

THE LANGUAGE OF THE SELF

THE FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE IN  
PSYCHOANALYSIS

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*Translated with notes and commentary*

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS  
BALTIMORE AND LONDON

he is able to see the identity of the side he takes and the disorder he denounces within a single reason, in order to comprehend their coherence in the Real and to anticipate by his certitude on the action which puts them in balance.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Rien de créé qui n'apparaisse dans l'urgence, rien dans l'urgence qui n'engendre son dépassement dans la parole. Mais rien aussi qui n'y devienne contingent quand le moment y vient pour l'homme, où il peut identifier en une seule raison le parti qu'il choisit et le désordre qu'il dénonce, pour en comprendre la cohérence dans le réel et anticiper par sa certitude sur l'action qui les met en balance."

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THE FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

## *Introduction*

*We are going to determine that while we are still at the aphelion of our matter, for, when we arrive at the perihelion, the heat will be capable of making us forget it.*

(Lichtenberg.)

*"Flesh composed of suns. How can such be?" exclaim the simple ones.*

(R. Browning, *Parleying with certain people.*)

Such awe seizes man when he unveils the lineaments of his power that he turns away from it in the very action employed to lay its features bare. So it has been with psychoanalysis. Freud's truly Promethean discovery was such an action, as his works bear witness; but the same is no less present in each humble psychoanalytic experience conducted by any one of the laborers formed in his school.

As time has gone by, we can trace almost year by year this aversion of interest as far as the functions of the Word and the domain of Language are concerned. This turning aside is the reason for the "alterations in aim and technique" which are now acknowledged within the psychoanalytic movement, and whose relation to the general lessening of therapeutic effectiveness is nevertheless ambiguous. In fact the emphasis on the resistance of the object in current psychoanalytical theory and technique must itself be submitted to the dialectic of analysis, which is bound to recognize in this emphasis an alibi of the subject.

Let us attempt to outline the topography<sup>1</sup> of this movement. If we examine the literature—our "scientific activity," we call it—the present problems of psychoanalysis fall clearly under three headings:

a) The function of the Imaginary,<sup>2</sup> shall we say, or more specifically that of phantasies in the technique of the psychoanalytic experience and in the constitution of the object at the various stages of psychic development. The original impetus in this area came from the analysis of children and from the fertile and tempting field offered to the attempts

of researchers by access to the formation of structures at the preverbal level. It is there also that the culmination of this impetus is now inducing a return in the same direction by posing the problem of what symbolic sanction is to be given to phantasies in their interpretation.

b) The concept of the libidinal object relations which, since it has renewed the idea of the progress of the cure, is surreptitiously altering the way in which it is conducted. Here the new perspective took its departure from the extension of the psychoanalytic method to psychoses and from the momentary opening up of the psychoanalytic technique to data based on different principles. At this point psychoanalysis merges with an existential phenomenology—one might say, with an activism animated by charity.<sup>3</sup> There again, a clear-cut reaction is making itself felt in favor of a return to the technical pivot of symbolization.

c) The importance of countertransference and, correlatively, of the formation of the analyst.<sup>4</sup> In this instance the emphasis has resulted from the difficulties besetting the termination of the cure, rejoining those which arise when the didactic analysis of the candidate culminates in his introduction into the practice of analysis. In both cases the same oscillation is evident. On the one hand, the being of the analyst is shown, not without courage, to be a by no means negligible factor in the results of the analysis—and even a factor to be brought out into the open in his conduct as the analysis draws to a close. On the other hand, it is put forward no less forcefully that no solution is possible except by an ever more thorough exploration of the mainsprings of the unconscious.

Besides the pioneer activity which they are manifesting on three different frontiers, these three problems have a trait in common with the vitality of the psychoanalytic experience which sustains them. This is the temptation for the analyst to abandon the grounding of the Word, and this precisely in areas where, because they border on the ineffable, its use would be more than ever in need of his scrutiny: that is to say, childhood training by the mother, help like that of the good Samaritan, and dialectical mastery. The danger indeed becomes great if at this point he abandons his own Language as well, in favor of others already established which offer compensations for ignorance with which he is ill-acquainted.

We would truly like to know more about the effects of symbolization in the child, and female psychoanalysts who are also mothers, even those who give our loftiest deliberations a matriarchal air, are not exempt from

that confusion of tongues by which Ferenczi designated the law of the relationship between the child and the adult.<sup>5</sup>

Our wise men's ideas about the perfect object relation are somewhat uncertainly conceived, and, when expounded, they reveal a mediocrity which does the profession no honor.

Beyond all doubt, these effects—where the psychoanalyst corresponds to the type of modern hero famous for his vain exploits in situations entirely beyond his control—could be corrected by a proper return to that area of knowledge in which the analyst ought to be past master: the study of the functions of the Word.

But, since Freud, it seems that this central area of our domain has been left fallow. Note how he himself refrained from venturing too far into its outlying parts: he discovered the libido stages of the child through the analysis of adults and intervened in little Hans's case only through the intermediary of his parents.<sup>5</sup> He deciphered a whole section of the language of the unconscious in paranoid delusion, but used for this purpose only the key text that Schreber left behind in the volcanic debris of his spiritual catastrophe.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, however, as far as the dialectic of this work and the traditional view of its meaning were concerned, he assumed the position of mastery in all its eminence.

Does this amount to saying that if the master's place remains empty, it is not so much the result of his own passing as that of a growing obliteration of the meaning of his work? To convince ourselves of this, we have surely only to ascertain what is going on in the place he vacated.

A technique is being handed on in a cheerless manner, reticent in its opacity, a manner which shies at any attempt to let in the fresh air of criticism. It has in fact assumed the air of a formalism pushed to ceremonial lengths, and so much so that one might very well wonder whether it is not to be tagged with the same similarity to obsessional neurosis that Freud so convincingly defined in the observance, if not in the genesis, of religious rites.<sup>7</sup>

When we consider the literature that this activity produces and feeds on, the analogy becomes even more marked: the impression is often that of a curious sort of closed circuit in which a failure to recognize the origin of the basic terms is father to the problem of making them agree with

<sup>5</sup> Ferenczi, "Confusion of Tongues between the Adult and the Child," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* [henceforth abbreviated *IJP*], XXX (1949), iv, 225-30.

each other and in which the effort to solve this problem reinforces the original misconception.

In order to get at the roots of this deterioration of the analytical discourse, one may legitimately apply the psychoanalytical method to the collectivity which sustains it.

In point of fact, to speak of the loss of the sense of the action of analysis is as true and as pointless as to explain the symptom by its sense<sup>8</sup> so long as that sense is not recognized.<sup>9</sup> We know that if that recognition is absent, the action of the analyst will be experienced only as an aggressive action at whatever level it occurs. We know, too, that in the absence of the social "resistances" in which the psychoanalytic group used to find reassurance, the limits of its tolerance towards its own activity—now "accepted," if not approved of—no longer depend upon anything more than the numerical strength by which its presence is measured on the social scale.

These starting points are adequate to assess the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real conditions which will determine the defense mechanisms we can recognize in the doctrine: isolation, undoing-what-has-been-done,<sup>10</sup> *dénégation*,<sup>11</sup> and, in general, *méconnaissance*.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, if the importance of the American group in relation to the psychoanalytic movement as a whole is measured by its mass, it will be easy enough to weigh accurately the conditions to be met with there.

In the Symbolic order first of all, one cannot neglect the importance of that factor C which I took into account at the Congress of Psychiatry in 1950 as being the constant characteristic of any given cultural milieu: here the condition of the lack of a historical dimension by which everyone recognizes the major features of "communication" in the United States, and which, according to our way of seeing it, is at the antipodes of the psychoanalytic experience. To this must be added a native mental form, known as behaviorism, which so dominates psychological concepts in America that they have clearly been entirely unfaithful ever since to the psychoanalysis inspired by Freud.<sup>13</sup>

As for the other two orders, we leave it in the hands of those interested to evaluate what the mechanisms which manifest themselves in the life of psychoanalytical societies owe, respectively, to the relative eminence of those within the group and to the experienced effects of their free enterprise on the whole of the social body—as well as the value to be attributed to the notion emphasized by one of their most lucid represen-

tatives, that of the convergence which makes itself felt between the foreignness of a group dominated by the immigrant, and the distancing into which it is drawn by the function which the cultural conditions indicated above call for.

In any event it appears incontestable that the conception of psychoanalysis in the United States has inclined toward the adaptation of the individual to the social environment, toward the quest for patterns of conduct, and toward all the objectification implied in the notion of "human relations."<sup>14</sup> And the indigenous term "human engineering"<sup>15</sup> strongly implies a privileged position of exclusion in relation to the human object.

It is in fact this distance—a distance from the human object without which such a position could not be held—which has contributed to the present eclipse in psychoanalysis of the most living terms of its experience: the unconscious and sexuality, which apparently will cease before long even to be mentioned.

We do not have to take sides over the faults of formalism and the corporation-man mentality, both of which are noted and denounced by the official writings of the analytical group itself. The Pharisee and the corporation man interest us only because of their common essence, the source of the difficulties which both have with the Word, and particularly when it comes to "talking shop."<sup>16</sup>

The fact is that the inability to communicate underlying motives, if it can sustain a magister, is not on a par with real mastery—that at least which the teaching of psychoanalysis requires. This became obvious in any case when, not long ago, in order to sustain the primacy of a magister and for the sake of appearances, it became necessary for a lesson to be given.

This is why the attachment to the traditional technique, indefectibly reaffirmed from the same tack, after a consideration of the results of the work on the frontier lines enumerated above, is not without equivocation; this equivocation is to be measured by the substitution of the term "classic" for "orthodox" in describing the traditional technique. The attachment is to decorum, for want of knowing how to make any sort of comment on the doctrine itself.<sup>17</sup>

As far as we are concerned, we assert that the technique cannot be comprehended, nor therefore correctly applied, if the underlying concepts are misconstrued. It is our task to demonstrate that these concepts

assume their full sense only when oriented in the domain of Language, only when ordered in relation to the function of the Word.

At this point I must note that in order to handle any Freudian concept, reading Freud cannot be considered superfluous, even if it be only for those concepts which are homonyms of current notions. This has been well demonstrated, I am opportunely reminded, by the misadventure which befell a theory of the instincts in a revision of Freud's position by an author somewhat less than alert to its explicitly stated mythical content. Obviously he could hardly be aware of it, since he tackles the theory by means of the work of Marie Bonaparte, which he repeatedly cites as an equivalent of the text of Freud—without the reader being in any way advised of the fact—relying no doubt on the good taste of the reader, not without reason, not to confuse the two, but proving no less that he has not the remotest comprehension of the true level of the secondary text.\*<sup>18</sup> As a result, from reductions to deductions, and from inductions to hypotheses, the author comes to his conclusion by way of the strict tautology of his false premises: that is to say, that the instincts in question are reducible to the reflex arc. Like the pile of chinaware whose collapse is the main feature of the classic music hall exhibition—leaving nothing in the hands of the performer except a couple of fragments mismatched by the crash—the complex construction which moves from the discovery of the migrations of the libido in the erotogenic zones to the metapsychological passage of a generalized pleasure principle into the death instinct, becomes the binomial dualism of a passive erotic instinct, modeled on the activity of the *chercheuses de poux*, so dear to the poet,<sup>19</sup> and a destructive instinct, identified simply with motility. A result which merits an honorable mention for the art, voluntary or not, of drawing the ultimate logical conclusions of an original misunderstanding.

# I

## *The Empty Word and the Full Word*

*Donne en ma bouche parole vraie et estable et fay de moy langue caulte.*

(*L'Internele Consolacion*, XLVe Chapitre: qu'on ne doit pas chascun croire et du legier trebuchement de paroles.)<sup>20</sup>

*Cause toujours.*<sup>21</sup>

(Motto of "causalist" thought.)

Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of formation, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single intermediary: the patient's Word. That this is self-evident is no excuse for our neglecting it. And every Word calls for a reply.

I shall show that there is no Word without a reply, even if it meets no more than silence, provided that it has an auditor: this is the heart of its function in psychoanalysis.

But if the psychoanalyst is not aware that this is the way it is with the function of the Word, he will only experience its appeal all the more strongly, and if the first thing to make itself heard is the void, it is within himself that he will experience it, and it is beyond the Word that he will seek a reality to fill this void.

Thus it is that he will come to analyze the subject's behavior in order to find in it what the subject is not saying. Yet in order to obtain an avowal of what he finds, he must nevertheless talk about it. Then he finds his tongue again, but his Word is now rendered suspect by having replied only to the failure of his silence, in the face of the echo perceived of his own nothingness.<sup>22</sup>

But what in fact was this appeal from the subject beyond the void of his speech? It was an appeal to Truth in its ultimate nature, through which other appeals resulting from humbler needs will find faltering expression. But first and foremost it was the appeal of the void, in the ambiguous *béance*<sup>23</sup> of an attempted seduction of the other by the means on which the subject has come compliantly to rely and to which he is going to commit the monumental construct of his narcissism.<sup>24</sup>

"That's it all right, introspection!" exclaims the *prud'homme* who

knows its dangers only too well. He is certainly not the last, he avows, to have tasted its charms, if he has exhausted its profit. Too bad that he hasn't more time to waste. For you would hear some fine profundities from him were he to arrive on your couch.

It is strange that an analyst, for whom this sort of person is one of the first encounters in his experience, should still take introspection into account in psychoanalysis. For from the moment that the wager is taken up, all those fine things that were thought to be in reserve slip away. If he does engage in it, they will appear of little account, but others present themselves sufficiently unexpected by our friend to seem ridiculous to him and to stun him into silence. The common lot.<sup>b</sup>

Then it is that he grasps the difference between the mirage of the monologue whose accommodating fancies used to sustain his animated outpourings, and the forced labor of this discourse without escape, on which the psychologist (not without humor) and the therapist (not without cunning) have bestowed the name of "free association."

For free association really is a labor, and so much of a travail that some have gone so far as to say that it requires an apprenticeship, even to the point of seeing in the apprenticeship its true formative value. But if viewed in this way, what does it form but a skilled craftsman?

Well, then, what of this labor? Let us consider its conditions and its fruit, in the hope of throwing more light on its aim and profit.

The aptness of the German word *durcharbeiten*—equivalent to the English "working through"—has been recognized in passing. It has confounded French translators, in spite of what the immortal words of a master of French style offered them by way of an exercise in exhausting every last drop of sense: "Cent fois sur le métier, remettez. . ."<sup>25</sup>—but how does the work [*l'ouvrage*] make any progress here?

The theory reminds us of the triad: frustration, aggressivity, regression. This is an explanation so apparently comprehensible that we may well be spared the necessity of comprehending it. Intuition is prompt, but we should be all the more suspicious of the self-evident that has become an *idée reçue*. If analysis should come round to exposing its weakness, it will be advisable not to rest content with recourse to affectivity—that taboo-word of the dialectical incapacity which, with the verb *to intellectualize* (whose accepted pejorative connotation makes a

<sup>b</sup> Paragraph rewritten in 1966. [Minor changes were also made in the preceding paragraph.]

merit of this incapacity), will go down in the history of the language as the stigmata of our obtuseness regarding the subject.<sup>c</sup>

Shall we enquire instead into the source of the subject's frustration? Does it come from the silence of the analyst? A reply to the subject's empty Word, even—or especially—an approving one, often shows by its effects that it is much more frustrating than silence. Is it not rather a matter of a frustration inherent in the very discourse of the subject?<sup>26</sup> Does the subject not become engaged in an ever-growing dispossession of that being of his, concerning which—by dint of sincere portraits which leave its idea no less incoherent, of rectifications which do not succeed in freeing its essence, of stays and defenses which do not prevent his statue from tottering, of narcissistic embraces which become like a puff of air in animating it—he ends up by recognizing that this being has never been anything more than his construct in the Imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certitudes? For in this labor which he undertakes to reconstruct this construct *for another*, he finds again the fundamental alienation which made him construct it *like another one*, and which has always destined it to be stripped from him *by another*.<sup>d,27</sup>

This ego, whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its essence.<sup>e</sup> Not frustration of a desire of the subject, but frustration by an object in which his desire is alienated and which the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from its *jouissance* becomes for the subject. Frustration at a second remove, therefore, and such that even if the subject were to reintroduce its form into his discourse to the point of reconstituting the preparatory image through which the subject makes himself an object by striking a

<sup>c</sup> Previously I had written: "in psychological matters. . ." (1966).

<sup>d</sup> Paragraph rewritten in 1966.

<sup>e</sup> This is the crux of a deviation as much practical as theoretical. For to identify the ego with the curbing of the subject is to confuse Imaginary isolation with the mastery of the instincts. This lays one open to errors of judgment in the conduct of the treatment: such as trying to reinforce the ego in many neuroses caused by its overforceful structure—and that is a dead end. Hasn't my friend Michael Balint written that a reinforcement of the ego should be beneficial to the subject suffering from *ejaculatio praecox* because it would permit him to prolong the suspension of his desire? But this can surely not be supposed, if it is precisely to the fact that his desire is made dependent upon the Imaginary function of the ego that the subject owes the short-circuiting of the act—which psychoanalytical clinical experience shows clearly to be intimately linked to narcissistic identification with the partner.



pose before the mirror,<sup>28</sup> he could not possibly be satisfied with it, since even if he achieved his most perfect likeness in that image, it would still be the *jouissance*<sup>29</sup> of the other that he would cause to be recognized in it. This is the reason why there is no reply which is adequate to this discourse, for the subject will consider as a takedown every Word participating in his mistake.

The aggressivity which the subject will experience at this point has nothing to do with the animal aggressivity of frustrated desire. Such a reference, which most people are content with, actually masks another one which is less agreeable for each and for all of us: the aggressivity of the slave whose response to the frustration of his labor is a desire for death.

It is therefore readily conceivable how this aggressivity may respond to any intervention which, by denouncing the Imaginary intentions of the discourse, dismantles the object constructed by the subject to satisfy them. This is in effect what is called the analysis of resistances, whose perilous side appears immediately. It is already pointed to by the existence of that artless simpleton who has never seen revealed anything except the aggressive signification of his subjects' phantasies.<sup>f</sup>

This is the same man who, not hesitating to plead for a "causalist" analysis which would aim to transform the subject in his present by learned explanations of his past, betrays well enough by his very intonation the anxiety from which he wishes to save himself—the anxiety of having to think that his patient's liberty may be dependent upon that of his own intervention. Whether or not the expedient into which he plunges may possibly be beneficial at some moment or another to the subject, this has no more importance than a stimulating pleasantry and will not detain me any longer.

Rather let us focus on this *hic et nunc* to which some analysts feel we should confine the tactics of analysis. It may indeed be useful, provided that the Imaginary intention that the analyst uncovers in it is not detached by him from the symbolic relation in which it is expressed. Nothing must be read into it concerning the *moi* of the subject which can-

<sup>f</sup>This is the same work which I crowned at the end of my Introduction. [Added 1966:] It is clear in what follows that aggressivity is only a lateral effect of analytic frustration, even if this effect can be reinforced by a certain type of intervention; as such, this effect is not the reason for the couple frustration-regression.

not be reassumed by the subject in the form of the "*je*," that is, in the first person.<sup>30</sup>

"I have been this only in order to become what I can be": if this were not the permanent fulcrum of the subject's assumption of his own mirages, where could one pick out progress here?

