
FOUR

The Freudian thing, or the meaning of the
return to Freud in psychoanalysis

An expanded version of a lecture given at the
Neuro-psychiatric Clinic, Vienna 7 November 1955¹



To Sylvia



Situation in time and place of this exercise

At a time when Vienna is making itself heard once again through the voice of its Opera, thus, in a most moving way, resuming what had always been its mission, namely, to create harmony at this point of cultural convergence as only it knew how, I have come here, not, I think, out of season, to evoke the election by which this city will remain, this time forever, linked to a revolution in knowledge worthy of the name of Copernicus, the eternal city of Freud's discovery, if it can be said that as a result of that discovery the very centre of the human being was no longer to be found at the place assigned to it by a whole humanist tradition.

Even, perhaps, for prophets whose own countries were not entirely deaf to them, the moment of eclipse must come, if only after their deaths. It is only right that an outsider should exercise restraint in assessing the forces at work in such apparent phases.

In any case, the return to Freud for which I am assuming here the role of herald is situated elsewhere: one has only to remember the symbolic scandal to which Dr Alfred Winterstein, then president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association, who is with us here today, rightly drew attention on the occasion of the inauguration of the commemorative plaque marking the house in which Freud pursued his heroic work – the scandal being not that this monument was not dedicated to Freud by his fellow citizens, but that it was not commissioned by the international association of those who live from his sponsorship.

Such a failure is symptomatic, for it reveals a betrayal that comes not

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from the land in which Freud, by virtue of his tradition, was merely a temporary guest, but from the very field that he has left in our care, and from those in whom that care was entrusted, from the psychoanalytical movement itself, where things have not reached the point when a return to Freud is seen as a reversal.

From the moment when the first sound of the Freudian message echoed across the world from the great bell of Vienna, many incidental factors have been involved in the story. Those first reverberations seemed, with the first world conflict, to be drowned by the heavy thud of a collapsing structure. They resumed, with renewed power, after the immense human laceration that fomented the second, and which was their most powerful vehicle. It was on the waves set up by the tocsin of hate, the tumult of discord, the panic-stricken breath of war, that Freud's voice reached us, as we witnessed the diaspora of those who were its bearers and a persecution that did not strike blindly. The shock waves were to reverberate beyond the confines of our world, in a continent where it would be untrue to say that history loses its meaning since it is there that it finds its limit – it would even be wrong to think that history was absent there, since, having been already formed over several centuries, it weighs all the more heavily there by virtue of the gulf that represents its all too limited horizon – but it is denied with a categorical will that gives the industrial corporations their style, a cultural ahistoricism peculiar to the United States of America.

It is this ahistoricism that defines the assimilation required if one is to be recognized in the society constituted by that culture. It was to its summons that a group of emigrants had to respond – men who, in order to be recognized, could only stress their difference, but whose function presupposed history in its very principle, their discipline being that which had re-established the bridge linking modern man to the ancient myths. The combination of circumstances was too strong, the opportunity too tempting for them to resist: they abandoned the principle and based function upon difference. Let us be clear as to the nature of this temptation. It involved neither facility nor profit. It is certainly easier to efface the principles of a doctrine than the stigmata of one's origins, more profitable to make one's function serve demand; but, here, to reduce one's function to one's difference is to give in to a mirage internal to the function itself, a mirage that bases function upon that difference. It is to return to the reactionary principle operant in the duality of the sick and the healer, the opposition between someone who knows and someone who does not.

the meaning of the psychoanalysis

lecture given at the
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How can one avoid regarding this opposition as true when it is real, how can one avoid becoming a manager of souls in a social context that demands such an office? The most corrupting of comforts is intellectual comfort, and the worst corruption that of the best.

Thus Freud's words to Jung – I have it from Jung's own mouth – when, on an invitation from Clark University, they arrived in New York harbour and caught their first glimpse of the famous statue illuminating the universe, 'They don't realize we're bringing them the plague', are attributed to him as confirmation of a hubris whose antiphrasis and gloom do not extinguish their troubled brightness. To catch their author in its trap, Nemesis had only to take him at his word. We would be justified in fearing that Nemesis had added a first-class return ticket.

Indeed, if something of the sort has taken place, we have only ourselves to thank. For Europe seems rather to have been effaced from the concerns, the style, not to say the memory, of those who left, together with the repression of their bad memories.

I will not grudge you this act of forgetting, if it leaves me freer to present to you the project of a return to Freud, as some of us in the *Société Française de Psychanalyse* conceive it. What such a return involves for me is not a return of the repressed, but rather taking the antithesis constituted by the phase in the history of the psychoanalytic movement since the death of Freud, showing what psychoanalysis is not and seeking with you the means of revitalizing that which has continued to sustain it, even in deviation, namely, the primary meaning that Freud preserved in it by his very presence, and which I should like to explicate here.

How could this meaning elude us when it is so clearly apparent in a body of written work of the most lucid, most coherent kind? And how could it leave us hesitant when a study of this *oeuvre* shows us that its different stages and changes in direction are governed by Freud's inflexibly effective concern to maintain it in its primary rigour?

Such texts may even be compared with those that, in other times, human veneration has invested with the highest qualities, in that they endure the test of that discipline of commentary, the virtue of which one rediscovers in making use of it, in the time-honoured way, not only to situate what Freud said in the context of its time, but to determine whether the answer that it brings to the questions it poses is or is not superseded by the answer that one finds in it to the questions of the real.

It will no doubt come as no surprise to you if I tell you that these

texts, to which for the past four every Wednesday from November than a quarter of the total, if totality at all, have given me the surprise afforded only by range from concepts that have covered by our exploration that by Freud extended beyond the little his observation, which seriousness, was the slave of what he technicians of disciplines other than these texts, has not been may 'The Interpretation of Dreams' Principle? What an exercise to lend one's voice to! And with this training and of the effect on students to whom you transmission, occurring sometimes in which becomes simpler or more transparent to themselves. I fear of this work in the talk that memory – an opportunity that to Dr Arnold, to whom I have long-standing relations with, that I would receive in Vienna.

But I must not forget that I M. Susini, the director of our F when coming to the meaning here, I must ask myself what specialists may be to understand appointing them.

I am sure what my answer will say is as it must be. The meaning of Freud. And the me to anyone because, addressed to

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texts, to which for the past four years I have devoted a two-hour seminar every Wednesday from November to July, without having covered more than a quarter of the total, if indeed my commentary presupposes their totality at all, have given me, and those who have attended my seminars, the surprise afforded only by genuine discoveries. These discoveries range from concepts that have remained unused to clinical details uncovered by our exploration that demonstrate how far the field investigated by Freud extended beyond the avenues that he left us to tend, and how little his observation, which sometimes gives an impression of exhaustiveness, was the slave of what he had to demonstrate. Who, among the technicians of disciplines other than analysis whom I have persuaded to read these texts, has not been moved by this research in action, whether in 'The Interpretation of Dreams', 'The Wolf Man', or 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'? What an exercise for the training of minds, and what a message to lend one's voice to! And what control of the methodological value of this training and of the effect of truth that this message produces when the students to whom you transmit them bring you evidence of a transformation, occurring sometimes from one day to the next, in their practice, which becomes simpler or more effective even before it becomes more transparent to themselves. I cannot provide you with an extensive account of this work in the talk that I am now giving in this place of noble memory – an opportunity that I owe to the kindness of Professor Hoff, to Dr Arnold, to whom I owe the suggestion, and to my excellent and long-standing relations with Igor Caruso, who assured me of the welcome that I would receive in Vienna.

But I must not forget that I owe part of this audience to the kindness of M. Susini, the director of our French Institute in Vienna. And this is why, when coming to the meaning of this return to Freud that I am proposing here, I must ask myself whether, because they are less prepared than specialists may be to understand me, I am not running the risk of disappointing them.



The adversary

I am sure what my answer would be: Certainly not, if what I am going to say is as it must be. The meaning of a return to Freud is a return to the meaning of Freud. And the meaning of what Freud said may be conveyed to anyone because, addressed as it is to all, it concerns each individual: to

make this clear, one has only to remember that Freud's discovery puts truth into question, and there is no one who is not personally concerned by the truth.

It must seem rather odd that I should be flinging this word in your faces – a word almost of ill repute, a word banished from polite society. Yet is it not inscribed at the very heart of analytic practice, since this practice is constantly re-making the discovery of the power of the truth in ourselves, in our very flesh?

In what could the unconscious be better recognized, in fact, than in the defences that are set up in the subject against it, with such success that they appear no less real? I am not reviving here the shoddy Nietzschean notion of the lie of life, nor am I astonished that one should believe oneself capable of belief, nor do I accept that it is enough to wish for something sufficiently to will it. But I am asking where the peace that follows the recognition of an unconscious tendency comes from if it is not more true than that which constrains it in the conflict? Indeed, for some time now, this peace has proved to be an illusory one, for, not content with recognizing as unconscious the defences attributable to the ego, psychoanalysts have more and more identified their mechanisms – displacement from the object, the turning against the subject, regression of the form – with the very dynamic that Freud had analysed in the tendency, which thus seems to continue in them with little more than a change of sign. Have we not overstepped the limit when we admit that the drive itself may be led to consciousness by the defence in order to prevent the subject from recognizing it?

In order to translate the exposition of these mysteries into a coherent discourse, I must once again use words that, in spite of myself, re-establish in that discourse the duality that sustains them. But what I deplore is not simply that one cannot see the wood of the theory for the trees of the technical process, but rather that it takes so little to believe that one is in the forest of Bondy, no more than the shape lurking behind every tree – the notion that some trees must be more real than others, or, if you prefer, that all the trees are not bandits.² Failing which, one might ask where the bandits are that are not trees. Perhaps this little, then, which can become everything on occasion, deserves an explanation? What is this truth without which there is no way of discerning the face from the mask, and outside of which there appears to be no other monster than the labyrinth itself? In other words, in what way are they to be distinguished, in fact, if they are all of equal reality?

Here the big clogs move forward as we know, the truth is born as well: what an ideologist you economic. All arrangements of the point at which the truth flies off unscathed with our

This time the business has clear what's happening. More. We'll be meeting Plato and enough. What they represent: this concerns everybody, it's even be classified in our files.

You think I'm joking. I assure what I am saying.

If Freud had brought the truth that there is such a thing discovery. Freud would belong tradition of humanist analysis of European culture in which shine as stars of the first order, as dazzling as it is short-lived, stimulated no doubt by a proper of the movement of the soul, casuistics into a map of Tendre, with the offices for which it was bound up with the analytic structure limit its field, can work perfectly north is since it lies along the point in the direction of the and mirages that appear within this: one after all, but one that cannot who wish to be introduced: revealing itself as akin to a whole them.

This language is moderate and to hear a zealot of a supposedly analysis as an experience whose forms that govern its practice, for they were obtained by means of

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Here the big clogs move forward to cover the dove's feet, on which, as we know, the truth is borne, and on occasion to swallow up the bird as well: what an ideologist you are, someone cries; our criterion is simply economic. All arrangements of reality are not equally economic. But at the point at which the truth has already been brought to bear, the bird flies off unscathed with our question: Economic for whom?

This time the business has gone too far. The adversary laughs: 'It's clear what's happening. Monsieur is about to launch into philosophy. We'll be meeting Plato and Hegel before long. These signatures are enough. What they represent is much the same, and, anyway, as you say, this concerns everybody, it's of no interest to specialists like us. It can't even be classified in our files.'

You think I'm joking. I assure you this is not the case. I really believe what I am saying.

If Freud had brought to man's knowledge nothing more than the truth that there is such a thing as the true, there would be no Freudian discovery. Freud would belong to the line of moralists in whom a whole tradition of humanist analysis is embodied, a milky way to the heavens of European culture in which Balthazar Gracian and La Rochefoucauld shine as stars of the first order, and in which Nietzsche features as a nova as dazzling as it is short-lived. The latest to join them, and, like them, stimulated no doubt by a properly Christian concern for the authenticity of the movement of the soul, Freud was able to precipitate a whole casuistics into a map of Tendre,³ which has only to be set in accordance with the offices for which it was intended. Its objectivity, in fact, is strictly bound up with the analytic situation, which, between the four walls that limit its field, can work perfectly well without one knowing where the truth is since it lies along the axis of the couch, which is supposed to point in the direction of the analyst. Psychoanalysis is the science of the images that appear within this field. A unique experience, a rather abject one after all, but one that cannot be recommended too highly to those who wish to be introduced to the principle of man's follies, for, by revealing itself as akin to a whole gamut of disorders, it throws light upon them.

This language is moderate enough – I did not invent it. We have lived to hear a zealot of a supposedly classical psychoanalysis define psychoanalysis as an experience whose privilege is strictly bound up with the forms that govern its practice, forms that cannot be altered a jot, because they were obtained by means of a miracle of chance; these forms provide

access to a transcendent reality possessing the characteristics of history, a reality in which a taste for order and a love of the beautiful, for example, have their permanent foundation – namely, the objects of the pre-Oedipal relation, shit and nappy-rash.

This position cannot be refuted since the rules are justified by their outcome, which is regarded as proof that the rules are well founded. And yet our questions proliferate. How did this prodigious operation of chance occur? What is the origin of this contradiction between the pre-Oedipal intrigue, to which, in the opinion of certain of our modern analysts, the analytic relation can be reduced, and the fact that Freud was satisfied with having situated it in the position of the Oedipus complex? How can the sort of hot-house osculation to which this 'new look' of experience is limited be the ultimate in a progress that first appeared to open up innumerable links between all the fields of creation – or the same question presented the other way round? If the objects discerned in this elective fermentation were thus discovered through some method other than experimental psychology, is experimental psychology able to find them again through its own methods?

The replies that we will receive from the interested parties leave no room for doubt. The motive force of the experience, even when motivated in their terms, cannot simply be this illusory truth that can be reduced to the illusion of truth. It all began with a particular truth, a disclosure, the effect of which is that reality is no longer the same for us as it was before, and it is there that the senseless cacophony of theory continues to catch human things alive, as if to prevent practice from declining to the level of the unfortunates who never succeed in escaping from it (I use the term to exclude the cynics).

A truth, it must be admitted, is not easy to recognize, once it has become accepted. Not that there are established truths, but they then become so easily confused with the reality that surrounds them that no clever artifice has yet been found to distinguish them from it than to mark them with the sign of the spirit, to pay them homage, to regard them as coming from another world. It is not to attribute everything to a sort of blindness on man's part to point out the fact that truth is never for him more beautiful than at the moment when the light, which he holds aloft as in the proverbial emblem, surprises her naked. And one must feign stupidity to some extent to pretend that one knows nothing of what happens afterwards. But the stupidity of bovine frankness remains if one wonders where one could have been looking for her before, since the emblem

scarcely indicated the well, as rather than the casket in which intact.

But the truth in Freud's mind for you I am the enigma of her who try so hard to hide me out. But I am prepared to believe even when you take it upon you no greater value on wearing it you yourselves, phantoms of you? Where was I before I went. But so that you will find me you will recognize me. Men I will speak.

'Must I remind you that you you who claim to be my lover in this kind of braggadocio had posited, in an ambiguous clumsily revealing the self-errors of philosophy, that it subsidies. Yet by embracing them in the end insipid and vulgar opinions in the manner them in their place, whether suits, guile, or, quite simply places, in the home and in the. They then realized that by seemed to be serving me militia, as the secret agents of game of forfeits, of sudden seemed to be due to nothing path of this discovery. The could bear witness to the truth that one of them tried to get of objects worthy of study. I

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scarcely indicated the well, an unseemly, not to say malodorous place, rather than the casket in which any precious form should be preserved intact.



The thing speaks of itself

But the truth in Freud's mouth takes the said beast by the horns: 'So for you I am the enigma of her who vanishes as soon as she appears, men who try so hard to hide me under the tawdry finery of your proprieties! But I am prepared to believe that your embarrassment is sincere, for even when you take it upon yourselves to serve as my heralds, you place no greater value on wearing my colours than your own, which are like you yourselves, phantoms that you are. Where, then, will I pass into you? Where was I before I entered you? Perhaps one day I will tell you? But so that you will find me where I am, I will teach you by what sign you will recognize me. Men, listen, I am giving you the secret. I, truth, will speak.

'Must I remind you that you did not yet know this? Certainly some of you who claim to be my lovers, no doubt by virtue of the principle that in this kind of braggadocio one is never better served than by oneself, had posited, in an ambiguous manner, and not without somewhat clumsily revealing the self-love that really concerned them, that the errors of philosophy, that is to say, their own, could subsist only on my subsidies. Yet by embracing these girls with their thought, they found them in the end insipid and vain, and set to once again to contend with vulgar opinions in the manner of the sages of old who knew how to put them in their place, whether they appeared in the form of tales, lawsuits, guile, or, quite simply, lies, but also to seek them out in their places, in the home and in the forum, in the forge or in the market-place. They then realized that by not being my parasites these vulgar opinions seemed to be serving me much more, and, who knows?, acting as my militia, as the secret agents of my power. Several cases observed in the game of forfeits, of sudden transformations of errors into truths, which seemed to be due to nothing more than perseverance, set them on the path of this discovery. The discourse of error, its articulation in acts, could bear witness to the truth against evidence itself. It was at this point that one of them tried to get the cunning of reason accepted into the rank of objects worthy of study. Unfortunately, he was a professor, and you

were too happy to turn against his teachings the ass's ears that you were made to wear at school and which have since served as ear-trumpets for those of you who are a little hard of hearing. So keep your vague sense of history and leave it to those cleverer than yourselves to found on the guarantee of my future firm the world market in lies, the trade in total war and the new law of self-criticism. If reason is as cunning as Hegel said, it will do its job without your help.

