you this is primarily a clinical concern, not a question of ethnology, is it not?

WA: Of course. What one has to see is how this operation in which the culture takes hold of each member of the collective unfolds. At the heart of this cultural challenge, I place what I refer to as the cultural montage of the sexual, which entails the censoring of the feminine, in the man first and then in the woman. From the point of view of the culture, what's at stake is that a man views a woman as a potential mother first and foremost, which makes it so that the man's relation to the orgasm takes priority over any feminine address. On that basis, it matters little what a woman can anticipate in terms of *jouissance*; the immune function of pleasure in the man will define the limits and the stakes of a so-called sexual relation within the framework of the receivable.

It's important to take things from this angle in order to get out of the confusion we have today between culture and civilization, which appeared at different times in our history, culture first, and then civilizations. Civilization has a fundamental function that is intentionally obscured. It defines what can be said, what can be the object of an address to the other. So doing, it assures the credibility of

the values and beliefs that found the norms from which cultural rules and interdictions derive. The culture operates primarily by way of the montage of the sexual, which defines puberty, with the function of submitting the new member of the collective to the norms and the limits of receivability within the culture. What has to be radically distinguished from this operation and its effects is the experience of adolescence, which is, very precisely, the discovery of a dimension within the individual that transcends the cultural montage as well as the civilization.

An opening onto this dimension profoundly changes our approach to the question of unconscious desire. To return to your first question, it's a perspective that isn't perceived within the clinic of neurosis – that the object of unconscious desire transcends the cultural field as well as the problematics of the civilization – but it's what the adolescent, psychotic or not, experiences. And it's what *mondialisation* confronts us with today. *Mondialisation* blows up the relation of culture and civilization and in doing that it confirms what we'd glimpsed with the psychotic and which had begun our progressive transformation of metapsychology in order to make the transference possible for the psychotic.

The cultural operation of taking control over the individual also begins well before puberty, of course. This is why we've brought the attention that we have to what we refer to as the two times of childhood. One has to distinguish between the entrance into language, that is, the entry into the social link, and the moment of the infant, *in-fans*, one who does not speak. This moment of the one who doesn't speak we refer to as the first childhood; the entry into language we refer to as the second childhood.

AM: Part of what Lacan borrowed from the structuralist program was of a methodological and epistemological order and entailed the privileging of the synchronic over the diachronic, focusing on the internal operational logic of a system of elements over so-called developmental concerns. It seems clear that this amounted to a considerable step forward for psychoanalysis, both in terms of how it constructs its knowledge and how the practice is guided. You, in turn, reintroduce a perspective derived from evolutionary anthropology, paleontology, the history of homo sapiens, on the one hand – seemingly in place of Lacan's reference to linguistics – and you also pay

considerable attention to certain key moments in ontogenetic development, as you've just mentioned with the question of puberty, adolescence, the two childhoods, and the manner in which these are understood to inform the manifestation of the structure that one encounters in the clinic. Can you say something about this emphasis that you place on these factors, specifically as pertains to developing an understanding of what's at stake in the structure, on the one hand, and in clinical strategies, on the other?

WA: Psychoanalysis developed, to a certain extent, on the basis of neurosis; and so, the metapsychology that accounts for the clinical approach is linked to the fact that it's a psychoanalysis for whom the vast majority of clientele has been neurotic. Neurotics, however, only represent a part of humanity. And what's more, we would have to restrain ourselves even further, to speaking about occidental neurotics. The stakes of the clinic are much more important than that. In our cities today, from one neighborhood to another, we pass from one civilization to another, from one culture to another. This wasn't the case for Freud and Lacan during the periods of the development of psychoanalysis. *Mondialisation* which confronts the West with other civilizations, which from then on live within the West itself, blows up the framework within which psychoanalysis and its neurotics were enclosed. So, in emphasizing the stakes of childhood, of puberty, and of adolescence, I wanted to call attention to something that *mondialisation* makes clear, which is the fact that each civilization defines the human and defines, in particular, what we refer to in Quebec as the address. The work with the psychotic confronts us with the fact that the address isn't put into place just any old way, that a culture isn't put into place by chance. This made us return to the history of humans. But in the clinic, we approached this on the basis of what seemed to us most central. Which is simply the fact that the collective must take control of its members, which is an issue that is evident since the creation of language.