Hence the analyst cannot without peril track the subject down into the intimacy of his gestures, nor into that of his static state, except by reintegrating them as silent notes into his narcissistic discourse—and this has been noted very sensitively, even by young practitioners.

The danger involved here is not that of the subject's negative reaction, but much rather that of his capture in an objectification—no less Imaginary than before—of his static state or of his "statue," in a renewed status of his alienation.

Quite the contrary, the art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certitudes until their last mirages have been consumed. And it is in the discourse that, like verse, their resolution must be scanned.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, however empty this discourse may appear, it is only so if taken at its face value: that which justifies the remark of Mallarmé's, in which he compares the common use of Language to the exchange of a coin whose obverse and reverse no longer bear any but worn effigies, and which people pass from hand to hand "in silence." This metaphor is sufficient to remind us that the Word, even when almost completely worn out, retains its value as a *tessera*.<sup>32</sup>

Even if it communicates nothing, the discourse represents the existence of communication; even if it denies the obvious, it affirms that the Word constitutes the Truth; even if it is destined to deceive, here the discourse speculates on faith in testimony.

Moreover, it is the analyst who knows better than anyone else that the question is to understand which "part" of this speech carries the significative term, and this is exactly how he proceeds in the ideal case: taking the recital of an everyday event for an apologue addressed to him that hath ears to hear, a long prosopopoeia for a direct interjection, or on the other hand taking a simple lapsus for a highly complex statement, or even the sigh of a momentary silence for the whole lyrical development it makes up for.

This is consequently a fortunate kind of punctuation, one which con-

fers its meaning on the subject's discourse. This is why the adjournment of a session—which according to present-day technique is simply a chronometric break and, as such, a matter of indifference to the thread of the discourse—plays the part of a metric beat which has the full value of an actual intervention by the analyst for hastening the concluding moments. This fact should lead us to free this act of termination from its routine usage and to employ it for the purposes of the technique in every useful way possible.

It is in this way that regression is able to operate. Regression is simply the actualization in the discourse of the phantasy relations reconstituted by an ego at each stage in the decomposition of its structure. After all, this regression is not a real regression; even in language it manifests itself only by inflections, by turns of phrase, by "*trebuchements si legiers*" that in the extreme case they cannot go beyond the artifice of "baby talk" in the adult. To attribute to regression the reality of a present relation to the object amounts to projecting the subject into an alienating illusion which does no more than echo an alibi of the psychoanalyst.

It is for this reason that nothing could be more misleading for the analyst than to seek to guide himself by a so-called contact experienced with the reality of the subject. This constantly reiterated theme harped on by intuitionist and even by phenomenological psychology has become extended in contemporary usage in a way which is thoroughly symptomatic of the rarefaction of the effects of the Word in the present social context. But its obsessional power becomes flagrantly obvious by being put forward in a relationship which, by its very rules, excludes all real contact.

Young analysts who might nevertheless allow themselves to be taken in by what such a recourse implies of impenetrable gifts will find no better way of retracing their steps than to consider the successful outcome of the actual supervision they themselves undergo. From the point of view of contact with the Real, the very possibility of such supervisory control would become a problem. It is in fact exactly the contrary: here the supervisor manifests a second sight, make no mistake about it, which makes the experience at least as instructive for him as for the person supervised. And this is almost all the more so because the person under his supervision demonstrates in the process fewer of these gifts, which are held by some people to be all the less communicable in proportion

as they themselves make more of a production about their technical secrets.

The reason for this enigma is that the supervised person acts as a filter, or even as a refractor, of the subject's discourse,<sup>33</sup> and in this way there is presented to the supervisor a ready-made stereoscopic picture, making clear from the start the three or four registers on which the musical score constituted by the subject's discourse can be read.

If the supervised person could be put by the supervisor into a subjective position different from that implied by the sinister term *contrôle* (advantageously replaced, but only in English, by "supervision"), the greatest profit he would derive from this exercise would be to learn to maintain himself in the position of second subjectivity into which the situation automatically puts the supervisor.

There he would find the authentic way to reach what the classic formula of the analyst's vague, even absent-minded, attention expresses only very approximately.<sup>34</sup> For it is essential to know toward what that attention is directed; and, as all our labors are there to testify, it is certainly not directed toward an object beyond the Word of the subject, in the way it is for certain analysts who make it a strict rule never to lose sight of that object.<sup>35</sup> If this were to be the way of analysis, then it would surely have recourse to means other than speech—or else this would be the only example of a method which forbade itself the means necessary to its own ends.

The only object within the analyst's range is the Imaginary relation which links him to the subject *qua moi*. And for lack of a way of eliminating it, he can employ it to regulate the yield of his ears, in line with the use which is normally made of them, according to both physiology and the Gospel: having ears *in order not to hear*; in other words, in order to pick up what is to be heard. For he has no other ears, no third or fourth ear to serve as what some have tried to describe as a direct transaudition of the unconscious by the unconscious.<sup>36</sup> I shall deal with the question of this supposed mode of communication later.

I have tackled the function of the Word in analysis from its least rewarding angle, that of the empty Word, where the subject seems to be talking in vain about someone who, even if he were his spitting image, can never become one with the assumption of his desire. I have pointed out in it the source of the growing devaluation of which the

Word has been the object in both theory and technique. I have been obliged to lift up by slow degrees, as if they were a heavy millstone which had fallen on the Word, what can serve only as a sort of "governor" for the movement of analysis: that is to say, the individual psychophysiological factors which are in reality excluded from its dialectic. To consider the goal of psychoanalysis to be to modify the individual inertia of these factors is to be condemned to a fiction of movement or evolution with which a certain trend in psychoanalytic technique seems in fact to be satisfied.

If we now turn to the other extreme of the psychoanalytic experience—if we look into its history, into its casuistry, into the process of the cure—we shall discover that to the analysis of the *hic et nunc* is to be opposed the value of anamnesis as the index and as the source of the progress of the therapy; that to obsessional intrasubjectivity is to be opposed hysterical intersubjectivity; and that to the analysis of resistance is to be opposed symbolic interpretation. Here it is that the realization of the full Word begins.

Let us examine the relation constituted by this realization.

It will be recalled that the method introduced by Freud and Breuer was very early on given the name of the "talking cure" by Anna O., one of Breuer's patients. It was the experience inaugurated with this hysterical patient that led them to the discovery of the pathogenetic event known as the traumatic experience.

If this event was recognized as being the cause of the symptom, it was because the putting into words of the event (in the patient's "stories") determined the lifting of the symptom.<sup>37</sup> Here the term *prise de conscience*,<sup>38</sup> borrowed from the psychological theory that was constructed on this fact, retains a prestige which merits the distrust we hold to be the best attitude towards explanations that do office as self-evident truths. The psychological prejudices of Freud's day were opposed to acknowledging the existence of any reality in verbalization as such, other than its own *flatus vocis*. The fact remains that in the hypnotic state verbalization is disassociated from the *prise de conscience*, and this fact alone is surely enough to require a revision of that conception of its effects.<sup>39</sup>

But why is it that the worthy proponents of the behaviorist *Aufhebung* do not use this as their example to show that they do not have to know

whether the subject has remembered anything whatever from the past? He has simply recounted the event. But we would say that he has verbalized it—or, in order to further develop this term whose echoes in French call to mind a Pandora figure other than the one with the box (in which the term should probably be locked up for good),<sup>40</sup> that he has made it pass into the *verbe*<sup>41</sup> or more precisely into the *epos*<sup>42</sup> by which he brings back into present time the origins of his own person. And he does this in a Language which permits his discourse to be understood by his contemporaries, and which furthermore presupposes their present discourse. Thus it happens that the recitation of the *epos* may include some discourse of olden days in its own archaic or even foreign tongue, or may even pursue its course in present time with all the animation of the actor; but it is like an indirect discourse, isolated inside quotation marks within the thread of the narration, and, if the discourse is played out, it is on a stage implying the presence not only of the chorus, but also of spectators.

Hypnotic remembrance is doubtless a reproduction of the past, but it is above all a spoken representation<sup>43</sup>—and as such implies all sorts of presences. It stands in the same relation to the waking remembrance of what is curiously called in analysis "the material," as the drama in which the original myths of the City State are produced before its assembled citizens stands in relation to a history which may well be made up of materials, but in which a nation today learns to read the symbols of a destiny on the march. In Heideggerian language one could say that both types of remembrance constitute the subject as *gewesend*—that is, as being the one who thus has been. But in the internal unity of this temporalization, the existent marks the convergence of the having-beens. That is to say, other encounters being assumed to have taken place since any particular one whatever of these moments considered as having-beens, there would have issued from it another existent which would cause him to have been in quite a different way.<sup>44</sup>

The ambiguity of the hysterical revelation of the past does not depend so much on the vacillation of its content between the Imaginary and the Real, for it locates itself in both. Nor is it exactly error or falsehood. The point is that it presents us with the birth of Truth in the Word, and thereby brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false. At any rate, that is the most disquieting aspect of the problem.

For the Truth of this revelation lies in the present Word which testi-

fies to it in contemporary reality and which grounds it in the name of that reality. Yet in that reality, it is only the Word which bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past which has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice.

This is the reason why the yardstick of continuity in anamnesis, by which Freud measures the completeness of the cure, has nothing to do with the Bergsonian myth of a restoration of duration in which the authenticity of each instant would be destroyed if it did not sum up the modulation of all the preceding ones. The point is that for Freud it is not a question of biological memory, nor of its intuitionist mystification, nor of the paramnesia of the symptom, but a question of remembrance, that is, of history—balancing the scales in which conjectures about the past cause a fluctuation of the promises of the future upon a single fulcrum: that of chronological certitude. I might as well be categorical: in psychoanalytical anamnesis, it is not a question of reality, but of Truth, because the effect of a full Word is to reorder the past contingent events by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, just as they are constituted by the little liberty through which the subject makes them present.<sup>45</sup>

The meanders of the research pursued by Freud into the case of the Wolf Man confirm these remarks by taking their full sense from them.

Freud insists on a total objectification of proof so long as it is a question of dating the primal scene, but without further ado he takes for granted all the resubjectifications of the event which he considers necessary to explain its effects at every turning point where the subject restructures himself—that is, as many restructurings of the event as take place, as he puts it, *nachträglich*, after the event.<sup>46</sup> What is more, with an audacity bordering on offhandedness, he asserts that he holds it legitimate in the analysis of processes to skip over the time intervals in which the event remains latent in the subject.<sup>46</sup> In short he annuls the *times for understanding* in favor of the *moments of concluding* which precipitate the meditation of the subject towards deciding the sense to attach to the original event.

<sup>45</sup> *Gesammelte Werke* [henceforth abbreviated *GW*], XII, 71; *Cinq psychanalyses*, Presses Universitaires de France [henceforth abbreviated PUF], p. 356, weak translation of the term.

<sup>46</sup> *GW*, XII, 72, n.1, last few lines. The concept of *Nachträglichkeit* is to be found once more stressed in the note. *Cinq psychanalyses*, p. 356, n.1. [*Standard Edition*, XVII, 45, n.1.]

Let it be noted that *temps pour comprendre* and *moment de conclure* are functions which I have defined in a purely logical theorem and which are familiar to my students as having proved extremely favorable to the dialectical analysis through which we guide their steps in the process of a psychoanalysis.<sup>47</sup>

It is certainly this assumption of his history by the subject, insofar as it is constituted by the Word addressed to the other, which makes up the fundamental principle of the new method which Freud called psychoanalysis, and not in 1904—as was taught until recently by an authority who, when he finally threw off the cloak of a prudent silence, appeared on that day to know nothing of Freud except the titles of his works—but in 1896.<sup>48</sup>

In this analysis of the sense of his method, I do not deny, any more than Freud himself did, the psycho-physiological discontinuity manifested by the states in which the hysterical symptom appears, nor do I deny that this symptom may be treated by methods—hypnosis or even narcosis—which reproduce the discontinuity of these states. I simply repudiate any reliance on these states—and as deliberately as Freud forbade himself recourse to them after a certain time—whether to explain the symptom or to cure it.

For if the originality of the analytic method depends on means which it must do without, the fact is that the means which it reserves to itself are sufficient to constitute a domain whose limits define the relativity of its operations.

Its means are those of the Word, in so far as the Word confers a meaning on the functions of the individual; its domain is that of the concrete discourse, insofar as this is the field of the transindividual reality of the subject; its operations are those of history, insofar as history constitutes the emergence of Truth in the Real.

To begin with, in fact, when the subject commits himself to analysis he accepts a position more constituting in itself than all the duties by which he allows himself to be more or less enticed: that of interlocution, and I see no objection in the fact that this remark may leave the listener

<sup>47</sup> In an article easily available to the least exacting French reader, since it [originally] appeared [in French] in the *Revue Neurologique*, whose collected numbers are usually to be found in the libraries of medical-student common rooms. ["L'hérédité et l'étiologie des névroses," *Standard Edition*, III, 143–56.]. [Added 1966:] The blunder denounced here illustrates among others how the said authority measured up to his "leadership."

nonplussed.<sup>48</sup> For I shall take this opportunity of stressing that the allocation of the subject entails an allocutor<sup>J</sup>—in other words, that the locutor<sup>K</sup> is constituted in it as intersubjectivity.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, it is on the fundamental basis of this interlocution, insofar as it includes the response of the interlocutor, that the meaning of what Freud insists on as the restitution of continuity in the subject's motivations makes itself clear to us. An operational examination of this objective shows us in effect that it cannot be satisfied except in the intersubjective continuity of the discourse in which the subject's history is constituted.

For instance, the subject may vaticinate on his history under the influence of one or other of those drugs that anaesthetize the consciousness and which have been christened in our day "Truth serums"—an unerring *contresens* that reveals all the irony inherent in Language. But precisely because it comes to him through an alienated form, even a retransmission of his own recorded discourse, be it from the mouth of his own doctor, cannot have the same effects as psychoanalytic interlocution.

It is therefore in the position of a third term that the Freudian discovery of the unconscious becomes clearly illuminated, revealing its true grounding. This discovery can be simply formulated in the following terms:

The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse in so far as it is transindividual, which is not at the disposition of the subject to re-establish the continuity of his conscious discourse.<sup>50</sup>

This disposes of the paradox presented by the concept of the unconscious if it is related to an individual reality. For to reduce this concept to unconscious drives is to resolve the paradox only by ignoring the experience which shows clearly that the unconscious participates in the functions of ideation, and even of thought—as Freud plainly insisted

<sup>J</sup> Even if he is speaking "off," or "to the wings." He addresses himself to *ce (grand) Autre* [i.e. to that Other with a big 'O'] whose theoretical basis I have consolidated since this was written and which bids a certain *epoché* in the resumption of the term to which I limited myself at that time: that of "intersubjectivity" (1966). [Cf. translator's note 49.]

<sup>K</sup> I borrow these terms from the late Edouard Pichon who, both in the indications he gave for the development of our discipline and in those which guided him in people's dark places, showed a divination that I can attribute only to his practice of semantics.

when, not being able to avoid a conjunction of contrary terms in the expression "unconscious thought,"<sup>51</sup> he bestowed on it the sacramental invocation: *sit venia verbo*. In any case we obey him by throwing the blame, in effect, on the *verbe*, but on that *verbe* which is realized in the discourse which runs from mouth to mouth—like the hidden object in hunt-the-slipper—so as to confer on the act of the subject who receives its message, the sense which makes of this act an act of his history and which confers on him his Truth.

Hence the objection that is raised against the notion of unconscious thought as a contradiction in terms, by a psychology not yet properly freed from formal logic, falls to the ground with the fact of the distinction of the psychoanalytical domain insofar as this field reveals the reality of the discourse in its autonomy. And the psychoanalyst's *eppur si muove!* shares its incidence with Galileo's; an incidence which is not that of factual experience, but that of the *experimentum mentis*.

The unconscious is that chapter of my history which is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter. But the Truth can be found again; it is most often already written down elsewhere. That is to say:

—in monuments: this is my body—that is to say, the hysterical nucleus of the neurosis where the hysterical symptom reveals the structure of a Language and is deciphered like an inscription which, once recovered, can without serious loss be destroyed;

—in archival documents also: these are my childhood memories, just as impenetrable as are such documents when I do not know their source;

—in semantic evolution: this corresponds to the stock of words and acceptations of my own particular vocabulary, as it does to my style of life and to my character;

—in traditions as well, and not only in them but also in the legends which, in a heroicized form, transport my history;

—and lastly, in the traces which are inevitably preserved by the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it, and whose meaning will be re-established by my exegesis.<sup>52</sup>

The student who has the idea that reading Freud in order to understand Freud is preferable to reading Mr. Fenichel—an idea rare enough, it is true, for our teaching to have to busy itself spreading it about—will realize, once he sets about it, that what I have just said has so little

originality, even in its verve, that there appears in it not a single metaphor that Freud's works do not repeat with the frequency of a *leitmotif* in which the very fabric of the work is revealed.

At every instant of his practice from then on, he will be more easily able to grasp the fact that these metaphors, in the manner of the negation whose doubling annuls it, lose their metaphorical dimension, and he will recognize that this is so because he is operating in the characteristic domain of the metaphor, which is but the synonym for the symbolic displacement brought into play in the symptom.<sup>53</sup>

After that he will better be able to form an opinion of the Imaginary displacement which motivates the works of Mr. Fenichel, by measuring the difference in consistency and technical efficacy between reference to the supposedly organic stages of individual development and research into the particular events of a subject's history. The difference is precisely that which separates authentic historical research from the so-called laws of history, of which it can be said that every age finds its own philosopher to diffuse them according to the prevailing scale of values.

This is not to say that there is nothing to be gathered from the different meanings uncovered in the general march of history along the path which runs from Bossuet (Jacques Bénigne) to Toynbee (Arnold), and which is punctuated by the edifices of Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. Everyone knows very well that they are worth as little for directing research into the recent past as they are for making any reasonable presumptions about the events of tomorrow. Besides, they are modest enough to postpone their certitudes until the day after tomorrow and not too prudish either to admit the retouching which permits predictions about what happened yesterday.

If therefore their role is somewhat too slender for the advancement of science, their interest however lies elsewhere: in their very considerable role as ideals. It is this which prompts me to make a distinction between what might be called the primary and the secondary functions of historization.

For to say of psychoanalysis or of history that, considered as sciences, they are both sciences of the particular, does not mean that the facts they deal with are purely accidental, or simply factitious, and that their ultimate value is reducible to the brute aspect of the trauma.

Events are engendered in a primary historization. In other words, history is already producing itself on the stage where it will be played out once it has been written down, both within the subject and outside him.<sup>54</sup>

At such and such a period, some riot or other in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine is lived by its actors as a victory or defeat of the Parlement or the Court; at another, as a victory or defeat of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. And although it is "the peoples" (to borrow an expression from the Cardinal de Retz) who foot its bill, it is not at all the same historical event—I mean that the two events do not leave the same sort of memory behind in men's minds.

This is to say that, with the disappearance of the reality of the Parlement and the Court, the first event will return to its traumatic value, admitting a progressive and authentic effacement, unless its sense is deliberately revived. Whereas the memory of the second event will remain very much alive even under censorship—in the same way that the amnesia of repression is one of the most lively forms of memory—as long as there are men to place their revolt under the command of the struggle for the coming to political power of the proletariat, that is to say, men for whom we can assume that the key words of dialectical materialism have a meaning.

