
Variations on the Standard Treatment

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This title, the counterpart of another title promoting the unheard-of heading, “standard treatment,” was assigned to me in 1953 as part of a project for which a committee of psychoanalysts was responsible. Selected from various tendencies due to their competence in the area, my friend Henri Ey had delegated to them the general responsibility he himself had received for the volume on therapeutic methods in psychiatry, to be published in the *Encyclopédie médico-chirurgicale*.

I accepted this role in order to investigate the scientific foundation of the said treatment, the only foundation on which the implicit reference to a deviation that such a title offered me could make any sense.

A deviation that was all too palpable, in effect. At least I believe I succeeded in raising a question about it, even though this undoubtedly ran counter to the intentions of its promoters.

Are we to think that the question was resolved by the removal of my article [from subsequent editions of the encyclopedia], quickly explained, by the abovementioned committee, as part of the ordinary updating of this kind of work?

Many people saw it as the sign of a certain precipitation, which would be understandable in this case by the very way in which a certain majority considered itself to be defined by my criticism. (The article was published in 1955.)

A Bat Question: Examining It in the Light of Day

“Variations on the Standard Treatment”—this title constitutes a pleonasm, though not a simple one:¹ based on a contradiction, it is nonetheless lame. Is this twisting due to the fact that it is addressed to a medical audience? Or is it a distortion intrinsic to the question?

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This stopping point serves as an entry point into the problem, since it recalls what the public senses: namely, that psychoanalysis is not like any other form of therapeutics. For the term “variations” implies neither the adapting of the treatment to the “variety” of cases, in accordance with empirical or even clinical criteria,² nor a reference to the “variables” by which the field of psychoanalysis is distinguished, but rather a concern, which may even be hypersensitive, for purity in the means and ends, which allows us to foresee a more meritorious status than the label presented here.

At stake here is clearly a rigor that is in some sense ethical, without which any treatment, even if it is filled with psychoanalytic knowledge, can only amount to psychotherapy.

This rigor would require a formalization, by which I mean a theoretical formalization, which has hardly been provided to date because it has been confused with a practical formalism—that is, a [set of rules] regarding what is done and what is not done.

This is why it is not inauspicious to start from the “theory of therapeutic criteria” in order to shed light on this situation.

Certainly, the psychoanalyst’s lack of concern about the basics required for the use of statistics is only equaled by that still found in medicine. It is, however, more innocent in the analyst’s case. For he makes less of assessments as cursory as “improved,” “much improved,” and “cured,” being warned against them by a discipline that knows how to isolate haste in concluding as an element that is in and of itself questionable.

Clearly advised by Freud to closely examine the effects in his experience of the danger sufficiently announced by the term *furor sanandi*, he does not, in the end, wish to appear to be motivated by it.

325 While he thus views cure as an added benefit [*la guérison comme bénéfice de surcroît*] of psychoanalytic treatment, he is wary of any misuse of the desire to cure. This is so ingrained in him that, when an innovation in technique is based upon this desire, he worries deep inside and even reacts inside the analytic group by raising the automatic question: “Is that still psychoanalysis?”

This point may appear to be tangential to the question at hand. But its import is precisely to encircle this question with a line which, while barely visible from the outside, constitutes the inner supporter of a circle, without the latter ceasing for all that to present himself as if nothing there separated him.

In this silence, which is the privilege of undisputed truths, psychoanalysts find the refuge that makes them impermeable to all criteria other than those of a dynamic, a topography, and an economy that they are incapable of justifying to those outside.

Hence no recognition of psychoanalysis, as either a profession or a science, can occur except by hiding a principle of extraterritoriality which it is as impossible for the psychoanalyst to give up as it is for him not to deny. This obliges him to place all validation of its problems under the heading of dual membership and to arm himself with the postures of inscrutability adopted by the bat in the fable.

All discussion of the present question thus begins with a misunderstanding, which is further heightened when it is backlit by a paradox from the inside.

This paradox is clearly introduced by what all analytic writers express, the most authorized affirming it no less than the others, regarding analysis’ therapeutic criteria—namely, that the more stridently we demand a theoretical reference the more these criteria vanish. This is a matter of serious concern,

when theory is alleged to give treatment its status. More serious is when, at such times, it suddenly becomes abundantly clear that the most widely accepted terms are utterly useless except as indices of inadequacy or as screens for incompetence.

To appreciate this it suffices to read the papers given at the last Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association, held in London [on July 27, 1953]. These papers warrant being included in our file—all of them and each of them in its entirety.³ I will cite a measured assessment from one of them, the one by Edward Glover:

About twenty years ago, I circulated a questionnaire with the intention of ascertaining what were the actual technical practices and working standards of analysts in this country [Great Britain]. Full replies were obtained from twenty-four of twenty-nine practising members, from the examination of which it transpired [*sic*] that on only six out of the sixty-three points raised was there complete agreement. Only one of these six points could be regarded as fundamental, viz., the necessity of analysing the transference; the others concerned such lesser matters as the inadvisability of accepting presents, avoidance of the use of technical terms during analysis, avoidance of social contact, abstention from answering questions, objection to preliminary injunctions and, interestingly enough, payment for all nonattendances.⁴

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This survey taken long ago derives its value from the quality of the practitioners to whom it was addressed, since they still constituted a small elite at that time. Glover only mentions it here due to the urgency, which has now become public, of what had before been merely a personal need—namely (and this is the title of his article), to define the “Therapeutic Criteria of Psycho-Analysis.” The major obstacle to doing so is found, in his view, in fundamental theoretical divergences:

We need not go afield to find psycho-analytical societies riven by such differences, with extreme groups holding mutually incompatible views, the opposing sections being held in uneasy alliance by “middle groups” whose members, as is the habit of eclectics the world over, compensate themselves for their absence of originality by extracting virtue from their eclecticism, maintaining, either implicitly or explicitly, that, whether or not principles differ, scientific truth lies only in compromise. Despite these eclectic efforts to maintain a united front to the scientific or psychological public, it is obvious that in certain fundamental respects the

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Moreover, the author cited has no illusions about his chances of attenuating these discordances at the plenary Congress he is addressing, due to the lack of any critique of the

sedulously cultivated assumptions that participants in such discussions hold roughly the same views, speak the same technical language, follow identical systems of diagnosis, prognosis, and selection of cases, [and] practise approximately the same technical procedures [. . .].

*Not one of these assumptions will bear close investigation.*⁶

As it would require ten full pages of this encyclopedia to list merely those articles and books in which the most widely recognized authorities confirm this view, any attempt to resort to philosophy's common sense would be ruled out in seeking some standard against which to measure variations in analytic treatment. The maintenance of standards falls more and more within the ambit of the group's interests, as is seen in the U.S.A. where the analytic group represents a significant power.

What is at stake is thus less a standard* than standing*. What I earlier termed "formalism" is what Glover calls "perfectionism." To realize this, it suffices to underscore how he speaks of it: analysis loses any measure of its "therapeutic applicability"; this ideal leads analysis to criteria of its operation that are "undefined and uncontrolled," and even to a "*mystique* (he uses the French word) which not only baffles investigation but blankets all healthy discussion."⁷

This mystification—which is, in fact, the technical term for any process that hides from the subject the origin of the effects of his own action—is all the more striking in that analysis enjoys favor, a favor which earns its stripes by its duration, only because it is well regarded broadly enough to occupy its putative place. It suffices to have those in human science circles look to psychoanalysis to give them their place, for psychoanalysis to have found its guarantee.

328 Problems result from this that become of public interest in a country like America where the quantity of analysts gives the quality of the group the scope of a sociological factor influencing the collective.

The fact that the milieu considers it necessary for the technique to be coherent with the theory is no more reassuring for all that.

Only a global apprehension of the divergences, which is able to grasp them synchronically, can determine the cause of their discord.

If we attempt to gain such an apprehension, we get the idea of a massive phenomenon of passivity, and even of subjective inertia, whose effects seem to grow with the spreading of the movement.

At least this is what is suggested by the dispersion we observe both in the coordination of concepts and in their comprehension.

Fine texts try to revitalize them and seem to take the hardy approach of arguing on the basis of their antinomies, but it is only to fall into purely fictive syncretisms that do not rule out indifference to false appearances.

People even go so far as to rejoice in the fact that the weakness of invention has not allowed for more damage to the fundamental concepts, those still being the concepts we owe to Freud. The latter's resistance to so many attempts to adulterate them becomes the *a contrario* proof of their consistency.

This is true of transference, which manages to weather the storm of popularizing theory and even popular ideas. It owes this to the Hegelian robustness of its constitution: Indeed, what other concept is there that better brings out its identity with the thing, the analytic thing in this case, cleaving to it with all the ambiguities that constitute its logical time?

This temporal foundation is the one with which Freud inaugurates transference and that I modulate by asking: Is it a return or a memorial? Others dwell on the thing regarding this resolved point by asking: Is it real or dereistic? Lagache⁸ raises a question about the concept of transference: Need for repetition or repetition of need?⁹

We see here that the dilemmas in which the practitioner gets bogged down derive from depreciations by which his thinking fails his action. These contradictions captivate us when, extenuated in his theory, they seem to force his pen with some semantic *Ananke* in which the dialectic of his action can be read *ab inferiori*.