'But for all that you have made your debts to me neither outdated nor in perpetuity. They are dated after yesterday and before tomorrow. And it hardly matters whether you rush ahead to honour them or to evade them, since they will seize you from behind in either case. Whether you flee me in fraud or think to entrap me in error, I will reach you in the mistake against which you have no refuge. In that place where the most caustic speech reveals a slight hesitation, it is lacking in perfidy, I am now publicly announcing the fact, and it would be rather more subtle to pretend that nothing had happened, in good, or for that matter, bad company. But there is no need to give yourselves the trouble to keep a closer watch on yourselves. All the same the conjoint jurisdictions of politeness and politics would declare as unacceptable whatever is associated with me by presenting itself in so illicit a way, you will not get off so lightly, for the most innocent intention is disconcerted at being unable to conceal the fact that one's unsuccessful acts are the most successful and that one's failure fulfills one's most secret wish. In any case, is it not enough to judge of your defeat to see me escape first from the dungeon of the fortress in which you are so sure you have me secured by situating me not in you yourselves, but in being itself? I wander about in what you regard as being the least true in essence: in the dream, in the way the most far-fetched conceit, the most grotesque nonsense of the joke defies sense in chance, not in its law, but in its contingency, and I never do more to change the face of the world than when I give it the profile of Cleopatra's nose.

'So you can reduce the traffic on the roads that you strive so hard to radiate from the consciousness, and which constitute the pride of the ego, crowned by Fichte with the emblems of transcendence. The true route of truth no longer passes through thought: strange to say, it now seems to pass through things: *riddle*, it is through you that I communicate, as Freud formulates it at the end of the first paragraph of the sixth chapter, devoted to the work of the dream, of his work on dreams and what dreams mean.

'But you will take care: all the coming a professor may spare him; his tirade continues. Listen carefully to the truth that speaks, the better to literally. Here, no doubt, things are speech. If Cleopatra's nose changed cause it entered the world's discourse in short term, it was enough, indeed, in nose.

'But it is your own that you must natural ends. Let a sharper scent than the chase to which I incite you: for disdainful she may be of you, remain I, the truth, would be Deceit itself, since crack too narrow to find for want of a visible cloud of the dream, through mediocre and the seductive impasse become on hearing me, blood-hound leash upon the hermetic traces of the ring sockets of Oedipus, certain as the sinister meeting at Colonus the hour and howl at my voice. There you are: I defy you, I take cover: you say that

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The return to the shades, which at that moment, is the signal for a 'murder' bidding anyone to leave, since any under her dress, for example, or even 'indiscreet jewels', in her belly. The game And the question is not an irrelevant are a little hasty. First the libido is acc of the jewels, but we must realize the fetters on the libido, which is so deep the object of its activities. One feels from one minute to the next, when everyone that it is the large drawing-

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 ing sockets of Oedipus, certain as he was of finding with him at the
 sinister meeting at Colonus the hour of truth. Enter the lists to my call
 and howl at my voice. There you are lost already, I contradict myself,
 I defy you, I take cover: you say that I am defending myself.'



Parade

The return to the shades, which we believe is to be expected at this
 moment, is the signal for a 'murder party'⁴ initiated by the order for-
 bidding anyone to leave, since anyone may now be hiding the truth,
 under her dress, for example, or even, as in the amorous fiction of the
 'indiscreet jewels', in her belly. The general question is: Who is speaking?
 And the question is not an irrelevant one. Unfortunately, the answers
 are a little hasty. First the libido is accused, which takes us in the direction
 of the jewels, but we must realize that the ego itself, although it places
 fetters on the libido, which is so desperate for satisfaction, is sometimes
 the object of its activities. One feels, in fact, that it is about to collapse
 from one minute to the next, when the sound of broken glass informs
 everyone that it is the large drawing-room mirror that has sustained the

accident, the golem of narcissism, hastily called in to assist, having made his entrance through it. The ego is then generally regarded as the murderer, or, if not, the victim, in which case the divine rays of the good Judge Schreber begin to spread their net over the world, and the sabbath of the instincts really does become complicated.

The comedy, which I shall interrupt here at the beginning of its second act, is gentler than is usually believed, since, bringing to bear upon a drama of knowledge a buffoonery that belongs only to those who act this drama without understanding it, it restores to such people the authenticity from which they were moving farther and farther away.

But if a more serious metaphor befits the protagonist, it is that which shows us in Freud an Actaeon perpetually slipped by dogs that have been tracked down from the beginning, and which he strives to draw back into pursuit, without being able to slacken the chase in which only his passion for the goddess leads him on. Leads him on so far that he cannot stop until he reaches the grottoes in which the chthonian Diana in the damp shade, which makes them appear as the emblematic seat of truth, offers to his thirst, with the smooth surface of death, the quasi-mystical limit of the most rational discourse in the world, so that we might recognize the place in which the symbol is substituted for death in order to take possession of the first swelling of life.

As we know, this limit and this place are still well outside the reach of his disciples, if indeed they make any attempt at all to seek it, and so the Actaeon who is dismembered here is not Freud, but every analyst who can measure up to the passion that consumed him and which has made him, according to the signification that Giordano Bruno gave this myth in his *Furori eroici*, the prey of the dogs of his thoughts.

In order to appreciate the scope of this split we must hear the irrepressible cries that arise from the best as well as the worst, attempting to bring them back to the beginning of the chase, with the words that truth has given us as viaticum: 'I speak', adding: 'There is no other speech but language.' The rest is drowned in their tumult.

'Logomachia!' goes the strophe on one side. 'What are you doing with the preverbal, gesture and mime, tone, the tune of a song, mood and af-fec-tive con-tact?' To which others no less animated give the antistrophe: 'Everything is language: language when my heart beats faster when I'm in a funk, and if my patient flinches at the throbbing of an aeroplane at its zenith it is a way of *saying* how she remembers the last bomb attack.' – Yes, eagle of thought, and when the plane's shape

cuts out your likeness in the sky is the sky's answer.

Yet one did not challenge, any form of communication exploits, whether signals or its content of sympathy, and virt

One began only to repeat *speaks*, and, no doubt, where pain. If there ever was a time sufficient reply (for hearing it: that the great ones of the early the curse destined to titanic ac: conductors of the good speed. However, since then, the m: psychoanalysis have increased reached with Athene having Freud. Shall I tell you of the these meetings: beneath the n promised, alas! thrice alas! a: another having taken her place

Let us return, then, quite what it has said of itself. The: 'I' by what he speaks, perhaps paused at the angle of intersect is not language' reminds us the of which we might at least let language is different from nat either; that it is not to be end it when you are dealing with: superstructure that materialism see Stalin's bull on the questio

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is the sky's answer.

Yet one did not challenge, in dealing with these premises, the use of
any form of communication to which anyone might have recourse in his
exploits, whether signals or images, content or form, if this content is a
content of sympathy, and virtue is not discussed by good form.

One began only to repeat after Freud the word of his discovery: *it
speaks*, and, no doubt, where it is least expected, namely, where there is
pain. If there ever was a time when simply listening to what it said was
sufficient reply (for hearing it is already a reply), let us suppose therefore
that the great ones of the early days, the arm-chair giants, were struck by
the curse destined to titanic acts of daring, or that their seats ceased to be
conductors of the good speech before which they were expected to sit.
However, since then, the meetings between the psychoanalyst and
psychoanalysis have increased in the hope that the Athenian could be
reached with Athene having emerged fully armed from the head of
Freud. Shall I tell you of the jealous fate, ever the same, that thwarted
these meetings: beneath the mask in which everyone was to meet his
promised, alas! thrice alas! and a cry of horror at the thought of it,
another having taken her place, he who was there was not he either.

Let us return, then, quite deliberately, and with the truth spell out
what it has said of itself. The truth has said: 'I speak'. To recognize this
'I' by what he speaks, perhaps we should not have turned to the 'I', but
paused at the angle of intersection of the speech. 'There is no speech that
is not language' reminds us that language is an order constituted by laws,
of which we might at least learn what they exclude. For example, that
language is different from natural expression and that it is not a code
either; that it is not to be confused with information – and don't forget
it when you are dealing with cybernetics; and that it is so irreducible to a
superstructure that materialism itself is seen to be alarmed by this heresy –
see Stalin's bull on the question.

If you want to know more, read Saussure, and since a clock-tower can
hide even the sun, I would add that I am not referring to the signature
to be found in psychoanalysis, but to Ferdinand, who can truly be said
to be the founder of modern linguistics.



Order of the thing

A psychoanalyst should find it easy enough to grasp the fundamental distinction between signifier and signified, and to begin to use the two non-overlapping networks of relations that they organize.

The first network, that of the signifier, is the synchronic structure of the language material in so far as in that structure each element assumes its precise function by being different from the others; this is the principle of distribution that alone governs the function of the elements of the language (*langue*) at its different levels, from the phonematic pair of oppositions to the compound expressions to disengage the stable forms of which is the task of the most modern research.

The second network, that of the signified, is the diachronic set of the concretely pronounced discourses, which reacts historically on the first, just as the structure of the first governs the pathways of the second. The dominant factor here is the unity of signification, which proves never to be resolved into a pure indication of the real, but always refers back to another signification. That is to say, the signification is realized only on the basis of a grasp of things in their totality.

Its origin cannot be grasped at the level at which it usually assures itself of the redundancy proper to it, for it always proves to be in excess over the things that it leaves floating within it.

The signifier alone guarantees the theoretical coherence of the whole as a whole. This adequacy is confirmed by the latest development of the science, as, on reflexion, it is found to be implicit in primary linguistic experience.

Such are the bases that distinguish language from the sign. From them the dialectic has derived a new trenchancy.

For the remark on which Hegel bases his critique of the *belle âme*, and in accordance with which it is said to live (in every sense, even the economic sense of making a living) precisely on the disorder that it denounces, escapes tautology only to maintain the tauto-ontic of the *belle âme*: as mediation, unrecognized by itself, of that disorder as primary in being.

Whatever dialectic it is, this remark cannot shake the delusion of the presumption to which Hegel applied it, remaining caught in the trap offered by the mirage of consciousness to the *I* infatuated with its feelings, which he erects into a law of the heart.

This '*I*' in Hegel is defined, no doubt, as a legal being, in which respect it is more concrete than the real being from which it was earlier thought:

it could be abstracted – as appears in the civil status (*état civil*) and a state of

But it was left to Freud to manifest disorder to be found in the organism's pseud-

I would explain the possibility by man's real being in his natural – sometimes ideographical, but also usage, of imaginary elements that a

But there is no need of this gene symptom to be demonstrated. W evident, imprinted upon the flesh, of the symbolic function.

It is this that distinguishes a s animal society, and even what en perceive such a distribution: that is, a society has other foundations than has been called the gift 'as total s farther, to the point where this s collection of individuals, when the group with a quite different structur

This is to introduce the effects point, and to impose a revision of stage of which would seem to be heterogeneity of these effects.⁵ It seems to forget that it was from this it derived its initial momentum. M much more striking feature than the pedants, namely, the connivence the common consciousness.

If all causality evidences an implicit doubt that every conflict of order

The terms of psychoanalytic interposing here – make it sufficiently individualist one.

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Order of the thing

it easy enough to grasp the fundamental and signified, and to begin to use the two relations that they organize.

The signifier, is the synchronic structure of signs in that structure each element assumes a different from the others; this is the principle governs the function of the elements of the different levels, from the phonematic pair of expressions to disengage the stable forms of modern research.

Of the signified, is the diachronic set of the classes, which reacts historically on the first; it governs the pathways of the second. The unity of signification, which proves never a relation of the real, but always refers back to the signifier; to say, the signification is realized only in their totality.

It is at the level at which it usually assures order to it, for it always proves to be in excess floating within it.

It restores the theoretical coherence of the whole confirmed by the latest development of the signifier found to be implicit in primary linguistic

language from the sign. From there it derives its trenchancy.

Hegel bases his critique of the *belle âme* in which it is said to live (in every sense, even the living) precisely on the disorder that it desires to maintain the tauto-ontic of the *belle âme* by itself, of that disorder as primary in being. His remark cannot shake the delusion of the signifier applied it, remaining caught in the transition from consciousness to the *I* infatuated with its feelings of the heart.

Without doubt, as a legal being, in which respect the real being from which it was earlier thought

it could be abstracted – as appears from the fact that it possesses both a civil status (*état civil*) and a statement of account (*état-comptable*).

But it was left to Freud to make this legal being responsible for the manifest disorder to be found in the most enclosed field of the real being, namely, in the organism's pseudo-totally.

I would explain the possibility of this by the congenital gap presented by man's real being in his natural relations, and by the resumption, for a sometimes ideographical, but also a phonetic, not to say grammatical, usage, of imaginary elements that appear fragmented in this gap.

But there is no need of this genesis for the signifying structure of the symptom to be demonstrated. When deciphered, it appears as self-evident, imprinted upon the flesh, the omnipresence for the human being of the symbolic function.

It is this that distinguishes a society founded in language from an animal society, and even what enables ethnology to stand back and perceive such a distribution: that is, the exchange that characterizes such a society has other foundations than the needs even to satisfy them, what has been called the gift 'as total social fact'. All this is then carried much farther, to the point where this society may no longer be defined as a collection of individuals, when the immixture of subjects makes it a group with a quite different structure.

This is to introduce the effects of truth as cause at a quite different point, and to impose a revision of the process of causality – the first stage of which would seem to be to recognize the inherent nature of the heterogeneity of these effects.⁵ It is strange that materialist thought seems to forget that it was from this recourse to the heterogeneous that it derived its initial momentum. More interest might then be shown in a much more striking feature than the resistance to Freud displayed by the pedants, namely, the connivance that this resistance has encountered in the common consciousness.

If all causality evidences an implication of the subject, there can be no doubt that every conflict of order can be attributed to it.

The terms of psychoanalytic intervention – the problem of which I am posing here – make it sufficiently clear, I think, that its ethic is not an individualist one.

But its practice in the American sphere has been so summarily reduced to a means of obtaining 'success' and to a mode of demanding 'happiness' that it should be pointed out that this constitutes a repudiation of psychoanalysis, a repudiation that occurs among too many of its adherents from

the simple, basic fact, that they have never wished to know anything about the Freudian discovery, and that they will never know anything about it, even by way of repression: for it is a question here of the mechanism of systematic *méconnaissance* in so far as it simulates delusion, even in its group forms.

A more rigorous reference from analytic experience to the general structure of the semantics in which it has its roots should nevertheless have made it possible to convince them before having to conquer them.

For the subject of which I was speaking just now as the legatee of a recognized truth is definitely *not* the ego perceptible in the more or less immediate data of conscious pleasure or alienation in labour. This *de facto* distinction is the same that is to be found between the α of the Freudian unconscious, in so far as it is separated by an abyss of pre-conscious functions, and the ω of Freud's will in the 31st of his *Neue Vorlesungen*: 'Wo Es war, soll Ich werden.'

A formula in which the dominance of the signifying structuration is made sufficiently clear.

Let us analyse it. Contrary to the form that the English translation - 'Where the id was, there the ego shall be' - cannot avoid, Freud did not say '*das Es*', nor '*das Ich*', as was his custom when designating the agencies by which for the previous ten years he had ordered his new topography, and this fact, in view of the inflexible rigour of his style, gives a special accent to their use in this sentence. In any case - even without having to confirm by internal criticism of Freud's work that he in fact wrote *Das Ich und das Es* in order to maintain this fundamental distinction between the true subject of the unconscious and the ego as constituted in its nucleus by a series of alienating identifications - the true meaning would seem to be the following: *Wo* (Where) *Es* (the subject - devoid of any *das* or other objectivating article) *war* (was - it is a locus of being that is referred to here, and that in this locus) *soll* (must - that is, a duty in the moral sense, as is confirmed by the single sentence that follows and brings the chapter to a close)⁶ *Ich* (I, there must I - just as one declared, 'this am I', before saying, 'it is I'), *werden* (become - that is to say, not occur (*survenir*), or even happen (*advenir* - but emerge (*venir au jour*) from this very locus in so far as it is a locus of being).

Thus I would agree, against the principles of the economy of signification that must dominate a translation, to force a little in French the forms of the signifier in order to bring them into line with the weight of

a still rebellious sign, therefore to employ the word '*sujet*' (subject) for a time at least, - namely, '*le soi*' (the reason, was eventually adequate, since it could not. '*Was ist das?*' that will appear if the production of a of absolute subjectivity is radical eccentric like it to be understood.