At this point it would be too much to say that I was about to carry these remarks over into the field of psychoanalysis, since they are there already, and since the disentanglement which they bring about in psychoanalysis between the technique of deciphering the unconscious and the theory of instincts—to say nothing of the theory of drives—goes without saying.

What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history—that is to say, we help him to perfect the contemporary historization of the facts which have already determined a certain number of the historical "turning points" in his existence. But if they have played this role, it is already as facts of history, that is to say, insofar as they have been recognized in one particular sense or censored in a certain order.

Thus, every fixation at a so-called instinctual stage is above all a historical scar: a page of shame that is forgotten or undone, or a page of glory which compels. But what is forgotten is recalled in acts, and

undoing-what-has-been-done is opposed to what is said elsewhere, just as obligation perpetuates in the symbol the very mirage in which the subject found himself trapped.

To put it briefly, the instinctual stages, when they are being lived, are already organized in subjectivity. And to put it clearly, the subjectivity of the child who registers as defeats and victories the heroic chronicle of the training of his sphincters, taking pleasure throughout it in the Imaginary sexualization of his cloacal orifices, turning his excremental expulsions into aggressions, his retentions into seductions, and his movements of release into symbols—this subjectivity *is not fundamentally different* from the subjectivity of the psychoanalyst who in order to understand them, tries his skill at reconstituting the forms of love which he calls pregenital.

In other words, the anal stage is no less purely historical when it is lived than when it is reconstituted in thought, nor is it less purely founded in intersubjectivity. On the other hand, seeing it as a momentary halt in what is claimed to be a maturing of the instincts leads even the best minds straight off the track, to the point that there is seen in it the reproduction in ontogenesis of a stage of the animal phylum which is to be looked for among threadworms, even jellyfish—a speculation which, ingenious as it may be when penned by Balint, leads in other places to the most inconsistent daydreams, or even to the folly that goes looking in the *protistum* for the imaginary blueprint of breaking and entering the body, fear of which is supposed to control feminine sexuality. Why not consequently look for the image of the *moi* in the shrimp, under the pretext that both acquire a new carapace after shedding the old?

Somewhere between 1910 and 1920, a certain Jaworski constructed a beautiful system in which the “biological plan” could be found right up to the confines of culture, and which actually sought to furnish the order of Crustacea with a historical counterpart at some period or other of the later Middle Ages, if I remember rightly, under the label of a common florescence of armor—and left no animal form without a human respondent, not excepting molluscs and bedbugs.

Analogy is not metaphor, and the use that philosophers of nature have made of it calls for the genius of a Goethe, but even his example is not encouraging. Nothing is more repugnant to the spirit of our discipline, and it was by deliberately keeping away from analogy that Freud

opened up the right way to the interpretation of dreams and with it, to the concept of analytic symbolism. Analytic symbolism, I insist, is strictly opposed to analogical thinking, whose dubious tradition results in the fact that some people, even in our own ranks, still consider it to be part and parcel of our method.

This is why excessive excursions into the ridiculous must be put to use for their eye-opening value, since by opening our eyes to the absurdity of a theory, they will bring our attention to bear on dangers that have nothing theoretical about them.

This mythology of the maturing of the instincts, built out of selections from the works of Freud, actually engenders spiritual \* problems whose vapor, condensing into nebulous ideals, returns to inundate the original myth with its showers. The best writers set their wits to postulating formulae which will satisfy the requirements of the mysterious “genital love”<sup>65</sup> (there are some notions whose strangeness adapts itself better to the parenthesis of a borrowed term), and they initial their attempt with the avowal of a *non liquet*. However, nobody appears very much disturbed by the *malaise* which results; and it can be seen rather as matter fit to encourage all the Münchhausens of psychoanalytical normalization to pull themselves up by the hair in the hope of attaining the paradise of the full realization of the genital object, indeed of the object, period.

If we, being psychoanalysts, are well placed to be acquainted with the power of words, this is no reason to turn it to account in the sense of the insoluble, nor for “binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laying them on men’s shoulders,” as Christ’s malediction is expressed to the Pharisees in the text of Saint Matthew.

In this way the poverty of the terms in which we try to enclose a subjective\* problem may leave a great deal to be desired for particularly exacting spirits, should they ever compare these terms to those which structured in their very confusion the ancient quarrels centered around Nature and Grace.<sup>1</sup> Thus this poverty may well leave them apprehensive concerning the quality of the psychological and sociological

<sup>1</sup> [Added 1966:] This reference to the aporia of Christianity announced a more precise one in its Jansenist culmen: a reference to Pascal in fact, whose wager, still intact, forced me to take the whole question up again in order to get at what it conceals which is inestimable for psychoanalysis—at this date (June, 1966) still in reserve. [Pascal’s “pari” on the “infini-rien” is to be found in *Pensée* #233 of the Brunschvicq edition, #451 of the Pléiade edition.]

results that one may expect from their use. And it is to be hoped that a better appreciation of the functions of the *logos* will dissipate the mysteries of our phantastic charismata.

To confine ourselves to a more lucid tradition, perhaps we shall understand the celebrated maxim in which La Rochefoucauld tells us that "il y a des gens qui n'auraient jamais été amoureux, s'ils n'avaient jamais entendu parler de l'amour,"<sup>56</sup> not in the Romantic sense of an entirely Imaginary "bringing to realization" of love which would make of this remark a bitter objection on his part, but as an authentic recognition of what love owes to the symbol and of what the Word entails of love.

In any event one has only to go back to the works of Freud to gauge to what secondary and hypothetical place he relegates the theory of instincts. The theory cannot in his eyes stand for a single instant against the least important particular fact of a history, he insists, and the *genital narcissism*<sup>57</sup> which he invokes when he sums up the case of the Wolf Man shows us well enough the disdain in which he holds the constituted order of the libidinal stages. Going even further, he evokes the instinctual conflict in his summing-up only to steer away from it immediately and to recognize in the symbolic isolation of the "I am not castrated" in which the subject asserts himself, the compulsive form in which his heterosexual choice remains riveted, in opposition to the effect of homosexualizing capture undergone by the *moi* traced back to the Imaginary matrix of the primal scene. This is in truth the subjective conflict, in which it is only a question of the vicissitudes of subjectivity in so far as the "*je*" wins and loses against the "*moi*" at the whim of religious catechizing or of the indoctrinating *Aufklärung*, a conflict whose effects Freud made the subject bring to realization through his help before explaining them to us in the dialectic of the Oedipus complex.

It is in the analysis of such a case that one sees clearly that the realization of perfect love is not a fruit of nature but of grace—that is to say, the fruit of an intersubjective accord imposing its harmony on the torn and riven nature which supports it.

"But what on earth is this subject then that you keep battering our understanding with?" finally protests some impatient listener. "Haven't we already learned the lesson from Monsieur de La Palice<sup>58</sup> that everything experienced by the individual is subjective?"

Naïve lips, whose praise will occupy my final days, open yourselves again to hear me. No need to close your eyes. The subject goes a long

way beyond what is experienced "subjectively" by the individual, exactly as far as the Truth he is able to attain, and which perhaps will fall from those lips you have already closed again. Yes, this Truth of his history is not all of it contained in his script, and yet the place is marked there by the painful shocks he feels from knowing only his own lines, and not simply there, but also in pages whose disorder gives him little by way of comfort.

That the unconscious is the discourse of the other<sup>59</sup> is what appears even more clearly than anywhere else in the studies which Freud devoted to what he called telepathy, insofar as it manifests itself in the context of an analytic experience. This is the coincidence of the subject's remarks with facts about which he cannot have information, but which still bestir themselves in the liaisons of another experience in which the same psychoanalyst is the interlocutor—a coincidence moreover constituted most often by an entirely verbal, even homonymic, convergence, or which, if it includes an act, is concerned with an "acting out"<sup>60</sup> by one of the analyst's other patients or by a child of the person being analyzed who is also in analysis.<sup>61</sup> It is a case of resonance in the communicating networks of discourse, an exhaustive study of which would throw light on the analogous facts presented by everyday life.

The omnipresence of the human discourse will perhaps one day be embraced under the open sky of an omniconmunication of its text. This is not to say that the discourse will be any more in harmony with it than now. But that is the field which our experience polarizes in a relation which is only apparently two-way, for any positing of its structure in merely dual terms is as inadequate to it in theory as it is ruinous for its technique.<sup>62</sup>



## II

### *Symbol and Language*

Τὴν ἀρχὴν ὃ τι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν.

(Gospel according to Saint John, VIII, 25.)

"Do crossword puzzles."

(Advice to the young psychoanalyst.)

To pick up the thread of my argument again, let me repeat that it is by the reduction of the history of the particular subject that psychoanalysis touches on relational *Gestalten* which analysis extrapolates into a regular process of development. But I also repeat that neither genetic psychology nor differential psychology, on both of which analysis may throw light, is within its compass, because both require experimental and observational conditions which are related to those of analysis only by homonymy.

To go even further: what stands out as psychology in the rough in common experience (which is confused with sensuous experience only by the professional of ideas)—that is to say, the wonder which surges forth during some momentary suspension of daily care from whatever it is that matches the clashing colors of living beings in a disparity going beyond that of the grotesques of a Leonardo or of a Goya, or the surprise which the density proper to a particular person's skin opposes to the caress of an exploring hand still animated by the thrill of discovery without yet being blunted by desire—all this, it may well be said, is done away with in an experience which cannot be bothered with such caprices and which sets itself obstinately against such mysteries.<sup>63</sup>

A psychoanalysis normally proceeds to its termination without revealing to us very much of what our patient derives in his own right from his particular sensitivity to colors or calamities, from the quickness of his grasp of things or the urgency of his weaknesses of the flesh, from his power to retain or to invent—in short from the vivacity of his tastes.

This paradox is only an apparent one and is not due to any personal deficiency, and if it is possible to base it on the negative conditions of

our experience, it simply presses us a little harder to examine that experience for what there is in it that is positive.

For this paradox does not become resolved in the efforts of certain people—like the philosophers mocked by Plato for being driven by their appetite for the Real to go about embracing trees—who tend to take every episode in which that fleeting reality puts forth its shoots for the lived reaction of which they show themselves so fond. For these are the very people who, making their objective what lies beyond Language, react to our rule of “Don’t touch” by a sort of obsession. Keep going in that direction, and I dare say the last word in the transference reaction will be a reciprocal sniffing between analyst and subject. I am not exaggerating: nowadays a young analyst-in-training, after two or three years of fruitless analysis, can actually hail the long-awaited arrival of the object relation in such an action between him and his subject, and can reap as a result of it the *dignus est intrare*<sup>64</sup> of our approval, guarantee of his abilities.

If psychoanalysis can become a science—for it is not yet one—and if it is not to degenerate in its technique—and perhaps that has already happened—we must get back to the meaning of its experience.

To this end, we can do no better than to return to the work of Freud. For an analyst to point out that he is a practitioner of the technique does not give him sufficient authority, from the fact that he does not understand a Freud III, to challenge the latter in the name of a Freud II whom he thinks he understands. And his very ignorance of Freud I is no excuse for considering the five great psychoanalyses as a series of case studies as badly chosen as they are badly expressed, however marvelous he thinks it that the grain of truth hidden within them ever managed to survive.<sup>m</sup>

Take up the work of Freud again at the *Traumdeutung* to remind yourself that the dream has the structure of a sentence or, rather, to stick to the letter of the work, of a rebus; that is to say, it has the structure of a form of writing, of which the child’s dream represents the primordial ideography and which, in the adult, reproduces the simultaneously phonetic and symbolic use of signifying elements,<sup>65</sup> which can also be found both in the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and in the characters still used in China.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>m</sup> This remark comes from one of the psychoanalysts the most interested in this debate (1966).

But even this is no more than the deciphering of the instrument. The important part begins with the translation of the text, the important part which Freud tells us is given in the [verbal] elaboration of the dream—in other words, in its rhetoric. Ellipsis and pleonasm, hyperbaton or syllepsis, regression, repetition, apposition—these are the syntactical displacements; metaphor, catachresis, antonomasia, allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche—these are the semantic condensations<sup>67</sup> in which Freud teaches us to read the intentions—ostentatious or demonstrative, dissimulating or persuasive, retaliatory or seductive—out of which the subject modulates his oneiric discourse.

We know that he laid it down as a rule that the expression of a desire must always be sought in the dream. But let us be sure what he meant by this. If Freud admits, as the motive of a dream apparently contrary to his thesis, the very desire to contradict him on the part of the subject whom he had tried to convince of his theory,<sup>n</sup> how could he fail to admit the same motive for himself from the moment that, from his having arrived at this point, it was from another that his own law came back to him?

To put it in a nutshell, nowhere does it appear more clearly that man’s desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, we all surely know from experience that from the moment that the analysis becomes engaged in the path of transference—and for us it is the index that this has taken place—each dream of the patient requires to be interpreted as a provocation, a masked avowal, or a diversion, by its relation to the analytic discourse; and that in proportion to the progress of the analysis, his dreams invariably become more and more reduced to the function of elements in the dialogue being realized in the analysis.

In the case of the psychopathology of everyday life,<sup>69</sup> another area consecrated by the work of Freud, it is clear that every parapraxis is a successful discourse—one might call it a nicely turned “phrase”—and that in the *lapsus* it is the muzzling effect or gag which hinges on the

<sup>n</sup> See *Gegenwuschtraume* in the *Traumdeutung*, *GW*, pp. 156–57 and pp. 163–64; *Standard Edition*, IV, 151 and 157–58; French translation, ed. Alcan, p. 140 and p. 146.

Word, and exactly from the right angle for its word to be sufficient to the wise.

But let us go straight to the part where the book goes into chance and the beliefs which it engenders, and especially to the facts where Freud applies himself to showing the subjective efficacy of number associations left to the fortune of a random choice or to the luck of the draw. Nowhere do the dominating structures of the psychoanalytical domain reveal themselves better than in this success of his. And the appeal made in passing to unknown intellectual mechanisms is no more in this instance than his distressed excuse for the total confidence he placed in the symbols, a confidence which falters as the result of being justified beyond all limits.

If for a symptom to be admitted as such in psychoanalytical psychopathology—whether a neurotic symptom or not—Freud insists on the minimum of overdetermination constituted by a double meaning (symptom of a conflict long dead apart from its function in a *no less symbolic* present conflict), and if he has taught us to follow the ascending ramification of the symbolic lineage in the text of the patient's free associations, in order to locate and mark in it the points where its verbal forms intersect with the nodal points of its structure, then it is already completely clear that the symptom resolves itself entirely in a Language analysis, because the symptom itself is structured like a Language, because the symptom is a Language from which the Word must be liberated.<sup>70</sup>

It is to those who have not inquired very far into the nature of Language that the experience of number association will show immediately what must be grasped here—that is, the combinatory power which is the agent of its ambiguities—and they will recognize in this the very main-spring of the unconscious.

In fact, if from the numbers obtained by cutting up the sequence of the figures in the chosen number, if from their uniting by all the operations of arithmetic, even from the repeated division of the original number by one of the numbers split off from it—if the numbers resulting<sup>o</sup>

<sup>o</sup>In order to appreciate the fruit of these procedures, the reader should acquaint himself thoroughly with the notes which I have circulated since this was written, taken from Emile Borel's book *Le Hasard*, notes on the commonplace triviality of what one obtains in this way which is "remarkable," after beginning from some number or other (1966).

from these operations, among all the numbers in the actual history of the subject, prove to be symbolizing numbers, it is because they were already latent in the choice from which they began. And if after this the idea that it was the figures themselves which determined the destiny of the subject is refuted as superstitious, we are forced to admit that it is in the order of existence of their combinations, that is to say, in the concrete Language which they represent, that everything lies which analysis reveals to the subject as his unconscious.

We shall see that philologists and ethnographers reveal enough to us about the sureness of combination which is established in the completely unconscious systems with which they deal \* for them to find nothing surprising in the proposition advanced here.

But if anybody should still be in doubt about the validity of my remarks, I would appeal once more to the testimony of the man who, since he discovered the unconscious, is not entirely without credentials to designate its place; he will not fail us.

For, however neglected by our interest—and for good reason—*le Mot d'Esprit et l'Inconscient*<sup>71</sup> remains the most unchallengeable of his works because it is the most transparent, in which the effect of the unconscious is demonstrated to us in its most subtle confines. And the face which it reveals to us is that of the spirit in the ambiguity conferred on it by Language, where the other side of its regalian power is the "*pointe*"<sup>72</sup> by which the whole of its order is annihilated in an instant—the *pointe*, in fact, where its creative activity unveils its absolute gratuitousness, where its domination over the Real is expressed in the challenge of non-sense, where humour, in the malicious grace of the *esprit libre*, symbolizes a Truth that has not said its last word.

We must accompany Freud through the admirably compelling detours of this book on his promenade in this chosen garden of bitterest love.

Here all is substance, all is pearl.<sup>73</sup> The spirit that lives as an exile in the creation whose invisible support it is, knows that it is at every instant the master capable of annihilating it. Not even the most despised of all the forms of this hidden royalty—haughty or perfidious, dandylike or debonnaire—but Freud can make their secret luster gleam. Stories of that derided Eros figure, and like him born of penury and pain: the marriage broker on his rounds of the ghettos of Moravia at the service of the riffraff whose avidity he discreetly guides—and who suddenly

discomfits his client with the illuminating non-sense of his final reply. "He who lets the truth escape like that," comments Freud, "is in reality happy to throw off the mask."<sup>74</sup>

It is Truth in fact which throws off the mask in his words, but only in order for the spirit to take on another and more deceiving one: the sophistry which is only a stratagem, the logic which in this case is only a decoy, the comic relief itself which tends only to dazzle. The spirit is always somewhere else. "Wit in fact entails such a subjective conditionality . . . : wit is only what I accept as such,"<sup>75</sup> continues Freud, who knows what he is talking about.<sup>76</sup>

Nowhere is the intention of the individual more evidently surpassed by what the subject finds—nowhere does the distinction which I make between the individual and the subject make itself better understood—since not only is it necessary that there have been something foreign to me in what I found for me to take pleasure in it, but it is also necessary that it remain this way for this find to hit its mark.<sup>77</sup> This taking its place from the necessity, so clearly marked by Freud, of the third listener, always supposed, and from the fact that the *mot d'esprit* does not lose its power in its transmission into indirect speech. In short, pointing the amboceptor—illuminated by the pyrotechnics of the "word" exploding in a supreme alacrity—towards the locus of the Other.<sup>78</sup>

There is only one reason for wit to fall flat: the platitude of the Truth which comes out.

Now this concerns our problem directly. The present disdain for research into the language of symbols—which can be seen by a glance at the summaries of our publications before and after the 1920's—corresponds in our discipline to nothing less than a change of object, whose tendency to align itself at the most commonplace level of communication, in order to come into line with the new objectives proposed for the psychoanalytical technique, is perhaps responsible for the rather gloomy balance sheet which the most lucid writers have drawn up of its results.<sup>p</sup>

How would the Word, in fact, be able to exhaust the sense of the Word or, to put it better, with the Oxford logical positivists, the meaning of meaning—except in the act which engenders it? Thus Goethe's reversal of its presence at the origin of things, "In the beginning was the action," is itself reversed in its turn: it was certainly the *verbe* that was in the

<sup>p</sup> See: C. I. Oberndorf, "Unsatisfactory Results of Psychoanalytic Therapy," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XIX, 393-407.

beginning, and we live in its creation, but it is the action of our spirit which continues that creation by constantly renewing it. And we can only turn back on that action by letting ourselves constantly be pushed further ahead by it.<sup>79</sup>

I shall try it myself only in the knowledge that *that* is its way. . . .