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Thus an external coherence persists in the deviations of analytic experience that surround its axis, with the same rigor with which the shrapnel of a projectile, in dispersing, maintains its ideal trajectory with the center of gravity of the pyramidal shape it traces out.

The condition of the misunderstanding which, as I noted above, obstructs psychoanalysis' path to recognition thus turns out to be redoubled by a misrecognition internal to its own movement.

It is here that the question of variations—which must arise anew for the analyst after having been presented to the medical public—can find an unforeseen advantage.

This platform is narrow: It is based entirely on the fact that a practice based on intersubjectivity cannot escape the latter's laws when, in seeking to gain recognition, it invokes their effects.

Perhaps the flash will be bright enough to bring out the fact that the hidden extraterritoriality by which psychoanalysis proceeds in order to spread suggests that we treat it in the same way as a tumor by exteriorization.

But we can only do justice to a claim that is rooted in misrecognition by accepting it in its crudest terms.

The question of variations in treatment, taken further still here with the gallant jibe of “standard treatment,” incites me to retain here but one criterion, since it is the only one at the disposal of the physician who orients his patient in the treatment. This criterion, which is rarely enunciated since it is considered tautological, can be stated as follows: A psychoanalysis, whether standard or not, is the treatment one expects from a psychoanalyst.

*From the Psychoanalyst's Pathway to Its Maintenance, Considered
from the Viewpoint of Its Deviation*

330 The remark with which I closed the preceding section is only obvious ironically. Highlighting, as it does, the apparent impasse of the question when taken dogmatically, it reiterates it—if we look at it closely, without omitting the necessary grain of salt—by way of a synthetic a priori judgment, on the basis of which practical reason could no doubt find its bearings.

For if psychoanalysis' pathway is called into question so seriously by its variations that it can no longer recommend itself except on the basis of a standard, such a precarious existence requires that a man maintain this pathway and that he be a real man.

Furthermore, it is in the solicitations to which the real man is exposed by the ambiguity of this pathway that people will try to gauge what he makes of it through its effect on him. For if he pursues his task amid this ambiguity, it is because it does not stop him any more than is common in the majority of human practices. But if the question of the limit to be assigned to these variations remains endemic to this particular practice, it is because no one sees where the ambiguity ends.

Hence it is of little importance that the real man spares himself the effort of defining this endpoint on the basis of authorities who provide support here only by making him mistake one thing for another, or that he makes do by misrecognizing this endpoint in its rigor, avoiding experiencing its limit. In both cases, he is more duped [*joué*] by his action than he performs it [*qu'il ne la joue*], but he finds it all the easier to situate therein the gifts that adapt him to it—without noticing that, in abandoning himself to the bad faith of instituted practice, he degrades it to the level of routines whose secrets are dispensed by clever analysts. Such secrets become unassailable, since they are

always subordinated to the same gifts—even if there were none left in the world—that they reserve themselves the right to detect.

He who spares himself the trouble of concerning himself with his mission at such a cost will even consider his decision confirmed by a warning that still resonates from the very voice which formulated the fundamental rules of his practice: not to form too lofty an idea of this mission, still less to become the prophet of some established truth. Hence this precept, by which the master thought he was offering these rules for the understanding, merely lends itself to false humility because, being presented in a negative form, it was misunderstood [*contresens*].

Along the path of true humility, we will not have to look far for the unbearable ambiguity that is proposed to psychoanalysis; it is within everyone's reach. It is revealed in the question of what it means to speak, and one encounters it simply by welcoming [*accueillir*] a discourse. For the very locution in which the French language records [*recueille*] its most naive intention—that of understanding what this discourse “means to say” [*ce qu'il "veut dire"*]—tells us clearly enough that it does not say it. But what this “means to say” means to say is still a double entendre and it is up to the hearer whether it is one or the other: whether it is what the speaker means to say to him by the discourse he addresses to him or what this discourse tells him about the condition of the speaker. Thus not only does the meaning of this discourse reside in he who listens to it, but the reception [*accueil*] he gives it determines *who* says it—namely, whether it is the subject to whom he gives permission and lends credence or the other that his discourse delivers to the listener as constituted.

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Now the analyst seizes the listener's discretionary power to raise it to a second power. For apart from the fact that he expressly positions himself as an interpreter of the discourse for himself, and even for the speaking subject, he imposes upon the subject, in the topic of his discourse, the proper opening for the rule he assigns him as fundamental: This discourse must be pursued first without stopping and second without holding anything back, [something the subject might be inclined to do] not only out of a concern for its coherence or internal rationality but also out of shame regarding its *ad hominem* thrust or its unacceptability in polite society. The analyst thus widens the gap that places at his mercy the subject's overdetermination in the ambiguity of constituting speech and constituted discourse, as if he hoped that the extremes would meet up by a revelation that brings them together. But this conjunction cannot occur due to the rarely noticed limits within which supposedly free association remains contained, by which the subject's speech is maintained in syntactic forms that articulate it in discourse in the language employed as understood by the analyst.

Hence the analyst retains complete responsibility, in the weighty sense that I have just defined on the basis of his position as a listener. An ambiguity that is direct, since it is at his own discretion as an interpreter, turns into a secret summons that he cannot dismiss even by remaining silent.

332 Psychoanalytic authors thus admit to its weight, as obscure as it remains to them. This is seen in all the ways in which their uneasiness can be identified, running the gamut from the awkwardness and even formlessness of their theories of interpretation, to the ever rarer use of interpretation in practice owing to its never properly explained postponement. The vague term “analyzing” all too often makes up for the imprecision that keeps them from using “interpreting,” because it has not been updated. This is an effect of the avoidance at work in the practitioner’s thinking. The false consistency of the notion of countertransference, its stylishness, and the fanfare it fosters can be explained by the fact that it serves as an alibi: the analyst thereby avoids considering the action that it is incumbent upon him to take in the production of truth.¹⁰

The question of variations would be clarified by following this effect, diachronically this time, in a *history of variations* of the psychoanalytic movement, in bringing the type of parodic catholicity in which this question takes shape back to its universal root—namely, its introduction into the experience of speech.

Moreover, there is no need to be a genius to realize that the key words that the real man I mentioned uses so sparingly to illustrate his technique are not always the words he conceptualizes the most clearly. Our oracles would turn red were they to all try to explain them at once, and are not unhappy that the shame of their junior colleagues—extending to the most inexperienced by a paradox explained by the training methods currently in favor—spares them any such ordeal.

Analysis of the material, analysis of resistances—it is in these terms that analysts explain both the basic principle of and the ultimate key to their technique, the analysis of the material seeming outdated since the promotion of the analysis of resistances. Nevertheless, since the relevance of the interpretation of a resistance is demonstrated by the production of “new material,” the nuances, or even divergences, begin with what is done with this new material. And if we are to interpret it like we did before, we will be justified in wondering whether the term “interpretation” has the same meaning at these two different points in time.

To answer this question, we can look back to around 1920 when the “turning point” (that is the term consecrated in the history of analytic technique) occurred which has since been considered decisive in the pathways of analysis. It was explained at that time by an ebbing in the results analysis was able

to achieve, a finding one could only shed light on heretofore with the recommendation—whether apocryphal or not, in which the master’s humor retroactively acquires the status of foresight—that we had better quickly take inventory of the unconscious before it closes back down.

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Yet the very term “material” has since denoted the fact that the set of phenomena in which we had hitherto learned to find the symptom’s secret—an immense domain annexed by Freud’s genius to man’s knowledge [*connaissance*] that warrants the true title of “psychoanalytic semantics,” including dreams, bungled actions, slips of the tongue, memory disturbances, whims of thought association, and so on—has fallen out of favor in analytic technique.

Prior to this “turning point,” it was by deciphering such material that the subject was able to remember his history along with the outlines of the conflict that determined his symptoms. And the value to be granted in technique to the elimination of symptoms was based on how well the order in his history was restored and the gaps in it were filled. The observed elimination of symptoms demonstrated a dynamic in which the unconscious was defined as a clearly constituting subject, since it sustained symptoms in their meaning before it was revealed, and we experienced the unconscious directly, recognizing it in the ruse of disturbances in which the repressed compromises with the censorship—in this respect, let it be noted in passing, neurosis is akin to the most common condition of truth in speech and writing.

If, then, the analyst gave the subject the solution [*mot*] to his symptom, but the symptom persisted, it was because the subject resisted recognizing its meaning; analysts thus concluded that it was this resistance that must, above all, be analyzed. Note that this conclusion still put its faith in interpretation, but it was the particular aspect of the subject in which people sought this resistance that led to the approaching deviation; for it is clear that this notion tends to take the subject to be constituted in his discourse. Should the deviation go on to seek his resistance outside of this discourse, it will be irremediable. No one will come back to question the constituting function of interpretation regarding its failure.

This move to give up on the use of speech justifies my saying that psychoanalysis has not since left behind its childhood illness, this term going beyond the commonplace here, with all the propriety it encounters due to this very move—where everything is, in effect, based on the methodological faux pas made by the best-known name in child analysis.