There's an important point here with respect to psychosis, as well as the intuition that Freud has with respect to what he calls mass psychology. I introduced the concept 'the effraction of the psyche by the spirit (*l'effraction du psychisme par l'esprit*)' as the moment that distinguishes, for example, *sapiens* from *neanderthal*. There is something in *homo sapiens* that goes beyond the psychical apparatus that *sapiens* inherits from the hominids. The psychical apparatus that *sapiens* inherits from other hominids dates back millions of years. With

sapiens, something new appears. In philosophy, we call it *l'esprit*: the capacity for pure mental representations, representations that are not representations of some thing – or as I like to put it, representations of something that doesn't exist. It's this, the effraction of the psyche. The psyche that *sapiens* inherits doesn't have control over that.

The experience of the child, what he or she lives in their being, they don't find any word for it in the mother's discourse about them. In other words, the child lives something that has no trace within language. In this first time, the first childhood, the child thus has the experience that what is lived is not represented in the discourse that others hold about them. This is the very heart of Freudianism. What is experienced by the being, a lived experience, cannot be seized by observation. There is no chance that any science that rests upon observation can have access to the intimacy of what is lived. This is what Freudianism is. A radical break between the lived and the observable. When I say that I am Freudian, it's to be taken seriously at this level here, which is also what physics demonstrates as being the most evident. The quantum physicist knows that what he observes is the reaction of what is observed to the machinery of the observation, and that this is not a true access to what is observed. The same consideration is at stake in the rethinking of the transference that was necessary to make it accessible to the psychotic, but it's already what's at stake in the first childhood. Essentially, the child has the experience that their lived experience cannot be communicated. There is an impotence of the Other with respect to what is lived in the first childhood.

AM: What strikes me in what you've just said is that, on the one hand, it would seem to correspond to the more radical dimensions of Mass Psychology – namely, Freud's move into something like an ontology of relation, all of the key concepts in this text are relational: identification, repression, love, hypnosis... the 'individual' that would be studied has to be conceived of as involved in a 'mass formation,' but on the other hand, and even more importantly, your comments insist upon a radical non-relation, which is not so clearly present in that particular text. And you link this non-relation directly to lived experience (le vécu). Is this where you situate the subject?

WA: What the being is subjected to is this lack of a relation, the impossible relation between what is lived and what can be observed. The subject as human is born there. The second childhood is when this

subjectivized being who has already had the intimate experience of her solitude is summoned by way of education to enter into language, this space in which there is no place for what is intimately lived. The stakes at this moment for the subject of the second childhood are: what do I have to sacrifice of my own being, my own lived experience, in order to be recognized, to be accepted, to be loved? The neurotic child takes that step. He or she wants to be accepted and so he accepts a loss. And here, we are required to distinguish between the neurotic, who will become the object of psychoanalysis, and the psychotic or the pervert or the autistic. The autistic withdraws in the face of what they must accept as a loss in order to be loved. The pervert realizes what has to be given up in order to be accepted, and the psychotic even more so. The young neurotic accepts this problematic of what must be given up in order to enter into language, but also realizes that there is a deficiency to this structure of the social link.

AM: What you're describing for the neurotic, wouldn't this be in a sense the moment in which what Freud refers to as mass psychology is put in place? He's very clear, meanwhile, as to how much is lost – not simply what the child imagines to be lost, but what is lost in making the choice to align him or herself with, to orient him or herself by way of the observable instead of the lived, in your terms. The passages in which he describes its effects at the level of the relation between the individual and the collective are striking. It's by way of the myth, but it's clear that he takes it to be generally applicable to humanity: "The individual's will was too weak; he lacked the courage to act. No other impulses arose but collective ones; only a joint will existed, no single will. The idea did not dare become will unless backed by the perception that it was widely shared" (1921, p. 82). He refers to it as the "uniformity of mental acts" and it clearly entails a question as to the individuation of thought, the manner in which it's constrained by emotional attachments which entail this submission to "the perception of what is widely shared," the observable.