You see, it is in which they appear the ego (*le moi*, subject.

What the linguistic basic initiation, will function as a signified from the in medicine. And it will force himself raised by the analysis to describe.) But grasped with certainty that is constituted the signification to

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To consider only that of defence, and - and we can not be

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... a still rebellious signification, which the German carries better here, and
 ... therefore to employ the homophony of the German *es* with the initial of
 ... the word '*sujet*' (subject). By the same token, I might feel more indulgence,
 ... for a time at least, to the first translation that was given of the word *es*,
 ... namely, '*le soi*' (the self). The '*ça*' (id), which not without very good
 ... reason, was eventually preferred, does not seem to me to be much more
 ... adequate, since it corresponds rather to the German *das*, as in the ques-
 ... tion, '*Was ist das?*', and the answer '*das ist*' ('*c'est*'). Thus the elided '*c*'
 ... that will appear if we hold to the accepted equivalence, suggests to me
 ... the production of a verb, '*s'être*', in which would be expressed the mode
 ... of absolute subjectivity, in the sense that Freud properly discovered it in
 ... its radical eccentricity: 'There where it was' ('*Là où c'était*'), I would
 ... like it to be understood, 'it is my duty that I should come to being'.⁷

You see, it is not in a grammatical conception of the functions in
 ... which they appear that one should analyse if and how the *I* (*le je*) and
 ... the ego (*le moi*) may be distinguished or overlap in each particular
 ... subject.

What the linguistic conception, which must guide the worker in his
 ... basic initiation, will teach him is to expect the symptom to prove its
 ... function as a signifier, that is to say, as that by which it is to be distin-
 ... guished from the natural index that the same term currently designates
 ... in medicine. And in order to satisfy this methodological requirement, he
 ... will force himself to recognize its conventional use in the significations
 ... raised by the analytic dialogue. (A dialogue whose structure I will try
 ... to describe.) But he will insist that these same significations can be
 ... grasped with certainty only in their context, that is, in the sequence
 ... that is constituted for each by the signification that refers back to it and
 ... the signification to which it refers back in analytic discourse.

These basic principles are applied easily enough in analytic technique,
 ... and in illuminating it, they dissipate many of the ambiguities which, in
 ... order to maintain themselves even in the major concepts of transference
 ... and resistance, make the use that is made of them in practice quite
 ... ruinous.

Resistance to the resisters

To consider only resistance, whose use is increasingly confused with
 ... that of defence, and all that this implies in terms of reductive manoeuvres
 ... - and we can no longer remain blind to the coercion that such manoeuvres

exert – it is as well to remember that the first resistance with which analysis has to deal is that of the discourse itself in that it is first a discourse of opinion, and that all psychological objectification will prove to be bound up with this discourse. This, in effect, is what motivated the remarkable simultaneity with which the psychoanalytic practice of the burgraves of analysis came to a standstill in the 1920s: by that time they knew both too much and not enough to get their patients, who scarcely knew less about it, to recognize the fact.

But the principle adopted at that time of the primacy to be accorded to the analysis of resistance hardly led to a favourable development. For the simple reason that it is not enough to carry out an operation with extreme urgency for it to achieve its aim if one is unclear as to what it consists of.

And it was precisely towards a reinforcement of the objectifying position in the subject that the analysis of resistance was orientated, to such an extent, indeed, that this directive now permeates the principles to be applied in the conduct of a standard analysis.

Far from having to maintain the subject in a state of observation, therefore, one must know that by engaging him there one enters a circle of misunderstanding that nothing in analysis, or in criticism, will be able to break. Any intervention in this direction could only be justified, therefore, by a dialectical aim, namely, to demonstrate its value as an impasse.

But I will go further and say: you cannot at the same time proceed yourself to this objectification of the subject and speak to him as you should. And for a very good reason, which is not only that one cannot, as the English proverb has it, have one's cake and eat it: that is to say, have towards the same objects two approaches whose consequences are mutually exclusive. But for the deeper reason that is expressed in the saying 'one cannot serve two masters', that is, one's being cannot conform to two actions that lead in opposite directions.

For, in psychology, objectification is subjected in its very principle to a law of *méconnaissance* that governs the subject not only as observed, but also as observer. That is to say, it is not about him that you have to speak to him, for he can do this himself, and therefore, it is not even to you that he speaks. If it is to him that you have to speak, it is literally of something else, that is, of something other than that which is in question when he speaks of himself, and which is the thing that speaks to you, a thing which, whatever he says, would remain forever inaccessible to him, if in being speech addressed to you it could not elicit its

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was the reinforcement of the objectifying position of resistance was orientated, to such an extent that it now permeates the principles to be followed in analysis.

The subject in a state of observation, therefore, engaging him there one enters a circle of analysis, or in criticism, will be able to proceed in that direction could only be justified, therefore, to demonstrate its value as an impassable barrier: you cannot at the same time proceed to the subject and speak to him as you would to a man, which is not only that one cannot have one's cake and eat it: that is to say, two approaches whose consequences are in the deeper reason that is expressed in the 'masters', that is, one's being cannot come in opposite directions.

The subject is subjected in its very principle to the subject not only as observed, but also as subject. It is not about him that you have to speak to himself, and therefore, it is not even about him that you have to speak, it is literally about something other than that which is in itself, and which is the thing that speaks to him. He says, would remain forever inaccessible to you it could not elicit its

response in you and if, from having heard its message in this inverted form, you could not, by returning it to him, give him the double satisfaction of having recognized it and of making him recognize its truth.

Can we therefore know this truth that we know in this way? *Adoequationem rei et intellectus*, thus has the concept of truth been defined since there were thinkers, and this definition leads us into the ways of their thought. Intellects like ours will certainly be adequate to this thing that speaks to us, which speaks within us, and even in escaping behind the discourse that says nothing but to make us speak, it would be strange indeed if it did not find to whom it might speak.

This is certainly the grace that I wish you, and what we must now do is speak about it, and it is up to those who put the thing into practice to speak.



Interlude

However, don't expect too much here, for since the psychoanalytic thing has become an accepted thing and its servants have their hands manicured, the arrangement they have come to can accommodate sacrifices to good form, which, as far as ideas, which psychoanalysts have never had enough of, are concerned, is certainly convenient: cut-price ideas for all will make up the balance of what everyone needs. We are sufficiently *au fait* with things to know that *chosisme* is hardly the latest thing; and there we have found our pirouette.

'What are you going to look for if not this ego that you distinguish, at the same time forbidding us to see it?' it may be objected. 'All right, we objectify it. So what's wrong with that?' Here the delicate shoes move stealthily forward to deliver the following kick in the shins: do you think, then, that the ego can be taken as a thing – I'd rather starve first!

From thirty-five years of cohabitation with the ego under the roof of the second Freudian topography, including ten years of a stormier liaison, regularized at last through the good offices of Miss Anna Freud in a marriage whose social credit has been on the up and up ever since, to the point that I am assured that it will soon request the blessing of the Church, in short, from the most sustained work of psychoanalysts, you will draw nothing more than this drawer.

It is true that it is filled to overflowing with old novelties and new junk the sheer mass of which is certainly entertaining. The ego is a function, the ego is a synthesis, a synthesis of functions, a function of synthesis.

It is autonomous! That's a good one! It's the latest fetish introduced into the holy of holies of a practice that derives its authority from the superiority of the superiors. It's worth another of the same kind, since everyone knows that for this function, which is entirely real, it is always the most outmoded, dirty, repulsive object that serves the purpose best. That it should gain for its inventor the veneration that it does where it is in operation is understandable enough, but the most amazing thing is that in enlightened circles it has earned for him the prestige of introducing psychoanalysis into the laws of general psychology. It is as if His Excellency the Aga Khan, not content with receiving his weight in gold, a fact that does nothing to damage the esteem in which he is held in cosmopolitan society, was then awarded the Nobel Prize for having given away in exchange to his followers the precise rules for betting on horses.

But the last find is the best: the ego, like everything else we've been dealing with of late in the human sciences, is an o-pe-ra-tion-al notion.

At this point I will have recourse, with the kind permission of my listeners, to that naïve *chosisme* that rivets them so respectfully in those seats to listen to me despite the ballet of calls to work, so that they might, with me, wish to put a stop to this operation.

How does this operation distinguish rationally what one makes of the notion of the ego in analysis from the current usage of any other thing, of this desk to take the first thing to hand? Of so little use is it that I undertake to show that the discourses concerning the ego and the desk (and that is what is at stake) coincide point by point.

For this desk, no less than the ego, is dependent on the signifier, namely on the word, which, bearing its function to the general, to the lectern of quarrelsome memory and to the Tronchin piece of noble pedigree, is responsible for the fact that it is not merely a piece of wood, worked in turn by the woodcutter, the joiner and the cabinet-maker, for reasons of commerce, combined with fashion, itself productive of needs that sustain its exchange value, providing it is not led too quickly to satisfy the least superfluous of those needs by the last use to which it will eventually be put, namely, as firewood.

Furthermore, the significations to which the desk refers are in no way less dignified than those of the ego, and the proof is that on occasion they envelop the ego itself, if it is by the functions that Mr Heinz Hartmann accords it that one of our fellow men may become our desk: namely, to maintain a position involving consent. An operational function no doubt that will enable the said fellow man to dispose within him all the possible

values of the thing co that maintained and back of the rue Quir of the first great sp offices of domestic u till it is used as firew

But that isn't all, : so that it might spea: vidual, of its history has left all the evide: bills detailing its fate: perishable article, enc: dent, to the ups and becomes the intersigr: is no need to know a what that end is.

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The tone is measu: the consciousness, we

ne! It's the latest fetish introduced into derives its authority from the superior- other of the same kind, since everyone h is entirely real, it is always the most that serves the purpose best. That it veneration that it does where it is in h, but the most amazing thing is that d for him the prestige of introducing neral psychology. It is as if His Excel- th receiving his weight in gold, a fact esteem in which he is held in cosmo- the Nobel Prize for having given away ecise rules for betting on horses.

ego, like everything else we've been sciences, is an o-pe-ra-tion-al notion. rse, with the kind permission of my t rivets them so respectfully in those et of calls to work, so that they might: operation.

wish rationally what one makes of the the current usage of any other thing. o hand? Of so little use is it that I ses concerning the ego and the desk ide point by point.

ego, is dependent on the signifier. ng its function to the general, to the nd to the Tronchin piece of noble that it is not merely a piece of wood. the joiner and the cabinet-maker, for th fashion, itself productive of needs viding it is not led too quickly to se needs by the last use to which it: rewood.

which the desk refers are in no way and the proof is that on occasion they e functions that Mr Heinz Hartmann an may become our desk: namely, t. nt. An operational function no doubt: to dispose within him all the possible

values of the thing constituted by the desk: from the burdensome renting that maintained and still maintains the reputation of the little hunch- back of the rue Quincampoix above the vicissitudes and memory itself of the first great speculative crash of modern times, through all the offices of domestic use, of space-filling, of market transfer or usufruct, till it is used as firewood, and why not? It wouldn't be the first time.

But that isn't all, for I am prepared to lend my voice to the real desk so that it might speak of its existence, which, though utilitarian, is indi- vidual, of its history, which, however radically alienated it may seem, has left all the evidence that a historian might need: documents, texts, bills detailing its fate, which, though inert, is dramatic, since a desk is a perishable article, engendered in work, a fate subject to chance, to acci- dent, to the ups and downs of fashion, of fatalities even, of which it becomes the intersign, and which is promised to an end of which there is no need to know anything for it to be one's own, since we all know what that end is.

But the whole thing would become banal if, after this prosopopoeia, one of you dreams that he is this desk, possessed or not with the gift of speech, and since the interpretation of dreams has become a well known, if not everyday, practice, it could hardly come as a surprise if, in dec- iphering the use as a signifier that this desk will have assumed in the riddle in which the dreamer encloses his desire, and in analysing the more or less equivocal reference back that this use involves in the signi- fications that the consciousness of this desk will have aroused in him, with or without its discourse, we touch on what might be called the preconscious of this desk.

At this point I am aware of a protest, which, although ruled like music paper, I am not sure how to name: the thing is, it concerns what has no name in any language, and which, being generally referred to by the white-nigger notion of the total personality, sums up everything that a facile phenomenology-psychiatry, in our society of stationary 'progress', trumpets in our ears. A protest on the part of the *belle âme* no doubt, but in forms suited to the neither-one-thing-nor-the-other being, the half- this-half-that manner, the stealthy tread of the modern intellectual, whether of right or left. Indeed, it is from this direction that the fictional protest of those who cultivate disorder finds its aristocratic connexions. Let us listen rather to the tone of this protest.

The tone is measured, but grave: the preconscious, or for that matter the consciousness, we are told, belongs not to the desk, but to ourselves.

We perceive the desk and give it its meaning, and as much trouble goes into doing so, perhaps, as into the making of the thing. But even if it had been a question of a more natural being, we should never inconsiderately swallow into the consciousness the high form which, however weak we may be in the universe, guarantees us an imprescriptible dignity in it – look up ‘reed’ in the dictionary of spiritualist thought.

I must admit that Freud arouses my irreverence here by the way in which, in a passing remark somewhere, as if without touching on it, he speaks of the modes of spontaneous provocation that operate when the universal consciousness goes into action. And this relieves me of any embarrassment I may have felt in pursuing my paradox.

Is the difference between the desk and us, as far as consciousness is concerned, so very great, then, if the desk can so easily come to resemble us, and be brought into play between you and me, that my words should have made any mistake possible? Thus by being placed with one of us between two parallel mirrors, it would be seen to be reflected to infinity, which means that it will be much more like the observer than one might think, since in seeing one’s image repeated in the same way, it too is seen by the eyes of another when it looks at itself, since without this other that is its image, it would not see itself seeing itself.

In other words, the privilege of the ego in relation to things is to be sought elsewhere than in this false recurrence to infinity of reflexion that the mirage of consciousness consists of, and which, despite its perfect inanity, still to some extent excites those who work with thought in seeing in it some supposed progress in interiority, whereas it is a topological phenomenon whose distribution in nature is as sporadic as the dispositions of pure exteriority that condition it, if indeed man has helped to spread them with such immoderate frequency.

Furthermore, how can we separate the term ‘preconscious’ from the affectations of this desk, or those to be found potentially or actually in any other thing, and which, by adjusting itself as exactly to my affectations, will enter consciousness with them?

I am quite willing to accept that the ego, and not the desk, is the seat of perceptions but in being so it reflects the essence of the objects it perceives and not its own, in so far as consciousness is its privilege, since these perceptions are very largely unconscious.

It is not for nothing, indeed, that we would locate the origin of the protest with which we are concerned here, in those bastard forms of phenomenology that cloud the technical analyses of human action, and

especially those required in the term that Herr Jasp psychoanalysis, really is with the cast-iron statue of him as intellectual, indeed, is always the same.

They are used here, in fact that the desk does not would prefer to ignore, but would at once begin to sp

In what way, then, is this desk that I am?’ it would

‘For if its health is regarded quite simply as being of “the healthy part of the doubt, incompatibilities we dance with your principle and anodyne, and will not you see them, is it not the healthy part of the subject of view, which, in order of things, just as there is adoption by the subject of the current admission to the purpose of analysis is ego?’

‘Certainly, the fact that received as it is leads to the view that we hoodwink the wink us. And the hyp for which appears with such should speak to the subtle still further on the depth the nausea that rises at the well informed parents we

its meaning, and as much trouble goes to making of the thing. But even if it is a natural being, we should never incur the risk of losing the high form which, however it is, guarantees us an imprescriptible dignity, the very glory of spiritualist thought.

It is my irreverence here by the way that I am here, as if without touching on it, by the very provocation that operate when the subject is in action. And this relieves me of any anxiety in pursuing my paradox.

My desk and us, as far as consciousness is concerned, the desk can so easily come to resemble me as when you and me, that my words should be seen to be reflected to infinity. Thus by being placed with one of us, the desk would be seen to be reflected to infinity. The desk is more like the observer than one might think. Repeated in the same way, it too is seen to be looking at itself, since without this other, the desk is itself seeing itself.

The relation of the ego in relation to things is to be seen as a recurrence to infinity of reflexion that is not satisfied, and which, despite its perfect form, is those who work with thought in the interiority, whereas it is a topographical situation in nature is as sporadic as the condition it, if indeed man has helped to increase its frequency.

It is the term 'preconscious' from the fact that it is to be found potentially or actually in the subject, lasting itself as exactly to my affections.

It is the ego, and not the desk, is the seat of the reflection that reflects the essence of the objects that are in it, as consciousness is its privilege, since it is the unconscious.

That we would locate the origin of the thing is remedied here, in those bastard forms of clinical analyses of human action, and

especially those required in medicine. If their cheap raw material, to use the term that Herr Jaspers specifically attaches to his estimation of psychoanalysis, really is what gives his work its style, and its weight to the cast-iron statue of him as director of conscience and to the tin-plate statue of him as intellectual master, they have served their turn, which, indeed, is always the same, namely, to divert.