The idea of resistance was not new, however. In 1895, Freud had already recognized its effect in the verbalization of chains of speech in which the subject constitutes his history. Freud did not hesitate to illustrate his conception of this process by representing these chains as encompassing with their array

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the pathogenic nucleus around which they bend, in order to indicate that resistance operates in a direction perpendicular to the parallelism of these chains. He even went so far as to posit the mathematical formula that this effect is inversely proportional to the distance between the nucleus and the chain being remembered, allowing us to gauge thereby how closely we have managed to approach it.

It is clear here that while interpretation of the resistance at work in such a chain of speech is different from interpretation of meaning by which the subject passes from one chain to another “deeper” chain, the first form of interpretation nevertheless operates on the very text of that speech, which includes its elusions, distortions, elisions, and even holes and syncopes.

The interpretation of resistance thus introduces the same ambiguity that I analyzed above in the position of the listener, which is taken up again here in the question: *Who* is resisting? “The ego,” answered the first doctrine, including therein the personal subject, no doubt, but solely from the indiscriminating angle of its dynamics.

It is here that the new orientation in technique runs headlong at a lure: it answers the question in the same way, neglecting the fact that it puts the blame on an ego whose meaning Freud, its oracle, has just changed; for Freud has just installed the ego in a new topography precisely in order to specify that resistance is not the privilege of the ego alone, but also of the id and the superego.

Nothing else in his last conceptualization will henceforth be truly understood, as can be seen in the fact that the authors of the “turning point” wave are still at the stage of examining the death instinct from every angle, and even of getting bogged down regarding what the subject must properly identify with, the analyst’s ego or his superego, without making a single worthwhile step forward, multiplying ever more instead an irresistible misconception.

By reversing the correct choice that determines which subject is welcomed in speech, the symptom’s constituting subject is treated as if he were constituted—like material [*en matériel*], as they say—while the ego, as constituted as it may be in resistance, becomes the subject upon whom the analyst henceforth calls as the constituting agency.

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The idea that this subject involves the person in his “totality” is a false effect of the new concept, even and especially insofar as it ensures a connection with the organs of the so-called perception-consciousness system. (Doesn’t Freud, moreover, make the superego the first guarantor of an experience of reality?)

What is in fact at stake is the return, of the most reactionary and thus of a highly instructive kind, of an ideology that has been given up everywhere else because it is quite simply bankrupt.¹¹

Consider the lines with which Anna Freud's book *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* opens:

There have been periods in the development of psychoanalytic science when the theoretical study of the individual ego was distinctly unpopular. [. . .] Whenever interest was shifted from the deeper to the more superficial psychic strata—whenever, that is to say, research was deflected from the id to the ego—it was felt that here was a beginning of apostasy from psychoanalysis as a whole.

These few lines suffice to allow us to hear, in the anxious sound with which they precluded the advent of a new era, the sinister music with which Euripides inscribed, in *The Phoenician Women*, the mythical link between the character of Antigone and the moment of the Sphinx's repercussion on the hero's action.

Since then it has become commonplace to repeat that we know nothing more about the subject than what his ego is willing to let us know. Otto Fenichel goes so far as to proffer quite simply, as if it were an indisputable truth, that "The understanding of the meaning of words is particularly a concern of the ego."¹²

The next step led to the confusing of resistances with ego defenses.

The idea of defense, put forward by Freud already in 1894 when he first relates neurosis to a widely accepted conception of the function of illness, is taken up again by him in his major work, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, to indicate that the ego forms on the basis of the same moments as a symptom.

But the semantic use Anna Freud makes of the ego, in the book just mentioned, as the subject of verbs, suffices by itself to display the transgression she consecrates in it; it shows too that, in the thereafter-received deviation, the ego is truly the objectified subject whose defense mechanisms constitute resistance.

Treatment is henceforth conceptualized as an attack, positing in theory the existence of a succession of systems of defense in the subject, which is adequately confirmed by the "cant phrase"—made fun of in passing by Edward Glover—by which one facilely tries to sound important by raising the question on any and every occasion whether one has sufficiently "analyse[d] the aggression."¹³ In this way, the simpleton asserts that he has never encountered any transference effects other than aggression.

It is in this way that Fenichel tries to set things right by a reversal that confuses things still more. For while there may be some value in the order he traces of the operation to be carried out against the subject's defenses, which he considers to be like a fortress—implying that the defenses as a whole merely tend

to divert the attack from the one defense which, since it too closely covers what it hides, already gives it away, but also that this latter defense is henceforth the essential stake, so much so that the drive hidden by this defense, when it offers itself up nakedly, must be considered to be the supreme artifice designed to preserve it—the impression of reality that holds our attention in this strategy serves as a prelude to the awakening that is such that where all suspicion of truth disappears, the dialectic reasserts its rights by appearing not to have to be useless in practice, if only by giving it a meaning.

337 For there is no longer any end to the supposed depths or even any reason to seek them if what such a search discovers is no truer than what covers it over. In forgetting this, analysis degenerates into an immense psychological mess, and what we hear about the way it is practiced by certain analysts merely confirms this impression.

If pretending to pretend is, indeed, a possible moment of the dialectic, the fact remains that the truth the subject confesses in order that we take it to be a lie is not the same as an error on his part. But the maintenance of this distinction is only possible in a dialectic of intersubjectivity in which constituting speech is presupposed in constituted discourse.

Indeed, to flee the area shy of the reason for this discourse, people displace it to the beyond. While the subject's discourse could, possibly and occasionally, be bracketed in the initial perspective of an analysis because it may serve as a lure in or even as an obstruction to the revelation of truth, it is insofar as it serves as a sign that it is now permanently devalued. For it is no longer only that it is stripped of its content in order to dwell instead on its flow, its tone, its interruptions, and even its melody. It seems that any other manifestation of the subject's presence will soon have to be preferred to it: his presentation in his approach and gait, the affectation of his manners, and the way he takes his leave of us. An attitudinal reaction in the session will hold our attention more than a syntactical error and will be examined more in terms of its energy level than its gestural import. An up-welling of emotion and a visceral gurgle will be the sought-for evidence of the mobilization of resistance, and the idiocy of the fanatics of lived experience will go so far as to find the *crème de la crème* in smelling each other.

But the more we separate the authenticity of the analytic relationship from the discourse in which it is inscribed, what we continue to call its "interpretation" derives ever more exclusively from the analyst's knowledge. This knowledge has, of course, grown considerably in this pathway, but people cannot claim they have, in this way, left behind an intellectualist form of analysis, unless they admit that the communication of this knowledge to the subject acts only as a suggestion to which the criterion of truth remains foreign. Thus

Wilhelm Reich, who clearly defined the conditions of this kind of intervention in his form of *character analysis*, which is rightly considered to be an essential stage in the development of the new technique, admits that he can expect it to have an effect only on the basis of his insistence.¹⁴

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This use of suggestion does not become a veritable interpretation just because it is analyzed as such. Such an analysis merely traces out the relation of one ego to another ego. This can be seen in the usual formulation that the analyst must become an ally of the healthy part of the subject's ego, when it is completed with the theory of the dissociation of the ego in psychoanalysis.¹⁵ If we thus proceed to make a series of bipartitions in the subject's ego by doing this *ad infinitum*, it is clear that his ego is reduced, in the end, to the analyst's ego.

Along this pathway, what does it matter if we proceed according to a formulation in which the return to the scholar's traditional disdain for "morbid thought" is clearly reflected? For by speaking to the patient in "his own language," we still will not render him his own speech.

The ground of the question remains unchanged and is instead confirmed when it is formulated from an entirely different perspective, that of the object-relation, whose recent role in technique we shall see. But when object relations theory refers to an introjection by the subject of the analyst's ego, in the guise of the good object, it makes us wonder what an observant Huron would deduce about the mentality of modern civilized man from this mystical meal, assuming he makes the same strange mistake we make in taking literally the symbolic identifications seen in the kind of thought that we call "primitive."

The fact remains that a theoretician weighing in on the delicate question of the termination of analysis can crudely posit that it implies that the subject has identified with the analyst's ego, insofar as this ego analyzes him.¹⁶

This formulation, once demystified, signifies nothing if not that in ruling out any foundation of his relationship with the subject in speech, the analyst can communicate nothing to him that the analyst does not already know from his preconceived views or immediate intuition—that is, nothing that is not subject to the organization of the analyst's own ego.

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I will momentarily accept this aporia to which analysis is reduced in order to maintain its core in its deviation, and I will raise the question: What must the analyst's ego thus be if it assumes the role of being the measure of truth for all of us and for each subject who puts himself in the analyst's hands?

On the Ego in Analysis and Its End in the Analyst

The term "aporia" with which, at the end of the second section, I summed up the gain made with respect to the impasse in the first chapter, announces that

I intend to confront this gain in the psychoanalyst's common sense—and certainly not take pleasure in the fact that he may be offended by it.

