

## Translator's Notes

I would like to thank Mario Beira, Matthew Baldwin, Rong-Bang Peng, and Héloïse Fink for their kind assistance on this translation. All errors here are my own.

The numbers in parentheses refer to the page and paragraph number of the present English edition.

## The Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real

- (5, 1) *Le réel* (the real) and *la réalité* (reality) are often indistinguishable in ordinary French usage as well as in this stage of Lacan's work. When I do not translate *le réel* as "the real," I always put the French in brackets.
- (5, 2) In Strachey's rendering: "In his normal state he was kind, cheerful, and sensible – an enlightened and superior kind of person" (SE X, p. 248).
- (9, 3) Regarding Raymond de Saussure, see his "Present

- Trends in Psychoanalysis," in *Actes du Congrès International de Psychiatrie V* (1950): 95–166.
- (10, 4) The reference to Demetrius is to a novel by Pierre Louÿs entitled *Aphrodite*, published in 1896.
- (13, 2) One should perhaps read: "nor are we surprised when a partner uses it to bring him to be better disposed toward her."
- (16, 3) The term "rebus" seems to appear initially on the first page of chapter 6, "The Dream-Work," in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (SE IV, p. 277).
- (18, 2) *Répondre* (reply) also means "talk back" or give "backchat."
- (19, 1) Regarding "calling one's sexual partner by the name of a thoroughly ordinary vegetable or repugnant animal," consider the French habit of calling loved ones by such names as *mon petit chou* (literally, my little cabbage, figuratively, my darling) or *mon petit crapaud* (literally, my little toad).
- (20, 1) The reference to Mallarmé is to a passage in his preface to René Ghil (1866), *Traité du Verbe*; see Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1945, pp. 368 and 857. Words are apparently missing in the stenography of this sentence and the exact meaning is thus uncertain.
- (22, 3) See SE X, pp. 166–7. In Strachey's translation, the passage reads as follows: "his face took on a very strange, composite expression I could only interpret as one of horror at pleasure of his own of which he himself was unaware."
- (25, 1) Regarding Leenhardt, see "La parole qui dure" (Tradition, myth, statut), *Do Kamo: la personne et*

*Le mythe dans le monde mélancolique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1947, pp. 173ff.

- (25, 3) *Semblable* is often translated as "fellow man" or "counterpart," but in Lacan's usage it refers specifically to the mirroring of two imaginary others (*a* and *a'*) who *resemble* each other (or at least see themselves in each other). "Fellow man" corresponds well to the French *prochain*, points to man (not woman), the adult (not the child), and suggests fellowship, whereas in Lacan's work *semblable* evokes rivalry and jealousy first and foremost. "Counterpart" suggests parallel hierarchical structures within which the two people take on similar roles, that is, symbolic roles, as in "The Chief Financial Officer's counterpart in his company's foreign acquisition target was Mr. Juppé, the *Directeur financier*." I have revived the somewhat obsolete English "semblable" found, for example, in *Hamlet*, Act V, scene II, line 124: "his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his unbrage, nothing more."

- (26, 2) A passage appears to be missing here, which could be roughly rendered as follows:

But if you live in a culture in which you cannot marry your seventh cousin because she is considered to be a parallel cousin or, conversely, a crossed cousin – or because she is in a certain homonymic relation to you that comes back every three or four generations – you would perceive that words and symbols play a decisive role in human reality and that words have exactly the meaning decreed by me. As Lewis Carroll has Humpty Dumpty reply admirably: "Because I am the master."

[The actual passage is as follows:

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."]

It should be clear to you that, at the outset, it is indeed man who gives meaning to words. And if words are then commonly agreed upon for the sake of communicability – namely, the same words come to serve to recognize the same thing – it is precisely due to relations, to an initial relationship, that allowed these people to be people who communicate. In other words, there is absolutely no question – except in a certain psychological perception – of trying to deduce how words stem from things and are successively and individually applied to them. Rather we must understand that it is within the total system of discourse – the universe of a specific language that involves, through a series of complementarities, a certain number of significations – that what there is to be signified, namely, things, must manage to find their place. This is how things have been constituted throughout history. And it is what renders particularly childish the whole theory of language that assumes we have to understand the role it plays in the formation of symbols. Such as the one given by Masserman . . .

- (26, 3) Lacan discusses the paper by Masserman, found in *JIP* XXV, 1-2 (1944): 1-8, at length in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. B. Fink, H. Fink, and R. Grigg, New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006, pp. 225-7.
- (31, 1) Colloquially, we might translate *l'objet là* as "this here object." It suggests "the object that is right in front of you." The French formulation imitates the translation into French of Heidegger's *Dasein* as *être-là*, literally "there being"; hence "there object" or "the object as present."
- (31, 1) Reading *décomposant* (decomposing) instead of *décompensant* (decompensating).
- (33, 2) The Latin *flatus vocis* means a mere name, word, or sound without a corresponding objective reality, and was used by nominalists to qualify universals.
- (37, 3) Reading *analyse* (analysis) for *analyse* (analysis).
- (41, 1) Reading *interdiction* (prohibition) instead of *interprétation* (interpretation).
- (43, 5) The paper by Ernest Jones that Lacan refers to here was published in the *British Journal of Psychology* IX, 2 (October 1916): 181-229. It was republished in Jones, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, 5th edn, Boston: Beacon, 1961. See Lacan's "In Memory of Ernest Jones: On His Theory of Symbolism," in *Écrits*, pp. 585-601.
- (51, 2) Regarding the *Urbild*, see "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function," in *Écrits*, pp. 75-81.
- (52, 2) A number of ill-recorded questions and responses are not included in this publication.

## Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father

- (56, 2) In the French, this paragraph ends with a repetition: "and the class I gave on December 20, 1961, and those that followed in January 1962 concerning proper names."
- (57, 4) Or: "anxiety is, among the subject's affects, the one that is not deceptive"; "anxiety is something that is not misleading."
- (61, 4) Or: "can be founded only upon a negation."
- (65, 1) Augustine's "*Ego sum qui sum*" is sometimes rendered in English translations of his work as "I am Who I am" or "I am Who am." French grammar allows Lacan to say, "I am the one who am," whereas contemporary English grammar would require us to say, "I am the one who is."
- The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New International Version (NIV), and New American Standard Bible (NASB) all render the phrase from Exodus 3:14 as "I AM WHO I AM." In some of these versions there is a footnote raising the possibility of rendering the phrase as "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE." On the other hand, the American Standard Version (ASV), following the King James Version (KJV), renders the phrase as "I AM THAT I AM." See the first full note on p. 104.
- (66, 2) *Dans l'émot* could also be rendered as "when agitated" or "when highly emotional."
- (66, 3) A supposed tendency to give to others selflessly or disinterestedly, discussed in French analytic texts of the 1950s, translated here as "oblativity" (the adjectival form being "oblativity"). The term was