WA: Exactly. And this also makes clear that if we see this as normal, the psychic structures of autism, psychosis, perversion, these subjects will be seen as abnormal. They don't enter into these norms because they don't accept what they need to lose of their own being, their own experience in order to be accepted. Second childhood prepares the terrain for what will be at issue in puberty, which is what will truly center the history of psychoanalysis on neurosis in such a manner as to

not leave a place for perversion and psychosis. At puberty, the culture, which has achieved the entry of the individual into language in the second childhood, will now proceed with the censure of the feminine.

Every member of a collective passes through the stomach of a woman, as I've said. In order to take control of its members, the collective has, in some way, to take control of the women first. This is why we have come to circumscribe the mode according to which each culture will operate in order to format its members. At stake for each culture is the task of making it such that the dimension of the maternal, as a service to the collective, takes priority over femininity. This plays out by way of the censure of the feminine, which is put in place at the precise moment that I designate as puberty, employing the common understanding of the term. Of course, already in the second childhood the censoring of the feminine is prepared – by the doll, for example. But it's effectively realized at the moment at which the girl has her first menstruation and the moment at which the boy has his first orgasms. Everything will turn around these two great pillars and the girl will become the object to be conquered who must therefore be ready to assure satisfaction. This is at the heart of the problematic of neurosis, to such an extent that psychoanalysis developed in such a manner as to maintain the imaginary that the girl would be the object of desire of the boy.

It's important to note here the radical separation between neurosis, which is structured on the basis of and around the second childhood and puberty – the two great pillars of neurosis – and the other clinical structures. The perverse subject, who will be considered a deviant, and the psychotic, who will be considered sick, neither the one nor the other enters into this game of what must be lost in order to enter into the social link, nor that of the censorship of the feminine that will be imposed in puberty. What characterizes the pervert is his refusal of the cultural montage of the sexual against which he'll undertake a sort of war without any possible negotiation. The psychotic puts in question the credibilization offered by the civilization in order to guarantee the limits of receivability of norms and values by way of beliefs and myths. With all of this, the question of the two times of childhood, of puberty, and of adolescence is crucial, for the sake of the development of metapsychology as well as for the clinic. The question of the censure of the feminine is absolutely central as well. It indicates very well where neurosis is situated.

AM: Perhaps this would be a good moment to clarify what you understand by way of the term feminine, to better approach the stakes of its repression, its relation to the psychoanalytic concept of jouissance.

WA: What I refer to as the feminine is not what one habitually understands by way of this term, since, as long as one is within the montage, there's no access to the feminine, nor is their access to *jouissance*. *Jouissance* supposes the feminine. It's for this reason that I'm always a bit reserved when I hear talk about *jouissance* in a framework in which I don't see any place for the feminine.

AM: There's an important point to be made here, I think. In the early 70s, Lacan begins to distinguish between phallic jouissance on the one hand and an other jouissance, a jouissance that would be not-all submitted to the phallic function. For you, it seems to me, the term jouissance is reserved for that other jouissance alone.

WA: In order to make understood what I refer to as the feminine, I used to show a film of a voodoo priest and the voodoo crisis, taken at a temple in Haiti. I would show the case of a man, around 40 years old, dancing and progressively entering into a crisis in order to show what *jouissance* is. A man who can't accede to that sort of *jouissance* cannot become a voodoo priest. Initiation in voodoo consists in preparing both men and women to have access to that. For the people to whom I was showing it, what they see in the video is something that would pertain to an illness or to a lack of culture, to being uncultured. All this just to indicate that from my position, there's no question of confusing pleasure, which is an immune function, with *jouissance* which is an exit from immunity. Pleasure indicates a limit that's not to be passed. It's exemplified by the orgasm. In the case of women, the same neurobiological structure that leads to the orgasm is not in place, and so a woman can have access to a dimension of herself that she couldn't have even suspected prior to the experience thereof. This is why I use the term feminine: the exit or escape for a being – man or woman, it doesn't matter – from the limits of pleasure, the limits of immunity, wherein the being discovers a dimension of itself otherwise inaccessible. When I speak of *jouissance*, I'm referring to this exit into the domain of the aesthetic, which can just as well be experienced by a man as by a woman. I refer to it as the feminine to mark the fact that it has nothing to do with what the culture attempts to control in the

individual at puberty, before adolescence. The control of adolescence, however, is a priority and a condition of survival for the collective. We don't have an example in the history of humanity in which the control of adolescence is not a central practice of the collective, to the point that this decisive moment in the existence of an individual can be repressed entirely, even betrayed.