Here again I will proceed by noting that the same things require a different discourse when they are taken up in another context, and will introduce my remarks by recalling that, if this connivance (*Einfühlung*) and assessment (*Abschätzung*)—which Ferenczi (1928, p. 209)¹⁷ will not have come from anywhere but from the preconscious—have prevailed over the notorious “communication of unconscious” (considered, not unjustifiably, in an early phase of analysis to be the crux of true interpretation), the current promotion of effects that are placed under the heading of “countertransference”¹⁸ is equally a step backward.

Moreover, the quibbling can only continue given that the ego as an agency is situated as unrelated to its neighbor agencies by those who consider it to represent the subject's collateral [*sûreté*].

We must call upon the first impression the analyst gives, which is certainly not that the ego is his strength, at least when it comes to his own ego and the foundation it can serve as for him.

Isn't that the hitch that requires the analyst to be analyzed, a principle that Ferenczi considers to warrant the title of the second fundamental rule of psychoanalysis? And doesn't the analyst bend under the weight of the judgment that might well be viewed as Freud's last, since it was handed down by him two years before his death: “analysts in their own personalities have not invariably come up to the standard of psychical normality to which they wish to educate their patients.”¹⁹ This astonishing verdict, which there is no reason to revise today, means that the analyst cannot take advantage of the excuse that can be used in favor of every elite, which is that it finds its recruits among ordinary mortals.

Since this elite is below average, the most favorable hypothesis is to attribute it to the adverse repercussion of a disturbance [*désarroi*] that originates in the analytic act itself, as the preceding shows.

Ferenczi, the first-generation author who most relevantly raised the question of what is required of the analyst as a person, in particular as regards the end of the treatment, elsewhere mentions the root of the problem.

In his luminous article on psychoanalytic elasticity, he expresses himself as follows:

I should like to mention, as a problem that has not been considered, that of the metapsychology of the analyst's mental processes during analysis. His cathexes oscillate between identification (analytic object-love) on the one hand and self-control or intellectual activity on the other.

During the long day's work he can never allow himself the pleasure of giving his narcissism and egoism free play in reality, and he can give free play to them in his fantasy only for brief moments. A strain of this kind scarcely occurs otherwise in life, and I do not doubt that sooner or later it will call for the creation of a special hygiene for the analyst.²⁰

Such is the abrupt precondition whose importance derives from the fact that it concerns what the psychoanalyst must first vanquish in himself. For why else would Ferenczi use this to introduce the tempered pathway that he wants to trace for us of the analyst's intervention with the elastic line he tries to define?

The order of subjectivity that the analyst must bring about in himself is the only thing Ferenczi indicates with an arrow at each intersection, and it is monotonously repeated by recommendations that are too varied for us not to try to grasp how they fit together. *Menschenkenntnis* and *Menschenforschung* are two terms he uses whose romantic ancestry, which pushes them toward the art of leading men and the natural history of man, allows us to appreciate what the author hopes to do with them, by way of a sure method and an open market: reduction of one's personal impact; knowledge relegated to a subordinate position; authority that knows not to insist; goodness without indulgence;²¹ distrust of the altar of good deeds; the only resistance to be attacked being that of indifference, *Unglauben*, or of refusal, *Ablehnung*; encouraging nasty comments; and true modesty regarding one's knowledge. In all of these rules, isn't it the ego that effaces itself in order to give way to the subject-point of interpretation? Thus these rules can only take effect on the basis of the psychoanalyst's personal analysis, and especially its end.

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Where is the end of analysis as far as the ego is concerned? How can we know this if we misrecognize the ego's function in the very action of psychoanalysis? Let us follow the path of a kind of criticism that puts a text to the test of the very principles it defends.

And let us submit the so-called analysis of character to it. Character analysis presents itself as based on the discovery that the subject's personality is structured like a symptom that his personality feels to be foreign; in other words, like a symptom, his personality harbors a meaning, that of a repressed conflict. The material that reveals this conflict is elicited in the second stage, after a preliminary stage of treatment whose goal—as Reich expressly states it in his conception, which has remained a classic in analysis—is to get the subject to take his own personality as a symptom.

This point of view has clearly borne fruit in an objectification of structures, such as the so-called “genital-narcissistic” and “masochistic” characters,

342 which were previously neglected because they were apparently asymptomatic, not to mention the hysterical and compulsive characters, which were already indicated by their symptoms, whose collection of traits constitutes a precious contribution to psychological knowledge, even if their theorization leaves something to be desired.

It is all the more important to pause at the results of this form of analysis, of which Reich was the master craftsman, in the assessment he gives of them. It amounts to the following: the quantity of change in the subject that legitimates this kind of analysis never even goes so far as to blur the lines that separate the original structures from each other.²² Hence, the positive effects of the analysis of these structures that are felt by the subject, after the structures have been “symptomized” through the objectification of their traits, oblige us to more closely indicate their relation to the tensions that the analysis has resolved. The whole theory that Reich provides of it is based on the idea that these structures are a defense by the individual against the orgasmic effusion whose primacy in lived experience can alone ensure its harmony. The extremes this idea led him to are well known—they went so far as to get him ousted by the analytic community. But, in ousting him not unjustifiably, no one ever really knew how to formulate why Reich was wrong.

We have to realize, first, that these structures play only the role of a medium or material, since they persist after the resolution of the tensions that seem to motivate them. This medium or material is, no doubt, ordered like the symbolic material of neurosis, as analysis proves, but it derives its efficacy here from the imaginary function, as it is revealed in the triggering of instinctual behavior; we learn about this from animal ethology, even though ethology itself has been strongly influenced by the concepts of displacement and identification stemming from psychoanalysis.

Thus Reich made only one mistake in his character analysis: what he calls “character armor”* and treats as such is actually but an armorial. The subject, after treatment, still carries the weight of the arms he received from nature, having merely effaced from them the mark of a blazon.

343 If this confusion was nevertheless possible, it is because the imaginary function—which in animals serves as a guide in their sexual fixation on the congener, in their display rituals by which the reproductive act is triggered, and even in their marking of territory—seems in man to be entirely diverted toward the narcissistic relation on which the ego is based, giving rise to an aggressiveness whose coordinate denotes the signification that I will try to show to be the first and last word of this relation. Reich’s error can be explained by his deliberate refusal of the signification that is tied to the death instinct, which was introduced by Freud at the height of his conceptual powers, and which is,

as we know, the touchstone of the mediocrity of analysts, whether they reject it or disfigure it.

Thus character analysis is only able to establish a properly mystifying conception of the subject on the basis of what proves to be a defense in that analysis, if we apply its own principles to it.

To return psychoanalysis to a veridical path, it is worth recalling that analysis managed to go so far in the revelation of man's desires only by following, in the veins of neurosis and the marginal subjectivity of the individual, the structure proper to a desire that thus proves to model it at an unexpected depth—namely, the desire to have his desire recognized. This desire, in which it is literally verified that man's desire is alienated in the other's desire, in effect structures the drives discovered in analysis, in accordance with all the vicissitudes of the logical substitutions in their source, aim [*direction*], and object.²³ But these drives, however far back we go into their history, instead of proving to derive from the need for a natural satisfaction, simply modulate in phases that reproduce all the forms of sexual perversion—that, at least, is the most obvious and best known fact of analytic experience.

But we more easily neglect the dominance found there of the narcissistic relation, that is, of a second alienation by which the internal splitting of his existence and his facticity is inscribed in the subject, along with the complete ambivalence of the position he identifies with in the perverse couple. It is nevertheless in the properly subjective meaning thus highlighted in perversion, far more than in its accession to a widely acknowledged objectification, that lies the step that psychoanalysis made man's knowledge take through its annexation, as the evolution of scientific literature alone demonstrates.

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Now, the theory of the ego in analysis remains marked by a fundamental misrecognition if we neglect the period of its elaboration in Freud's work running from 1910 to 1920, in which it is entirely inscribed in the structure of the narcissistic relation.

In the early stage of psychoanalysis, the study of the ego never constituted a subject of aversion, as Anna Freud would have it in the above-cited passage. Rather, it is since people came up with the idea of promoting it in analysis that this study truly favors the subversion of psychoanalysis.

The conception of the phenomenon of passionate love [*amour-passion*] as determined by the image of the ideal ego, like the question of its imminent hatred, are the points we must examine from the abovementioned period of Freud's thought if we are to properly understand the relation between the ego and the image of the other—such as it is already made sufficiently clear in his very title, which joins *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921)²⁴—in one of the texts with which Freud inaugurates the last period of

his thought, the one in which he completes the definition of the ego in his topography.

But this completion can only be understood by grasping the coordinates of his progress in developing the notions of primary masochism and the death instinct, found in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920),²⁵ and in developing the conception of the negating root of objectification, as it is laid out in the short 1925 article on *Verneinung* (negation).²⁶

345 Only by studying Freud's progress in these areas can we explain his growing interest in aggressiveness in transference, in resistance, and even in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929),²⁷ showing that the kind of aggression we imagine to be at the root of the struggle for survival is not what is at stake in them. The notion of aggressiveness corresponds, on the contrary, to the rending of the subject from himself, a rending whose primordial moment comes when the sight of the other's image, apprehended by him as a unified whole, anticipates his sense that he lacks motor coordination, this image retroactively structuring this lack of motor coordination in images of fragmentation. This experience explains both the depressive reaction, as reconstructed by Melanie Klein at the origins of the ego, and the child's jubilatory assumption of his image in the mirror, the phenomenon of which, characteristic of the period beginning at six to eight months of age, is considered by the author of these lines to manifest in an exemplary manner the properly imaginary nature of the ego's function in the subject, along with the constitution of the ego's ideal *Urbild*.²⁸

It is thus at the heart of experiences of bearing and intimidation during the first years of his life that the individual is introduced to the mirage of mastery of his functions, in which his subjectivity will remain split, and whose imaginary formation, naively objectified by psychologists as the ego's synthetic function, manifests instead the condition that introduces him to the alienating master/slave dialectic.