No one is supposed to be ignorant of the law; this formula taken direct from the heavy-handed humor of our Code of Justice nevertheless expresses the Truth in which our experience is grounded and which our experience confirms. No man is actually ignorant of it, since the law of man has been the law of Language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts—although it took the detestable *Danaoi* who came and fled over the sea for men to learn to fear deceiving words accompanying faithless gifts. Until that time, for the pacific Argonauts—uniting the islets of the community with the bonds of a symbolic commerce—these gifts, their act and their objects, their erection into signs, and even their fabrication, were so much part of the Word that they were designated by its name.<sup>q</sup>

Is it with its gifts or else with the passwords which accord to them their salutary non-sense that Language, with the law, begins? For these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbol means pact and that they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact which they constitute as signified, as is plainly seen in the fact that the objects of symbolic exchange—pots made to remain empty, shields too heavy to be carried, sheafs of wheat that wither, lances stuck into the ground—all are destined and intended to be useless, if not simply superfluous because of their abundance.<sup>80</sup>

This neutralization of the signifier is the whole of the nature of Language. On this assessment, one could see the beginning of it among sea swallows, for instance, during the mating parade, materialized in the fish which they pass between each other from beak to beak. And if the ethologists are right in seeing in this the instrument of a general setting in movement of the group which could be called the equivalent of a *fête*, they would be completely justified in recognizing it as a symbol.

It can be seen that I do not shrink from seeking the origins of symbolic behavior outside the human sphere. But this is certainly not to be done by way of an elaboration of the sign. It is on this path that Mr.

<sup>q</sup> See, among others: *Do Kamo*, by Maurice Leenhardt, chapters IX and X.

Jules H. Massermann,<sup>f</sup> after so many others, has set off, and I shall stop here for an instant, not only because of the knowing tone which accompanies his proceedings, but also because of the welcome which his work has found among the editors of our official journal. In conformity with a tradition borrowed from employment agencies, they never neglect anything that might provide our discipline with "good references."

Think of it—here we have a man who has reproduced neurosis *ex-ri-men-tal-ly* in a dog tied down to a table, and by what ingenious methods: a bell, the plate of meat which it announces, and the plate of potatoes which arrives instead; you can imagine the rest. He will certainly not be one, at least so he assures us, to let himself be taken in by the "ample ruminations," as he puts it, that philosophers have devoted to the problem of Language. Not him, he's going to grab it from your throat.

We are told that a raccoon can be taught by a judicious conditioning of his reflexes to go to his feeding trough when he is presented with a card on which his menu is listed. We are not told whether it shows the various prices, but the convincing detail is added that if the service disappoints him, he comes back and rips up the card which promised too much, just as an irritated woman might do with the letters of an unfaithful lover (*sic*).

This is one of the supporting arches of the bridge over which the author carries the road which leads from the signal<sup>81</sup> to the symbol. It is a two-way road, and the return trip from the symbol to the signal is illustrated by no less imposing works of art.

For if you associate the projection of a bright light into the eyes of a human subject with the ringing of a bell, and then the ringing alone to the command: "Contract,"<sup>82</sup> you will succeed in getting the subject to make his pupils contract just by giving the order himself, then by muttering it, and eventually just by thinking it—in other words you will obtain a reaction of the nervous system called autonomous because it is usually inaccessible to intentional effects. Thus, if we are to believe this writer, Mr. Hudgins "has created in a group of subjects a highly individualized configuration of related and visceral reactions from the 'idea-symbol':<sup>83</sup> 'Contract,' a response that could be referred back through their individual experiences to an apparently distant source, but in reality

<sup>f</sup> Jules H. Massermann, "Language Behaviour and Dynamic Psychiatry," *JJP* (1944), 1 and 2, pp. 1-8.

basically physiological—in this example, simply the protection of the retina against an excessively bright light." And the author concludes: "The significance of such experiments for psychosomatic and linguistic research does not even need further elaboration."

For my part, I would have been curious to learn whether subjects trained in this way also react to the enunciation of the same syllables in the expressions: "marriage contract," "bridge contract," "breach of contract,"<sup>84</sup> or even to the word "contract" progressively reduced to the articulation of its first syllable: contract, contrac, contra, contr . . . The control experiment required by strict scientific method would then be offered all by itself as the French reader murmured this syllable between his teeth, even though he would have been subjected to no conditioning other than that of the bright light projected on the problem by Mr. Jules H. Massermann. Then I would ask this author whether the effects observed in this way among conditioned subjects still appeared to dispose so easily of further elaboration. For either the effects would not be produced any longer, thus revealing that they do not depend even conditionally on the semanteme, or else they would continue to be produced, posing the question of the limits to be assigned to it.

In other words, they would cause the distinction of signifier and signified, so blithely confused by the author in the English term "idea-symbol," to appear in the very instrument of the word. And without needing to examine the reactions of subjects conditioned by the command "Don't contract," or even by the entire conjugation of the verb "to contract," I could draw the author's attention to the fact that what defines any element whatever of a language as belonging to Language, is that, for all the users of this language, this element is distinguished as such in any given set made up of homologous elements.<sup>85</sup>

The result is that the particular effects of this element of Language are intimately linked to the existence of the set or whole, anterior to any possible liaison with any particular experience of the subject. Considering this last liaison to be exterior to any reference to the first, consists simply in denying in this element the function proper to Language.

This reminder of first principles might perhaps have saved our author, in his unequalled naïveté, from discovering the textual correspondence of the grammatical categories of his childhood in the relationships of reality.

This monument of naïveté, in any case of a kind common enough in

these matters, would not be worth so much attention if it were not the achievement of a psychoanalyst, or rather of someone who fits into his work as if by accident everything produced by a certain tendency in psychoanalysis—in the name of the theory of the ego or of the technique of the analysis of defenses—everything, that is, which is the most contrary to the Freudian experience. In this way the coherence of a sound conception of Language along with the maintenance of this conception is revealed *a contrario*. For Freud's discovery was that of the domain of the incidence in the nature of man of his relations to the Symbolic order and the tracing of their sense right back to the most radical instances of symbolization in being. To misconstrue this Symbolic order<sup>86</sup> is to condemn the discovery to oblivion, and the experience to ruin.

And I affirm—an affirmation that cannot be left out of the serious intent of my present remarks—that it would seem to me preferable to have the raccoon I mentioned sitting in the armchair where, according to our author, Freud's timidity confined the analyst by putting him behind the couch, rather than a "scientist" who discourses on the Word and Language in the way he has done.<sup>87</sup>

For the raccoon, at least, thanks to Jacques Prévert ("une pierre, deux maisons, trois ruines, quatre fossoyeurs, un jardin, des fleurs, un raton-laveur"),<sup>88</sup> has entered the poetic bestiary once and for all and participates as such and in its essence in the commanding function of the symbol. But that being resembling us who professes, as he has done, a systematic failure to recognize that function, banishes himself from everything that can be called into existence by it. From this point on, the question of the place to be assigned to our friend in the classification of nature would seem to me to be simply that of an irrelevant humanism, if his discourse, in its intersection with a technique of the Word which it is our responsibility to watch over, were not in fact too fruitful, even in engendering sterile monstrosities within it. Let it be known therefore, since he also prides himself on braving the reproach of anthropomorphism, that this is the very last term I would use to say that he makes his own being the measure of all things.

Let us return to our symbolic object, which is itself extremely consistent in its matter, even if it has lost the weight of its use, but whose imponderable sense will cause displacements of some weight. Is it there that the law and Language are to be found? Perhaps not yet.

For even if there appeared among the sea swallows some big wheel of the

colony who, by gulping down the symbolic fish before the gaping beaks of the others, were to inaugurate that exploitation of swallow by swallow—a fantasy I once took pleasure in developing—this would not be in any way sufficient to reproduce among them that fabulous history, the image of our own, whose winged epic kept us captive on Anatole France's *Penguin Island*; and there would still be something else needed to create a "hirundinized" universe.

This "something else" completes the symbol and makes Language of it. In order for the symbolic object liberated from its usage to become the word liberated from the *hic et nunc*, the differentiation does not depend on its material quality as sound, but on its evanescent being in which the symbol finds the permanence of the concept.<sup>89</sup>

Through the word—already a presence made of absence—absence itself comes to giving itself a name in that moment of origin whose perpetual recreation Freud's genius detected in the play of the child. And from this pair [of sounds] modulated on presence and absence<sup>90</sup>—a coupling that the tracing in the sand of the single and the broken line of the mantic *kwa* of China would also serve to constitute—there is born a particular language's universe of sense in which the universe of things will come into line.

Through that which takes on body only by being the trace of a nothingness and whose support from that moment on cannot be impaired, the concept, saving the duration of what passes by, engenders the thing.

For it is still not enough to say that the concept is the thing itself, as any child can demonstrate against the scholar. It is the world of words which creates the world of things—the things originally confused in the *hic et nunc* of the all-in-the-process-of-becoming—by giving its concrete being to their essence, and its ubiquity to what has been from everlasting:<sup>91</sup> κτήμα ἐς ἀεί.<sup>92</sup>

Man speaks therefore, but it is because the symbol has made him man. Even if in fact overabundant gifts welcome the stranger who has introduced himself into the group and made himself known, the life of natural groups making up the community is subjected to marriage ties which order the direction and sense of the operation of the exchange of women, and to the reciprocal exchanges of gifts and benefits determined by these marriage ties: just as the Sironga proverb says, a relative by marriage is an elephant's thigh.<sup>93</sup> The marriage tie is presided over by a preferential order whose law implying the kinship names, like Language, is im-

perative for the group in its forms, but unconscious in its structure. In this structure whose harmony or impasses regulate the restricted or generalized exchange discerned in it by the ethnologist, the startled theoretician finds the whole of the logic of combinations: thus the laws of number—that is to say, the laws of the most refined of all symbols—prove to be immanent in the original symbolism. At all events it is the richness of the forms in which are developed what have been called the elementary structures of kinship which make them legible in it. And this gives food for thought: that it is perhaps only our unconsciousness of their permanence which lets us go on believing in the freedom of choice in the so-called complex structures of marriage ties under whose law we live. If statistics have already let us glimpse that this freedom is not exercised in a random manner, it is because a subjective logic orients this freedom in its effects.

This is precisely where the Oedipus complex—insofar as we continue to recognize it as covering the whole field of our experience with its signification<sup>94</sup>—may be said, in this connection, to mark the limits that our discipline assigns to subjectivity: that is to say, what the subject can know of his unconscious participation in the movement of the complex structures of marriage ties, by verifying the symbolic effects in his individual existence of the tangential movement towards incest which has manifested itself ever since the coming of a universal community.

The primordial Law is therefore that which in regulating marriage ties superimposes the kingdom of culture on that of nature abandoned to the law of copulation. The interdiction of incest is only its subjective pivot, revealed by the modern tendency to reduce to the mother and the sister the objects forbidden to the subject's choice, although full licence outside of these is not yet entirely open.

This law, therefore, is revealed clearly enough as identical to an order of Language. For without kinship nominations, no power is capable of instituting the order of preferences and taboos which bind and weave the yarn of lineage down through succeeding generations. And it is indeed the confusion of generations which, in the Bible as in all traditional laws, is accused as being the abomination of the *verbe* and the desolation of the sinner.<sup>95</sup>

We know in fact what ravages a falsified filiation can produce, going as far as the dissociation of the subject's personality, when the constraint of the environment is used to sustain its error. They may be no less

when, as a result of a man having married the mother of the woman of whom he has had a son, the son will have for a brother a child who is his mother's brother. But if he is later adopted—and the case is not invented—by the sympathetic couple formed by a daughter of his father's previous marriage and her husband, he will find himself once again the half-brother of his foster mother, and one can imagine the complex feelings with which he will await the birth of a child who will be in this recurring situation his brother and his nephew at the same time.

As a matter of fact the simple falling out of step produced in the order of generations by a late-born child of a second marriage, in which the young mother finds herself the contemporary of an older brother, can produce similar effects, as we know was the case of Freud himself.

This same function of symbolic identification through which primitive man believes he reincarnates an ancestor with the same name—and which even determines an alternating recurrence of characters in modern man—therefore introduces in subjects exposed to these discordances in the father relation a dissociation of the Oedipus relation in which the constant source of its pathogenetic effects must be seen. Even when in fact it is represented by a single person, the paternal function concentrates in itself both Imaginary and Real relations, always more or less inadequate to the Symbolic relation which constitutes it essentially.

It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the Symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law.<sup>96</sup> This conception permits us to distinguish clearly, in the analysis of a case, the unconscious effects of this function from the narcissistic relations, or even from the Real relations which the subject sustains with the image and the action of the person who incarnates it; and there results from this a mode of comprehension which will tend to have repercussions on the very way in which the interventions of the analyst are conducted. Practice has confirmed its fecundity for me, as well as for the students whom I have introduced to this method. And, both in supervising analyses and in commenting on cases being demonstrated, I have often had the opportunity of emphasizing the harmful confusion engendered by failure to recognize it.

Thus it is the virtue of the *verbe* which perpetuates the movement of the Great Debt whose economics Rabelais, in a famous metaphor, extended to the stars themselves. And we shall not be surprised that the chapter in which, with the macaronic inversion of kinship names, he

presents us with an anticipation of the discoveries of the ethnographers, should reveal in him the substantific divination of the human mystery which I am trying to elucidate here.<sup>97</sup>

Identified with the sacred *hau* or with the omnipresent mana, the inviolable Debt is the guarantee that the voyage on which wives and goods are embarked will bring back to their point of departure in a never-failing cycle other women and other goods, all carrying an identical entity: what Lévi-Strauss calls *symbole zéro*, thus reducing the power of *la Parole* to the form of an algebraic sign.<sup>98</sup>

Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him "par l'os et par la chair";<sup>99</sup> so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairy spirits, the design of his destiny; so total that they give the words which will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts which will follow him right to the very place where he *is* not yet and beyond his death itself; and so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgment where the *verbe* absolves his being or condemns it—except he attain the subjective bringing to realization of being-for-death.<sup>100</sup>

Servitude and grandeur in which the living would be annihilated, if desire did not preserve its part in the interferences and pulsations which the cycles of Language cause to converge on him, when the confusion of tongues takes a hand and when the orders interfere with each other in the tearing apart of the universal work.

But this desire itself, to be satisfied in man, requires that it be recognized, by the accord of the Word or by the struggle for prestige, in the symbol or in the Imaginary.

What is at stake in a psychoanalysis is the advent in the subject of that little reality which this desire sustains in him with respect to the symbolic conflicts and Imaginary fixations as the means of their accord, and our path is the intersubjective experience where this desire makes itself recognized.<sup>101</sup>

From this point on it will be seen that the problem is that of the relationships of the Word and Language in the subject.

Three paradoxes in these relationships present themselves in our domain.

In madness, of whatever nature, we must recognize on the one hand the negative liberty of a Word which has given up trying to make itself

recognized, or what we call an obstacle to transference, and, on the other hand, we must recognize the singular formation of a delusion which—fabulous, fantastic, or cosmological; interpretative, revindicating, or idealist—objectifies the subject in a Language without dialectic.<sup>8,102</sup>

The absence of the Word is manifested here by the stereotypes of a discourse in which the subject, one might say, is spoken rather than speaking:<sup>103</sup> here we recognize the symbols of the unconscious in petrified forms which find their place in a natural history of these symbols next to the embalmed forms in which myths are presented in our story-books. But it is an error to say that the subject takes on these symbols: the resistance to their recognition is no less strong [in psychosis] than in the neuroses when the subject is led into it by an endeavour of the analyst in the process of the cure.<sup>104</sup>

Let it be noted in passing that it would be worthwhile finding out what places in social space our culture has assigned to these subjects, especially as regards their assignment to social duties relating to Language, for it is not unreasonable that there is at work here one of the factors which consign such subjects to the effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discordances which characterize the complex structures of civilization.

The second case is represented by the privileged domain of the psychoanalytic discovery: that is, symptoms, inhibition, and anxiety in the constituent economy of the different neuroses.

Here the Word is driven out of the concrete discourse which orders the subject's consciousness, but it finds its support either in the natural functions of the subject, insofar as an organic stimulus sets off that *béance* of his individual being to his essence, which makes of the illness the introduction of the living to the existence of the subject<sup>105</sup>—or else in the images which organize at the limit of the *Umwelt* and of the *Innenwelt*, their relational structuring.<sup>106</sup>

The symptom is here the signifier of a signified repressed from the

<sup>8</sup> Aphorism of Lichtenberg's: "A madman who imagines himself a prince differs from the prince who is in fact a prince only because the former is a negative prince, while the latter is a negative madman. Considered without their sign, they are alike."

<sup>105</sup> To obtain an immediate subjective confirmation of this remark of Hegel's, it is enough to have seen in the recent [myxomatosis] epidemic a blinded rabbit in the middle of a road, lifting the emptiness of his vision changed into a *look* towards the setting sun: he was human to the point of the tragic.



consciousness of the subject. A symbol written in the sand of the flesh and on the veil of Maia, it participates in Language by the semantic ambiguity which I have already emphasized in its constitution.<sup>107</sup>

But it is a Word in full flight, for the Word includes the discourse of the other in the secret of its cipher.

It was by deciphering this Word that Freud rediscovered the primary language of symbols,<sup>u</sup> still living on in the suffering of civilized man (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*).

Hieroglyphics of hysteria, blazons of phobia, labyrinths of the *Zwangsneurose*—charms of impotence, enigmas of inhibition, oracles of anxiety—talking arms of character,<sup>v</sup> seals of self-punishment, disguises of perversion—these are the hermetic elements that our exegesis resolves, the equivocations that our invocation dissolves, the artifices that our dialectic absolves, in a deliverance of the imprisoned sense, which moves from the revelation of the palimpsest<sup>108</sup> to the given word of the mystery and to the pardon of the Word.<sup>109</sup>

The third paradox of the relation of Language to the Word is that of the subject who loses his meaning and direction in the objectifications of the discourse. However metaphysical its definition may appear, we cannot fail to recognize its presence in the foreground of our experience. For here is the most profound alienation of the subject in our scientific civilization, and it is this alienation that we encounter first of all when the subject begins to talk to us about himself: hence, in order to entirely resolve it, analysis should be conducted to the limits of wisdom.

To give an exemplary formulation of this, I could not find a more pertinent ground than the usage of common speech—pointing out that the “*ce suis-je*” of the time of Villon has become reversed in the “*c’est moi*” of modern man.<sup>110</sup>

The *moi* of modern man, as I have indicated elsewhere, has taken on its form in the dialectical impasse of the *belle âme* who does not recognize his very own *raison d’être* in the disorder that he denounces in the world.<sup>111</sup>

But a way out is offered to the subject for the resolution of that impasse when his discourse is delusion. Communication can validly be established for him in the common task of science<sup>112</sup> and in the posts which it

<sup>u</sup> The lines before and after this term will show what I mean by it.