AM: It's interesting to note that the developmental line Freud traces in Mass Psychology goes from infancy through childhood, and then stops at puberty. From there, he arrives at the constitution of 'a primary mass' and his famous schema of identification. In other words, no question of adolescence and the analysis basically concludes at the exact point at which you situate what you refer to as the cultural montage of the sexual.

WA: Exactly. But it's not shocking to note the absence of this key moment in Freud's analysis. The cultural montage of the sexual is installed before adolescence in order to prevent it, to repress it. Anyways, the idea of bringing the psychology of the individual back to the psychology of the collective is very precisely indicative of the censor by way of which each culture hopes to take control of adolescence. It's the field of neurosis, the space in which Freudian psychoanalysis finds its field of action and its limit. In other words, what Freud demonstrates is the culture that represses the stakes of the desire that surges up in the unconscious. Unconscious desire is this quest of the human that is experienced from the effraction of the psyche in the first childhood, which takes its measure in the adolescent, and with respect to which we don't know where it will lead, where it will lead the humanity that is in each of us and which makes of each one of us a *sapiens*. It's not exactly the perspective on desire that is posed by way of the neurotic in Freud or Lacan, but it's what we're dealing with in perversion as well as psychosis. It's a desire that escapes the collective by definition. From within the specific field in which adolescence is censored, they cannot but appear as illnesses or as counterfeits of humanity and be excluded as such. It's not for nothing that manifestations of psychosis first appear in adolescence. The same goes for perversion, let it be said in passing. It's not by chance. What I claim is that every individual has this experience of a dimension of themselves that transcends what is imposed upon them by their culture or civilization. If every individual doesn't have this experience, a so-called 'success' of psychoanalysis, which would extract the individual

from the consequences of imaginary castration as well as symbolic castration, such a success couldn't even be imagined. It's necessary to rethink the entire metapsychology in these terms because *mondialisation* puts in question civilizations, and the decredibilization of cultural norms that goes along with the putting in question of civilizations exposes all collectivities to this unconscious desire that surges forth in the adolescent. The right and the far right are arming themselves against that.

AM: A lot of the right-wing phenomena that we're witnessing would seem to be pretty well accounted for by Freud's analysis in Mass Psychology. Take the case of a figure like Donald Trump, who would seemingly fit into the position described by Freud: the leader, the one who enjoys, who isn't submitted to the law, the paternal exception. Different positions have been taken however with respect to whether Freud's analysis can account for a figure like Trump and his crowds.

WA: When people offer this sort of analysis something important is overlooked: namely, what began with the internationalization of capital, the displacement of industries, and so on, which created the conditions for *mondialisation* to come into play, to take shape over the course of the 80s and 90s. What is underestimated is that the right wing and various forms of nationalism are reinforced in this period. What's at stake in that, what's provoked by *mondialisation* is the appearance of a very specific fear, the fear of disappearing, which will feed nationalism and the right, the extreme right as well as the political right. Cultures realize that the civilizations that provide their credibility are at risk of disappearing, and so a whole series of movements are mobilized in order to find the means to consolidate and to conserve their civilization. At the same time, for the left there appears the hope that the bourgeoisie that are the pillars of these civilizations will be weakened with the disappearance of the civilizations through which they justified what they imposed upon the populations. This whole movement of factors gets overlooked if one calls upon Freud's analysis too readily, which, I would say, is completely valid in the cultural context and the civilization in which it was offered. Since the 80s at least, however, that context has changed tremendously and the instruments that Freud created and that he transmitted to us, which served very well previously, are no longer proportionate to what we're confronting since the 90s. Lacan, meanwhile, isn't here to help us.