But if these experiences—which can be seen in animals too at many moments in their instinctual cycles, and especially in the preliminary displays of the reproductive cycle, with all the lures and aberrations these experiences involve—in fact open onto this signification in order to durably structure the human subject, it is because they receive this signification from the tension stemming from the impotence proper to the prematurity of birth, by which naturalists characterize the specificity of man's anatomical development—a fact that helps us grasp the dehiscence from natural harmony, required by Hegel to serve as the fruitful illness, life's happy fault, in which man, distinguishing himself from his essence, discovers his existence.

There is, in effect, no other reality behind the new prestige the imaginary

function takes on in man than this touch of death whose mark he receives at birth. For it is clearly the same “death instinct” that is manifested in this function in the animal kingdom, if we stop to consider that (1) by serving in the specific fixation on the congener in the sexual cycle, subjectivity is not distinguished there from the image that captivates it, and that (2) the individual appears there only as the passing representative of this image—that is, only as the passage of this represented image into life. Only to man does this image reveal its mortal signification and, at the same time, that he exists. But this image is only given to him as an image of the other—that is to say, it is ravished from him.

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Thus the ego is never but half of the subject; moreover, it is the half he loses in finding that image. We can thus understand why he clings to it and tries to hold on to it in everything that seems to stand in for [*doubler*] it in himself or in the other, and offers him its resemblance, along with its effigy.

Demystifying the meaning of what analytic theory calls “primary identifications,” let us say that the subject always imposes on the other—in the radical diversity of relational modes that run the gamut from the invocation of speech to the most immediate sympathy—an imaginary form which bears the seal, or even superimposed seals, of the experiences of impotence by which this form has been shaped in the subject. And this form is no other than the ego.

Thus, to return to the action of analysis, the subject always naïvely tends to concentrate his discourse on the focal point of the imaginary where this form is produced once he is freed, by the condition of the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis, from the threat that a total rejection may be addressed to him. It is the visual power this imaginary form retains from its origins that, in fact, justifies a condition which is rarely explained, even though it is felt to be crucial in variations in technique: the condition that the analyst occupy, in the session, a place that makes him invisible to the subject. For this allows the narcissistic image to be produced all the more purely and the regressive proterianism of its seductions to have freer range.

Now, the analyst undoubtedly knows, on the other hand, that he must not respond to appeals that the subject makes to him in this place, as implicit as they may be; otherwise he will see transference love arise there that nothing, except its artificial production, distinguishes from passionate love, the conditions which produced it thus failing due to their effect, analytic discourse being reduced to the silence of the evoked presence. The analyst also knows that the more he fails to respond, the more he provokes in the subject the aggression, and even hatred, characteristic of negative transference.

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But he knows less well that what he says in his response is less important here than the place from which he responds. For he cannot content himself

with the precaution of avoiding entering into the subject's game when the principle of the analysis of resistances orders him to objectify it.

Indeed, by simply targeting the object whose image is the subject's ego, that is, by targeting his character traits, the analyst falls under the sway of the illusions [*prestiges*] of his own ego, no less naively than the subject himself does. And the effect here is not so much to be gauged in the mirages they produce as in the distance they bring about in his object-relation. For it suffices for it to be fixed for the subject to know how to find it there.

The analyst thus enters into the game of a more radical connivance in which the shaping of the subject by the analyst's ego serves merely as an excuse for the analyst's narcissism.

If the truth of this aberration were not openly avowed in the theorization provided for it, whose forms I highlighted above, the proof could be found in the phenomena that one of the analysts the best trained in Ferenczi's school of authenticity so sensitively analyzes as characteristic of the cases that he considers to have been successfully terminated: whether he is describing the narcissistic ardor with which the subject is consumed and which we encourage him to douse in the cold shower of reality, or his oozing of an indescribable emotion at the final leave taking, going so far as to note that the analyst shares his emotion.²⁹ This is corroborated by the author's disappointed resignation at having to admit that certain beings cannot hope for anything more than to separate from their analysts in hatred.³⁰

348 These results justify a use of transference corresponding to a theory of so-called "primary" love which takes as its model the mutual voracity of the mother/child couple:³¹ in all the forms envisioned, we see the purely dyadic conception that has come to govern the analytic relationship.³²

If the intersubjective relationship in analysis is, indeed, conceptualized as that of a dyad of individuals, it can only be based on the unity of a perpetuated vital dependency, the idea of which altered the Freudian conception of neurosis (abandonment neurosis); and it can only be carried out in the passivation/activation polarity of the subject, the terms of which are expressly considered by Alice Balint to formulate the impasse that makes this theory necessary.³³ Such errors can be considered human inasmuch as they are rendered subtle in connotation by their author.

These errors cannot be corrected without reference to the mediation that speech constitutes between subjects. But this mediation is inconceivable unless one presupposes the presence of a third term in the imaginary relationship itself: mortal reality—the death instinct—which conditions the illusions [*prestiges*] of narcissism, as I showed earlier, and whose effects can be found

anew in a brilliant form in the results considered by Balint to be those of an analysis carried to its full term in an ego-to-ego relationship.

In order for the transference relationship to escape these effects, the analyst would have to strip the narcissistic image of his own ego of all the forms of desire by which that image has been constituted, reducing it to the only face that sustains it behind their masks: the face of the absolute master, death.

It is thus clearly here that the analysis of the ego finds its ideal terminus: that in which the subject, having refound the origins of his ego in an imaginary regression, comes, by the progression of remembering, to its end in analysis—namely, the subjectification of his death.

And this is supposed to be the end required of the analyst's ego, about whom we can say that he must acknowledge the prestige of but one master—death—349 in order for life, which he must guide through so many vicissitudes, to be his friend. This goal does not seem beyond human grasp—for it does not imply that for him, or for others, death is anything more than an illusion [*prestige*]—and it merely satisfies the requirements of his task, such as someone like Ferenczi had defined it earlier.

This imaginary condition can only be brought about, nevertheless, through an ascesis that is affirmed in a being by following a path along which all objective knowledge is progressively suspended. This is true because, for the subject, the reality of his own death is in no wise an object that can be imagined, and the analyst can know nothing about it, no more than anyone else, except that he is a being destined to die [*promis à la mort*]. Thus, assuming he has eliminated all the illusions [*prestiges*] of his ego in order to accede to “being-toward-death,” no other knowledge, whether immediate or constructed, can be preferred by him to be made a power of, assuming it [*il*] is not simply abolished thereby.

Thus he can now respond to the subject from the place he wants to respond from, but he no longer wants anything that determines this place.

Here we find, if we think about it, the reason for the profound oscillatory movement that brings analysis back to an “expectant” practice after each misguided attempt to make it more “active.”

The analyst's approach cannot be left up to the indeterminacy of a freedom of indifference, nevertheless. But the usual watchword of benevolent neutrality does not provide a sufficient indication here. For while it subordinates the analyst's pleasure to the subject's own good, it still does not place his knowledge at his disposal.

Which brings us to the following question: What must the analyst know in analysis?

What the Psychoanalyst Must Know: How to Ignore What He Knows

350 The imaginary condition with which the preceding section culminates must be understood only as an ideal condition. But if we realize that the fact that something belongs to the imaginary does not mean that it is illusory, we can say that being taken to be ideal does not make it any more dereistic. For an ideal point and even a solution that is called “imaginary” in mathematics, because it provides the pivotal point of transformation, the node point of convergence of figures or functions that are entirely determined in reality [*réel*], are clearly constitutive parts of those figures and functions. This is true of the condition involving the analyst’s ego in the form of the problem whose challenge I have accepted.

The question now directed at the analyst’s knowledge derives its power from the fact that it does not bring with it the answer that the analyst knows what he is doing, since it is the obvious fact that he does not, whether in theory or in technique, which led us to raise the question here.

For, if it is taken for granted that an analysis changes nothing in reality [*réel*] but “changes everything” for the subject, as long as the analyst cannot say what he is doing, the term “magical thinking”—used to designate the naive faith the subject he works with has in his power—only serves as an excuse for his own ignorance.

If, indeed, there are many opportunities to demonstrate how idiotically this term is used both inside and outside of analysis, we will find here, no doubt, the most favorable opportunity for asking the analyst what authorizes him to consider his knowledge to be privileged.