<sup>v</sup> Reich’s error, to which I shall return, caused him to take armorial bearings for an armor. [See translator’s note 109.]

commands in our universal civilization; this communication will be effective within the enormous objectification constituted by that science, and it will permit him to forget his subjectivity. He will be able to make an efficacious contribution to the common task in his daily work and will be able to furnish his leisure time with all the pleasures of a profuse culture which, from detective novels to historical memoirs, from educational lectures to the orthopedics of group relations, will give him the wherewithal to forget his own existence and his death, at the same time as that to misconstrue the particular sense of his life in a false communication.

If the subject did not rediscover in a regression—often pushed right back to the *stade du miroir*—the enclosure of a stage in which his *moi* contains its Imaginary exploits, there would hardly be any assignable limits to the credulity to which he must succumb in that situation. And this is what makes our responsibility so redoubtable when, along with the mythical manipulations of our doctrine, we bring him one more opportunity to alienate himself, in the decomposed trinity of the ego, the superego, and the id, for example.<sup>113</sup>

Here there is a Language-barrier<sup>114</sup> opposed to the Word, and the precautions against verbalism which are a theme of the discourse of the “normal” man in our culture, merely serve to reinforce its thickness.

It might not be time wasted to measure its thickness by the statistically determined total of pounds of printed paper, miles of record grooves, and hours of radio broadcasting that the said culture produces per head of population in the sectors A, B, and C of its domain. This would be a fine research project for our cultural organizations, and it would be seen that the question of Language does not remain entirely within the domain of the convolutions in which its use is reflected in the individual.

*We are the hollow men*  
*We are the stuffed men*  
*Leaning together*  
*Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!*

and so on.

The resemblance between this situation and the alienation of madness, insofar as the formula given above is authentic—that is, that here the subject is spoken rather than speaking—is obviously the result of the exigency, presupposed by psychoanalysis, that there be a true Word. If this consequence, which pushes the constituent paradoxes of what I am

saying here to their limit, were to be turned against the common sense of the psychoanalytic viewpoint, I would accord to this objection all its pertinence, but only to find my own position confirmed in it—and this by a dialectical return in which I would not be lacking for authorized sponsors, beginning with Hegel's denunciation of "the philosophy of the cranium"<sup>115</sup> and stopping only at Pascal's warning, at the dawn of the historical era of the "*moi*," echoing in these terms: "Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous, que ce serait être fou par un autre tour de folie, de n'être pas fou."<sup>116</sup>

This is not to say, however, that our culture pursues its course in shadows exterior to creative subjectivity. On the contrary, creative subjectivity has not ceased a militant struggle to renew the never-exhausted power of symbols in the human exchange which brings them to the light of day.

To take into account how few subjects support this creation would be to accede to a Romantic viewpoint by confronting what is not equivalent. The fact is that this subjectivity, in whatever domain it appears—in mathematics, in politics, in religion, or even in advertising—continues to animate the whole movement of humanity. And another look, probably no less illusory, would make us accentuate this opposing trait: that its symbolic character has never been more manifest. It is the irony of revolutions that they engender a power all the more absolute in its actions, not because it is more anonymous, as people say, but because it is more reduced to the words which signify it. And more than ever, on the other hand, the force of the churches resides in the Language which they have been able to maintain: an instance, it must be said, that Freud left in the dark in the article where he sketches for us what we would call the collective subjectivities of the Church and the Army.<sup>117</sup>

Psychoanalysis has played a role in the direction<sup>118</sup> of modern subjectivity, and it cannot continue to sustain this role without bringing it into line with the movement in modern science which elucidates it.

This is the problem of the grounding which must assure our discipline its place amongst the sciences: a problem of formalization, in truth very much off on the wrong foot.

For it seems that, caught by the very quirk in the medical mind against which psychoanalysis had to constitute itself, it is with the handicap of being half a century behind the movement of the sciences, like medicine itself, that we are seeking to join up with them again.

It is in the abstract objectification of our experience on fictitious, or even simulated, principles of the experimental method, that we find the effect of prejudices which must first be swept from our domain if we wish to cultivate it according to its authentic structure.

Since we are practitioners of the Symbolic function, it is astonishing that we should turn away from probing deeper into it, to the extent of failing to recognize that it is this function which situates us at the heart of the movement which is now setting up a new order of the sciences, with a new putting in question of anthropology.\*

This new order signifies nothing other than a return to a conception of veritable science whose claims have been inscribed in a tradition beginning with Plato's *Theaetetus*. This conception has become degraded, as we know, in the positivist reversal which, by making the human sciences the crowning glory of the experimental sciences, in actual fact made them subordinate to experimental science. This conception is the result of an erroneous view of the history of science founded on the prestige of a specialized development of the experiment.

But since today the human sciences are discovering once again the age-old conception of science, they are obliging us to revise the classifications of the sciences which we inherited from the nineteenth century, in a sense indicated clearly by the most lucid spirits.

One has only to follow the concrete evolution of the various disciplines in order to become aware of this.

Linguistics can serve us as a guide here, since that is the role it plays in the vanguard of contemporary anthropology, and we cannot possibly remain indifferent to it.

The mathematicized form in which is inscribed the discovery of the *phoneme* as the function of pairs of oppositions formed by the smallest discriminate elements capable of being distinguished in the semantic structure,<sup>119</sup> leads us to the very grounding in which the last of Freud's doctrines designates the subjective sources of the Symbolic function in a vocalic connotation of presence and absence.

And the reduction of every language to the group of a very small number of these phonemic oppositions, since it prepares the way for an equally rigorous formalization of its most complicated morphemes, puts within our reach a precisely defined access to our own field.\*

It is up to us to make use of these advances to discover their effects in the domain of psychoanalysis, just as ethnography—which is on a line

parallel to our own—has already done for its own by deciphering myths according to the synchrony of mythemes.<sup>120</sup>

Isn't it striking that Lévi-Strauss, in suggesting the implication of the structures of Language with that part of the social laws which regulate marriage ties and kinship, is already conquering the very terrain in which Freud situates the unconscious? <sup>w</sup>

From now on, it is impossible not to make a general theory of the symbol the axis of a new classification of the sciences where *les sciences de l'homme* will once more take up their central position as sciences of subjectivity. Let me indicate its basic principle, which nevertheless still calls for continuing elaboration.

The Symbolic function presents itself as a double movement within the subject: man makes an object of his action, but only in order to restore to this action in due time its place as a grounding. In this equivocation, operating at every instant, lies the whole process of a function in which action and knowledge alternate.<sup>x</sup>

Two examples, one borrowed from the classroom, the other from the very quick of our epoch:

—the first, mathematical: phase one, man objectifies in two cardinal numbers two collections he has counted; phase two, with these numbers he realizes the act of adding them up (cf. the example cited by Kant in the introduction to the transcendental aesthetic, section IV, in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*);

—the second, historical: phase one, the man who works at the level of production in our society considers himself to rank amongst the proletariat; phase two, in the name of belonging to it, he joins in a general strike.

If these two examples come from areas which, for us, are the most contrasted in the domain of the concrete—the first involving an operation always open to a mathematical law, the second, the brazen face of capitalist exploitation—it is because, although they seem to come from a long way apart, their effects come to constitute our subsistence, and precisely by meeting each other in the concrete in a double inversion or

<sup>w</sup> See: Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Language and the Analysis of Social Laws," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (April-June, 1951), pp. 155-63. [A French adaptation of the original article is published in *Anthropologie Structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958), of which there is an English translation.]

<sup>x</sup> The last four paragraphs have been rewritten (1966).

reversal: the most subjective of the sciences having forged a new reality, and the shadow of social distribution arming itself with a symbol in action.<sup>121</sup>

Here the opposition which is traced between the exact sciences and those for which there is no reason to decline the appellation of "conjectural" seems no longer an admissible one—for lack of any grounds for that opposition.<sup>7</sup>

For exactitude is to be distinguished from Truth, and conjecture does not exclude rigorous precision. And even if experimental science gets its exactitude from mathematics, its relationship to nature does not remain any less problematic.

If our link to nature in fact urges us to wonder poetically whether it is not its very own movement that we rediscover in our science, in

. . . *cette voix*  
*Qui se connaît quand elle sonne*  
*N'être plus la voix de personne*  
*Tant que des ondes et des bois,*<sup>122</sup>

it is clear that our physics is simply a mental fabrication whose instrument is the mathematical symbol.

For experimental science is not so much defined by the quantity to which it is in fact applied, as by the measurement which it introduces into the Real.

This can be seen in relation to the measurement of time without which experimental science would be impossible. Huyghens' clock, which alone gave experimental science its precision, is only the organ of the realization of Galileo's hypothesis on the equigravity of bodies—that is, the hypothesis on uniform acceleration which confers its law, since it is the same, on any kind of fall.

It is amusing to point out that the instrument was completed before it had been possible to verify the hypothesis by observation, and that by this fact the clock rendered the observation superfluous at the same time as it offered it the instrument of its precision.<sup>8</sup>

But mathematics can symbolize another kind of time, notably the

<sup>7</sup> These two paragraphs have been rewritten (1966).

<sup>8</sup> On the Galilean hypothesis and Huyghens' chronometer, see: Alexandre Koyré, "An Experiment in Measurement," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 97 (April, 1953). (The last two paragraphs of my text were rewritten in 1966.)

intersubjective time which structures human action, whose formulae are beginning to be given us by the theory of games, also called strategy, but which it would be better to call *stochastics*.

The author of these lines has tried to demonstrate in the logic of a sophism the temporal sources through which human action, insofar as it orders itself according to the action of the other, finds in the scansion of its hesitations the advent of its certitude; and in the decision which concludes it, this action gives to that of the other—which it includes from that point on—along with its sanction as regards the past, its sense-to-come.

In this article it is demonstrated that it is the certitude anticipated by the subject in the *temps pour comprendre* which, by the haste which precipitates the *moment de conclure*, determines in the other the decision which makes of the subject's own movement error or Truth.

It can be seen by this example how the mathematical formalization\* which inspired Boolean logic, to say nothing of the theory of sets, can bring to the science of human action that structure\* of intersubjective time which is needed by psychoanalytic conjecture in order to secure itself in its own scientific rigor.

If on the other hand the history of the technique of historians shows that its progress defines itself in the ideal of an identification of the subjectivity of the historian with the constituting subjectivity of the primary historization in which the event is humanized, it is clear that psychoanalysis finds its precise bearings here: that is to say, in knowledge, as realizing this ideal, and in [curative] efficacy, as finding its justification there. The example of history will also cause to dissipate like a mirage that recourse to the lived reaction which obsesses our technique as it does our theory, for the fundamental historicity of the event which we retain suffices to conceive the possibility of a subjective reproduction of the past in the present.

Furthermore, this example makes us realise how psychoanalytic regression implies that progressive dimension of the subject's history that Freud emphasizes as lacking in the Jungian concept of neurotic regression, and we understand how the experience itself renews this progression by assuring its relief.

Finally, the reference to linguistics will introduce us to the method which, by distinguishing synchronic from diachronic structurings in Language, will allow us to comprehend better the different value or

force which our Language takes on in the interpretation of resistances and transference, or even to differentiate the effects proper to repression and the structure of the individual myth in obsessional neurosis.

The list of the disciplines named by Freud as those which should make up the disciplines accessory to an ideal Faculty of Psychoanalysis is well known. Besides psychiatry and sexology, we find: "the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religions, literary history, and literary criticism."<sup>123</sup>

This whole group of subjects, determining the *cursus* of an instruction in technique, are normally inscribed within the epistemological triangle that I have described, and which would provide with its method an advanced level of instruction in analytical theory and technique.

For my part, I should be inclined to add: rhetoric, dialectic in the technical sense that this term assumes in the *Topics* of Aristotle, grammar, and, that supreme pinnacle of the esthetics of Language, poetics, which would include the neglected technique of the witticism.

And if these subject headings tended to evoke somewhat outmoded echoes for some people, I would not be unwilling to accept them, as constituting a return to our sources.

For psychoanalysis in its early development, intimately linked to the discovery and to the study of symbols, was on the way to participating in the structure of what was called in the Middle Ages, "the liberal arts." Deprived, like them, of a veritable formalization, psychoanalysis became organized, like them, in a body of privileged problems, each one promoted by some fortunate relation of man to his own measure and taking on from this particularity a charm and a humanity which in our eyes might well make up for the somewhat recreational aspect of their presentation. Let this aspect of the early development of psychoanalysis not be disdained; it expresses in fact no less than the re-creation of the sense of man during the arid years of scientism.

These aspects of the early years should be all the less disdained since psychoanalysis has not raised the level by setting off along the false paths of a theorization contrary to its dialectical structure.

Psychoanalysis will not lay down a scientific grounding for its theory or for its technique except by formalizing in an adequate fashion the essential dimensions of its experience which, along with the historical theory of the symbol, are: intersubjective logic and the temporality of the subject.

### III

## *Interpretation and Temporality*

*Entre l'homme et l'amour,*

*Il y a la femme.*

*Entre l'homme et la femme,*

*Il y a un monde.*

*Entre l'homme et le monde,*

*Il y a un mur.<sup>124</sup>*

(Antoine Tudal in *Paris en l'an 2000*.)

*Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβύλλα τί θέλεις, respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.<sup>125</sup>*

(*Satyricon*, XLVIII.)

Bringing the psychoanalytic experience back to the Word and to Language as its grounding is of direct concern to its technique. Psychoanalysis may not actually be drifting off into the ineffable, but there has undoubtedly been a tendency in this direction, always along the one-way street of separating analytical interpretation more and more from the principle it depends on. Any suspicion that this deviation of psychoanalytical practice is the motive force behind the new aims to which psychoanalytical theory is being opened up is consequently well-founded.\*

If we look at the situation a little more closely, we can see that the problems of symbolic interpretation began by intimidating our little group before becoming embarrassing to it. Because of the way he informed his patients about psychoanalytical theory—a heedlessness from which his successors seem in fact to proceed—the successes obtained by Freud are now a matter of astonishment, and the display of indoctrination he put on in the cases of Dora, the Rat Man, and the Wolf Man does not exactly leave us unscandalized. True, our cleverer friends do not shrink from doubting whether the technique employed in these cases was really the right one. This disaffection in the psychoanalytic movement can in truth be ascribed to a confusion of tongues, and, in a recent conversation with me, the personality the most representative of its present hierarchy made no secret about it.

It is worth noting that this confusion continues to grow. Each analyst presumes to consider himself the one chosen to discover the conditions of a completed objectification in our experience, and the enthusiasm which greets these theoretical attempts seems to grow more fervent the more dereistic they prove to be.

It is certain that the principles of the analysis of resistances, however well founded they may be, have in practice been the occasion of a growing *méconnaissance* of the subject, for want of being understood in their relation to the intersubjectivity of the Word.

If we follow the proceedings of the first seven sessions of the case of the Rat Man, and they are reported to us in full, it seems highly improbable that Freud did not recognize the resistances as they came up, and precisely in the places where our modern technicians drill into us that he overlooked them, since it is Freud's own text, after all, which permits them to pinpoint them. Once again the Freudian text manifests that exhaustion of the subject which continues to amaze us, and no interpretation has so far worked out all its resources.

I mean that Freud not only let himself be trapped into encouraging his subject to go beyond his initial reticence, but that he also understood perfectly the seductive power of this exercise in the Imaginary. To be convinced of this, it is enough to refer to the description which he gives us of his patient's expression during the painful recital of the represented torture which supplied the theme of his obsession, that of the rat forced into the victim's anus: "His face," Freud tells us, "reflected the horror of a pleasure of which he was unaware."<sup>126</sup> The effect of the repetition of this account at that present moment did not escape Freud, any more than did the identification of the psychoanalyst with the "cruel captain" who had forced this story to enter the subject's memory, nor therefore the import of the theoretical clarifications of which the subject required to be guaranteed before pursuing his discourse.

Far from interpreting the resistance at this point, however, Freud astonishes us by acceding to his request, and to such an extent in fact that he seems to be taking part in the subject's game.

But the extremely approximative character of the explanations with which Freud gratifies him, so approximative as to appear somewhat crude, is sufficiently instructive: at this point it is clearly not so much a question of doctrine, nor even of indoctrination, but rather of a symbolic gift of the Word, pregnant with a secret pact, in the context of the

Imaginary participation which includes it and whose import will reveal itself later in the symbolic equivalence that the subject institutes in his thought between rats and the florins with which he remunerates the analyst.

We can see therefore that Freud, far from failing to recognize the resistance, uses it as a propitious predisposition for the setting in movement of the resonances of the Word, and he conforms, as far as he can, to the first definition he gave of resistance,<sup>127</sup> by making use of it to implicate the subject in his message. In any case he will change tack abruptly from the moment he sees that, as a result of being carefully manipulated, the resistance is turning towards maintaining the dialogue at the level of a conversation in which the subject would from then on be able to perpetuate his seduction while maintaining his evasion.

But we learn that analysis consists in playing in all the multiple keys of the orchestral score which the Word constitutes in the registers of Language and on which depends the overdetermination [of the symptom], which has no meaning except in that order.<sup>128</sup>

And at the same time we discover the source of Freud's success. In order for the analyst's message to respond to the profound interrogation of the subject, it is necessary for the subject to hear and understand it as the response which is particular to him; and the privilege which Freud's patients enjoyed in receiving its good Word from the very lips of the man who was its annunciator, satisfied this exigency in them.

Let us note in passing that in the case of the Rat Man the subject had had an advance taste of it, since he had glanced over the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, then fresh off the presses.

This is not to say that this book is very much better known today, even by analysts, but the popularization of Freud's ideas, which have passed into the common consciousness, their collision with what we call the Language barrier, would deaden the effect of our Word, if we were to give it the style of Freud's remarks to the Rat Man.

But it is not a question of imitating him. In order to rediscover the effect of Freud's Word, it is not to its terms that we shall have recourse, but to the principles which govern it.

These principles are none other than the dialectic of the consciousness-of-self, as it is brought into realization from Socrates to Hegel, starting from the ironic presupposition that all that is rational is real, eventually to be precipitated into the scientific judgment that all that is real is

rational.<sup>129</sup> But Freud's discovery was to demonstrate that this verifying process<sup>130</sup> authentically attains the subject only by decentering him from the consciousness-of-self, in the axis of which the Hegelian reconstruction of the phenomenology of the spirit maintained it: that is, that this discovery renders even more decrepit any pursuit of the *prise de conscience* which, beyond its status as a psychological phenomenon, cannot be inscribed within the conjuncture of the particular moment which alone gives body to the universal and in default of which it vanishes into generality.\*<sup>131</sup>

These remarks define the limits within which it is impossible for our technique to fail to recognize the structuring moments of the Hegelian phenomenology: in the first place the master-slave dialectic, or the dialectic of the *belle âme* and of the law of the heart, and generally everything which permits us to understand how the constitution of the object is subordinated to the bringing to realization of the subject.

But if there still remains something prophetic in Hegel's insistence on the fundamental identity of the particular and the universal, an insistence which gives the measure of his genius, it is certainly psychoanalysis which supplies it with its paradigm by revealing the structure in which that identity comes to realization as disjoined from the subject, and without appealing to tomorrow.

Let me simply say that this is what leads me to object to any reference to totality in the individual, since it is the subject who introduces division into the individual, as well as into the collectivity which is his equivalent. Psychoanalysis is properly that which reveals both the one and the other to be simply mirages.

This would seem to be something that could no longer be forgotten, if it were not precisely the teaching of psychoanalysis that it is forgettable—concerning which we find, by a return more legitimate than it is believed to be, that confirmation comes from psychoanalysts themselves, from the fact that their “new tendencies” represent this forgetting.