AM: Since Lacan, 'jouissance' has become for many a key political concept, frequently employed to analyze the kinds of phenomena in question with something like right-wing populism. This would undoubtedly be of the order of the phallic jouissance I've referred to above, but one of the ideas that's put forth is that a sort of identitarian jouissance or a nationalistic jouissance is at stake, an enjoyment that rests upon the fantasy of a superiority over another group – blacks, immigrants, liberals, women – which the leader fuels or offers a confirmation of. And also, that there's a sort of enjoyment at stake that the left simply doesn't offer, but which feeds these movements by way of the libidinal economies of mass psychology that are involved.

WA: It's important that you include women in that description. What that shows, in other words, is a humanity at the level of puberty, which doesn't get past the censor of the feminine. Evidently, the new generations can take advantage of the confrontation of cultures and the battle between civilizations and they can realize, they can finally realize what previous generations didn't, which is that there's a cultural montage of the sexual that censures femininity and which is the source of the sorts of racism in question. But we won't get rid of racism without dealing with the censorship of the feminine. Racism is no more than a consequence; it is secondary with respect to the question of the violence done to women. This is the reason that the treatment of the issue of racism often becomes ridiculous – because it doesn't touch what is at the heart of the problem, which is the cultural montage of the sexual. This is verified in the question of the address.

AM: You speak of a sort of opening for the new generations. I would agree with this, but at the same time, it's a delicate question, for more than one reason. Freud's analysis, for example, underlines a serious difficulty that seems crucial to take note of today: when the common ideal is put in question, the result is the weakening of the bonds between the members of the collective, the social link, the possibility of the social relation itself is put in question. It's a question of the dissolution of affective attachments, of the very possibility of the identifications that could constitute a 'we.' It seems clear that this is something we're living through, that young people are living with difficulty: there's not only a sort of crisis pertaining to the credibility of figures of authority – the media lies, politicians are not only corrupt but ridiculous figures, institutions are forged on the basis of violence and defend a fraudulent and exploitative order, all of that is clearer than ever, in the US to a

farcical extent – but that this in turn permeates the social bond in general. Freud gives the example of the phenomenon of panic, which opens us onto the other side or the other dimension of the opening that goes along with a certain destabilization.

WA: Absolutely. You see to what extent Freud is brilliant. His intuition is incomparable. But as you also see, what's at stake in the example of panic is the absence of a support for the effraction, which will entail an impossibility to face up to the deficiency of language, and so, an impossibility to become a member of the collective. It's today that we can really take the measure of Freud's intuition, as a result of what *mondialisation* imposes on us, and even more so, the pandemic.

AM: His description of these phenomena of course also revolves around the question of the father.

WA: This is where I take my distance from the position of Freud. In order to put in place the metapsychology that we have, which would allow for the work we do with psychosis, the question we posed was: what is a father? In order to work on this question, I constructed a schema that took up the approach of Lévi-Strauss while also transforming it, and which was based upon set theory. The question was this: what happens with respect to the position of the father in the familial structure of the three generations that precede the generation in which a psychosis appears. I put together a questionnaire with 150 or so questions; we had the responses of about 500 families. I then constructed this instrument that we use at the 388 where we analyze how the question of the father has been posed in the three generations that precede the psychotic that we have in treatment.

The fundamental point is the following: What is a father, what is the paternal function in the first childhood? It's to support the effraction of the psyche. What is it in the second childhood? It's to support for the child the deficiency of language. In puberty, the function of the father is to maintain an aesthetic space for the feminine, for the boy as well as the girl. These three different functions comprise what I refer to as the paternal function. What the child can create in his imaginary, which can be terrifying for him, what the child confronts and what he lives as an intimate experience, there's no place for that in language. This is why the autistic recoils. From this perspective, the stakes of the paternal function, it's not so much a question of foreclosure. It's important to

first grasp what it is, the paternal function, and then, of course, in a second moment to take the measure of what appeared to Lacan as foreclosure. The father that's at stake in Freud's analysis in 1921, it's the father that the culture imposes. He has the same status as the leader. When I speak of the father it's not this that I'm referring to, because this father is in service of the cultural integration of the individual into the collective. This father is precisely the one that is refused by the autistic, the psychotic, the pervert. Certainly, it's the case that this father here can be foreclosed, but it's not a deficiency that this father would be foreclosed.