For his imbecilic recourse to the term “lived experience” to qualify the knowledge [*connaissance*] he gains from his own analysis, as if all knowledge [*connaissance*] deriving from an experience were not lived, does not suffice to distinguish his way of thinking from the way of thinking that considers him to be a man “not like the others.” Nor can we attribute the vanity of this statement to the “they” [*on*] who repeat it. For if “they” are not justified, in effect, in saying that he is not a man like the others, since “they” recognize in their semblable a man in that “they” can speak to him, “they” are not wrong to mean by this that he is not a man like everyone else in that “they” recognize a man as their equal on the basis of the weight [*portée*] of his words.

Now the analyst is different in that he makes use of a function that is common to all men in a way that is not within everyone’s grasp [*portée*] when he *supports* [*porte*] speech.

351 For that is what he does for the subject’s speech, even by simply welcom-

ing it, as I showed earlier, with an attentive silence. For this silence implies [*comporte*] speech, as we see in the expression “to keep silent” which, speaking of the analyst’s silence, means not only that he makes no noise but that he keeps quiet *instead of* responding.

We can go no further in this direction without asking: What is speech? And I will do my best to ensure that all the words hit their target [*portent*] here.

Nevertheless, no concept supplies the meaning of speech, not even the concept of concept, for speech is not the meaning of meaning. But speech gives meaning its medium in the symbol that speech incarnates through its act.

It is thus an act and, as such, it presupposes a subject. But it is not enough to say that, in this act, the subject presupposes another subject, for it is rather that he establishes himself here by being the other, but in a paradoxical unity of the one and the other by means of which, as I showed earlier, the one defers to the other in order to become identical to himself.

We can thus say that speech manifests itself as a communication in which the subject, expecting the other to render his message true, proffers his message in an inverted form, *and* in which this message transforms him by announcing that he is the same. As is seen in any promise made [*foi donnée*], in which the declarations “You are my wife” and “You are my master” signify “I am your husband” and “I am your disciple.”

Speech thus seems to be an all the more true instance of speech [*une parole*] the less its truth is based on what is known as its “correspondence to the thing”: true speech is thus paradoxically opposed to true discourse, their truth being distinguished by the fact that the former constitutes the recognition [*reconnaissance*] by the subjects of their beings insofar as they are invested [*intéressés*] in them, while the latter is constituted by knowledge [*connaissance*] of reality [*réel*], insofar as the subject targets reality in objects. But each of the truths distinguished here is altered when it crosses the path of the other truth.

This is how true discourse, by isolating the givens [*données*] of promises in the giving of one’s word [*parole donnée*], makes the latter appear to be lying speech—since it pledges the future which, as they say, belongs to no one—and ambiguous too in that it constantly outstrips the being it concerns in the alienation in which its becoming is constituted.

But true speech, questioning true discourse as to what it signifies, will find that one signification always refers to another signification in true discourse, no thing being able to be shown other than by a sign, and will thus make true discourse seem to be doomed to error.

How, in navigating between the Charybdis and the Scylla of this inter-accusation of speech, could the intermediate discourse—that in which the sub-

ject, in his design to get himself recognized, addresses speech to the other while taking into account what he knows of his being as given—avoid being forced into proceeding by way of ruse?

This is, in effect, how discourse proceeds to con-vince, a word that involves strategy in the process of reaching an agreement. And, however little we may have participated in the enterprise of a human institution, or even in merely supporting it, we know that the struggle continues over the terms, even when the things have been agreed to. The prevalence of speech as the middle term is again manifested in this.

This process is carried out while the subject manifests bad faith, steering his discourse between trickery, ambiguity, and error. But this struggle to assure so precarious a peace would not offer itself as the most common field of intersubjectivity if man were not already completely per-suaded by speech, which means that he indulges in it thoroughly.

For it is also true that man, in subordinating his being to the law of recognition, is traversed by the avenues of speech, which is why he is open to every suggestion. But he pauses and loses himself in the discourse of conviction, due to the narcissistic mirages that dominate his ego's relation to the other.

Thus the subject's bad faith, being so constitutive of this intermediary discourse that it is not even absent in his declaration of friendship, redoubles due to the misrecognition in which these mirages are instated. This is what Freud called the unconscious function of the ego in his topography, before he demonstrated its essential form in the discourse of negation (see "Die Verneinung," 1925).

If the analyst is thus subjected to the ideal condition that the mirages of his narcissism must have become transparent to him, it is in order that he be permeable to the other's authentic speech; we must now try to understand how he can recognize the latter through the other's discourse.

353 Of course this intermediate discourse, even qua discourse of trickery and error, does not fail to bear witness to the existence of the kind of speech on which truth is based; for it sustains itself only by attempting to pass itself off as such, and even when it openly presents itself as a lying discourse, it merely affirms all the more strongly the existence of such speech. If we refind, through this phenomenological approach to truth, the key the loss of which leads positivist logicism in search of the "meaning of meaning," doesn't this approach also get us to recognize in truth the concept of concept insofar as it is revealed in speech in action [*acte*]?

This speech, which constitutes the subject in its truth, is nevertheless forever forbidden to him, except in rare moments of his existence when he strives, ever so confusedly, to grasp it in his sworn word [*foi jurée*]; it is forbidden in

that he is doomed to misrecognize it by the intermediate discourse. This speech nonetheless speaks wherever it can be read in his being—that is, at all the levels at which it has shaped him. This antinomy is the very antinomy found in the meaning Freud gave to the notion of the unconscious.

But if this speech is nevertheless accessible, it is because no true speech is simply the subject's speech, since true speech always operates by grounding the subject's speech in its mediation by another subject. In that way, this speech is open to the endless chain—which is not, of course, an indefinite chain, since it forms a closed loop—of words [*paroles*] in which the dialectic of recognition is concretely realized in the human community.

It is to the extent that the analyst manages to silence the intermediate discourse in himself, in order to open himself up to the chain of true speech [*paroles*], that he can interpolate his revelatory interpretation.

This can be seen whenever we consider an authentic interpretation in its concrete form. For example, in the analysis classically known as that of the Rat Man, the major turning point comes when Freud comprehends the resentment aroused in the subject by the fact that his mother suggested that his choice of a wife should be dictated in a calculating manner. The fact that the prohibition this advice brought with it for the subject, the prohibition against becoming engaged to the woman he thinks he loves, is associated by Freud with the father's speech, despite obvious facts to the contrary—especially the one, which takes precedence over all the others, that his father is dead—leaves us quite surprised. But it is justified at the level of a deeper truth that Freud seems to have unwittingly divined, which is revealed by the series of associations the subject then goes on to provide. This truth is situated solely in what Freud refers to here as the “word chain”—which, making itself heard both in the neurosis and in the subject's destiny, extends well beyond him as an individual—and consists in the fact that a similar lack of good faith presided over his father's marriage and that this ambiguity itself covered over a breach of trust in money matters which, in causing his father to be discharged from the army, determined the latter's decision whom to marry.

Now this chain, which is not made up of pure events (all of which had, in any case, occurred prior to the subject's birth), but rather of a failure (which was perhaps the most serious because it was the most subtle) to live up to the truth of speech and of an infamy more sullyng to his honor—the debt engendered by the failure seeming to have cast its shadow over the whole of his parents' marriage, and the debt engendered by the infamy never having been paid—this chain provides the meaning by which we can understand the simulacrum of redemption that the subject foments to the point of delusion in the course of the great obsessive trance that leads him to ask Freud for help.

Note that this chain is certainly not the whole structure of his obsessive neurosis, but that, in the text of the neurotic's individual myth, it crossbreeds with the web of fantasies in which the shadow of his dead father and the ideal of his lady-love are conjoined in a couple of narcissistic images.

But if Freud's interpretation, by undoing this chain in all its latent import, leads the imaginary web of the neurosis to disintegrate, it is because this chain summons the subject, concerning the symbolic debt that is promulgated in his tribunal, less as its legatee than as its living witness.

For it is important to consider that speech constitutes the subject's being not merely by a symbolic assumption, but that prior to his birth speech determines—through the laws of marriage, by which the human order is distinguished from nature—not only the subject's status but even the birth of his biological being.

355 Now, it seems that Freud's access to the crucial point of the meaning with which the subject could literally decipher his destiny was made possible by the fact that a similar suggestion of familial prudence had been made to Freud himself, as we know from a fragment of his self-analysis, mentioned in his work, which was unmasked by Bernfeld. Had Freud himself not rejected it on that occasion, perhaps he might have missed the opportunity to recognize it when treating the Rat Man.

The dazzling comprehension Freud demonstrates in such cases is, of course, clouded over often enough by the effects of his own narcissism. Still, owing nothing to an analysis conducted in the usual manner, it allows us to see that, in the lofty heights of his final doctrinal constructions, the paths of being were cleared for him.

While this example makes us realize how important it is to comment upon Freud's work in order to understand analysis, it will serve here only as a spring-board for the last stop in our discussion of this question—namely, *the contrast between the objects proposed to the analyst by his experience and the discipline necessary to his training.*

Never having been fully conceptualized, or even approximately formulated, this contrast is nevertheless expressed, as we might well expect of any neglected truth, in the rebelliousness of the facts.

The facts rebel first at the level of analytic experience, where no one gives voice to their rebellion better than Theodor Reik; we can confine our attention here to his sounding of the alarm in his book *Listening with the Third Ear*,³⁴ the "third ear" designating nothing other, no doubt, than the two at every man's disposal, on the condition that the function the Scriptures claim they do not have be restored to them.