For if on the other hand Hegel is precisely what we needed to confer a meaning other than that of stupor on our so-called analytic neutrality,<sup>132</sup> this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from the elasticity of the Socratic maieutics or “art of midwifery,” or even from the fascinating technical procedure by which Plato presents it to us—be it only by our experiencing in Socrates and in his desire [to know] the still-intact enigma of the psychoanalyst, and by situating in relationship

to the Platonic skopia our own relationship to Truth—in this case, however, in a way which would respect the distance separating the reminiscence that Plato came to presuppose as necessary for any advent of the idea, from the exhaustion of being which consumes itself in the Kierkegaardian repetition.<sup>aa,133</sup>

But there is also a historical difference between Socrates' interlocutor and ours which is worth examining. When Socrates relies on an artisan reason which he can extract equally well from the discourse of the slave, it is in order to give authentic masters access to the necessity of an order which makes short work of their power, and Truth of the master words of the city.<sup>134</sup> But we analysts have to deal with slaves who think they are masters, and who find in a Language whose mission is universal, the support of their servitude along with the bonds of its ambiguity. So much so that, as I might humorously put it, our goal is to reinstate in them the sovereign liberty displayed by Humpty Dumpty when he reminds Alice that after all he is the master of the signifier, even if he isn't the master of the signified in which his being took on its form.

We therefore invariably rediscover our double reference to the Word and to Language. In order to liberate the subject's Word, we introduce him into the Language of his desire, that is, into the *primary Language* in which, beyond what he tells us of himself, he is already talking to us unbeknownst to him,<sup>135</sup> and in the symbols of the symptom in the first place.

In the symbolism brought to light in analysis, it is certainly a question of a Language. This Language, corresponding to the playful wish which can be found in one of Lichtenberg's aphorisms, has the universal character of a language which could make itself understood in all other languages, but at the same time, since it is the Language which seizes desire at the very moment in which it becomes human desire by making itself recognized, it is absolutely particular to the subject.

*Primary Language*, I say, by which I do not mean “primitive language,” since Freud, whose feat in this total discovery merits comparison with Champollion's, deciphered it in its entirety in the dreams of our contemporaries. Moreover, the essential domain of this Language was authoritatively defined by one of the earliest pioneers associated with this work, and one of the few to have brought anything new to it: I

<sup>aa</sup> I have fully developed these indications as the opportunity presented itself (1966). Four paragraphs rewritten.

mean Ernest Jones, the last survivor of those to whom the seven rings of the master were given and who attested by his presence in the highest places of an international organization that they were not reserved simply for bearers of relics.

In a fundamental paper on symbolism,<sup>bb</sup> Dr. Jones points out near page 15 that although there are thousands of symbols in the sense that the term is understood in analysis, all of them refer to the body itself, to kinship relations, to birth, to life, and to death.

This truth, recognized here as a fact, permits us to understand that, although the symbol in psychoanalytical terms is repressed<sup>136</sup> into the unconscious, it carries in itself no index whatsoever of regression, or even of immaturity. For it to induce its effects in the subject, it is enough that it make itself heard, since these effects operate without his being aware of it—as we admit in our daily experience, explaining many reactions of normal as well as of neurotic subjects by their response to the symbolic sense of an act, of a relation, or of an object.

There is therefore no doubt that the analyst can play on the power of the symbol by evoking it in a carefully calculated fashion in the semantic resonances of his remarks.

This is surely the way for a return to the use of symbolic effects in a renewed technique of interpretation in analysis.

In this regard, we could take note of what the Hindu tradition teaches about *dhvani*,<sup>cc</sup> in the sense that this tradition brings out that it is proper to the Word to cause to be understood what it does not say.<sup>137</sup> The tradition illustrates this by a tale whose ingenuousness, which appears to be the usual thing in these examples, shows itself humorous enough to induce us to penetrate the Truth which it conceals.

A young girl, it begins, is waiting for her lover on the bank of a stream when she sees a Brahmin coming along towards her. She runs to him and exclaims in the warmest and most amiable tones: "How lucky it is that you came by today! The dog which used to frighten you

<sup>bb</sup> "The Theory of Symbolism," *British Journal of Psychology*, IX, 2. Reprinted in his *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* [(London, 5th ed., 1948). See the article: "A la mémoire d'Ernest Jones: Sur sa théorie du symbolisme," *La Psychanalyse*, V (1960), pp. 1-20; *Ecrits*, pp. 697-717].

<sup>cc</sup> The reference is to the teaching of Abhinavagupta (tenth century). See: Dr. Kanti Chandra Pandey, "Indian Esthetics," *Chowkamba Sanskrit Series, Studies*, Vol. II, Benares, 1950.

by its barking will not be along this riverbank again, for it has just been devoured by a lion which is often seen around here. . . ."

The absence of the lion can thus have as much of an effect as his spring would have were he present, for the lion only springs once, says the proverb appreciated by Freud.<sup>138</sup>

The *primary* character of symbols in fact brings them close to those numbers out of which all the others are compounded, and if they therefore underlie all the semantemes of language, we shall be able to restore to the Word its full value of evocation by a discreet search for their interferences, using as our guide a metaphor whose symbolic displacement will neutralize the second senses of the terms which it associates.<sup>139</sup>

This technique would require for its teaching as well as for its learning a profound assimilation of the resources of one's own language, and especially of those which are concretely realized in its poetic texts. It is well known that Freud was in this position in relation to German literature, as well as to Shakespeare's dramatic works by virtue of a translation of unequalled quality. Every one of his works bears witness to it, at the same time as the continual recourse he had to it, no less in his technique than in his discovery. Not to omit his knowledge of the ancient classics, his up-to-date initiation into folklore, and his interested participation in the conquests of contemporary humanism in the domain of ethnography.

It might well be demanded of the practitioner of analysis not to denigrate any attempt to follow Freud along this road.

But the tide is against us. It can be measured by the condescending attention paid to the "wording,"<sup>140</sup> as if to some novelty; and the English morphology of the term gives a subtle enough support to a notion still difficult to define, for people to make a point of using it.

What this notion masks, however, is not exactly encouraging when an author<sup>dd</sup> is amazed by the fact of having obtained an entirely different result in the interpretation of one and the same resistance by the use, "without conscious premeditation," he emphasizes, of the term "need for love"<sup>141</sup> instead and in the place of "demand for love,"<sup>142</sup> which

<sup>dd</sup> Ernst Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XX, No. 1 (January, 1951), pp. 15-29, in particular the passage quoted on pp. 27-28. [For further commentary on this article, see the "Réponse au commentaire de J. Hyppolite" (1956), pp. 52-58.]



he had first put forward, without seeing anything deeper in it (as he emphasizes himself). If the anecdote is to confirm this reference of the interpretation to the "ego psychology" in the title of the article, it is rather, it seems, a reference to the "ego psychology" of the analyst, insofar as this interpretation makes shift with such a weak use of English that this writer can push his practice of analysis to the limits of a nonsensical stuttering.<sup>ee</sup>

The fact is that "need" and "demand" have a diametrically opposed sense for the subject, and to hold that their use can be confused even for an instant amounts to a radical failure to recognize the "intimation" of the Word.<sup>143</sup>

For in its symbolizing function the Word is moving towards nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link which it establishes with the one who emits it—in other words, by introducing an effect of the signifier.\*

This is why it is necessary for us to return once more to the structure of communication in Language\* and to dissipate once and for all the mistaken notion of Language as a system of signs,<sup>144</sup> a source in this domain of confusions of the discourse as well as of malpractice of the Word.

If the communication of Language is conceived as a signal by which the sender informs the receiver of something by means of a certain code, there is no reason why we should not give as much credence and even more to any other sign when the "something" in question is of the individual: there is even every reason for us to give preference to any mode of expression which comes close to the natural sign.

It is in this way that the technique of the Word has fallen into discredit among us. We can be seen in search of a gesture, a grimace, an attitude, a moment of mimicry, a movement, a shudder, nay, an arrestation of habitual movement; shrewd as we are, nothing can now stop us from letting our bloodhounds off the leash to follow these tracks.

I shall show the insufficiency of the conception of Language-as-a-sign by the very manifestation which best illustrates it in the animal kingdom, a manifestation which, if it had not recently been the object of an authentic discovery, it seems it would have been necessary to invent for this purpose.

<sup>ee</sup> Paragraph rewritten (1966).

It is now admitted generally that when the honeybee returns to the hive from his foraging expedition, he transmits to his companions by two sorts of dance instructions about the existence of nectar-bearing flowers and their relative distance, near or far, from the hive. The second type of dance is the most remarkable, for the plane in which the bee traces the figure-of-eight curve which has caused it to be called the "wagging dance,"<sup>145</sup> and the frequency of the figures executed within a given time, designate exactly the direction to be followed, determined in relation to the inclination of the sun (on which bees are able to take a fix in all weathers, thanks to their sensitivity to polarized light) on the one hand, and on the other, the distance, up to several miles, at which the source of nectar may be found. And the other bees respond to this message by setting off immediately for the designated spot.

It took some ten years of patient observation for Karl von Frisch to decode this mode of message, for it is certainly a question of a code, or of a system of signaling, whose generic character alone forbids us to qualify it as conventional.<sup>146</sup>

But is it necessarily a Language? We can say that it is distinguished from a Language precisely by the fixed correlation of its signs to the reality which they signify. For in a Language, signs take on their value from their relationships to each other in the lexical sharing-out of semantemes as much as in the positional, or even flectional, use of morphemes, in sharp contrast to the fixity of the coding used by bees. And the diversity of human languages takes on its full value from this enlightening discovery.

What is more, while the message in the mode described here determines the action of each *socius*, it is never retransmitted by him. This means that the message remains fixed in its function as a relay of the action from which no subject detaches it as a symbol of communication itself.<sup>ff</sup>

The form alone in which Language is expressed defines subjectivity. Language says: "You will go such and such a way, and when you see

<sup>ff</sup> This for the use of whoever can still understand it, after going to Littré to look for the justification of a theory which makes of the *parole* an "action beside," by the translation which Littré does in fact give of the Greek *parabole* (but why not "action towards"?) without having noticed at the same time that if this word always designates what it means, it is because of ecclesiastical usage which since the tenth century, has reserved the word *verbe* for the Logos incarnate.

such and such, you will turn off in such and such a direction." In other words, it refers itself to the discourse of the other. As such it is enveloped in the highest function of the Word, inasmuch as the Word commits its author by investing the person to whom it is addressed with a new reality, as for example, when by a "You are my wife," a subject marks himself with the seal of wedlock.\*

This is in fact the essential form from which every human Word derives rather than the form at which it arrives.

Hence the paradox by which one of my most penetrating listeners, when I began to make my views known on analysis as dialectic, thought he could oppose my position by a remark which he formulated in the following terms: "Human Language (according to you) constitutes a communication in which the sender receives his own message back from the receiver in an inverted form." This was an objection that I had only to reflect on for a moment before recognizing that it carried the stamp of my own thinking—in other words, that the Word always subjectively includes its own reply,<sup>147</sup> that Pascal's "Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé"<sup>148</sup> simply confirms the same Truth in different words, and that this is the reason why, in the paranoiac refusal of recognition, it is in the form of a negative verbalization that the inavowable feeling comes to the point of surging forth in the persecutory "interpretation."

Furthermore, when you congratulate yourself on having met someone who speaks the same Language as you do, you do not mean that you meet with him in the discourse of everybody, but that you are united to him by a special form of Word.

Thus the antinomy immanent to the relations of the Word and Language becomes clear. As Language becomes more functional, it becomes improper for the Word, and as it becomes too particular to us, it loses its function as Language.

One is aware of the use made in primitive traditions of secret names in which the subject identifies his own person or his gods, to the point that to reveal these names is to lose himself or to betray these gods; and the confidences of our subjects, as well as our own memories, teach us that it is not at all rare for children spontaneously to rediscover the virtue of such a usage.

Finally, it is by the intersubjectivity of the "we" which it takes on that the value of a Language as Word is measured.

By an inverse antinomy, it can be observed that the more the duty of

Language becomes neutralized by its moving closer to information, the more Language is imputed to be laden with *redundancies*. This notion of redundancy in Language came from research which was all the more precise because a vested interest was involved, having been prompted by the economic problem of long-distance communication, and in particular that of the possibility of carrying several conversations at once on a single telephone line. It can be asserted that a substantial portion of the phonetic material\* is superfluous to the realization of the communication actually sought.<sup>149</sup>

This is highly instructive for us,<sup>\*\*</sup> since what is redundant as far as information is concerned is precisely that which does duty as resonance in the Word.

Here the function of Language is not to inform but to evoke.

What I seek in the Word is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name which he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.

I identify myself in Language, but only by losing myself in it like an object.\* What is realized in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming.

If I now place myself in front of the other to question him, there is no cybernetic computer imaginable that can make a reaction out of what the response will be. The definition of response as the second term in the circuit "stimulus-response" is simply a metaphor sustained by the subjectivity imputed to the animal, a subjectivity which is then glossed over in the physical schema to which the metaphor reduces it. This is

\*\* Every Language to its own taste in transmission, and since the legitimacy of such research is founded on its success, nothing forbids us to draw a moral from it. Consider, for example, the maxim pinned to the prefatory note as an epigraph. Since it is so laden with redundancies, its style may possibly appear a little flat to you. But lighten it of them, and its audacity will get the enthusiasm it deserves: "Parfaupe ouclaspa nannanbryle anaphi ologi psysocline ixispad anlana égnia kune n'rbiol' ô blijouater têtumaine ennoucoņ . . ." There we have the purity of its message finally laid bare. There meaning raises its head, there the avowal of being outlines itself, and our victorious *esprit* bequeaths to the future its immortal imprint.

what I have called putting the rabbit into the hat so as to be able to pull it out again later. But a reaction is not a reply.

If I press an electric button and a light goes on, there is no response except for *my* desire. If in order to obtain the same result I must try a whole system of relays whose correct position is unknown to me, there is no question except as concerns my anticipation, and there will not be one any longer, once I have learned enough about the system to operate it without mistakes.

But if I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I choose to give him, I intimate to him the subjective function that he will take on again in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate this function.

Henceforth the decisive function of my own reply appears, and this function is not, as has been said, simply to be received by the subject as acceptance or rejection of his discourse, but really to recognize him or to abolish him as subject. Such is the nature of the analyst's *responsibility* whenever he intervenes by means of the Word.

Moreover, the problem of the therapeutic effect of inexact interpretation posed by Mr. Edward Glover<sup>hh</sup> in a remarkable paper has led him to conclusions where the question of exactitude moves into the background. In other words, not only is every spoken intervention received by the subject in terms of his (and its) structure, but the intervention takes on a structuring function in him in proportion to its form. It is precisely the scope of nonanalytic psychotherapy, and even of the most ordinary medical "prescriptions," to be interventions that could be described as obsessional systems of suggestion, as hysterical suggestions of a phobic character, or even as persecutory supports, each one taking its particular character from the sanction which it gives to the subject's failure to recognize his own reality.

The Word is in fact a gift of Language, and Language is not immaterial. It is a subtle body, but body it is. Words are trapped in all the corporeal images which captivate the subject; they can make the hysteric pregnant, be identified with the object of *penis-neid*, represent the flood of urine of urethral ambition, or the retained faeces of avaricious *jouis-sance*.

<sup>hh</sup> "The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation; a Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion," *IJP*, XII, p. 4.

What is more, words themselves can undergo symbolic lesions and accomplish Imaginary acts of which the patient is the subject. You will remember the *Wespe* (wasp), castrated of its initial W to become the S. P. of the Wolf Man's initials at the moment when he brings to realization the symbolic punishment whose object he was on the part of Grusha, the wasp.<sup>150</sup>

You will remember also the S which constitutes the residue of the hermetic formula into which the conjuratory invocations of the Rat Man became condensed after Freud had extracted the anagram of the name of his beloved from its cipher, and which, tacked on to the final "amen" of his jaculatory prayer, eternally floods the lady's name with the symbolic ejection of his impotent desire.<sup>151</sup>

Similarly, an article by Robert Fliess,<sup>ii</sup> inspired by Abraham's inaugural remarks, shows us that the discourse as a whole may become the object of an erotization, following the displacements of erogenuity in the corporeal image as they are momentarily determined by the analytic relation.

The discourse then takes on a phallic-urethral, anal-erotic, or even an oral-sadistic function. It is in any case remarkable that the author catches the effect of this function above all in the silences which mark the inhibition of the satisfaction experienced through it by the subject.

In this way the Word may become an Imaginary, or even Real object in the subject and, as such, swallow up in more than one respect the function of Language. We shall then place the Word inside the parentheses of the resistance which it manifests.

But this will not be in order to put the Word on the index of the analytic relation, for that relation would then lose everything, including its *raison d'être*.

Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true Word and the bringing to realization of his history by the subject in his relation to a future.

Maintaining this dialectic is in direct opposition to any objectifying orientation of analysis, and emphasizing this necessity is of first importance in order to see through the aberrations of the new tendencies being manifested in psychoanalysis.

<sup>ii</sup> "Silence and Verbalization. A Supplement to the Theory of the 'Analytic Rule,'" *IJP*, XXX, 1.

I shall illustrate my remarks on this point again by a return to Freud, and in fact, since I started by using this case, by the observation of the Rat Man.

Freud even goes so far as to take liberties with factual accuracy when it is a question of attaining to the Truth of the subject. At one moment he perceives the determining role played by the proposal of marriage brought to the subject by his mother at the origin of the present phase of his neurosis. In any case, as I have shown in my seminar, Freud had had a lightning intuition of it as a result of personal experience. Nevertheless he does not hesitate to interpret its effect to the subject as that of his dead father's prohibition against his liaison with the lady of his thoughts.

This interpretation is not only materially inaccurate. It is also psychologically inaccurate, for the castrating action of the father, which Freud affirms here with an insistence that might be considered systematic, played only a secondary role in this case. But the apperception of the dialectical relationship is so apt that Freud's act of interpretation at that moment sets off the decisive lifting of the death-bearing symbols which bind the subject narcissistically both to his dead father and to the idealized lady, their two images being sustained, in an equivalence characteristic of the obsessional neurotic, one by the phantasmatic aggressivity which perpetuates it, the other by the mortifying cult which transforms it into an idol.

In the very same way, it is by recognizing the forced subjectification of the obsessional debt<sup>11</sup> in the scenario of the vain attempts at restitution—a scenario which too perfectly expresses the Imaginary terms of this debt for the subject even to try to bring it to realization—by recognizing the forced subjectification of an obsessional debt whose pressure is exploited by the subject to the point of delusion, that Freud achieves his goal. This is the goal of bringing the subject to rediscover—in the history of his father's lack of delicacy, his marriage with the subject's mother, the "poor but pretty" girl, his marred love-life, the distasteful memory of the beneficent friend [to whom the father had never made restitution of

<sup>11</sup> Here, equivalent for me to the term *Zwangsbejürchtung* [literally: "obsessional or compulsive (transitive) fearing," "apprehension"], which needs to be rendered into its component elements without losing any of the semantic resources of the German language.

his own debt]—to rediscover in this history, along with the fateful constellation<sup>152</sup> which had presided over the subject's very birth, the *béance*, impossible to fill, of the symbolic debt of which his neurosis is the notice of nonpayment.