AM: And we see the responses to the transformations through which we're living - the rise of conspiracy theories, the entry into the so-called post-truth era, the most extreme example being that of QAnon. These are phenomena, by the way, which one hears not infrequently described by the media, by intellectuals, even by some psychoanalysts or psychoanalytic theorists by way of the term psychosis, or at least delusion and paranoia which are then often folded back into the category of psychosis. How would you respond to these so-called diagnoses? Is there any justification in the use of the term?

WA: Absolutely none. It's a question, as you've said, of neurotic panic. What psychosis catches a glimpse of and what the psychotic aspires to is in no way destructive. The psychotic would prefer to commit suicide rather than to have the sentiment of destroying the human. At least, this is the experience that we have with psychosis in Quebec, with several hundreds of cases. Sometimes, the difficulty that we have with them is precisely to help them to realize that they're not responsible for the evil that is done around them and that they don't have to blame themselves for it. These group phenomena have nothing to do with what's evoked in the lives of psychotics. It's only neurotics who would have this sort of attitude... better to destroy the other than to disappear. They're caught up with the three objects that the culture offers the neurotic: the dollar, the gun, and the penis – three objects that will lead them precisely nowhere. The fear of disappearing, the other accused as the cause, whereas the psychotic accuses him or herself of being the cause. It makes me think of a patient that we had a lot of difficulty with, because he wanted to cut off his penis. We had some difficulty because, you know, psychotics pass to the act rather quickly when they think their act is justified. He considered that a relation was an aggression done to a woman, so he wanted to cut off his penis. Just

an example to show that the problematic in which the psychotic finds itself, and the perspective of a psychotic, has strictly nothing to do with this other bullshit.

AM: And a psychoanalysis today that would found itself on the perspective opened up by the experience of psychosis, what can it offer with respect to the question of rebuilding the social link or living it differently in the absence of the support of the so-called vertical identification? Or in other words, if we take the neurotic and of the psychotic as two extreme positions, so to speak, one that's based upon the function of the norm and integration into the group with all the problems that entails, and on the other hand, the position of the psychotic entails what can be a very difficult non-belonging, a lack of integration into the group, all sorts of problems that derive from something like an overexposure to what the neurotic is shielded from. If we consider the sort of opposite directions in which their analyses must proceed, what does this offer us in terms of an understanding of the difficult articulation of the individual to the group today?

WA: What the neurotic is living with in this era of *mondialisation* is failure. But he or she has to arrive at hope, because the solution is within him or her, it has to be discovered within oneself. The psychotic is living with rejection. He or she is told that they are sick. They're rejected. What we do is to offer the subject a space to say their quest and to find out how to articulate it in a dialogue with the other, with others. For the neurotic like the psychotic today, the stakes are what you referred to yourself as a new social link – but they don't start from the same place, they don't have the same means, they don't have the same difficulties. The role of the psychoanalyst is to accompany them on the pathway of a quest for a new dialogue, a new social link. It's the question of the relation of psychoanalysis to politics as well, of the battle that humans wage to save the human, the human for which they are responsible, the human they carry within themselves. I can't anticipate how it will play out, but I can say that the new generations and the next generations won't have a choice. It's already begun, though. It can't be said that the new generations aren't in battle.

And what are we living through today? The pandemic. Yesterday it was *mondialisation*, today it's the pandemic, which puts *mondialisation* into action. The two together help us discover that there are stakes that exceed any culture and that exceed any civilization, that there are

problems that can't be resolved by the most powerful nation or group of nations on earth. We're discovering for the first time that what each civilization presents as the human, that's not it. The human remains to be discovered in a dialogue between civilizations. We're still in the conflict of civilizations. If we speak about a new social link, well, we're far from it, but we're on the path towards it with *mondialisation* and with the pandemic. The new generations, the one that you're a part of, will have to create the aesthetic space by way of which the sentiment that what the other offers, we don't want under any circumstance to lose that because it makes humanity more beautiful, and that there are things that are worth more than our own existence. The idea of a *jouissance* that the pervert would suggest to the neurotic, let's forget that. The pervert is at battle with the culture, a battle that we hope that he'll win, but what can't be forgotten is the perspective that psychosis opens: the human.