The reader will find there his reasons for opposing the requirement of a

regular succession of levels of imaginary regression, whose principle was stipulated by the analysis of resistances, no less than the more systematic forms of planning* this kind of analysis went on to formulate—while he recalls, with a hundred lively examples, the pathway proper to true interpretation. One cannot, in reading his book, fail to note his recourse, that is unfortunately poorly defined, to divination, if the use of this term can refine its former virtue by evoking the juridical procedure it originally designated (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, II, 4), reminding us that human destiny depends upon the choice of

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he who will support speech's accusation in a trial.

We will be no less concerned by the malaise that reigns regarding everything related to the analyst's training. To take but the most recent reverberation, consider the declarations made in December 1952 by Dr. Knight in his presidential address to the American Psychoanalytic Association.³⁵ Among the factors that tend to "alter the character of analytic training," he points out, alongside the increase in the number of analysts-in-training, "the more structured training" in the institutes that offer training, opposing it to the earlier type of training by a master ("the earlier preceptorship type of training"*) [page 218].

Regarding the recruitment of analytic trainees, he says the following:

[Formerly] they were primarily introspective individuals, inclined to be studious and thoughtful, and tended to be highly individualistic and to limit their social life to clinical and theoretical discussions with colleagues. They read prodigiously and knew the psychoanalytic literature thoroughly. [. . .] In contrast, perhaps the majority of students of the past decade [. . .] are not so introspective, are inclined to read only the literature that is assigned in institute courses, and wish to get through with the training requirements as rapidly as possible. Their interests are primarily clinical rather than research and theoretical. Their motivation for being analyzed is more to get through this requirement of training. [. . .] The partial capitulation of some institutes [to the pressure arising from their students'] ambitious haste, and from their tendency to be satisfied with a more superficial grasp of theory, has created some of the training problems we now face [218–19].

It is quite clear, in this highly public discourse, how serious the problem is and also how poorly it is understood, if it is understood at all. What is desirable is not that the analysts be more "introspective" but rather that they understand what they are doing; and the remedy is not that the institutes be less structured, but rather that analysts stop dispensing predigested knowl-

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But what we must understand above all is that, whatever the dose of knowledge thus transmitted, it is of no value in training analysts.

For the knowledge accumulated in the course of an analyst's experience concerns the imaginary, which his experience constantly runs up against, so much so that his experience has come to adjust its pace to the systematic exploration of the imaginary in the subject. This experience has thus succeeded in constituting the natural history of the forms of desire's capture and even of the subject's identifications that had never before been cataloged this rigorously in their richness or even approached in terms of their means of action, whether by science or even wisdom, even though their luxuriance and seduction had long been deployed in artists' fanciful imaginings.

But beyond the fact that the imaginary's capture effects are extremely difficult to objectify in a true discourse—creating the major obstacle to true discourse in our daily work, which constantly threatens to make analysis into a bad science, given its continued uncertainty as to their limits in reality [*réel*]—this science, even if we assumed it were correct, is of only deceptive help in the analyst's action, for it concerns only the deposit, not the mainspring.

In this respect, experience privileges neither the so-called "biological" tendency in analytic theory, which of course has nothing biological about it except the terminology, nor the sociological tendency sometimes referred to as "culturalist." The first tendency's ideal of "drive" harmony, based on individualist ethics, cannot, as it is easy to see, yield effects that are any more humanizing than the ideal of conformity to the group with which the second tendency exposes itself to the covetousness of "engineers of the soul." The difference one can see in their results derives only from the distance that separates an autoplasmic graft from a member made of the orthopedic device that replaces it—what remains lame, in the first case, with regard to instinctual functioning (what Freud calls the "scar" of neurosis) leaves only an uncertain advantage over the compensatory artifice aimed at by the second's sublimations.

358 In truth, if analysis borders closely enough on the scientific domains thus evoked that certain of its concepts have been adopted by them, these concepts are not grounded in the experience of those domains, and the attempts analysis makes to get its experience naturalized in science remain in a state of suspension that leads analysis to be highly regarded in science only insofar as it is posited as a problem.

For psychoanalysis is also a practice subordinated by its purpose to what is most particular about the subject. And when Freud emphasizes this, going so far as to say that analytic science must be called back into question in the analysis of each case (see the case of "The Wolf Man," *passim*, the entire discussion

of the case unfolding on the basis of this principle), he quite clearly indicates to the analysand the path his training should follow.

Indeed, the analyst cannot follow this path unless he recognizes in his own knowledge the symptom of his own ignorance, in the properly analytic sense that the symptom is the return of the repressed in a compromise [formation] and that repression, here as elsewhere, constitutes the censorship of truth. Ignorance must not, in fact, be understood here as an absence of knowledge but, just as much as love and hate, as a passion for being—for it can, like them, be a path by which being forms.

This is clearly the passion that must give meaning to all of analytic training, as is obvious if one simply allows oneself to see that this passion structures the analytic situation.

People have tried to detect the inner obstacle to training analysis in the psychological attitude of candidacy in which the candidate places himself in relation to the analyst, but they fail to realize that the obstacle lies in its essential foundation, which is the desire to know or the desire for power that motivates the candidate at the core of his decision. Nor have they recognized that this desire must be treated like the neurotic's desire to love, which is the very antinomy of love, according to the wisdom of the ages—unless this is what is aimed at by the best analytic writers when they declare that every training analysis is obliged to analyze the reasons why the candidate chose the career of analyst.³⁶

The positive fruit of the revelation of ignorance is nonknowledge, which is not a negation of knowledge but rather its most elaborate form. The candidate's training cannot be completed without some action on the part of the master or masters who train him in this nonknowledge—failing which he will never be anything more than a robotic analyst.

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It is here that we understand this closing up of the unconscious whose enigma I pointed out at the major turning point of analytic technique; Freud foresaw, in more than just a quick remark, that this closing up could result some day from the very effects on a social scale of analysis becoming more widespread.³⁷ Indeed, the unconscious shuts down insofar as the analyst no longer “supports speech [*porte la parole*],” because he already knows or thinks he knows what speech has to say. Thus, if he speaks to the subject, who, moreover, knows as much about it as he does, the latter cannot recognize in what the analyst says the truth *in statu nascendi* of his own particular speech. This also explains the effects, which are often astonishing to us, of the interpretations Freud himself gave: the response he gave the subject was the true speech in which he himself was grounded; for in order to unite two subjects in its truth, speech requires that it be true speech for both of them.

This is why the analyst must aspire to a kind of mastery of his speech that

makes it identical to his being. For he does not need to say much in the treatment (so little, indeed, that we might believe there is no need for him to say anything) in order to hear—every time he has, with the help of God, that is, with the help of the subject himself, brought an analysis to its full term—the subject pronounce before him the very words in which he recognizes the law of his own being.

How could he be surprised by this, he whose action, in the solitude in which he must answer for his patient, does not fall solely under the jurisdiction of consciousness [*conscience*], as they say of surgeons, since his technique teaches him that the very speech it reveals concerns an unconscious subject. Thus the analyst must know, better than anyone else, that he can only be himself in his speech.

Isn't this the answer to the question that tormented Ferenczi, namely: In order for the patient's avowal to come to its full term, mustn't the analyst's avowal also be pronounced? Indeed, the analyst's being acts even in his silence, and it is at the low-water level of the truth that sustains him that the subject proffers his speech. But while, in accordance with the law of speech, it is in him qua other that the subject finds his own identity, it is in order to maintain his own being there.

This result is far removed from narcissistic identification, so finely described by Balint (see above), for such identification leaves the subject, in infinite beatitude, more than ever exposed to the obscene and ferocious figure that analysis calls the superego and that must be understood as the gap opened up in the imaginary by any and every rejection (*Verwerfung*) of the commandments of speech.³⁸

And there is no doubt but that a training analysis has this effect if the subject finds therein nothing more proper to witness the authenticity of his experience, for example, of having fallen in love with the person who opens the door at his analyst's house, mistaking her for his analyst's wife. A titillating fancy, of course, by its specious conformity, but about which he can hardly brag that he derived his lived knowledge of it from Oedipus, this knowledge being destined, rather, to take this fancy away from him. For, in going no further, he will have experienced nothing more than the myth of Amphitryon, and he will have done so the way Sosia did, that is, without understanding anything about it. How then can we expect that, as subtle as he may have seemed to be in his promises, such a subject will prove to be anything other than a follower whose head is full of idle gossip, when it will be his turn to add his two cents' worth to the question of variations in treatment?

In order to avoid such results, training analysis, about which all analytic authors note that its conditions are never discussed except in a censored form,

must not drive its ends and practice ever further into the shadows, as the formalism of the guarantees that people claim to provide of it grows stronger—as Michael Balint declares and demonstrates with the greatest clarity.³⁹

Indeed, the sheer quantity of researchers cannot bring quality to psychoanalytic research the way it does in a science that is constituted in objectivity. A hundred mediocre psychoanalysts do not advance analytic knowledge one iota, whereas a physician, being the author of a wonderful book on grammar (you must not imagine that it was some pleasant little product of medical humanism), defended his whole life long a certain style of communication within a group of analysts against the winds of its discordance and the tide of its servitudes.