There is no trace here at all of a recourse to the ignoble specter of some sort of original "fear," nor even to a masochism which it would be easy enough to wave about, less yet to that obsessional counterforcing propagated by some analysts in the name of the analysis of defenses. The resistances themselves, as I have shown elsewhere, are used as long as possible in the sense or direction of the progress of the discourse. And when it is time to put an end to them, it is in acceding to them that the end is reached.

For it is in this way that the Rat Man succeeds in introducing into his subjectivity his true mediation in the transference form of the Imaginary daughter which he ascribes to Freud in order to receive through her a marriage tie with him, and who unveils her true face to him in a key dream: that of death gazing at him with her yellow-brown eyes.<sup>153</sup>

Moreover, if it is with this symbolic pact that the ruses of the subject's servitude came to an end, reality did not fail him, it seems, in consummating these nuptials. And the footnote of 1923 [on p. 249] which Freud dedicated by way of epitaph to this young man who had found in the risks of war "the end that awaited so many young men of value on whom so many hopes could be founded," thus concluding the case with all the rigor of destiny, elevates it to the beauty of tragedy.

In order to know how to reply to the subject in analysis, the procedure is to recognize first of all the place where his ego is, that ego which Freud himself defined as an ego formed of a verbal nucleus; in other words, to know through whom and for whom the subject poses *his question*. So long as this is not known, there will be the risk of a *contresens* concerning the desire which is there to be recognized and concerning the object to whom this desire is addressed.

The hysterical subject captures this object in an elaborate intrigue, and his ego is in the third party by whose intermediary the subject enjoys that object in which his question is incarnated. The obsessional subject drags into the cage of his narcissism the objects in which his question reverberates back and forth in the multiplied alibi of mortal

figures and, subduing their heady acrobatics, addresses its ambiguous homage towards the box in which he himself has his seat, that of the master who cannot be seen or see himself.<sup>154</sup>

*Trahit sua quemque voluptas*; one identifies himself with the spectacle, and the other puts one on.

For the hysterical subject, for whom the technical term "acting out" takes on its literal meaning since he is acting outside himself, you have to get him to recognize where his action is situated. For the obsessional neurotic, you have to get him to recognize you in the spectator, invisible from the stage, to whom he is united by the mediation of death.<sup>155</sup>

It is therefore always in the relationship of the subject's *moi* to the *je* of his discourse that you must understand the sense of the discourse in order to achieve the dealienation of the subject.

But you cannot possibly achieve this if you cling to the idea that the *moi* of the subject is identical to the presence which is speaking to you.

This error is fostered by the terminology of the analytic topography, which is all too tempting to objectifying thought and which lets the objectifying thinker make an almost imperceptible transposition from the concept of the *moi* defined as the system perception-consciousness—that is, as the system of the objectifications of the subject—to the concept of the *moi* as correlative to an absolute reality and thus, in a singular return of the repressed in psychologistic thought, to rediscover in the *moi* the "function of the Real" in relation to which Pierre Janet, for instance, orders his psychological conceptions.

Such a transposition can occur only when it has not been recognized that in the works of Freud the topography of the ego, the id, and the superego is subordinated to the metapsychology whose terms he was propounding at the same period and without which the new topography loses its sense. Thus analysts became involved in a sort of psychological orthopedics which has not yet finished bearing its fruit.

Michael Balint has analyzed in a thoroughly penetrating way the intricate interaction of theory and technique in the genesis of a new conception of analysis, and he finds no better term to indicate the problem than the catchword borrowed from Rickman of the advent of a "Two-body psychology."

It couldn't be better put. Analysis is becoming the relation of two bodies between which is established a phantasmatic communication in which the analyst teaches the subject to apprehend himself as an object;

subjectivity is admitted into it only inside the parentheses of the illusion, and the Word is put on the index of a search for the lived experience which becomes its supreme aim, but the dialectically necessary result appears in the fact that, since the subjectivity of the analyst is free of all restraint, his subjectivity leaves the subject in a state of complete surrender to every summons<sup>156</sup> of his Word.

Once the intrasubjective topography has become entified, it does in fact come to realization in the division of labor between the subjects in the presence of each other. And this deformed usage of Freud's formula that all that is of the id must become of the ego appears under a demystified form; the subject, transformed into a *cela*,<sup>157</sup> has to conform to an ego in which the analyst has little trouble in recognizing his ally, since in actual fact it is to the analyst's ego that the subject is expected to conform.<sup>158</sup>

This is precisely that process expressed in many a theoretical formulation of the "splitting of the ego" in analysis. Half of the subject's ego passes over to the other side of the wall which separates the person being analyzed from the analyst, then half of that half, and so on, in an asymptotic procession which will never succeed, however far it is pushed in the opinion which the subject has reached on his own, in canceling out any margin from which he can go back on the aberration of the analysis.

But how could the subject of a type of analysis whose axis is the principle that all his formulations are systems of defense, be defended against the total disorientation in which this principle leaves the dialectic of the analyst?

Freud's interpretation, whose dialectical progression appears so clearly in the case of Dora,<sup>159</sup> does not present these dangers, for, when the analyst's prejudices and presumptions (that is, his countertransference, a term whose use in my opinion cannot be extended beyond the dialectical reasons for the error) have misled him in his intervention, he pays the price for it on the spot by a negative transference. For this negative transference manifests itself with a force which is all the greater the further such an analysis has already set the subject going in an authentic recognition, and what usually results is the breaking off of the analysis.

This is exactly what happened in Dora's case, because of Freud's relentless persistence in wanting to make her recognize the hidden object of her desire in the person of Herr K, in whom the constituting pre-

sumptions of his countertransference lured him into seeing the promise of her happiness.

Dora herself was undoubtedly deceived in this relation, but she did not resent any the less the fact that Freud was fooled along with her. But when she came back to see him, after a delay of fifteen months in which the fateful cipher of her "*temps pour comprendre*" is inscribed, we can sense her entering into the path of a pretense that she had been pretending, and the convergence of this second-degree pretense with the aggressive intention imputed to her by Freud—and not inaccurately, but without his recognizing what it actually sprang from—presents us with the rough outline of the intersubjective complicity which any "analysis of resistances" sure of its rights would have been able to perpetuate between them. No doubt that with the means now offered us by the progress of our technique, this human error could have been extended beyond the limits of the diabolical.

None of this is of my own invention, for Freud himself afterwards recognized the prejudicial source of his defeat in his own failure to recognize at the time the homosexual position of the object at which the hysterical subject's desire was aimed.<sup>160</sup>

No doubt the whole process which has culminated in this present tendency of psychoanalysis goes back, and from the very first, to the analyst's guilty conscience about the miracle produced by his Word. He interprets the symbol, and lo and behold, the symptom, which inscribes the symbol in letters of suffering in the subject's flesh, disappears. This unseemly thaumaturgy is unbecoming to us, for after all we are scientists, and the practice of magic is hardly something we can defend.<sup>161</sup> So we escape the difficulty by attributing magical thinking to the patient. Before long we'll find ourselves preaching the Gospel according to Lévy-Bruhl to him. But in the meantime, lo and behold, we have become thinkers again and have re-established the proper distance between ourselves and our patients—a traditional distance which was perhaps a little too recklessly abandoned, a distance expressed so nobly in the words of Pierre Janet when he spoke of the feeble abilities of the hysterical subject compared to our own lofty position. The poor little thing, he confides to us, "she understands nothing about science, and doesn't even imagine how anybody could be interested in it . . . . If we consider the absence of control which characterizes their thinking, instead of allowing ourselves to be scandalized by their falsehoods, which are in

any case naïve enough, we should rather be astonished that there are so many truthful ones," and so on.

These words, since they represent the sentiments of many present-day analysts who have come back to condescending to talk to the patient "in his own Language," can be used to understand what has happened in between times. For if Freud had been capable of putting his name to them, how would he have been able to hear and understand as he did the Truth enclosed within the little stories of his first patients, or yet decipher a gloomy delusion like Schreber's to the point of extending it to the measure of man eternally enchained by his symbols?

Is our reason so weak that it cannot recognize itself on equal terms in the mediation of scientific discourse and in the primary exchange of the Symbolic object, and that it cannot rediscover there the identical measure of its original guile?

Is it going to be necessary to recall what the yardstick of "thought" is worth to practitioners of an experience which is occupied rather more closely with an intestinal erotism than with an equivalent of action?

Is it necessary for me, as I speak to you, to point out that I do not have to fall back on thought in order to understand that if I am talking to you in this moment of the Word, it is insofar as we have in common a technique of the Word which enables you to understand me when I speak to you, and which disposes me to address myself through you to those who understand nothing of that technique?

No doubt that we have to lend an ear to the "not-said" which lies in the holes of the discourse, but this does not mean that we are to do our listening as if it were to someone knocking from the other side of a wall.

For if from this point on we are no longer to concern ourselves except with these noises, as some analysts pride themselves on doing, it must be admitted that we will not have put ourselves in the most propitious set of conditions to decipher their sense. Without first racking our brains to comprehend [such a sign from the subject, something quite unnecessary for a signifier], how is one supposed to *translate* what is not of itself Language? Led in this way to appeal to the subject,<sup>162</sup> since it is after all to *his* account that we have to disburse this understanding, we shall implicate him in a wager along with us, a wager that we have properly understood [his sign] and then wait until a return makes winners out of both of us. As a result, in continuing to perform this shuttling back and forth, he will learn very simply to beat time himself, a form

of suggestion worth as much as any other—in other words, a form of suggestion in which, as in every other form of suggestion, one does not know who is keeping the score. The procedure is recognized as being sound enough when it is a question of being six feet under.<sup>kk,163</sup>

Halfway to this extreme the question arises: Does psychoanalysis remain a dialectical relation in which the nonaction of the analyst guides the subject's discourse towards the bringing to realization of his Truth, or is it to be reduced to a phantasmatic relation where "two abysses brush against each other" without touching, while the whole gamut of Imaginary regressions is exhausted—like a sort of "bundling"<sup>ll</sup> pushed to its extreme limits as a psychological experience?

In actual fact, this illusion which impels us to seek the reality of the subject beyond the Language barrier is the same as that by which the subject believes that his Truth is already given in us and that we know it in advance; and it is moreover as a result of this that he is wide open to our objectifying intervention.

But for his part, no doubt, he does not have to answer for this subjective error which, whether it is avowed or not in his discourse, is immanent in the fact that he has entered analysis and that he has already concluded the original pact involved in it. And the fact that we find in the subjectivity of this moment the reason for what can be called the constituting effects of transference—insofar as they are distinguished by an index of reality from the constituted effects which succeed them—is all the more ground for not neglecting this subjectivity.<sup>mmm</sup>

<sup>kk</sup> Two paragraphs rewritten (1966).

<sup>ll</sup> This term refers to the custom, of Celtic origin and still employed among certain American Biblical sects, of allowing a couple engaged to be married, or even a passing guest and the daughter of the house, to pass the night together in the same bed, provided that they keep their outdoor clothes on. The word takes its meaning from the fact that the girl is usually wrapped up tightly in several sheets.

(Quincey speaks of it. See also the book by Aurand le Jeune on this practice amongst the Amish people.)

In this way the myth of Tristan and Iseult, and even the complex which it represents, would henceforth act as a sponsor for the analyst in his quest for the soul betrothed to mystifying nuptials via the extenuation of its instinctual phantasies.

<sup>mmm</sup> Thus what I have designated in what follows as the support of transference: namely, *le sujet-supposé-savoir*, is to be found defined here (1966). [Lacan: It is insofar as he is "supposed to know"—however incorrect this is, of course—that the analyst becomes the support (*ὑποκείμενον*) of the transference.]

Freud, let it be recalled, in touching on the feelings involved in transference, insisted on the necessity of distinguishing in it a factor of reality. He concluded that it would be an abuse of the subject's docility to want to persuade him in every case that these sentiments are a simple transference repetition of the neurosis.<sup>164</sup> Consequently, since these real feelings manifest themselves as primary and since the charm of our own person remains a contingent factor, there would seem to be some mystery here.

But this mystery becomes clarified if it is viewed within the phenomenology of the subject, insofar as the subject constitutes himself in the quest for Truth. One has only to go back to the traditional data—which the Buddhists could furnish us with, although they are not the only ones who could—to recognize in this form of the transference the normal error of existence, and under three headings which they figure as follows: love, hate, and ignorance. It is therefore as a countereffect of the movement of analysis that we shall understand their equivalence in what is called an originally positive transference—each one being illuminated by the other two under this existential aspect, if one does not except the third, which is usually omitted because of its proximity to the subject.

Here I evoke the invective through which I was called on as a witness to the lack of discretion shown by a certain work (which I have already cited too often) in its senseless objectification of the play of the instincts in analysis, by someone whose debt to me can be recognized by his use of the term "real" in conformity with mine. It was in these words that, as people say, he "liberated his heart": "It is high time to put an end to the fraud which tends to make it believed that anything real whatsoever takes place during the treatment." Let it not be said what has befallen it, for alas, if analysis has not cured the dog's oral vice of which the Gospel speaks, its condition is worse than before: it is other people's vomit which it laps up.

For this sally was not ill directed, since it sought in fact to distinguish between those elementary registers whose grounding I later put forward in these terms: the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real—a distinction never previously made in psychoanalysis.\*

Reality in the analytic experience does in fact often remain veiled by negative forms, but it is not too difficult to situate it.

Reality is encountered, for instance, in what we usually condemn as

active interventions; but it would be an error to define the limit of reality in this way.

For it is clear on the other hand that the analyst's abstention, his refusal to reply, is an element of reality in analysis. More exactly, it is in this negativity insofar as it is a pure negativity—that is, detached from any particular motive—that lies the junction between the Symbolic and the Real. This naturally follows from the fact that this nonaction of the analyst is founded on our firm and stated Knowledge of the principle that all that is real is rational, and on the resulting precept that it is up to the subject to show what he is made of.

The fact remains that this abstention is not indefinitely maintained; when the subject's question has taken on the form of a true Word, we give it the sanction of our reply, but thereby we have shown that a true Word already contains its own reply and that we are simply adding our own lay to its antiphon. What does this mean except that we do no more than to confer on the subject's Word its dialectical punctuation?

The other moment in which the Symbolic and the Real come together is consequently revealed, and I have already marked it theoretically: that is to say, in the function of time, and this makes it worth stopping for a moment to consider the technical effects of time.

Time plays its role in analytical technique from several angles.

Time presents itself first of all in the total duration of the analysis, and implies the sense to be given to the termination of the analysis, which is the question which must precede that of the signs of its end. I shall touch on the problem of fixing its termination. But it is clear right now that this duration can only be anticipated for the subject as indefinite.

This is for two reasons which can only be distinguished in a dialectical perspective:

The first, which is linked to the limits of our domain and which confirms our remarks on the definition of its confines: we cannot predict for the subject what his *temps pour comprendre* will be, insofar as it includes a psychological factor which escapes us as such.

The second, which is properly of the subject and through which the fixing of a termination is equivalent to a spatializing projection in which he finds himself already alienated from himself at the very beginning: from the moment that the coming-to-term of his Truth can be predicted—whatever may come about in the ensuing interval in the intersubject-

tive relation of the subject and analyst—the fact is that the Truth is already there. That is to say that in this way we re-establish in the subject his original mirage insofar as he places his Truth in us, and that if we then give him the sanction of our authority, we are setting the analysis off on an aberrant path whose results will be impossible to correct.

This is precisely what happened in the celebrated case of the Wolf Man, and Freud so well understood its exemplary importance that he took support from it again in his article on finite or indefinite analysis.<sup>nn</sup>

The advance fixing of a termination to an analysis, first form of active intervention, inaugurated (*proh pudor!*) by Freud himself,<sup>165</sup> whatever may be the divinatory sureness (in the proper sense of the term)<sup>oo</sup> of which the analyst may give proof in following his example, will invariably leave the subject in the alienation of his Truth.

Moreover, we find the confirmation of this point in two facts from Freud's case:

In the first place, in spite of the whole cluster of proofs demonstrating the historicity of the primal scene, in spite of the conviction which he shows concerning it—remaining imperturbable to the doubts which Freud methodically cast on it by way of testing him—the Wolf Man never managed in spite of it all to integrate his remembrance of the primal scene into his history.

Secondly, the same patient later demonstrated his alienation in the most categorical way, in a paranoid form.

<sup>nn</sup> For this is the correct translation of the two terms which have been rendered, with that unflinching *contresens* already noted, by "terminated and interminable analysis." [The usual French translation of the title "Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse" (1937), *Standard Edition*, XXIII, is "Analyse terminée et analyse interminable"; the English: "Analysis Terminable and Interminable." Lacan renders the title by "analyse finie ou indéfinie."]

<sup>oo</sup> Cf. Aulus-Gellius, *Attic Nights*, II, 4: "In a trial, when it is a question of knowing who shall be given the task of presenting the accusation, and when two or more people volunteer for this office, the judgment by which the tribunal names the accuser is called divination . . . This word comes from the fact that since accuser and accused are two correlative terms which cannot continue to exist without each other, and since the type of judgment in question here presents an accused without accuser, it is necessary to have recourse to divination in order to find what the trial does not provide, what it leaves still unknown—that is to say, the accuser."



It is true that here there is at work another factor through which reality intervenes in the analysis—namely, the gift of money whose symbolic value I shall save to treat of elsewhere, but whose import is indicated in what I have already brought out concerning the link between the Word and the constituting gift of primitive exchange. In this case the gift of money is reversed by an initiative of Freud's in which, as much as in his insistence on coming back to the case, we can recognize the unresolved subjectification within him of the problems which this case leaves in suspense. And nobody doubts that this was a factor in the subsequent onset of the psychosis, however without really being able to say why.

Surely it is understood nevertheless that admitting a subject to be nurtured in the *prytaneum*<sup>166</sup> of psychoanalysis in return for services he renders to science as a case available for study (for it was in fact through a group collection that the Wolf Man was supported), is also to initiate and establish him in the alienation of his Truth? \*

The material of the supplementary analysis of the Wolf Man undertaken by Dr. Ruth Mack Brunswick<sup>167</sup> illustrates the responsibility of the previous treatment with Freud by demonstrating my remarks on the respective places of the Word and Language in psychoanalytic mediation.

What is more, it is in the perspective of the Word and Language that one can grasp the fact that Dr. Mack Brunswick has not at all taken her bearings incorrectly in her delicate position in relation to the transference. (The reader will be reminded of the very wall of my metaphor of the Language barrier, in that the wall figures in one of the Wolf Man's dreams, the wolves of the key dream showing themselves eager to get around it . . . .) Those who follow my seminar know all this, and the others can try their hand at it if they like.<sup>pp</sup>

What I want to do is to touch on another aspect of analysis which is particularly ticklish at the moment, that of the function of time in the technique of analysis; more precisely, the question of the length of the session.

Once again it is a question of an element which manifestly belongs to reality, since it represents our working time, and from that angle it falls under the heading of the prevalent professional rule.

<sup>pp</sup> Two paragraphs rewritten (1966).

But its subjective incidences are no less important—and in the first place for the analyst. The taboo nature which has recently characterized discussion of this time limit proves well enough that the subjectivity of the psychoanalytical group is not at all entirely free in this respect, and the scrupulous, not to say obsessional, character which the observation of a standard time limit takes on for some if not most analysts—a standard whose historical and geographical variation seems nevertheless to bother no one—is certainly the sign of the existence of a problem which they are all the more reluctant to deal with because they realize to what extent it would entail a putting into question of the function of the analyst.