They are used here, for example, in order to avoid discussing the fact that the desk does not talk, a fact that the upholders of false protest would prefer to ignore, because by hearing me grant it them, my desk would at once begin to speak.



The discourse of the other

'In what way, then, is this ego that you treat in analysis better than the desk that I am?' it would ask them.

'For if its health is defined by its adaptation to a reality that is regarded quite simply as being suited to it, and if you need the co-operation of "the healthy part of the ego" in order to reduce, in the other part no doubt, incompatibilities with reality, which appear as such only in accordance with your principle of regarding the analytical situation as simple and anodyne, and will not rest until you make the subject see them as you see them, is it not clear that there is no other way of distinguishing the healthy part of the subject's ego than by its agreement with your point of view, which, in order to be regarded as healthy, becomes the measure of things, just as there is no other criterion of cure than the complete adoption by the subject of this measure of yours – all of which confirms the current admission to be found in certain very serious authors that the purpose of analysis is achieved with identification with the analyst's ego?

'Certainly, the fact that such a view can become so widespread and be received as it is leads one to think that, contrary to the commonly held view that we hoodwink the naïve, it is much easier for the naïve to hoodwink us. And the hypocrisy that is revealed in the declaration – regret for which appears with such curious regularity in this discourse – that we should speak to the subject in "his own language", leads one to reflect still further on the depth of this naïvety. Do we still have to overcome the nausea that rises at the suggestion of talking *babyish*,⁸ without which well informed parents would believe themselves incapable of inducting

into their high reasons the poor little beggars that have to be kept quiet! This is the least one might expect in view of the fact that analytical imbecility projects neuroses into the notion of the weakness of the ego.

'But we are not here to dream between nausea and vertigo. The fact remains that I who am speaking to you, mere desk though I be, am the ideal patient since with me not so much trouble has to be taken, the results are acquired at once, I am cured in advance. Since it is simply a question of substituting your discourse for mine, I am a perfect ego, since I have never had any other, and I leave it to you to inform me of the things to which my regulating devices do not allow you to adapt me directly, namely, all those things that are not your diopters, your size and the dimension of your papers.'

Well, that's a pretty good speech for a desk, it seems to me. I am joking, of course. In what it said under my command, it did not have its say. For the simple reason that it was itself a word; it was *I* as grammatical subject. Well, that's one rank attained, one to be picked up by the occasional soldier in the ditch of an entirely eristic claim, but it also provides us with an illustration of the Freudian motto, which, expressed as '*Là où était ça, le je doit être*' ('*Wo es war, soll Ich werden*'), would confirm to our advantage the feeble character of a translation that substantiates the *Ich* by giving a 't' to the 'doit' of *soll* [i.e. making it third person singular - Tr.] and fixes the price of the *Es* at the rate of the 'c' cedilla. Nevertheless, the desk is not an ego, eloquent though it has been, but a means that I have employed in my discourse.

But, after all, if one takes into account its virtue, in analysis, the ego, too, is a means, and so they can be compared.

As the desk remarked so pertinently, it has the advantage over the ego of not being a means of resistance, and that's precisely why I chose it to support my discourse and so reduce as much as possible the resistance that would have been aroused in you by too great an interference on the part of my ego in the words of Freud: satisfied as I should already be, if what must be left to you despite this effacement allows you to find what I am saying 'interesting'. And it is no accident that this expression designates in its euphemism what interests us only moderately, and which manages to loop the loop in its antithesis, by which speculations of universal interest are called 'disinterested'.

But let's look and see (*voyons voir*) whether what I am saying happens to interest you, as one says, thus piling a pleonasm on to an antonomasia: personally, the desk will soon be torn to pieces for use as ammunition.

Oh, well! The same uses seem to be reverse speech addressed to you resist its recognition, it in that it helps in not he

In effect, it is in the c by the ego that the subie And it is from the sort significations that turn h.

This interest in the ego by the traditional mor dynamics in its relation investigation has succee relation with this image signification that interest such a dependence on th more closely to the desir in me.

The objects in questi in a space structured by human world. As to the depends, men are far fr they should see further trary, their misfortune w their noses, and that the by the same trick that an in a mirror. But scarcely love with it, and this is th the forms of desire. It is aggressivity in the firma obscure if it kept to this

This is a point that I ceiving the dynamics of prematuration at birth indicated the jubilant id

the beggars that have to be kept quiet in view of the fact that analysis is the notion of the weakness of the ego between nausea and vertigo. The fact is that you, mere desk though I be, am the one who has to take so much trouble. The cure is secured in advance. Since it is simply a course for mine, I am a perfect ego and I leave it to you to inform me if my devices do not allow you to adapt to those that are not your diopters, your spectacles.

Each for a desk, it seems to me. I am under my command, it did not have to be itself a word; it was *I* as grammatically contained, one to be picked up by the entirely eristic claim, but it also presents a Freudian motto, which, expressed as *Es war, soll Ich werden*'), would characterize a translation that substantiates the 'soll' [i.e. making it third person of the *Es* at the rate of the 'c' cedilla]. An eloquent though it has been, but in its discourse.

To recount its virtue, in analysis, the ego is compared. It has the advantage over the ego and that's precisely why I chose it: to be as much as possible the resistance to the ego: satisfied as I should already be, this effacement allows you to find it is no accident that this expression interests us only moderately, and its antithesis, by which speculations are interested'.

Whether what I am saying happens is a pleonasm on to an antonomasia: to pieces for use as ammunition.

Oh, well! The same applies to the ego, apart from the fact that its uses seem to be reversed in their relation to its states. A means of the speech addressed to you from the subject's unconscious, a weapon to resist its recognition, it is fragmented in that it bears speech, and whole in that it helps in not hearing it.

In effect, it is in the disintegration of the imaginary unity constituted by the ego that the subject finds the signifying material of his symptoms. And it is from the sort of interest aroused in him by the ego that the significations that turn his discourse away from those symptoms proceed.



Imaginary passion

This interest in the ego is a passion whose nature was already glimpsed by the traditional moralists, who called it *amour-propre*, but whose dynamics in its relation to one's own body image only psychoanalytic investigation has succeeded in analysing. This passion brings to every relation with this image, constantly represented by my fellow-man, a signification that interests me so much, that is to say, which places me in such a dependence on this image that it links all the objects of my desires more closely to the desire of the other than to the desire that they arouse in me.

The objects in question here are those whose appearance we expect in a space structured by vision, that is to say, objects characteristic of the human world. As to the knowledge on which the desire of these objects depends, men are far from confirming the expression that wishes that they should see further than the ends of their noses, for, on the contrary, their misfortune wishes that the world should begin at the ends of their noses, and that they should be able to apprehend their desire only by the same trick that enables them to see their own noses, that is to say, in a mirror. But scarcely has this nose been discerned than they fall in love with it, and this is the first signification by which narcissism envelops the forms of desire. It is not the only one, and the progressive rise of aggressivity in the firmament of analytic preoccupations would remain obscure if it kept to this one alone.

This is a point that I think I have myself helped to elucidate by conceiving the dynamics of the so-called *mirror stage* as a consequence of a prematuration at birth, generic to man, from which results at the time indicated the jubilant identification of the as yet *infans* individual with

the total form in which this reflexion of the nose is integrated, namely, the image of his body: an operation which by being performed at a glance (*à vue de nez*), is of much the same kind as the 'aha!' that reveals to us the intelligence of the chimpanzee (we never fail to be amazed when confronted by the miracle of intelligence on the faces of our peers). It does not fail to bring with it deplorable consequences.

As a witty poet remarks so rightly, the mirror would do well to reflect a little more before returning our image to us. For at this moment the subject has not yet seen anything. But as soon as the same capture is reproduced before the nose of one of one's fellow-men, the nose of a notary, for example, God knows where the subject will be led by the nose, in view of the places where these ministerial officers are in the habit of sticking theirs. So that whatever else we have – hands, feet, heart, mouth, even the eyes, so reluctant to follow – is threatened by dislocation (*une rupture d'attelage*), whose announcement in anxiety could only involve severe measures. Fall in! That is, an appeal to the power of the image in which the honeymoon of the mirror so delighted, to that sacred union of right and left that is affirmed in it, interverted as it may seem if the subject proves to be a little more observant.

But what finer model of this union could be found than the very image of the other, that is to say, of the notary in his function? It is thus that the functions of mastery, which we incorrectly call the synthesizing functions of the ego, establish on the basis of a libidinal alienation the development that follows from it, namely, what I once called the paranoiac principle of human knowledge, according to which its objects are subjected to a law of imaginary reduplication, evoking the homologation of an endless series of notaries, who owe nothing to their professional body.

But for me the decisive signification of the alienation that constitutes the *Urbild* of the ego appears in the relation of exclusion that then structures the dual relation of ego to ego. For if the imaginary coadaptation of each by the other should result in the roles being distributed in a complementary manner between the notary and his client, for example, the identification precipitated from the ego to the other in the subject has the effect that this apportionment of functions never constitutes even a kinetic harmony, but is established on the permanent 'you or I' of a war involving the existence of one or other of the two notaries in each of the subjects. A situation that is symbolized in the 'Yah-boo, so are you' of the transitivist quarrel, the original form of aggressive communication.

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rightly, the mirror would do well to reflect our image to us. For at this moment the thing. But as soon as the same capture is of one of one's fellow-men, the nose of a bows where the subject will be led by the there these ministerial officers are in the at whatever else we have – hands, feet, so reluctant to follow – is threatened by (slage), whose announcement in anxiety assures. Fall in! That is, an appeal to the the honeymoon of the mirror so delighted, and left that is affirmed in it, interverted as es to be a little more observant.

union could be found than the very image the notory in his function? It is thus that ch we incorrectly call the synthesizing on the basis of a libidinal alienation from it, namely, what I once called the knowledge, according to which its objects inary reduplication, evoking the homo-notaries, who owe nothing to their pro-

fication of the alienation that constitutes the relation of exclusion that then struc-ego. For if the imaginary coadaptation of in the roles being distributed in a com-notary and his client, for example, the the ego to the other in the subject has the of functions never constitutes even a ed on the permanent 'you or I' of a war other of the two notaries in each of the lIALIZED in the 'Yah-boo, so are you' of nal form of aggressive communication.

One can see to what the language of the ego is reduced: intuitive illumination, recollective command, the retorsive aggressivity of the verbal echo. Let us add what comes back to it from the automatic detritus of common discourse: the educative cramming and delusional *ritornello*, modes of communication that perfectly reproduce objects scarcely more complicated than this desk, a feed-back construction for the first, for the second a gramophone record, preferably scratched in the right place.

Yet it is in that register that the systematic analysis of defence is offered. It is corroborated by what looks like regression. The object relation provides its appearances and this forcing has no other outcome than one of the three admitted in the technique in operation. Either the impulsive leap into the real through the paper hoop of phantasy: acting out in a sense usually signifying the opposite of suggestion. Or transitory hypomania by ejection of the object itself, which is properly described in the megalomaniac ebriety which my friend Michael Balint, in an account so veracious as to make him the more my friend, recognizes as the index of the termination of the analysis in present practice. Or in the sort of somatization represented by hypochondria *a minima*, modestly theorized under the heading of the doctor/patient relationship.

The dimension of 'two body psychology',⁹ as suggested by Rickman, is the fantasy from which a 'two ego analysis',⁹ which is as untenable as it is coherent in its results, shelters.



Analytic action

That is why we teach that there are not only two subjects present in the analytic situation, but two subjects each provided with two objects, the ego and the other (*autre*), this other being indicated by a small *o* (*a*). Now by virtue of the singularities of a dialectical mathematics with which we must familiarize ourselves, their meeting in the pair of sub-jects *S* and *O* comprises in all only four terms, because the relation of exclusion that operates between *o* and *o'* reduces the two couples thus indicated to a single couple in the confrontation of the subjects.

In this game for four players, the analyst will act on the significative resistances that weigh down, impede and divert speech, while himself introducing into the quartet the primordial sign of the exclusion that connotes the either/or of presence or absence that formally releases the death included in the narcissistic *Bildung*. A sign that is lacking, let us

note in passing, in the algorithmic apparatus of a modern logic that calls itself symbolic, and thus demonstrates the dialectical inadequacy that still renders it unsuited to the formalization of the human sciences.

This means that the analyst intervenes concretely in the dialectic of analysis by pretending he is dead, by cadaverizing his position as the Chinese say, either by his silence when he is the Other with a capital *O*, or by annulling his own resistance when he is the other with a small *o*. In either case, and under the respective effects of the symbolic and the imaginary, he makes death present.

It is important, moreover, that he recognizes and therefore distinguishes his action in each of these two registers if he is to know why he intervenes, at what moment the opportunity presents itself and how to seize it.

The prime condition for this is that he should be thoroughly imbued with the radical difference between the Other to which his speech must be addressed, and that second other who is the individual that he sees before him, and from whom and by means of whom the first speaks to him in the discourse that he holds before him. For, in this way, he will be able to be he to whom this discourse is addressed.

The fable of my desk and the current practice of the discourse of conviction will show him sufficiently, if he thinks about it, that no discourse, whatever inertia it may be based on or to whatever passion it may appeal, is ever addressed to anyone but the good listener to whom it brings its salvation. What is called the argument *ad hominem* itself is regarded by him who practises it only as a seduction destined to obtain from the other in his authenticity the acceptance of what he says, which constitutes a pact, whether admitted or not, between the two subjects, a pact that is situated in each case beyond the reasons of the argument.

As a rule everyone knows that others will remain, like himself, inaccessible to the constraints of reason, outside an acceptance in principle of a rule of debate that does not come into force without an explicit or implicit agreement as to what is called its basis, which is almost always tantamount to an anticipated agreement as to what is at stake. What is called logic or law is never more than a body of rules that were laboriously drawn up at a moment of history duly certificated as to time and place, by agora or forum, church, even party. I shall expect nothing therefore of those rules except the good faith of the Other, and, as a last resort, will make use of them, if I think fit or if I am forced to, only to amuse bad faith.

The Other is, speaks to him, the reply, the spoken.

But this locu that is to say, as we have kn the laws that s

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Selection

The Freudian thing

The locus of speech

The Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks to him who hears, that which is said by the one being already the reply, the other deciding to hear it whether the one has or has not spoken.

But this locus also extends as far into the subject as the laws of speech, that is to say, well beyond the discourse that takes its orders from the ego, as we have known ever since Freud discovered its unconscious field and the laws that structure it.

It is not because of some mystery concerning the indestructibility of certain infantile desires that these laws of the unconscious determine the analysable symptoms. The imaginary shaping of the subject by desires more or less fixed or regressed in their relation to the object is too inadequate and partial to provide the key to it.

The repetitive insistence of these desires in the transference and their permanent recollection in a signifier that has been taken possession of by repression, that is to say, in which the repressed element returns, find their necessary and sufficient reason, if one admits that the desire of recognition dominates in these determinations the desire that is to be recognized, by preserving it as such until it is recognized.

The laws of recollection and symbolic recognition are, in effect, different in essence and manifestation from the laws of imaginary reminiscence, that is to say, from the echo of feeling or instinctual imprint (*Prägung*), even if the elements ordered by the first as signifiers are taken from the material to which the second give signification.

To touch on the nature of symbolic memory, it is enough to have studied once, as we have done in my seminar, the simplest symbolic sequence, that of a linear series of signs connoting the alternative of presence or absence, each being chosen at random by whatever pure or impure mode adopted. One then elaborates this sequence in the simplest way, that is, by noting in it the ternary sequences in a new series, and one will see the appearance of the syntactical laws that impose on each term of this series certain exclusions of possibility until the compensations demanded by its antecedents have been lifted.

With his discovery of the unconscious – which, he insisted, was a quite different matter from everything that had previously been designated by that term – Freud was taken at once to the heart of this determination of the symbolic law. For, in establishing, in ‘The Interpretation

the apparatus of a modern logic that demonstrates the dialectical inadequacy of the formalization of the human sciences. It intervenes concretely in the dialectic by cadaverizing his position as the Other when he is the Other with a capital O, when he is the other with a small o. The relative effects of the symbolic and the

he recognizes and therefore distinguishes two registers if he is to know why the opportunity presents itself and how to

that he should be thoroughly imbued with the Other to which his speech must be addressed. It is the individual that he sees in the means of whom the first speaks to the Other before him. For, in this way, he will be addressed.

The current practice of the discourse of the Other, if he thinks about it, that no discourse is based on or to whatever passion it may be directed, but the good listener to whom it is addressed is the argument *ad hominem* itself is directed by as a seduction destined to obtain the acceptance of what he says, which is not, between the two subjects, a matter of the reasons of the argument.