AM: There are also reasons for pessimism: the rise of the right, the rise of racism, the rise of xenophobia are everywhere. Already around 1970, Lacan predicted the rise of racism, the rise of what he referred to more generally as segregation.

WA: The fear of disappearing, if we want to put it in a word.

AM: But how does that play out in the life of a subject?

WA: (laughs) You can see it very clearly in the US. It's the sentiment of an entire past that one thought to be glorious but which becomes useless, and which won't be transmitted to future generations. Confronted with that, what is sought after is a guilty party. All civilizations will either pass through that or enter into a dialogue the stakes of which are humanity. But there will always be, in the period that we're in, groups of humans that don't want to lose the civilizations that they've created since centuries ago. Instead of having a perspective of modifying a civilization, of enriching it so that there's more place for the human, they have the option of recoiling. This sentiment of superiority that each civilization possesses, we're in a period in which it has to be abandoned.

AM: Certainly, and I follow you on that, but to say it in this manner – that it's the culture that realizes this is happening, and that reacts – for me, this doesn't pose a problem at a theoretical level, to make the

culture the agent, so to speak, which acts through individuals, but at the level of the individual who participates in this process, how does it manifest itself for him? Because each individual caught up in these sorts of reactionary dynamics isn't saying to themselves, well, the civilization that credibilizes the norms at the heart of my culture risks disappearing – at that level, what is it that an individual is confronted with? An experience of anxiety provoked by the fact that the montage that serves to manage and control the energies of their psyche no longer protects them from the deficiency in language?

WA: Exactly.

AM: *Which leads to a reaction –*

WA: It's correct to put it in this way, but one has to be attentive to the fact that what you're describing pertains to a universe of neurotics. In this context, we should begin to consider how it is that a pervert reacts, how it is that a psychotic reacts. This work hasn't been done. We've rushed into a diagnosis that these people are deviant or that they're sick. It's ridiculous. These are neurotics who have lost their points of reference and stability and who, seeing that their colleague and their neighbor have also lost their points of reference, group together and form the sorts of primary masses that Freud describes. In other words, the crowd isn't first. The crowd is the state in which one arrives when all repairs have been lost, when there's no longer any possible leader and thus anyone can become a leader if he knows how to mobilize violence. Because, as I say, it's either aesthetics or violence. Where points of reference have been lost and the aesthetic is no longer possible, it will be violence. But this is the field of neurosis. The pervert and the psychotic are totally at ease in this context in which a dialogue between cultures is needed so that there would be a chance of a new civilization. They don't need to resort to exercising violence.

AM: *This might be one way of approaching another key question that Freud poses in the text, which he refers to as a way out of mass psychology. He's interested in trying to understand the conditions under which a move from mass psychology to individual psychology becomes possible.*

WA: Absolutely. He doesn't have a way to express that other than through psychoanalysis and what he refers to in this case as an

individual psychology, but this is what interested us: the human in the individual, something in the individual that transcends the group and makes it that the individual can serve the group, can give its life to the group, can seek to make the group better, can want to free itself from the limits of the group in order to make the group better. Freud perceived something there that he didn't elaborate upon, but for us it's something that we cannot renounce.

AM: Which captures the stakes of an analysis. What Lacan, for example, referred to as a way out of "the need of the group (le besoin du groupe)," and which permits a transformation of the relation to the other.

WA: Exactly. Precisely. But what you've just said – the relation to the other – we refer to that in Quebec as the address, which is what a civilization defines.

AM: When we speak of the address, on the one hand, we're speaking about something that is structured by the culture and civilization, which provide the forms through which something is meant to pass, so to speak – they serve the function of forming or formatting – but I'm wondering about the extent to which you conceive of the address or some dimension of the address as beyond or outside of this structuring, as on the side of what you refer to as the human in opposition to both culture and civilization. I'm thinking of a passage from Proust that someone recently shared with me, in which Swann wonders: "whether music might not be the unique example of what might have been – if the invention of language, the formation of words, the analysis of ideas had not intervened – the means of communication between souls. It is like a possibility that has come to nothing; humanity has developed along other lines."