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The fact is that psychoanalysis, since it progresses essentially in non-knowledge, is tied in the history of science to a state prior to its Aristotelian definition, which is known as dialectic. Freud's work bears witness to this in its references to Plato and even to the pre-Socratics.

But far from being isolated or even isolable, it simultaneously finds its place at the center of the vast conceptual movement which in our time—restructuring so many sciences that are improperly called “social,” changing or re-finding the meaning of certain sections of the exact science *par excellence*, mathematics, in order to restore the foundations of a science of human action insofar as it is based on conjecture—is reclassifying the body of sciences of intersubjectivity under the name “human sciences.”

The analyst will find much to borrow from linguistic research in its most concrete modern developments, with which to shed light on difficult problems posed to him by verbalization in both his practice and doctrine. And we can see, in the most unexpected manner, in the elaboration of the unconscious' most original phenomena—dreams and symptoms—the very figures of the outdated rhetoric, which prove in practice to provide the most subtle specifications of those phenomena.

The modern notion of history will be no less necessary to the analyst if he is to understand the function of history in the subject's individual life.

But it is above all the theory of symbols—revived from its status as a curiosity during what one might call the paleontological age of analysis, when it was classed under the heading of a supposed “depth psychology”—that analysis must restore to its universal function. No study would be better suited to this than the study of whole numbers, whose nonempirical origin cannot be excessively pondered by the analyst. And without going into the fruitful exercises of modern game theory, much less into the highly suggestive formalizations of set theory, the analyst will find sufficient material upon which to base his

362 practice by simply learning to correctly count to four, as the author of these lines is trying to teach people to do (that is, to integrate the function of death into the ternary Oedipal relationship).

My point is not to define the fields of a program of study, but rather to indicate that, in order to situate analysis in the eminent place that those responsible for public education should grant it, its foundations must be laid open to criticism, without which it will degenerate into effects of collective subordination.

It is up to the discipline of analysis itself to avoid these effects in the training of analysts and to thus bring clarity to the question of its variations.

Only then will we be able to understand the extreme discretion with which Freud introduced the very forms of the “standard treatment” that have since become the norm:

I must however make it clear that what I am asserting is that this technique is the only one suited to my individuality; I do not venture to deny that a physician quite differently constituted might find himself driven to adopt a different attitude to his patients and to the task before him.⁴⁰

For this discretion will then cease to be relegated to the status of a sign of Freud’s profound modesty, and will instead be recognized as affirming the truth that analysis cannot find its measure except along the pathways of a learned ignorance.

Notes

1. [Added in 1966:] In 1966 let us say that I consider it to be abject. This assessment, which I cannot help but pronounce, legitimates my rewriting of the first section here in a lighter manner.

2. [Added in 1966:] Except in taking up anew in the structure what specifies our “clinical approach” [*clinique*], in the sense it still maintains from its moment of birth, an originally repressed moment in the physician who extends it, he himself becoming ever more thoroughly the lost child of this moment. See Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la Clinique* (Paris: PUF, 1963) [*The Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Pantheon, 1973)].

3. See *IJP* XXXV, 2 (1954), the entire issue.

4. Edward Glover, “Therapeutic Criteria of Psycho-Analysis,” *IJP* XXXV, 2 (1954): 95.

[Added in 1966:] A French translation of the whole of this article can be found in the final pages of the collection of this author’s work published under the title *Technique de la psychanalyse* (Paris: PUF, 1958). [In English, see *The Technique of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1955)].

5. Glover, “Therapeutic Criteria,” 95–96.

6. Glover, “Therapeutic Criteria,” 96. Italics in the original.

7. Glover, “Therapeutic Criteria,” 96.

8. “Le problème du transfert” (“The Problem of Transference”), *RFP* XVI, 1–2 (1952): 5–115. [A sample of Lagache’s work on transference can be found in English in “Some Aspects of Transference,” *IJP* XXXIV, 1 (1953): 1–10.]

9. [Added in 1966:] In 1966, Lagache is

someone who keeps up with my teaching without seeing in it that transference is the inmixing of the time of knowing.

While rewritten, this text scrupulously follows the statements I made in 1955.

10. [Added in 1966:] Three paragraphs rewritten.

11. [Added in 1966:] If I have managed with these lines, as with my classes, to lift the reign of boredom that I combat enough for their style of emission to self-correct in being reread here, let me add to them this note: in 1966, I would say that the ego is the theology of free enterprise, and I would designate its patron saints as the triad Fénelon, Guizot, and Victor Cousin.

12. *Problèmes de technique psychanalytique* (Paris: PUF, 1953), 63. [In English, see *Problems of Psychoanalytic Technique* (Albany: Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 1941), 54.]

13. Glover, "Therapeutic Criteria," 97.

14. Wilhelm Reich, "Charakteranalyse" ("Character Analysis"), *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* XIV, 2 (1928): 180–96. English translation in *The Psycho-analytic Reader* (New York: International Universities Press, 1948). [See also Reich's book *Character Analysis* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972).]

15. Richard Sterba, "The Fate of the Ego in Analytic Therapy," *IJP* XV, 2–3 (1934): 117–26.

16. W. Hoffer, "Three Psychological Criteria for the Termination of Treatment," *IJP* XXXI, 3 (1950): 194–95.

17. Sandor Ferenczi, "Die Elastizität der psychoanalytischen Technik," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* XIV, 2 (1928): 197–209. [In English, see "The Elasticity of Psycho-Analytic Technique," in *The Selected Papers of Sandor Ferenczi, M.D.*, Vol. III, *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1955), 87–101. Note that Lacan renders *Einfühlung* as *connivence* (connivance), not as "empathy" (or "understanding" or "sensitivity") as is usually the case and as it is rendered in the translation of Ferenczi's work cited here. See also the revised translation included in *Sandor Ferenczi: Selected Writings* (London: Penguin, 1999), 255–68.]

18. [Added in 1966:] That is, the analyst's transference.

19. Freud, "Die Endliche und die Unendliche Analyse," *GW* XVI, 93 ["Analysis Terminable and Interminable," *SE* XXIII, 247; Lacan here translates the title of the article as "*L'analyse finie et l'analyse sans fin*," "Finite (or Finished) Analysis and Endless Analysis."]

20. Ferenczi, "Die Elastizität der psychoanalytischen Technik," 207. ["The Elasticity of Psycho-analytic Technique," 98.]

21. [Added in 1966:] Ferenczi never imagined that this might one day serve as a billboard slogan.

22. Reich, "Charakteranalyse," 196 [*The Psycho-analytic Reader*, 123].

23. Freud, "Triebe und Triebchicksale," *GW* X, 210–32. ["Drives and Their Vicissitudes," *SE* XIV, 117–40, especially 122–23.]

24. *GW* XIII, 71–161 [*SE* XVIII, 69–143].

25. *GW* XIII, 1–69 [*SE* XVIII, 7–64].

26. "Die Verneinung," *GW* XIV, 11–15 ["Negation," *SE* XIX, 235–39].

27. *GW* XIV, 421–506 [*SE* XXI, 64–145].

28. Lacan, "Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis" (1948) and "The Mirror Stage" (1949), in *Écrits* 1966.

29. M. Balint, "On the Termination of Analysis," *IJP* XXXI, 3 (1950): 197.

30. M. Balint, "On Love and Hate," in *Primary Love and Psychoanalytic Technique* (London: Hogarth, 1952), 155. [The article is also found in *IJP* XXXIII (1952): 355–62; see especially 361–62.]

31. A. Balint, "Love for the Mother and Mother-Love," *IJP* XXX, 4 (1949): 251–59. [I have corrected the mistaken attribution of this article to Michael Balint instead of to Alice Balint in the footnotes and text.]

32. M. Balint, "Changing Therapeutic Aims and Techniques in Psycho-Analysis," *IJP* XXXI, 1–2 (1950). See his remarks on the "two-body psychology" on pages 123–24.

33. See the appendix to her abovementioned article, "Love for the Mother."

34. New York: Garden City Books, 1949. [Published in Great Britain as *The Inner Experience of a Psychoanalyst* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949).]

35. R. P. Knight, "The Present Status of Organized Psychoanalysis in the United States," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* I, 2 (1953): 197–221.
36. Maxwell Gitelson, "Therapeutic Problems in the Analysis of the 'Normal' Candidate," *IJP* XXXV, 2 (1954): 174–83.
37. Freud, "Die zukünftigen Chancen der psychoanalytischen Therapie" (1910), *GW* VIII, 104–15 ["The Future Prospects of Psycho-Analytic Therapy," *SE* XI, 141–51].
38. Freud, "Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose," *GW* XII, 111 ["From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (the Wolf Man)," *SE* XVII, 79–80].
39. M. Balint, "Analytic Training and Training Analysis," *IJP* XXXV, 2 (1954): 157–62.
40. Freud, "Ratschläge für den Arzt bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung," *GW* VIII, 376 ["Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis," *SE* XII, 111. Lacan provides his own French translation here].