Others will remain, like himself, in the Other, outside an acceptance in principle that is brought into force without an explicit or stated basis, which is almost always determined as to what is at stake. What is at stake is a body of rules that were laboriously articulated as to time and place, by which I shall expect nothing therefore of the Other, and, as a last resort, will be addressed. I am forced to, only to amuse bad

of Dreams', the Oedipus Complex as the central motivation of the unconscious, he recognized this unconscious as the agency of the laws on which marriage alliance and kinship are based. This is why I can say to you now that the motives of the unconscious are limited – a point on which Freud was quite clear from the outset and never altered his view – to sexual desire. Indeed, it is essentially on sexual relations – by ordering them according to the law of preferential marriage alliances and forbidden relations – that the first combinatory for the exchanges of women between nominal lineages is based, in order to develop in an exchange of gifts and in an exchange of master-words the fundamental commerce and concrete discourse on which human societies are based.

The concrete field of individual preservation, on the other hand, through its links with the division not of labour, but of desire and labour, already manifested from the first transformation introducing into food its human signification to the most developed forms of the production of consumer goods, shows that it is structured in this dialectic of master and slave, in which we can recognize the symbolic emergence of the imaginary struggle to the death in which we earlier defined the essential structure of the ego: it is hardly surprising, then, if this field is reflected exclusively in this structure. In other words, this explains why the other great generic desire, that of hunger, is not represented, as Freud always maintained, in what the unconscious preserves in order to gain recognition for it.

Thus Freud's intention, which is so legible to anyone who is not content simply to stumble through his text, becomes increasingly clear when he promulgated the topography of the ego, which involved restoring in all its rigour the separation, even in their unconscious interference, between the field of the ego and that of the unconscious first discovered by him, by showing the 'transverse' position of the first in relation to the second, to the recognition of which it resists by the effect of its own significations in speech.

It is certainly there that the contrast is to be found between the significations of guilt, the discovery of which in the subject's action dominated the first phase in the history of psychoanalysis, and the significations of the subject's affective frustration, instinctual deprivation, and imaginary dependence that dominate its present phase.

To say that the prevalence of the latter, as it is now being consolidated in a neglect of the former, should lead to a propedeutics of general infantilization is not to say very much, when psychoanalysis is already allowing its principles to authorize large-scale practices of social mystification.

Will our action go as far as in its exercise? Will it send the passion of the Rat Man to recognition, even if we must do it: namely, that it is out of the unconscious words, the entrance into the world of a man, the symptoms, to disturb the balance.

For the unripe grapes of the father the authentic bunch of wrath that the mother has baited him in to set his teeth on edge more *jouissance* or even having been

Will we manage to escape which the real misdeed may divert our study from what has been intolerable to a child stood by him when still unknown been presented to him in its being discerned: that is the symbolic chain, raise from the in which we must see the truth

It should be made clear that be an analysis of resistance a tion of defences is directed its practice as in its principal legitimate ends.

The manoeuvres of dual happiness and success cannot resistance of the effects of speech that is avowed at the moment.

I believe that it is in the reference is the enigmatic act its centre and its gravity, and that I conceive of this spe



Symbolic debt

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Will our action go as far, then, as to repress the very truth that it bears
in its exercise? Will it send this truth back to sleep, a truth that Freud in
the passion of the Rat Man would maintain presented for ever to our
recognition, even if we must increasingly divert our vigilance away from
it: namely, that it is out of the forfeits and vain oaths, lapses in speech and
unconsidered words, the constellation of which presided at the putting
into the world of a man, that is moulded the stone guest who comes, in
symptoms, to disturb the banquet of one's desires?

For the unripe grape of speech by which the child receives too early
from a father the authentication of the nothingness of existence, and
the bunch of wrath that replies to the words of false hope with which the
mother has baited him in feeding him with the milk of her true despair,
set his teeth on edge more than having been weaned on an imaginary
jouissance or even having been deprived of such real attentions.

Will we manage to escape unscathed from the symbolic game in
which the real misdeed pays the price of imaginary temptation? Will we
divert our study from what will become of the law when, from having
been intolerable to a fidelity of the subject, it was already misunder-
stood by him when still unknown, and of the imperative if, from having
been presented to him in imposture, it is challenged within itself before
being discerned: that is to say, springs which, in the broken link of the
symbolic chain, raise from the imaginary that obscene, ferocious figure
in which we must see the true signification of the superego?

It should be made clear that our critique of an analysis that claims to
be an analysis of resistance and is reduced more and more to the mobiliza-
tion of defences is directed solely at the fact that it is as disorientated in
its practice as in its principles, and in order to recall it to the order of its
legitimate ends.

The manoeuvres of dual complicity in which it strives for effects of
happiness and success can have value in our eyes only by reducing the
resistance of the effects of prestige in which the ego is affirmed to the
speech that is avowed at that moment of the analysis that is the analytic
moment.

I believe that it is in the avowal of this speech, of which the trans-
ference is the enigmatic actualization, that the analysis must rediscover
its centre and its gravity, and let no one imagine from what I said earlier
that I conceive of this speech in some mystical mode reminiscent of

karma. For what strikes one in the moving drama of neurosis are the absurd aspects of a disconcerted symbolization of which the *quid pro quo* appears more derisory the more one penetrates it.

Adequatio rei et intellectus: the homonymic enigma that we can extract from the genitive *rei*, which without even a change of accent can be that of the word *reus*, which means the party to a suit in a trial, in particular, the defendant, and metaphorically he who is in debt for something, surprises us by giving at the end its formula with the strange adequation with which we posed the question for our intellect and which finds its response in the symbolic debt for which the subject as subject of speech is responsible.



The training of the analysts of the future

So it is to the structures of language so manifestly recognizable in the earliest discovered mechanisms of the unconscious that we will return in taking up once more our analysis of the modes in which speech is able to recover the debt that it engenders.

One has only to turn the pages of his works for it to become abundantly clear that Freud regarded a study of languages and institutions, of the resonances, whether attested or not in memory, of literature and of the significations involved in works of art as necessary to an understanding of the text of our experience. Indeed, Freud himself is a striking instance of his own belief: he derived his inspiration, his ways of thinking and his technical weapons from just such a study. But he also regarded it as a necessary condition in any teaching of psychoanalysis.

That this condition should have been neglected, even in the selection of analysts, cannot be unconnected with the present state of analysis: only by articulating the requirements of this condition in technique will we be able to satisfy it. It is with an initiation into the methods of the linguist, the historian and, I would say, the mathematician that we should now be concerned if a new generation of practitioners and researchers is to recover the meaning and the motive force of the Freudian experience. These younger analysts will also find in these methods a means of preserving themselves from the psycho-sociological objectification, in which the psychoanalyst will seek, in his uncertainty, the substance of what he does, whereas it can bring him no more than an inadequate abstraction in which his practice is engulfed and dissolved.

This reform will be an institutional operation, for it can be sustained

only by means of a certain 'define themselves as 'social and theoretical sciences', a term that are diverting the field.

But such a direction is to say, one that will be a question. For the pact instituting the fact that this experience in order to separate it from the truth.

Thus, in exposing our thinking, and in fact to produce their offspring in with truth.

It is to this connection that it is impossible to and to psychoanalysis. subject can only be a reserves for truth?

For truth proves to be alien to reality, stubborn all, rather inhuman. De goddess, the prey in will become, let the pack recognize the hounds of

1. First appeared in *psychiatrique*, 1956, n. 1, p. 11.

2. A pun on 'Bordé' (The Forest of Bondy), Paris, was long famous for robbers. [Tr.].

3. The *Pays du Tendre* a local country in which was a preoccupation. It was the Mlle de Scudéry and the seventeenth century. [Tr.].

4. English in the original.

5. This rewritten paragraph a line of thought that I explored further (1966).

FOUR

The Freudian thing, or the meaning of the return to Freud in psychoanalysis

An expanded version of a lecture given at the
Neuro-psychiatric Clinic, Vienna 7 November 1955¹

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To Sylvia

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Situation in time and place of this exercise

At a time when Vienna is making itself heard once again through the voice of its Opera, thus, in a most moving way, resuming what had always been its mission, namely, to create harmony at this point of cultural convergence as only it knew how, I have come here, not, I think, out of season, to evoke the election by which this city will remain, this time forever, linked to a revolution in knowledge worthy of the name of Copernicus, the eternal city of Freud's discovery, if it can be said that as a result of that discovery the very centre of the human being was no longer to be found at the place assigned to it by a whole humanist tradition.

Even, perhaps, for prophets whose own countries were not entirely deaf to them, the moment of eclipse must come, if only after their death. It is only right that an outsider should exercise restraint in assessing the forces at work in such apparent phases.

In any case, the return to Freud for which I am assuming here the role of herald is situated elsewhere: one has only to remember the symbolic scandal to which Dr Alfred Winterstein, then president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association, who is with us here today, rightly drew attention on the occasion of the inauguration of the commemorative plaque marking the house in which Freud pursued his heroic work the scandal being not that this monument was not dedicated to Freud by his fellow citizens, but that it was not commissioned by the international association of those who live from his sponsorship.

Such a failure is symptomatic, for it reveals a betrayal that comes not

from the land in which Freud, by virtue of his tradition, was merely a temporary guest, but from the very field that he has left in our care, and from those in whom that care was entrusted, from the psychoanalytical movement itself, where things have not reached the point when a return to Freud is seen as a reversal.

From the moment when the first sound of the Freudian message echoed across the world from the great bell of Vienna, many incidental factors have been involved in the story. Those first reverberations seemed, with the first world conflict, to be drowned by the heavy thud of a collapsing structure. They resumed, with renewed power, after the immense human laceration that fomented the second, and which was their most powerful vehicle. It was on the waves set up by the tocsin of hate, the tumult of discord, the panic-stricken breath of war, that Freud's voice reached us, as we witnessed the diaspora of those who were its bearers and a perception that did not strike blindly. The shock waves were to reverberate beyond the confines of our world, in a continent where it would be untrue to say that history loses its meaning since it is there that it finds its limit — it would even be wrong to think that history was absent there, since, having been already formed over several centuries, it weighs all the more heavily there by virtue of the gulf that represents its all too limited horizon — but it is denied with a categorical will that gives the industrial corporations their style, a cultural ahistoricism peculiar to the United States of America.

It is this ahistoricism that defines the assimilation required if one is to be recognized in the society constituted by that culture. It was to its summons that a group of emigrants had to respond — men who, in order to be recognized, could only stress their difference, but whose function presupposed history in its very principle, their discipline being that which had re-established the bridge linking modern man to the ancient myths. The combination of circumstances was too strong, the opportunity too tempting for them to resist: they abandoned the principle and based function upon difference. Let us be clear as to the nature of this temptation. It involved neither faculty nor profit. It is certainly easier to efface the principles of a doctrine than the stigmata of one's origins, more profitable to make one's function serve demand; but, here, to reduce one's function to one's difference is to give in to a mirage internal to the function itself, a mirage that bases function upon that difference. It is to return to the reactionary principle operant in the duality of the sick and the healer, the opposition between someone who knows and someone who does not.

How can one avoid regarding this opposition as true when it is real, how can one avoid becoming a manager of souls in a social context that demands such an office? The most corrupting of comforts is intellectual comfort, and the worst corruption that of the best.

Thus Freud's words to Jung – I have it from Jung's own mouth – when, on an invitation from Clark University, they arrived in New York harbour and caught their first glimpse of the famous statue illuminating the universe, 'They don't realize we're bringing them the plague', are attributed to him as confirmation of a hubris whose antiphrasis and gloom do not extinguish their troubled brightness. To catch their author in its trap, Nemesis had only to take him at his word. We would be justified in fearing that Nemesis had added a first-class return ticket.

Indeed, if something of the sort has taken place, we have only ourselves to thank. For Europe seems rather to have been effaced from the concerns, the style, not to say the memory, of those who left, together with the repression of their bad memories.

I will not grudge you this act of forgetting, if it leaves me free to present to you the project of a return to Freud, as some of us in the *Société Française de Psychanalyse* conceive it. What such a return involves for me is not a return of the repressed, but rather taking the antithesis constituted by the phase in the history of the psychoanalytic movement since the death of Freud, showing what psychoanalysis is not, and seeking with you the means of revitalizing that which has continued to sustain it, even in deviation, namely, the primary meaning that Freud preserved in it by his very presence, and which I should like to explicate here.

How could this meaning elude us when it is so clearly apparent in a body of written work of the most lucid, most coherent kind? And how could it leave us hesitant when a study of this *œuvre* shows us that in different stages and changes in direction are governed by Freud's inflexibly effective concern to maintain it in its primary rigour?

Such texts may even be compared with those that, in other times, human veneration has invested with the highest qualities, in that they endure the test of that discipline of commentary, the virtue of which one rediscovers in making use of it, in the time-honoured way, not only to situate what Freud said in the context of its time, but to determine whether the answer that it brings to the questions it poses is or is not superseded by the answer that one finds in it to the questions of the real. It will no doubt come as no surprise to you if I tell you that these

texts, to which for the past four years I have devoted a two-hour seminar every Wednesday from November to July, without having covered more than a quarter of the total, if indeed my commentary presupposes their totality at all, have given me, and those who have attended my seminars, the surprise afforded only by genuine discoveries. These discoveries range from concepts that have remained unused to clinical details uncovered by our exploration that demonstrate how far the field investigated by Freud extended beyond the avenues that he left us to tend, and how little his observation, which sometimes gives an impression of exhaustiveness, was the slave of what he had to demonstrate. Who, among the technicians of disciplines other than analysis whom I have persuaded to read these texts, has not been moved by this research in action, whether in 'The Interpretation of Dreams', 'The Wolf Man', or 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'? What an exercise for the training of minds, and what a message to lend one's voice to! And what control of the methodological value of this training and of the effect of truth that this message produces when the students to whom you transmit them bring you evidence of a transformation, occurring sometimes from one day to the next, in their practice, which becomes simpler or more effective even before it becomes more transparent to themselves. I cannot provide you with an extensive account of this work in the talk that I am now giving in this place of noble memory – an opportunity that I owe to the kindness of Professor Hoff, to Dr Arnold, to whom I owe the suggestion, and to my excellent and long-standing relations with Igor Caruso, who assured me of the welcome that I would receive in Vienna.

But I must not forget that I owe part of this audience to the kindness of M. Susini, the director of our French Institute in Vienna. And this is why, when coming to the meaning of this return to Freud that I am proposing here, I must ask myself whether, because they are less prepared than specialists may be to understand me, I am not running the risk of disappointing them.



The adversary

I am sure what my answer would be: Certainly not, if what I am going to say is as it must be. The meaning of a return to Freud is a return to the meaning of Freud. And the meaning of what Freud said may be conveyed to anyone because, addressed as it is to all, it concerns each individual: to

make this clear, one has only to remember that Freud's discovery puts truth into question, and there is no one who is not personally concerned by the truth.

It must seem rather odd that I should be flinging this word in your faces – a word almost of ill repute, a word banished from polite society. Yet is it not inscribed at the very heart of analytic practice, since this practice is constantly re-making the discovery of the power of the truth in ourselves, in our very flesh?

In what could the unconscious be better recognized, in fact, than in the defences that are set up in the subject against it, with such success that they appear no less real? I am not reviving here the shoddy Nietzschean notion of the lie of life, nor am I astonished that one should believe oneself capable of belief, nor do I accept that it is enough to wish for something sufficiently to will it. But I am asking where the peace that follows the recognition of an unconscious tendency comes from if it is not more true than that which constrains it in the conflict? Indeed, for some time now, this peace has proved to be an illusory one, for, not content with recognizing as unconscious the defences attributable to the ego, psychoanalysts have more and more identified their mechanisms – displacement from the object, the turning against the subject, regression of the form – with the very dynamic that Freud had analysed in the tendency, which thus seems to continue in them with little more than a change of sign. Have we not overstepped the limit when we admit that the drive itself may be led to consciousness by the defence in order to prevent the subject from recognizing it?

In order to translate the exposition of these mysteries into a coherent discourse, I must once again use words that, in spite of myself, re-establish in that discourse the duality that sustains them. But what I deplore is not simply that one cannot see the wood of the theory for the trees of the technical process, but rather that it takes so little to believe that one is in the forest of Bondy, no more than the shape lurking behind every tree, the notion that some trees must be more real than others, or, if you prefer, that all the trees are not bandits.² Failing which, one might add where the bandits are that are not trees. Perhaps this little, then, which can become everything on occasion, deserves an explanation? What is this truth without which there is no way of discerning the face from the mask, and outside of which there appears to be no other monster than the labyrinth itself? In other words, in what way are they to be distinguished, in fact, if they are all of equal reality?

Here the big clogs move forward to cover the dove's feet, on which, as we know, the truth is borne, and on occasion to swallow up the bird as well: what an ideologist you are, someone cries; our criterion is simply economic. All arrangements of reality are not equally economic. But at the point at which the truth has already been brought to bear, the bird flies off unscathed with our question: Economic for whom?

This time the business has gone too far. The adversary laughs: 'It's clear what's happening. Monsieur is about to launch into philosophy. We'll be meeting Plato and Hegel before long. These signatures are enough. What they represent is much the same, and, anyway, as you say, this concerns everybody, it's of no interest to specialists like us. It can't even be classified in our files.'