WA: The aesthetic. Of course, the address precedes language. Speech is not created by language but precedes it. Language, once again, was created 50k years ago, but we spoke before that. What's important is to note that once language was created and once cultures begin the operation of censoring the feminine and then civilizations begin crediting and credibilizing, these two operations overdetermine the question of the address. We can take this up on the basis of a very simple question: what is the culture in which a woman can address herself to a man? In the occidental culture that presents itself as the

model of humanity, can a woman say to a man: if you come before me, don't return? These are the stakes of the address. What is receivable for the other and who or what determines receivability – or in other words, makes speech possible? Speech, that is, that would say something awaited by the subject (*une escompte du sujet*) that exceeds the limits of culture and civilization.

It's evident that Afghan women who flee their country, when they arrive in NYC or in Paris or Montreal, they take note of the fact that they can address themselves to a man. They won't ask themselves the same question that a New Yorker or Parisian woman will ask herself – namely, up to what point can I address myself to a man? But today with feminicide, the question imposes itself. Feminicide isn't a coincidence, it's not a question of 'a few bad apples' who would be either perverts or psychotics, it's in the very structure of the cultural montage of the sexual which makes of the woman an object and not the subject of a saying, the subject of speech. On what condition can a woman risk addressing to a man a request, an anticipation concerning what in her was censured by the culture and thus *impropre au dire* in the civilization and of which the other, this man with whom she speaks, has no idea? On what condition can a subject take the risk of giving the other access to what is by definition inaccessible to the other? In doing it, the subject inevitably runs the risk of the *impropre au dire*. These are the stakes of the transference. On what condition can the psychotic take the risk of speaking to the other – the psychologist, the psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst – about what he intimately lives and what, for this other, is *impropre au dire* from the point of view of the civilization, is not receivable from the point of view of the culture? Fundamentally, when a psychotic speaks, the psychologist or psychiatrist doesn't believe them. This is why we had to subvert the structure of the transference by subverting the structure of the address. To subvert the structure of the address that is created by the civilization so that the pervert and the psychotic as well as what is unconscious in the neurotic will have its chance. Freud saw very clearly, as did Lacan, that, given the structure of the address in their civilizations, there was no chance for speech for the psychotic. That's what we had to subvert so that the treatment of the psychotic would be possible. You see that this question of the address is fundamental. I hope I'll have the time to finish what I'm working on, a book which is called *L'adresse improbable*. It's what the new generations are confronted with. It's not only in the case of a Muslim woman or an orthodox Jew that a woman can't address herself to a man.

This censoring of the feminine exists in the occidental as well. It's much more profound than racism. Racism, I repeat, is a consequence of this; a banal consequence of the censorship of the feminine.

AM: Once again this question of the difficulty but also the opening encountered by younger generations, when the cultural reference points, the idea of a consistent Other, are coming apart. It's a real tension, which manifests itself precisely in the relation to the other, in the question of the address.

WA: Absolutely. We are entering into an era in which the essential is to be reconsidered and reconstructed. Obviously, it's not people of my generation who are going to live that. People from 25 to 45 years old are going to have to escape from the superstition of the norm, of what is receivable, in order to experience what was never previously lived. The stakes are no longer the survival of one culture or civilization or another; the stakes are the survival of the human. We have a perfect example of that with COVID, but there are a whole series of problems that require a collaboration of humanity in a manner that was never previously possible. The interest of COVID is to be an example of this, but it's the same thing for global warming, the same thing for the fact that the middle classes have less and less of the means required to support the state by way of taxes. There's a whole set of problems that require the cooperation of the ensemble regardless of borders. It's new. The generations between 25 and 45 will be confronting this in the next 10 to 15 years. It will all arrive much more quickly than we expect, and it was with an eye to all of this that, from the mid-90s on we wanted to take stock of psychoanalysis on the basis of *mondialisation*, on the one hand, and everything that psychosis had taught us, on the other, and to rethink metapsychology and psychoanalysis in terms of the human rather than in terms of the neurotic. That's the point: to rethink psychoanalysis on the basis of the human and not on the basis of a certain category of individual, the neurotic.

AM: And as you've said, western neurotics at that.

WA: We've not gotten out of colonization, we've simply changed the forms of colonization, which, as a formerly colonized, I refuse.

AM: Thank you for your time, M. Apollon.