On the other hand, nobody can possibly fail to recognize its importance for the subject in analysis. The unconscious, it is said, in a tone which is all the more businesslike in proportion as the speaker is less capable of justifying what he means—the unconscious needs time to reveal itself. I quite agree. But I ask: how is this time to be measured? Is its measure to be that of what Alexandre Koyré calls “the universe of precision”? Obviously we live in this universe, but its advent for man is relatively recent, since it goes back precisely to Huyghens' clock—in other words, to 1659—and the *malaise* of modern man does not exactly indicate that this precision is in itself a liberating factor for him. Are we to say that this time, the time of the fall of heavy bodies, is in some way sacred in the sense that it corresponds to the time of the stars as they were fixed in the Eternal by God who, as Lichtenberg put it, winds up our sundials? Perhaps we might get a somewhat better idea of time by comparing the time [required for] the creation of a symbolic object with the moment of inattention when we let it fall.

However this may be, if the labor of our function during this time remains problematic, I believe I have brought out clearly enough the function of labor in what the patient brings to realization during that time.

But the reality of this time, whatever that reality may be, consequently takes on a localized value from it: that of receiving the product of this labor.\*

We play a recording role by assuming the function, fundamental in any symbolic exchange, of gathering what *do kamo*, man in his authenticity, calls *la parole qui dure*.<sup>168</sup>

As a witness called to account for the sincerity of the subject, deposi-

tary of the minutes of his discourse, reference as to his exactitude, guarantor of his straightforwardness, custodian of his testament, scrivener of his codicils, the analyst participates in the nature of the scribe.

But above all he remains the master of the Truth of which this discourse is the progress. As I have said, it is he above all who punctuates its dialectic. And here he is apprehended as the judge of the value of this discourse. This entails two consequences.

The suspension of a session cannot *not* be experienced by the subject as a punctuation in his progress. We know very well how he calculates its coming-to-term in order to articulate it upon his own delays, or even upon his escapist refuges, how he anticipates its end by weighing it like a weapon, by watching out for it as he would a place of shelter.

It is a fact, which can be plainly seen in the study of the manuscripts of symbolic writings, whether it is a question of the Bible or of the Chinese canonicals, that the absence of punctuation in them is a source of ambiguity. The punctuation, once inserted, fixes the sense; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and a faulty punctuation amounts to a change for the worse.

The indifference with which the cutting up of the "timing"<sup>169</sup> interrupts the moments of haste within the subject can be fatal to the conclusion towards which his discourse was being precipitated, or can even fix a misunderstanding or misreading in it, if not furnish a pretext for a retaliatory act of guile.

Beginning analysts seem more struck by the effects of this fact than others—which makes one think that for the others it is simply a matter of submitting to routine.

Certainly the neutrality which we manifest in strictly applying the rule concerning the length of the session maintains us in the path of our nonaction.

But this nonaction has its limits, otherwise there would be no interventions at all—and why make an intervention impossible at this point, which is consequently privileged in this way?

The danger that this point may take on an obsessional value for the analyst rests simply in the fact that it lends itself to the connivance of the subject, a connivance which is not only overt for the obsessional subject, but which takes on a special force for him, precisely in relation to the vigorousness of his feeling about his labor. The keynote of forced

labor which envelops everything for this subject, even the activities of his leisure time, is only too well known.<sup>170</sup>

This sense is sustained by his subjective relation to the master insofar as it is the master's death for which he waits.

In fact the obsessional subject manifests one of the attitudes that Hegel did not develop in his dialectic of the master and the slave. The slave has given way in face of the risk of death in which mastery was being offered to him in a struggle of pure prestige. But since he knows that he is mortal, he also knows that the master can die. From this moment on he is able to accept his laboring for the master and his renunciation of *jouissance* in the meantime; and, in the uncertainty of the moment when the master will die, he waits.

Such is the intersubjective reason, as much for the doubt as for the procrastination which are character traits of the obsessional subject.

In the meantime, all his labor falls under the heading of this intention, and becomes doubly alienating by this fact. For not only is the subject's handiwork stripped from him by another—which is the constituting relation of all labor—but the subject's recognition of his own essence in his handiwork where this labor finds its justification, does not any the less escape from him, for he himself "*is not in it.*" He *is* in the anticipated moment of the master's death, from which moment he will begin to live, but in the meantime he identifies himself with the master as dead, and as a result of this he is himself already dead.<sup>171</sup>

Nevertheless he makes an effort to deceive the master by the demonstration of the good intentions manifested in his labor. This is what the dutiful children of the analytical catechism express in their rough and ready way by saying that the subject's ego is trying to seduce his superego.

This intrasubjective formulation becomes immediately demystified once it is understood in the analytical relation, where the subject's "working through" is in fact employed for the seduction of the analyst.

Nor is it by chance that, from the moment that the dialectical progress begins to approach the questioning of the intentions of the ego in our subjects, the phantasy of the analyst's death—often felt in the form of fear or even of anguish<sup>172</sup>—never fails to be produced.

And the subject then sets off again in an even more demonstrative elaboration of his "good will."

How can we consequently have doubts about the effect of any disdain shown by the master towards the product of such a labor? The subject's resistance may even become completely out of tune because of it.

From this moment, his alibi—hitherto unconscious—begins to unveil itself for him, and he can be seen passionately in quest of the justification of so many efforts.

I would not have so much to say about it if I had not been convinced that, in experimenting with what have been called our short sessions, in a moment of my experience which has now come to its conclusion, I was able to bring to light in a certain male subject phantasies of anal pregnancy as well as the dream of its resolution by Caesarean section, in a delaying of the end of the session where I would otherwise have had to go on listening to his speculations on the art of Dostoevsky.<sup>173</sup>

However, I am not here in order to defend this procedure, but to show that it has a precise dialectical sense in its technical application.<sup>99</sup>

And I am not the only one to have made the remark that it ultimately becomes one with the technique known as *Zen*, which is applied as the means of the subject's revelation in the traditional ascetic practice of certain Far Eastern teachings.

Without going to the extremes to which this technique is carried, since they would be contrary to certain of the limitations imposed by ours, a discreet application of its basic principle in analysis seems much more admissible to me than certain modes of analysis known as the analysis of resistances, insofar as this technique does not in itself entail any danger of the subject's alienation.

For this technique only breaks the discourse in order to bring about the delivery of the Word.

Here we are then, at the foot of the wall, at the foot of the Language barrier. We are in our place there, that is to say, on the same side as the patient, and it is on this wall—the same for him as for us—that we shall try to respond to the echo of his Word.<sup>174</sup>

Beyond this wall, there is nothing for us but outer darkness. Does this mean that we are entirely masters of the situation? Certainly not, and on this point Freud has bequeathed us his testament on the negative therapeutic reaction.

The key to this mystery, it is said, is in the instance of a primordial

<sup>99</sup> Stone which the builders rejected or headstone of the corner, my strong point is that I have never yielded over this (1966).

masochism—in other words, in a manifestation in the pure state of that death instinct<sup>175</sup> whose enigma Freud propounded for us at the apogee of his experience.

We cannot turn up our noses at this problem, any more than I shall be able to postpone examination of it here.

For I note that this same refusal to accept this culminating point of Freud's doctrine is shared by those who conduct their analysis on the basis of a conception of the ego whose error I have denounced, and by those who, like Reich, go so far with the principle of seeking the ineffable organic expression beyond the Word that, like him, in order to deliver it from its armor, they might symbolize, as he does, the orgasmic induction that, like him, they expect from analysis, in the superimposition of the two vermicular forms whose stupefying schema may be seen in his book on character analysis.

Such a combination will no doubt allow me an optimistic view of the rigor of the formations of the spirit, when I have demonstrated the profound relationship uniting the notion of the death instinct to the problems of the Word.

As a moment's reflection shows, the notion of the death instinct involves a basic irony, since its sense has to be sought in the conjunction of two contrary terms: instinct in its most comprehensive acceptance being the law which regulates in its succession a cycle of behavior whose goal is the accomplishment of a vital function; and death appearing first of all as the destruction of life.

Nevertheless, both the definition of life, given by Bichat at the dawn of biology, as being the whole set of forces which resist death; as well as the most modern conception of life—to be found in Cannon's notion of homeostasis—as the function of a system maintaining its own equilibrium, are there to remind us that life and death are compounded in a polar relation at the very heart of phenomena related to life.

Consequently the congruence between the contrasted terms of the death instinct and the phenomena of repetition to which Freud's explanation in fact related them under the heading of automatism<sup>176</sup> ought not to cause difficulty, if it were simply a question of a biological notion.

But we all know very well that it is not a question of biology, and this is what makes this problem a stumbling block for so many of us. The fact that so many people come to a halt on the apparent incom-

patibility of these terms might well be worth our attention in that it manifests a dialectical innocence that would probably be somewhat disconcerted by the classical problem posed to semantics in the determinative declaration: a hamlet on the Ganges,<sup>177</sup> by which Hindu aesthetics illustrates the second form of the resonances of Language.<sup>rr</sup>

This notion must be approached through its resonances in what I shall call the poetics of the Freudian corpus, the first way of access towards the penetration of its sense, and the essential dimension, from the origins of the work to the apogee marked in it by this notion, for an understanding of its dialectical repercussions. It must be remembered, for example, that Freud tells us he found his vocation for medicine in the call heard during a public reading of the Goethe's famous "Hymn to Nature"—in that text brought to light by a friend in which the poet, in the declining years of his life, agreed to recognize a reputed child of the most youthful effusions of his pen.

At the other end of Freud's life, we find in the article on analysis considered as finite or indefinite, the express reference of his new conception to the conflict of the two principles to which the alternation of universal life was subjected by Empedocles of Agrigento in the fifth century B.C.—that is, in the pre-Socratic period where nature and mind were not distinguished.<sup>178</sup>

These two facts are a sufficient indication that here it is a question of a myth of the dyad, whose exposition by Plato is in any case evoked in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a myth which can only be understood in the subjectivity of modern man by its elevation to the negativity of the judgment in which it is inscribed.<sup>179</sup>

This is to say that, in the same way as the compulsion to repeat—all the more misconstrued by those who wish to divide the two terms from each other—has in view nothing less than the historicizing temporality of the experience of transference,<sup>180</sup> so does the death instinct essentially express the limit of the historical function of the subject. This limit is death—not as an eventual coming-to-term of the life of the individual, or as the empirical certitude of the subject, but, as Heidegger's formula puts it, as the "possibilité absolument propre, inconditionnelle, indépassable, certaine et comme telle indéterminée du sujet,"<sup>181</sup> "subject" understood as meaning the subject defined by his historicity.

<sup>rr</sup> This is the form called *Lakṣanalakṣana*.

Moreover this limit is at every instant present in what this history possesses as achieved. This limit represents the past in its absolutely real form—that is to say, not the physical past whose existence is abolished, or the epic past as it has become perfected in the handiwork of memory, or the historic past in which man finds the guarantor of his future, but the past which reveals itself reversed in repetition.<sup>88</sup>

This is the dead partner taken by subjectivity in the triad which its mediation institutes in the universal conflict of *Philia*, "love," and *Neikos*, "discord."

There is consequently no further need to have recourse to the outworn notion of primordial masochism in order to understand the reason for the repetitive utterances in which subjectivity brings together mastery over its abandonment and the birth of the symbol.<sup>182</sup>

These are the acts of occultation<sup>183</sup> which Freud, in a flash of genius, revealed to us so that we might recognize in them that the moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into Language.

We can now grasp in this the fact that in this moment the subject is not simply mastering his privation by assuming it, but that here he is raising his desire to a second power. For his action destroys the object which it causes to appear and disappear in the anticipating *provocation* of its absence and its presence. His action thus negatives the field of forces of desire in order to become its own object to itself. And this object, immediately taking body in the symbolic couple of two elementary jaculations, announces in the subject the diachronic integration of the dichotomy of the phonemes, whose synchronic structure existing Language offers to his assimilation; moreover, the child begins to become engaged in the system of the concrete discourse of the environment, by reproducing more or less approximatively in his *Fort!* and in his *Da!* the vocables which he receives from it.<sup>184</sup>

*Fort! Da!* It is precisely in his solitude that the desire of the little child has already become the desire of another, of an *alter ego* who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction.<sup>185</sup>

Let the child now address himself to an Imaginary or Real partner,

<sup>88</sup> The four words ["renversé dans la répétition"] in which is inscribed my latest formulation of repetition (1966) are substituted for an improper recourse to the "eternal return" ["toujours présent dans l'éternel retour"], which was all that I could put across at that time.

and he will see this partner in equal obedience to the negativity of his discourse, and since his appeal has the effect of making the partner disappear, he will seek in a banishing summons the provocation of the return which brings the partner back to his desire.

Thus the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing,<sup>186</sup> and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalization of his desire.

The first symbol in which we recognize humanity in its vestigial traces is the sepulture, and the intermediary of death can be recognized in every relation where man comes to the life of his history.

This is the only life which goes on enduring and is true, since life is transmitted without being lost, in the perpetuated tradition of subject to subject. How is it possible not to see how loftily this life transcends that inherited by the animal in which the individual disappears into the species, since no memorial distinguishes his ephemeral apparition from that which will reproduce it again in the invariability of the type. In fact, apart from those hypothetical mutations of the phylum that must be integrated by a subjectivity which man is still only approaching from outside—nothing, except the experiments to which man associates it, distinguishes a rat from the rat, a horse from the horse, nothing except this inconsistent passage from life to death—whereas Empedocles, by throwing himself into Mount Etna, leaves forever present in the memory of men this symbolic act of his being-for-death.

Man's liberty is entirely inscribed within the constituting triangle of the renunciation which he imposes on the desire of the other by the menace of death for the *jouissance* of the fruits of his serfdom—of the consented-to sacrifice of his life for the reasons which give to human life its measure—and of the suicidal renouncement of the vanquished partner, balking of his victory the master whom he abandons to his inhuman solitude.

Of these figures of death, the third is the supreme detour through which the immediate particularity of desire, reconquering its ineffable form, rediscovers in *dénégation* a final triumph. And we must recognize its meaning, for we have to deal with it. This third figure is not in fact a perversion of the instinct, but rather that desperate affirmation of life which is the purest form in which we recognize the death instinct.

The subject says "No!" to this intersubjective *jeu de furet* in which desire makes itself recognized for a moment, only to become lost in a will

which is will of the other.<sup>187</sup> Patiently, the subject withdraws his precarious life from the sheeplike conglomerations of the Eros of the symbol in order to affirm it at the last in a Wordless malediction.

Therefore, when we wish to attain in the subject what was before the serial articulations of the Word, and what is primordial to the birth of symbols, we find it in death, from which his existence takes on all the meaning it has. It is in effect as a desire for death that he affirms himself for others; if he identifies himself with the other, it is by fixing him solidly in the metamorphosis of his essential image, and no being is ever evoked by him except among the shadows of death.

To say that this mortal meaning reveals in the Word a center exterior to Language is more than a metaphor and manifests a structure. This structure is different from the spatialization of the circumference or of the sphere in which some people like to schematize the limits of the living being and his environment:<sup>188</sup> it corresponds rather to the relational group which symbolic logic designates topologically as an annulus.

If I wished to give an intuitive representation of it, it seems that, rather than have recourse to the surface aspect of a zone, I should call on the three-dimensional form of a torus, insofar as its peripheral exteriority and its central exteriority constitute only one single region.<sup>tt</sup>

This schema satisfactorily expresses the endless circularity of the dialectical process which is produced when the subject brings his solitude to realization, be it in the vital ambiguity of immediate desire or in the full assumption of his being-for-death.

But by the same fact it can be grasped that the dialectic is not individual, and that the question of the termination of the analysis is that of the moment when the satisfaction of the subject finds a way to come to realization in the satisfaction of everyone—that is, of all those whom this satisfaction associates with itself in a human undertaking. Of all the undertakings which have been put forward in this century, that of the psychoanalyst is perhaps the loftiest, because the undertaking of the psychoanalyst acts in our time as a mediator between the man of care and the subject of absolute Knowledge.<sup>189</sup> This is therefore why it requires a long subjective ascesis, and one which can never be interrupted, since the end of the didactic analysis itself is not separable from the engagement of the subject in its practice.

<sup>tt</sup> Premises of topology which I have been putting into practice over the past five years (1966).

Let it be renounced, then, by whoever cannot rejoin at its horizon the subjectivity of his epoch. For how could he possibly make his being the axis of so many lives if he knew nothing of the dialectic which engages him with these lives in a symbolic movement? Let him be well acquainted with the whorl into which his epoch draws him in the continued enterprise of Babel, and let him be aware of his function as interpreter in the discord of Languages. As for the darkness of the *mundus* around which the immense tower is coiled, let him leave to the mystic vision the task of seeing in it the putrescent serpent of life raised on an everlasting rod.<sup>190</sup>

I may be permitted a laugh if these remarks are accused of turning the sense of Freud's work away from the biological basis he would have wished for it towards the cultural references with which it overflows. I do not want to preach to you the doctrine of factor *b*, designating the first, nor of factor *c*, designating the second. All I have tried to do is to remind you of the misconstrued *a, b, c*, of the structure of Language, and to teach you to spell once again the forgotten *b-a, ba*, of the Word.<sup>191</sup>

For what recipe would guide you in a technique which is composed of the first and draws its effects from the second, if you did not recognize the domain and the function of both of them?

The psychoanalytical experience has rediscovered in man the imperative of the *verbe* as the law which has formed him in its image. It manipulates the poetic function of Language to give to his desire its symbolic mediation. May that experience bring you to understand at last that it is in the gift of the Word<sup>uu</sup> that all the reality of its effects resides; for it is by way of this gift that all reality has come to man and it is by his continued act that he maintains it.

If the domain which defines this gift of the Word is to be sufficient for your action as also for your Knowledge, it will also be sufficient for your devotion. For it offers it a privileged field.

When the Devas, the men, and the Asuras were ending their novitiate with Prajapâti, so we read in the second Brâhmana of the fifth lesson of the Bhrad-âraṇyaka Upanishad, they addressed to him this prayer: "Speak to us."

<sup>uu</sup> Let it be understood that it is not a question of those "gifts" which are always supposed to be in default in novices, but of a gift which is in fact lacking to them more often than they lack it.

"Da," said Prajapâti, god of thunder. "Have you understood me?" And the Devas answered and said: "Thou hast said to us: *Damyata*, master yourselves"—the sacred text meaning that the powers above submit to the law of the Word.

"Da," said Prajapâti, god of thunder. "Have you understood me?" And the men answered and said: "Thou hast said to us: *Datta*, give"—the sacred text meaning that men recognize each other by the gift of the Word.

"Da," said Prajapâti, god of thunder. "Have you understood me?" And the Asuras answered and said: "Thou hast said to us: *Dayadhvam*, be merciful"—the sacred text meaning that the powers below resound to the invocation of the Word.<sup>vv</sup>

That, continues the text, is what the divine voice caused to be heard in the thunder: Submission, gift, grace. *Da da da*.<sup>192</sup>

For Prajapâti replies to all: "You have understood me."

<sup>vv</sup> Ponge writes it: *réson* (1966). [In his *Pour un Malherbe*. "Resound" is "résonner" in French; *réson* is a homonym of *raison*.]