You think I'm joking. I assure you this is not the case. I really believe what I am saying.

If Freud had brought to man's knowledge nothing more than the truth that there is such a thing as the true, there would be no Freudian discovery. Freud would belong to the line of moralists in whom a whole tradition of humanist analysis is embodied, a milky way to the heavens of European culture in which Balthazar Gracian and La Rochefoucauld shine as stars of the first order, and in which Nietzsche features as a nova as dazzling as it is short-lived. The latest to join them, and, like them, simulated no doubt by a properly Christian concern for the authenticity of the movement of the soul, Freud was able to precipitate a whole casuistry into a map of Tendre,³ which has only to be set in accordance with the offices for which it was intended. Its objectivity, in fact, is strictly bound up with the analytic situation, which, between the four walls that limit its field, can work perfectly well without one knowing where the north is since it lies along the axis of the couch, which is supposed to point in the direction of the analyst. Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that appear within this field. A unique experience, a rather abject one after all, but one that cannot be recommended too highly to those who wish to be introduced to the principle of man's follies, for, by revealing itself as akin to a whole gamut of disorders, it throws light upon them.

This language is moderate enough – I did not invent it. We have lived to hear a zealot of a supposedly classical psychoanalysis define psychoanalysis as an experience whose privilege is strictly bound up with the forms that govern its practice, forms that cannot be altered a jot, because they were obtained by means of a miracle of chance; these forms provide

access to a transcendent reality possessing the characteristics of history, a reality in which a taste for order and a love of the beautiful, for example, have their permanent foundation – namely, the objects of the pre-Oedipal relation, shit and nappy-rash.

This position cannot be refuted since the rules are justified by their outcome, which is regarded as proof that the rules are well founded. And yet our questions proliferate. How did this prodigious operation of chance occur? What is the origin of this contradiction between the pre-Oedipal intrigue, to which, in the opinion of certain of our modern analysts, the analytic relation can be reduced, and the fact that Freud was satisfied with having situated it in the position of the Oedipus complex? How can the sort of hot-house osculation to which this 'new look' of experience is limited be the ultimate in a progress that first appeared to open up innumerable links between all the fields of creation – or the same question presented the other way round? If the objects discerned in this elective fermentation were thus discovered through some method other than experimental psychology, is experimental psychology able to find them again through its own methods?

The replies that we will receive from the interested parties leave no room for doubt. The motive force of the experience, even when motivated in their terms, cannot simply be this illusory truth that can be reduced to the illusion of truth. It all began with a particular truth, a disclosure, the effect of which is that reality is no longer the same for us as it was before, and it is there that the senseless cacophony of theory continues to catch human things alive, as if to prevent practice from declining to the level of the unfortunates who never succeed in escaping from it (I use the term to exclude the cynics).

A truth, it must be admitted, is not easy to recognize, once it has become accepted. Not that there are established truths, but they then become so easily confused with the reality that surrounds them that no other artifice has yet been found to distinguish them from it than to mark them with the sign of the spirit, to pay them homage, to regard them as coming from another world. It is not to attribute everything to a sort of blindness on man's part to point out the fact that truth is never for him more beautiful than at the moment when the light, which he holds aloft as in the proverbial emblem, surprises her naked. And one must feign stupidity to some extent to pretend that one knows nothing of what happens afterwards. But the stupidity of bovine frankness remains if one wonders where one could have been looking for her before, since the emblem

scarcely indicated the well, an unseemly, not to say maladorous place, rather than the casket in which any precious form should be preserved intact.



The thing speaks of itself

But the truth in Freud's mouth takes the said beast by the horns: 'So for you I am the enigma of her who vanishes as soon as she appears, men who try so hard to hide me under the tawdry finery of your proprieties! But I am prepared to believe that your embarrassment is sincere, for even when you take it upon yourselves to serve as my heralds, you place no greater value on wearing my colours than your own, which are like you yourselves, phantoms that you are. Where, then, will I pass into you? Where was I before I entered you? Perhaps one day I will tell you? But so that you will find me where I am, I will teach you by what sign you will recognize me. Men, listen, I am giving you the secret. I, truth, will speak.

'Must I remind you that you did not yet know this? Certainly some of you who claim to be my lovers, no doubt by virtue of the principle that in this kind of braggadocio one is never better served than by oneself, had posited, in an ambiguous manner, and not without somewhat clumsily revealing the self-love that really concerned them, that the errors of philosophy, that is to say, their own, could subsist only on my subsidies. Yet by embracing these girls with their thought, they found them in the end insipid and vain, and set to once again to contend with vulgar opinions in the manner of the sages of old who knew how to put them in their place, whether they appeared in the form of tales, lawsuits, guile, or, quite simply, lies, but also to seek them out in their places, in the home and in the forum, in the forge or in the market-place. They then realized that by not being my parasites these vulgar opinions seemed to be serving me much more, and, who knows?, acting as my militia, as the secret agents of my power. Several cases observed in the name of forfeits, of sudden transformations of errors into truths, which seemed to be due to nothing more than perseverance, set them on the path of this discovery. The discourse of error, its articulation in acts, could bear witness to the truth against evidence itself. It was at this point that one of them tried to get the cunning of reason accepted into the rank of objects worthy of study. Unfortunately, he was a professor, and you

were too happy to turn against his teachings the ass's ears that you were made to wear at school and which have since served as ear-trumpets for those of you who are a little hard of hearing. So keep your vague sense of history and leave it to those cleverer than yourselves to found on the guarantee of my future firm the world market in lies, the trade in total war and the new law of self-criticism. If reason is as cunning as Hegel said, it will do its job without your help.

'But for all that you have made your debts to me neither outdated nor in perpetuity. They are dated after yesterday and before tomorrow. And it hardly matters whether you rush ahead to honour them or to evade them, since they will seize you from behind in either case. Whether you flee me in fraud or think to entrap me in error, I will reach you in the mistake against which you have no refuge. In that place where the most caustic speech reveals a slight hesitation, it is lacking in perfidy, I am now publicly announcing the fact, and it would be rather more subtle to pretend that nothing had happened, in good, or for that matter, bad company. But there is no need to give yourselves the trouble to keep a closer watch on yourselves. All the same the conjoint jurisdictions of politeness and politics would declare as unacceptable whatever is associated with me by presenting itself in so illicit a way, you will not get off so lightly, for the most innocent intention is disconcerted at being unable to conceal the fact that one's unsuccessful acts are the most successful and that one's failure fulfills one's most secret wish. In any case, is it not enough to judge of your defeat to see me escape first from the dungeon of the fortress in which you are so sure you have me secured by situating me not in you yourselves, but in being myself? I wander about in what you regard as being the least true in essence: in the dream, in the way the most far-fetched conceit, the most grotesque nonsense of the joke defies sense, in chance, not in its law, but in its contingency, and I never do more to change the face of the world than when I give it the profile of Cleopatra's nose.

'So you can reduce the traffic on the roads that you strive so hard to radiate from the consciousness, and which constitute the pride of the ego, crowned by Fichte with the emblems of transcendence. The trade route of truth no longer passes through thought: strange to say, it now seems to pass through things: *riddle*, it is through you that I communicate, as Freud formulates it at the end of the first paragraph of the sixth chapter, devoted to the work of the dream, of his work on dreams and what dreams mean.

'But you will take care: all the trouble this individual put into becoming a professor may spare him your neglect, if not your errors, the tirade continues. Listen carefully to what he says, and, as he said of me, the truth that speaks, the better to grasp its meaning and to take it literally. Here, no doubt, things are my signs, but, I repeat, signs of my speech. If Cleopatra's nose changed the course of the world, it was because it entered the world's discourse, for to change it in the long or short term, it was enough, indeed, it was necessary, for it to be a speaking nose.

'But it is your own that you must now avail yourself of, but to more natural ends. Let a sharper scent than all your categories guide you in the chase to which I incite you: for it the cunning of reason, however disdainful she may be of you, remained open to your faith, beside you, I, the truth, would be Deceit itself, since my ways pass not only through a crack too narrow to find for want of pretence and through the inaccessible cloud of the dream, through the motiveless fascination of the mediocre and the seductive impasse of absurdity. Seek, dogs that you become on hearing me, blood-hounds that Sophocles preferred to unleash upon the hermetic traces of the thief of Apollo than on the bleeding sockets of Oedipus, certain as he was of finding with him at the sinister meeting at Colonus the hour of truth. Enter the lists to my call and howl at my voice. There you are lost already, I contradict myself, I defy you, I take cover: you say that I am defending myself.'



Parade

'The return to the shades, which we believe is to be expected at this moment, is the signal for a 'murder party'⁴ initiated by the order forbidding anyone to leave, since anyone may now be hiding the truth, under her dress, for example, or even, as in the amorous fiction of the 'indiscreet jewels', in her belly. The general question is: Who is speaking? And the question is not an irrelevant one. Unfortunately, the answers are a little hazy. First the libido is accused, which takes us in the direction of the jewels, but we must realize that the ego itself, although it places letters on the libido, which is so desperate for satisfaction, is sometimes the object of its activities. One feels, in fact, that it is about to collapse from one minute to the next, when the sound of broken glass informs everyone that it is the large drawing-room mirror that has sustained the

accident, the golem of narcissism, hastily called in to assist, having made his entrance through it. The ego is then generally regarded as the murderer, or, if not, the victim, in which case the divine rays of the good Judge Schreber begin to spread their net over the world, and the sabath of the instincts really does become complicated.

The comedy, which I shall interrupt here at the beginning of its second act, is gentler than is usually believed, since, bringing to bear upon a drama of knowledge a buffoonery that belongs only to those who act this drama without understanding it, it restores to such people the authenticity from which they were moving farther and farther away.

But if a more serious metaphor befits the protagonist, it is that which shows us in Freud an Actaeon perpetually slipped by dogs that have been tracked down from the beginning, and which he strives to draw back into pursuit, without being able to slacken the chase in which only his passion for the goddess leads him on. Leads him on so far that he cannot stop until he reaches the grottoes in which the chthonian Diana in the damp shade, which makes them appear as the emblematic seat of truth, offers to his thirst, with the smooth surface of death, the quasi-mystical limit of the most rational discourse in the world, so that we might recognize the place in which the symbol is substituted for death in order to take possession of the first swelling of life.

As we know, this limit and this place are still well outside the reach of his disciples, if indeed they make any attempt at all to seek it, and so the Actaeon who is dismembered here is not Freud, but every analyst who can measure up to the passion that consumed him and which has made him, according to the signification that Giordano Bruno gave this myth in his *Furori eroici*, the prey of the dogs of his thoughts.

In order to appreciate the scope of this split we must hear the irrepressible cries that arise from the best as well as the worst, attempting to bring them back to the beginning of the chase, with the words that truth has given us as viaticum: 'I speak', adding: 'There is no other speech but language.' The rest is drowned in their tumult.

'Logomachia!' goes the strophe on one side. 'What are you doing with the preverbal, gesture and mime, tone, the tune of a song, mood and af-fee-tive con-tact?' To which others no less animated give the antistrophe: 'Everything is language: language when my heart beats faster when I'm in a funk, and if my patient finches at the throbbing of an aeroplane at its zenith it is a way of saying how she remembers the last bomb attack.' — Yes, eagle of thought, and when the plane's shape

cuts out your likeness in the night-piercing brush of the searchlight, it is the sky's answer.

Yet one did not challenge, in dealing with these premises, the use of any form of communication to which anyone might have recourse in his exploits, whether signals or images, content or form, if this content is a content of sympathy, and virtue is not discussed by good form.

One began only to repeat after Freud the word of his discovery: *it speaks*, and, no doubt, where it is least expected, namely, where there is pain. If there ever was a time when simply listening to what it said was sufficient reply (for hearing it is already a reply), let us suppose therefore that the great ones of the early days, the arm-chair giants, were struck by the curse destined to titanic acts of daring, or that their seats ceased to be conductors of the good speech before which they were expected to sit. However, since then, the meetings between the psychoanalyst and psychoanalysis have increased in the hope that the Athenian could be reached with Athene having emerged fully armed from the head of Freud. Shall I tell you of the jealous fate, ever the same, that thwarted these meetings: beneath the mask in which everyone was to meet his promised, alas! thrice alas! and a cry of horror at the thought of it, another having taken her place, he who was there was not he either.

Let us return, then, quite deliberately, and with the truth spell out what it has said of itself. The truth has said: 'I speak'. To recognize this 'I' by what he speaks, perhaps we should not have turned to the 'I', but paused at the angle of intersection of the speech. 'There is no speech that is not language' reminds us that language is an order constituted by laws, of which we might at least learn what they exclude. For example, that language is different from natural expression and that it is not a code either; that it is not to be confused with information — and don't forget it when you are dealing with cybernetics; and that it is so irreducible to a superstructure that materialism itself is seen to be alarmed by this heresy — see Stalin's bull on the question.

If you want to know more, read Saussure, and since a clock-tower can hide even the sun, I would add that I am not referring to the signature to be found in psychoanalysis, but to Ferdinand, who can truly be said to be the founder of modern linguistics.



Order of the thing

A psychoanalyst should find it easy enough to grasp the fundamental distinction between signifier and signified, and to begin to use the two non-overlapping networks of relations that they organize.

The first network, that of the signifier, is the synchronic structure of the language material in so far as in that structure each element assumes its precise function by being different from the others; this is the principle of distribution that alone governs the function of the elements of the language (*langue*) at its different levels, from the phonematic pair of oppositions to the compound expressions to disengage the stable forms of which is the task of the most modern research.

The second network, that of the signified, is the diachronic set of the concretely pronounced discourses, which reacts historically on the first, just as the structure of the first governs the pathways of the second. The dominant factor here is the unity of signification, which proves never to be resolved into a pure indication of the real, but always refers back to another signification. That is to say, the signification is realized only on the basis of a grasp of things in their totality.

Its origin cannot be grasped at the level at which it usually assures itself of the redundancy proper to it, for it always proves to be in excess over the things that it leaves floating within it.

The signifier alone guarantees the theoretical coherence of the whole as a whole. This adequacy is confirmed by the latest development of the science, as, on reflexion, it is found to be implicit in primary linguistic experience.

Such are the bases that distinguish language from the sign. From them the dialectic has derived a new trenchancy.

For the remark on which Hegel bases his critique of the *belle âme*, and in accordance with which it is said to live (in every sense, even the economic sense of making a living) precisely on the disorder that it denounces, escapes tautology only to maintain the tauto-ontic of the *belle âme* as mediation, unrecognized by itself, of that disorder as primary in being.

Whatever dialectic it is, this remark cannot shake the delusion of the presumption to which Hegel applied it, remaining caught in the trap offered by the mirage of consciousness to the *Infatuated* with its feelings, which he erects into a law of the heart.

This 'I' in Hegel is defined, no doubt, as a legal being, in which respect it is more concrete than the real being from which it was earlier thought

it could be abstracted – as appears from the fact that it possesses both a civil status (*état civil*) and a statement of account (*état-comptable*).

But it was left to Freud to make this legal being responsible for the manifest disorder to be found in the most enclosed field of the real being, namely, in the organism's pseudo-totally.

I would explain the possibility of this by the congenital gap presented by man's real being in his natural relations, and by the resumption, for a sometimes ideographical, but also a phonetic, not to say grammatical, usage, of imaginary elements that appear fragmented in this gap.

But there is no need of this genesis for the signifying structure of the symptom to be demonstrated. When deciphered, it appears as self-evident, imprinted upon the flesh, the omnipresence for the human being of the symbolic function.

It is this that distinguishes a society founded in language from an animal society, and even what enables ethnology to stand back and perceive such a distribution: that is, the exchange that characterizes such a society has other foundations than the needs even to satisfy them, what has been called the gift 'as total social fact'. All this is then carried much farther, to the point where this society may no longer be defined as a collection of individuals, when the immixture of subjects makes it a group with a quite different structure.

This is to introduce the effects of truth as cause at a quite different point, and to impose a revision of the process of causality – the first stage of which would seem to be to recognize the inherent nature of the heterogeneity of these effects.⁵ It is strange that materialist thought seems to forget that it was from this recourse to the heterogeneous that it derived its initial momentum. More interest might then be shown in a much more striking feature than the resistance to Freud displayed by the pedants, namely, the connivance that this resistance has encountered in the common consciousness.

If all causality evidences an implication of the subject, there can be no doubt that every conflict of order can be attributed to it.

The terms of psychoanalytic intervention – the problem of which I am posing here – make it sufficiently clear, I think, that its ethic is not an individualist one.

But its practice in the American sphere has been so summarily reduced to a means of obtaining 'success' and to a mode of demanding 'happiness' that it should be pointed out that this constitutes a repudiation of psycho-analysis, a repudiation that occurs among too many of its adherents from

the simple, basic fact, that they have never wished to know anything about the Freudian discovery, and that they will never know anything about it, even by way of repression: for it is a question here of the mechanism of systematic *méconnaissance* in so far as it simulates delusion, even in its group forms.

A more rigorous reference from analytic experience to the general structure of the semantics in which it has its roots should nevertheless have made it possible to convince them before having to conquer them.

For the subject of which I was speaking just now as the legatee of recognized truth is definitely *not* the ego perceptible in the more or less immediate data of conscious pleasure or alienation in labour. This *de facto* distinction is the same that is to be found between the α of the Freudian unconscious, in so far as it is separated by an abyss of pre-conscious functions, and the ω of Freud's will in the 31st of his *Neurolösungen*: 'Wo Es war, soll Ich werden.'

A formula in which the dominance of the signifying structuration is made sufficiently clear.

Let us analyse it. Contrary to the form that the English translation - 'Where the id was, there the ego shall be' - cannot avoid, Freud did not say 'das Es', nor 'das Ich', as was his custom when designating the agencies by which for the previous ten years he had ordered his new topography, and this fact, in view of the inflexible rigour of his style, gives a special accent to their use in this sentence. In any case - even without having to confirm by internal criticism of Freud's work that he in fact wrote *Das Ich und das Es* in order to maintain this fundamental distinction between the true subject of the unconscious and the ego as constituted in its nucleus by a series of alienating identifications - the true meaning would seem to be the following: *Wo* (Where) *Es* (the subject - devoid of any *das* or other objectivating article) *war* (was - it is a locus of being that is referred to here, and that in this locus) *soll* (must - that is, a duty in the moral sense, as is confirmed by the single sentence that follows and brings the chapter to a close)⁶ *Ich* (I, there must I - just as one declared, 'this am I', before saying, 'it is I'), *werden* (become - that is to say, not occur (*survenir*), or even happen (*advenir*), but emerge (*venir au jour*) from this very locus in so far as it is a locus of being).

Thus I would agree, against the principles of the economy of signification that must dominate a translation, to force a little in French the forms of the signifier in order to bring them into line with the weight of

a still rebellious signification, which the German carries better here, and therefore to employ the homophony of the German *es* with the initial of the word 'sujet' (subject). By the same token, I might feel more indulgence, for a time at least, to the first translation that was given of the word *es*, namely, 'le soi' (the self). The 'ja' (id), which not without very good reason, was eventually preferred, does not seem to me to be much more adequate, since it corresponds rather to the German *das*, as in the question, 'Was ist das?', and the answer 'das ist' ('c'est'). Thus the elided 'c' that will appear if we hold to the accepted equivalence, suggests to me the production of a verb, 's'étre', in which would be expressed the mode of absolute subjectivity, in the sense that Freud properly discovered it in its radical eccentricity: 'There where it was' ('*Là où c'était*'), I would like it to be understood, 'it is my duty that I should come to being'.

You see, it is not in a grammatical conception of the functions in which they appear that one should analyse if and how the *I* (*le je*) and the ego (*le moi*) may be distinguished or overlap in each particular subject.

What the linguistic conception, which must guide the worker in his basic initiation, will teach him is to expect the symptom to prove its function as a signifier, that is to say, as that by which it is to be distinguished from the natural index that the same term currently designates in medicine. And in order to satisfy this methodological requirement, he will force himself to recognize its conventional use in the significations raised by the analytic dialogue. (A dialogue whose structure I will try to describe.) But he will insist that these same significations can be grasped with certainty only in their context, that is, in the sequence that is constituted for each by the signification that refers back to it and the signification to which it refers back in analytic discourse.

These basic principles are applied easily enough in analytic technique, and in illuminating it, they dissipate many of the ambiguities which, in order to maintain themselves even in the major concepts of transference and resistance, make the use that is made of them in practice quite ruinous.

Resistance to the resisters

To consider only resistance, whose use is increasingly confused with that of defence, and all that this implies in terms of reductive manoeuvres - and we can no longer remain blind to the coercion that such manoeuvres

exert — it is as well to remember that the first resistance with which analysis has to deal is that of the discourse itself in that it is first a discourse of opinion, and that all psychological objectification will prove to be bound up with this discourse. This, in effect, is what motivated the remarkable simultaneity with which the psychoanalytic practice of the burgraves of analysis came to a standstill in the 1920s: by that time they knew both too much and not enough to get their patients, who scarcely knew less about it, to recognize the fact.

But the principle adopted at that time of the primacy to be accorded to the analysis of resistance hardly led to a favourable development. For the simple reason that it is not enough to carry out an operation with extreme urgency for it to achieve its aim if one is unclear as to what it consists of.

And it was precisely towards a reinforcement of the objectifying position in the subject that the analysis of resistance was orientated, to such an extent, indeed, that this directive now permeates the principles to be applied in the conduct of a standard analysis.

Far from having to maintain the subject in a state of observation, therefore, one must know that by engaging him there one enters a circle of misunderstanding that nothing in analysis, or in criticism, will be able to break. Any intervention in this direction could only be justified, therefore, by a dialectical aim, namely, to demonstrate its value as an impasse.

But I will go further and say: you cannot at the same time proceed yourself to this objectification of the subject and speak to him as you should. And for a very good reason, which is not only that one cannot, as the English proverb has it, have one's cake and eat it: that is to say, have towards the same objects two approaches whose consequences are mutually exclusive. But for the deeper reason that is expressed in the saying 'one cannot serve two masters', that is, one's being cannot conform to two actions that lead in opposite directions.

For, in psychology, objectification is subjected in its very principle to a law of *méconnaissance* that governs the subject not only as observed, but also as observer. That is to say, it is not about him that you have to speak to him, for he can do this himself, and therefore, it is not even to you that he speaks. If it is to him that you have to speak, it is literally of something else, that is, of something other than that which is in question when he speaks of himself, and which is the thing that speaks to you, a thing which, whatever he says, would remain forever inaccessible to him, if in being speech addressed to you it could not elicit its

response in you and if, from having heard its message in this inverted form, you could not, by returning it to him, give him the double satisfaction of having recognized it and of making him recognize its truth.

Can we therefore know this truth that we know in this way? *Adequatio rei et intellectus*, thus has the concept of truth been defined since there were thinkers, and this definition leads us into the ways of their thought. Intellectuals like ours will certainly be adequate to this thing that speaks to us, which speaks within us, and even in escaping behind the discourse that says nothing but to make us speak, it would be strange indeed if it did not find to whom it might speak.

This is certainly the grace that I wish you, and what we must now do is speak about it, and it is up to those who put the thing into practice to speak.



Interlude

However, don't expect too much here, for since the psychoanalytic thing has become an accepted thing and its servants have their hands manacled, the arrangement they have come to can accommodate sacrifices to good form, which, as far as ideas, which psychoanalysis have never had enough of, are concerned, is certainly convenient: cut-price ideas for all will make up the balance of what everyone needs. We are sufficiently *au fait* with things to know that *chossisme* is hardly the latest thing; and there we have found our pirouette.

'What are you going to look for if not this ego that you distinguish, at the same time forbidding us to see it?' it may be objected. 'All right, we objectify it. So what's wrong with that?' Here the delicate shoes move stealthily forward to deliver the following kick in the shins: do you think, then, that the ego can be taken as a thing — I'd rather starve first!

From thirty-five years of cohabitation with the ego under the roof of the second Freudian topography, including ten years of a stormier liaison, regularized at last through the good offices of Miss Anna Freud in a marriage whose social credit has been on the up and up ever since, to the point that I am assured that it will soon request the blessing of the Church, in short, from the most sustained work of psychoanalysis, you will draw nothing more than this drawer.

It is true that it is filled to overflowing with old novelties and new junk the sheer mass of which is certainly entertaining. The ego is a function, the ego is a synthesis, a synthesis of functions, a function of synthesis.

It is autonomous! That's a good one! It's the latest fetish introduced into the holy of holies of a practice that derives its authority from the superiority of the superiors. It's worth another of the same kind, since everyone knows that for this function, which is entirely real, it is always the most outmoded, dirty, repulsive object that serves the purpose best. That it should gain for its inventor the veneration that it does where it is in operation is understandable enough, but the most amazing thing is that in enlightened circles it has earned for him the prestige of introducing psychoanalysis into the laws of general psychology. It is as if His Excellency the Aga Khan, not content with receiving his weight in gold, a fact that does nothing to damage the esteem in which he is held in cosmopolitan society, was then awarded the Nobel Prize for having given away in exchange to his followers the precise rules for betting on horses.

But the last find is the best: the ego, like everything else we've been dealing with of late in the human sciences, is an o-pe-ra-tion-al notion.

At this point I will have recourse, with the kind permission of my listeners, to that naive *chanson* that rivets them so respectfully in those seats to listen to me despite the ballet of calls to work, so that they might, with me, wish to put a stop to this operation.

How does this operation distinguish rationally what one makes of the notion of the ego in analysis from the current usage of any other thing, of this desk to take the first thing to hand? Of so little use is it that I undertake to show that the discourses concerning the ego and the desk (and that is what is at stake) coincide point by point.

For this desk, no less than the ego, is dependent on the signifier, namely on the word, which, bearing its function to the general, to the lectern of quarrelsome memory and to the Tronchin piece of noble pedigree, is responsible for the fact that it is not merely a piece of wood, worked in turn by the woodcutter, the joiner and the cabinet-maker, for reasons of commerce, combined with fashion, itself productive of needs that sustain its exchange value, providing it is not led too quickly to satisfy the least superfluous of those needs by the last use to which it will eventually be put, namely, as firewood.

Furthermore, the significations to which the desk refers are in no way less dignified than those of the ego, and the proof is that on occasion they envelop the ego itself, if it is by the functions that Mr Heinz Hartmann accords it that one of our fellow men may become our desk: namely, to maintain a position involving consent. An operational function no doubt that will enable the said fellow man to dispose within him all the possible

values of the thing constituted by the desk: from the burdensome renting that maintained and still maintains the reputation of the little hunchback of the rue Quincampoix above the vicissitudes and memory itself of the first great speculative crash of modern times, through all the offices of domestic use, of space-filling, of market transfer or usufruct, till it is used as firewood, and why not? It wouldn't be the first time.

But that isn't all, for I am prepared to lend my voice to the real desk so that it might speak of its existence, which, though utilitarian, is individual, of its history, which, however radically alienated it may seem, has left all the evidence that a historian might need: documents, texts, bills detailing its fate, which, though inert, is dramatic, since a desk is a perishable article, engendered in work, a fate subject to chance, to accident, to the ups and downs of fashion, of fatalities even, of which it becomes the intersign, and which is promised to an end of which there is no need to know anything for it to be one's own, since we all know what that end is.

But the whole thing would become banal if, after this prosopopeia, one of you dreams that he is this desk, possessed or not with the gift of speech, and since the interpretation of dreams has become a well known, if not everyday, practice, it could hardly come as a surprise if, in deciphering the use as a signifier that this desk will have assumed in the riddle in which the dreamer encloses his desire, and in analysing the more or less equivocal reference back that this use involves in the significations that the consciousness of this desk will have aroused in him, with or without its discourse, we touch on what might be called the preconscious of this desk.

At this point I am aware of a protest, which, although ruled like music paper, I am not sure how to name: the thing is, it concerns what has no name in any language, and which, being generally referred to by the white-nigger notion of the total personality, sums up everything that a facile phenomenology-psychiatry, in our society of stationary 'progress', trumpets in our ears. A protest on the part of the *belle âme* no doubt, but in forms suited to the neither-one-thing-nor-the-other being, the half-this-half-that manner, the stealthy tread of the modern intellectual, whether of right or left. Indeed, it is from this direction that the fictional protest of those who cultivate disorder finds its aristocratic connexions. Let us listen rather to the tone of this protest.

The tone is measured, but grave: the preconscious, or for that matter the consciousness, we are told, belongs not to the desk, but to ourselves.

We perceive the desk and give it its meaning, and as much trouble goes into doing so, perhaps, as into the making of the thing. But even if it had been a question of a more natural being, we should never inconsiderately swallow into the consciousness the high form which, however weak we may be in the universe, guarantees us an imprescriptible dignity in it — look up 'reed' in the dictionary of spiritualist thought.

I must admit that Freud arouses my irreverence here by the way in which, in a passing remark somewhere, as if without touching on it, he speaks of the modes of spontaneous provocation that operate when the universal consciousness goes into action. And this relieves me of any embarrassment I may have felt in pursuing my paradox.

Is the difference between the desk and us, as far as consciousness is concerned, so very great, then, if the desk can so easily come to resemble us, and be brought into play between you and me, that my words should have made any mistake possible? Thus by being placed with one of us between two parallel mirrors, it would be seen to be reflected to infinity, which means that it will be much more like the observer than one might think, since in seeing one's image repeated in the same way, it too is seen by the eyes of another when it looks at itself, since without this other that is its image, it would not see itself seeing itself.

In other words, the privilege of the ego in relation to things is to be sought elsewhere than in this false recurrence to infinity of reflexion that the mirage of consciousness consists of, and which, despite its perfect inanity, still to some extent excites those who work with thought into seeing in it some supposed progress in interiority, whereas it is a topological phenomenon whose distribution in nature is as sporadic as the dispositions of pure exteriority that condition it, if indeed man has helped to spread them with such immoderate frequency.

Furthermore, how can we separate the term 'preconscious' from the affections of this desk, or those to be found potentially or actually in any other thing; and which, by adjusting itself as exactly to my affections, will enter consciousness with them?

I am quite willing to accept that the ego, and not the desk, is the seat of perceptions but in being so it reflects the essence of the objects it perceives and not its own, in so far as consciousness is its privilege, since these perceptions are very largely unconscious.

It is not for nothing, indeed, that we would locate the origin of the protest with which we are concerned here, in those bastard forms of phenomenology that cloud the technical analyses of human action, and

especially those required in medicine. If their cheap raw material, to use the term that Herr Jaspers specifically attaches to his estimation of psychoanalysis, really is what gives his work its style, and its weight to the cast-iron stature of him as director of conscience and to the tin-plate stature of him as intellectual master, they have served their turn, which, indeed, is always the same, namely, to divert.

They are used here, for example, in order to avoid discussing the fact that the desk does not talk, a fact that the upholders of false protest would prefer to ignore, because by hearing me grant it them, my desk would at once begin to speak.



The discourse of the other

'In what way, then, is this ego that you treat in analysis better than the desk that I am?' it would ask them.

'For if its health is defined by its adaptation to a reality that is regarded quite simply as being suited to it, and if you need the co-operation of "the healthy part of the ego" in order to reduce, in the other part no doubt, incompatibilities with reality, which appear as such only in accordance with your principle of regarding the analytical situation as simple and anodyne, and will not rest until you make the subject see them as you see them, is it not clear that there is no other way of distinguishing the healthy part of the subject's ego than by its agreement with your point of view, which, in order to be regarded as healthy, becomes the measure of things, just as there is no other criterion of cure than the complete adoption by the subject of this measure of yours — all of which confirms the current admission to be found in certain very serious authors that the purpose of analysis is achieved with identification with the analyst's ego?'²

'Certainly, the fact that such a view can become so widespread and be received as it is leads one to think that, contrary to the commonly held view that we hoodwink the naïve, it is much easier for the naïve to hoodwink us. And the hypocrisy that is revealed in the declaration — regret for which appears with such curious regularity in this discourse — that we should speak to the subject in "his own language", leads one to reflect still further on the depth of this naïvety. Do we still have to overcome the nausea that rises at the suggestion of talking *babyish*,³ without which well-informed parents would believe themselves incapable of inducing

into their high reasons the poor little beggars that have to be kept quiet! This is the least one might expect in view of the fact that analytical imbecility projects neuroses into the notion of the weakness of the ego.

'But we are not here to dream between nausea and vertigo. The fact remains that I who am speaking to you, mere desk though I be, am the ideal patient since with me not so much trouble has to be taken, the results are acquired at once, I am cured in advance. Since it is simply a question of substituting your discourse for mine, I am a perfect ego, since I have never had any other, and I leave it to you to inform me of the things to which my regulating devices do not allow you to adapt me directly, namely, all those things that are not your diopters, your size and the dimension of your papers.'

Well, that's a pretty good speech for a desk, it seems to me. I am joking, of course. In what it said under my command, it did not have its say. For the simple reason that it was itself a word; it was *I* as grammatical subject. Well, that's one rank attained, one to be picked up by the occasional soldier in the ditch of an entirely eristic claim, but it also provides us with an illustration of the Freudian motto, which, expressed as '*Là où étaut ça, le je doit être*' ('*Wo es war, soll Ich werden*'), would conform to our advantage the feeble character of a translation that substantiates the *Ich* by giving a 'i' to the '*doit*' of *soll* [i.e. making it third person singular - [Tr.] and fixes the price of the *Es* at the rate of the 'c' cedilla. Nevertheless, the desk is not an ego, eloquent though it has been, but a means that I have employed in my discourse.

But, after all, if one takes into account its virtue, in analysis, the ego, too, is a means, and so they can be compared.

As the desk remarked so pertinently, it has the advantage over the ego of not being a means of resistance, and that's precisely why I chose it to support my discourse and so reduce as much as possible the resistance that would have been aroused in you by too great an interference on the part of my ego in the words of Freud: satisfied as I should already be, if what must be left to you despite this effacement allows you to find what I am saying 'interesting'. And it is no accident that this expression designates in its euphemism what interests us only moderately, and which manages to loop the loop in its antithesis, by which speculations of universal interest are called 'disinterested'.

But let's look and see (*royons voir*) whether what I am saying happens to interest you, as one says, thus piling a pleonasm on to an antonomasia: personally, the desk will soon be torn to pieces for use as ammunition.

Oh, well! The same applies to the ego, apart from the fact that its uses seem to be reversed in their relation to its states. A means of the speech addressed to you from the subject's unconscious, a weapon to resist its recognition, it is fragmented in that it bears speech, and whole in that it helps in not hearing it.

In effect, it is in the disintegration of the imaginary unity constituted by the ego that the subject finds the signifying material of his symptoms. And it is from the sort of interest aroused in him by the ego that the significations that turn his discourse away from those symptoms proceed.



Imaginary passion

This interest in the ego is a passion whose nature was already glimpsed by the traditional moralists, who called it *amour-propre*, but whose dynamics in its relation to one's own body image only psychoanalytic investigation has succeeded in analysing. This passion brings to every relation with this image, constantly represented by my fellow-man, a signification that interests me so much, that is to say, which places me in such a dependence on this image that it links all the objects of my desires more closely to the desire of the other than to the desire that they arouse in me.

The objects in question here are those whose appearance we expect in a space structured by vision, that is to say, objects characteristic of the human world. As to the knowledge on which the desire of these objects depends, men are far from confirming the expression that wishes that they should see further than the ends of their noses, for, on the contrary, their misfortune wishes that the world should begin at the ends of their noses, and that they should be able to apprehend their desire only by the same trick that enables them to see their own noses, that is to say, in a mirror. But scarcely has this nose been discerned than they fall in love with it, and this is the first signification by which narcissism envelops the forms of desire. It is not the only one, and the progressive rise of aggressivity in the firmament of analytic preoccupations would remain obscure if it kept to this one alone.

This is a point that I think I have myself helped to elucidate by conceiving the dynamics of the so-called *mirror stage* as a consequence of a prematuration at birth, generic to man, from which results at the time indicated the jubilant identification of the as yet *infans* individual with

the total form in which this reflexion of the nose is integrated, namely, the image of his body: an operation which by being performed at a glance (*à vue de nez*), is of much the same kind as the 'aha!' that reveals to us the intelligence of the chimpanzee (we never fail to be amazed when confronted by the miracle of intelligence on the faces of our peers), does not fail to bring with it deplorable consequences.

As a witty poet remarks so rightly, the mirror would do well to reflect a little more before returning our image to us. For at this moment the subject has not yet seen anything. But as soon as the same capture is reproduced before the nose of one of one's fellow-men, the nose of a notary, for example, God knows where the subject will be led by the nose, in view of the places where these ministerial officers are in the habit of sticking theirs. So that whatever else we have — hands, feet, heart, mouth, even the eyes, so reluctant to follow — is threatened by dislocation (*une rupture d'articlage*), whose announcement in anxiety could only involve severe measures. Fall in! That is, an appeal to the power of the image in which the honeymoon of the mirror so delighted, to that sacred union of right and left that is affirmed in it, interverted as it may seem if the subject proves to be a little more observant.

But what finer model of this union could be found than the very image of the other, that is to say, of the notary in his function? It is thus that the functions of mastery, which we incorrectly call the synthesizing functions of the ego, establish on the basis of a libidinal alienation the development that follows from it, namely, what I once called the paranoid principle of human knowledge, according to which its objects are subjected to a law of imaginary reduplication, evoking the homologation of an endless series of notaries, who owe nothing to their professional body.

But for me the decisive signification of the alienation that constitutes the *Utbild* of the ego appears in the relation of exclusion that then structures the dual relation of ego to ego. For if the imaginary coadaptation of each by the other should result in the roles being distributed in a complementary manner between the notary and his client, for example, the identification precipitated from the ego to the other in the subject has the effect that this apportionment of functions never constitutes even a kinetic harmony, but is established on the permanent 'you or I' of a war involving the existence of one or other of the two notaries in each of the subjects. A situation that is symbolized in the 'Yah-boo, so are you' of the transactivist quarrel, the original form of aggressive communication.

One can see to what the language of the ego is reduced: intuitive illumination, recollective command, the retorsive aggressivity of the verbal echo. Let us add what comes back to it from the automatic detritus of common discourse: the educative cramming and delusional *riornello*, modes of communication that perfectly reproduce objects scarcely more complicated than this desk, a feed-back construction for the first, for the second a gramophone record, preferably scratched in the right place.

Yet it is in that register that the systematic analysis of defence is offered. It is corroborated by what looks like regression. The object relation provides its appearances and this forcing has no other outcome than one of the three admitted in the technique in operation. Either the impulsive leap into the real through the paper hoop of phantasy: acting out in a sense usually signifying the opposite of suggestion. Or transitory hypomania by ejection of the object itself, which is properly described in the megalomaniac ebriety which my friend Michael Balint, in an account so veracious as to make him the more my friend, recognizes as the index of the termination of the analysis in present practice. Or in the sort of somatization represented by hypochondria *a minima*, modestly theorized under the heading of the doctor/patient relationship.

The dimension of 'two body psychology',⁹ as suggested by Rickman, is the fantasy from which a 'two ego analysis',⁹ which is as untenable as it is coherent in its results, shelters.



Analytic action

That is why we teach that there are not only two subjects present in the analytic situation, but two subjects each provided with two objects, the ego and the other (*autre*), this other being indicated by a small *o* (*a*). Now by virtue of the singularities of a dialectical mathematics with which we must familiarize ourselves, their meeting in the pair of subjects *S* and *O* comprises in all only four terms, because the relation of exclusion that operates between *o* and *o'* reduces the two couples thus indicated to a single couple in the confrontation of the subjects.

In this game for four players, the analyst will act on the significant resistances that weigh down, impede and divert speech, while himself introducing into the quarrel the primordial sign of the exclusion that connotes the either/or of presence or absence that formally releases the death included in the narcissistic *Bildung*. A sign that is lacking, let us

note in passing, in the algorithmic apparatus of a modern logic that calls itself symbolic, and thus demonstrates the dialectical inadequacy that still renders it unsuited to the formalization of the human sciences.

This means that the analyst intervenes concretely in the dialectic of analysis by pretending he is dead, by cadaverizing his position as the Chinese say, either by his silence when he is the Other with a capital O, or by annulling his own resistance when he is the other with a small o. In either case, and under the respective effects of the symbolic and the imaginary, he makes death present.

It is important, moreover, that he recognizes and therefore distinguishes his action in each of these two registers if he is to know why he intervenes, at what moment the opportunity presents itself and how to seize it.

The prime condition for this is that he should be thoroughly imbued with the radical difference between the Other to which his speech must be addressed, and that second other who is the individual that he sees before him, and from whom and by means of whom the first speaks to him in the discourse that he holds before him. For, in this way, he will be able to be he to whom this discourse is addressed.

The fable of my desk and the current practice of the discourse of conviction will show him sufficiently, if he thinks about it, that no discourse, whatever inertia it may be based on or to whatever passion it may appeal, is ever addressed to anyone but the good listener to whom it brings its salvation. What is called the argument *ad hominem* itself is regarded by him who practises it only as a seduction destined to obtain from the other in his authenticity the acceptance of what he says, which constitutes a pact, whether admitted or not, between the two subjects, a pact that is situated in each case beyond the reasons of the argument.

As a rule everyone knows that others will remain, like himself, inaccessible to the constraints of reason, outside an acceptance in principle of a rule of debate that does not come into force without an explicit or implicit agreement as to what is called its basis, which is almost always tantamount to an anticipated agreement as to what is at stake. What is called logic or law is never more than a body of rules that were laboriously drawn up at a moment of history duly certificated as to time and place, by agora or forum, church, even party. I shall expect nothing therefore of those rules except the good faith of the Other, and, as a last resort, will make use of them, if I think fit or if I am forced to, only to amuse bad faith.

The locus of speech

The Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks to him who hears, that which is said by the one being already the reply, the other deciding to hear it whether the one has or has not spoken.

But this locus also extends as far into the subject as the laws of speech, that is to say, well beyond the discourse that takes its orders from the ego, as we have known ever since Freud discovered its unconscious field and the laws that structure it.

It is not because of some mystery concerning the indestructibility of certain infantile desires that these laws of the unconscious determine the analysable symptoms. The imaginary shaping of the subject by desires more or less fixed or regressed in their relation to the object is too inadequate and partial to provide the key to it.

The repetitive insistence of these desires in the transference and their permanent recollection in a signifier that has been taken possession of by repression, that is to say, in which the repressed element returns, find their necessary and sufficient reason, if one admits that the desire of recognition dominates in these determinations the desire that is to be recognized, by preserving it as such until it is recognized.

The laws of recollection and symbolic recognition are, in effect, different in essence and manifestation from the laws of imaginary reminiscence, that is to say, from the echo of feeling or instinctual imprint (*Prägung*), even if the elements ordered by the first as signifiers are taken from the material to which the second give signification.

To touch on the nature of symbolic memory, it is enough to have studied once, as we have done in my seminar, the simplest symbolic sequence, that of a linear series of signs connoting the alternative of presence or absence, each being chosen at random by whatever pure or impure mode adopted. One then elaborates this sequence in the simplest way, that is, by noting in it the ternary sequences in a new series, and one will see the appearance of the syntactical laws that impose on each term of this series certain exclusions of possibility until the compensations demanded by its antecedents have been lifted.

With his discovery of the unconscious — which, he insisted, was a quite different matter from everything that had previously been designated by that term — Freud was taken at once to the heart of this determination of the symbolic law. For, in establishing, in "The Interpretation

of Dreams', the Oedipus Complex as the central motivation of the unconscious, he recognized this unconscious as the agency of the laws on which marriage alliance and kinship are based. This is why I can say to you now that the motives of the unconscious are limited – a point on which Freud was quite clear from the outset and never altered his view – to sexual desire. Indeed, it is essentially on sexual relations – by ordering them according to the law of preferential marriage alliances and forbidden relations – that the first combinatory for the exchanges of women between nominal lineages is based, in order to develop in an exchange of gifts and in an exchange of master-words the fundamental commerce and concrete discourse on which human societies are based.

The concrete field of individual preservation, on the other hand, through its links with the division not of labour, but of desire and labour, already manifested from the first transformation introducing into food its human signification to the most developed forms of the production of consumer goods, shows that it is structured in this dialectic of master and slave, in which we can recognize the symbolic emergence of the imaginary struggle to the death in which we earlier defined the essential structure of the ego: it is hardly surprising, then, if this field is reflected exclusively in this structure. In other words, this explains why the other great generic desire, that of hunger, is not represented, as Freud always maintained, in what the unconscious preserves in order to gain recognition for it.

Thus Freud's intention, which is so legible to anyone who is not content simply to stumble through his text, becomes increasingly clear when he promulgated the topography of the ego, which involved restoring in all its rigour the separation, even in their unconscious interference, between the field of the ego and that of the unconscious first discovered by him, by showing the 'transverse' position of the first in relation to the second, to the recognition of which it resists by the effect of its own significations in speech.

It is certainly there that the contrast is to be found between the significations of guilt, the discovery of which in the subject's action dominated the first phase in the history of psychoanalysis, and the significations of the subject's affective frustration, instinctual deprivation, and imaginary dependence that dominate its present phase.

To say that the prevalence of the latter, as it is now being consolidated in a neglect of the former, should lead to a propedeutics of general infantilization is not to say very much, when psychoanalysis is already allowing its principles to authorize large-scale practices of social mystification.

Symbolic debt

Will our action go as far, then, as to repress the very truth that it bears in its exercise? Will it send this truth back to sleep, a truth that Freud in the passion of the Rat Man would maintain presented for ever to our recognition, even if we must increasingly divert our vigilance away from it: namely, that it is out of the forfeits and vain oaths, lapses in speech and unconsidered words, the constellation of which presided at the putting into the world of a man, that is moulded the stone guest who comes, in symptoms, to disturb the banquet of one's desires?

For the unripe grape of speech by which the child receives too early from a father the authentication of the nothingness of existence, and the bunch of wrath that replies to the words of false hope with which the mother has baited him in feeding him with the milk of her true despair, set his teeth on edge more than having been weaned on an imaginary *jouissance* or even having been deprived of such real attentions.

Will we manage to escape unscathed from the symbolic game in which the real misdeed pays the price of imaginary temptation? Will we divert our study from what will become of the law when, from having been intolerable to a fidelity of the subject, it was already misunderstood by him when still unknown, and of the imperative if, from having been presented to him in imposture, it is challenged within itself before being discerned: that is to say, springs which, in the broken link of the symbolic chain, raise from the imaginary that obscene, ferocious figure in which we must see the true signification of the superego?

It should be made clear that our critique of an analysis that claims to be an analysis of resistance and is reduced more and more to the mobilization of defences is directed solely at the fact that it is as disorientated in its practice as in its principles, and in order to recall it to the order of its legitimate ends.

The manoeuvres of dual complicity in which it strives for effects of happiness and success can have value in our eyes only by reducing the resistance of the effects of prestige in which the ego is affirmed to the speech that is avowed at that moment of the analysis that is the analytic moment.

I believe that it is in the avowal of this speech, of which the transference is the enigmatic actualization, that the analysis must rediscover its centre and its gravity, and let no one imagine from what I said earlier that I conceive of this speech in some mystical mode reminiscent of

karma. For what strikes one in the moving drama of neurosis are the absurd aspects of a disconcerted symbolization of which the *quid pro quo* appears more derisory the more one penetrates it.

Adequatio rei et intellectus: the homonymic enigma that we can extract from the genitive *rei*, which without even a change of accent can be that of the word *res*, which means the party to a suit in a trial, in particular, the defendant, and metaphorically he who is in debt for something, surprises us by giving at the end its formula with the strange adequation with which we posed the question for our intellect and which finds its response in the symbolic debt for which the subject as subject of speech is responsible.



The training of the analysts of the future

So it is to the structures of language so manifestly recognizable in the earliest discovered mechanisms of the unconscious that we will return in taking up once more our analysis of the modes in which speech is able to recover the debt that it engenders.

One has only to turn the pages of his works for it to become abundantly clear that Freud regarded a study of languages and institutions, of the resonances, whether attested or not in memory, of literature and of the significations involved in works of art as necessary to an understanding of the text of our experience. Indeed, Freud himself is a striking instance of his own belief: he derived his inspiration, his ways of thinking and his technical weapons from just such a study. But he also regarded it as a necessary condition in any teaching of psychoanalysis.

That this condition should have been neglected, even in the selection of analysts, cannot be unconnected with the present state of analysis: only by articulating the requirements of this condition in technique will we be able to satisfy it. It is with an initiation into the methods of the linguist, the historian and, I would say, the mathematician that we should now be concerned if a new generation of practitioners and researchers is to recover the meaning and the motive force of the Freudian experience. These younger analysts will also find in these methods a means of preserving themselves from the psycho-sociological objectification, in which the psychoanalyst will seek, in his uncertainty, the substance of what he does, whereas it can bring him no more than an inadequate abstraction in which his practice is engulfed and dissolved.

This reform will be an institutional operation, for it can be sustained

only by means of a constant communication with disciplines that would define themselves as sciences of intersubjectivity, or by the term 'conjunctural sciences', a term by which I indicate the order of the researches that are diverting the implication of the term 'human sciences'.

But such a direction will be maintained only by a true teaching, that is to say, one that will constantly be subject to what is known as innovation. For the pact instituting the analytic experience must take account of the fact that this experience establishes the very effects that capture it in order to separate it from the subject.

Thus, in exposing magical thinking, one does not see that it is magical thinking, and in fact the alibi of thoughts of power, ever ready to produce their offspring in an action that is sustained only by its connexion with truth.

It is to this connexion with truth that Freud refers when he declares that it is impossible to keep to three undertakings: to educate, to govern, and to psychoanalyse. Why, indeed, should this be so, if not that the subject can only be lacking there, be pushed out to the edge that Freud reserves for truth?

For truth proves to be complex in essence, humble in its offices and alien to reality, stubborn to the choice of sex, akin to death and, all in all, rather inhuman, Diana perhaps... Actaeon, too guilty to hunt the goddess, the prey in which is caught, O huntsman, the shadow that you become, let the pack pass by without hastening your step, Diana will recognize the hounds for what they are...



Notes

1. First appeared in *L'Évolution psychiatrique*, 1956, no. 1.
2. A pun on 'Bondy' and 'bandits'. The Forest of Bondy, to the north of Paris, was long famous as a haunt of robbers. [Tr.]
3. The *Pyys du Tendre* was an allegorical country in which love was the sole preoccupation. It was the creation of Mlle de Scudéry and other novelists of the seventeenth century [Tr.]
4. English in the original [Tr.]
5. This rewritten paragraph antedates a line of thought that I have since explored further (1966).
6. Namely: 'Es ist Kulturarbeit etwa die Trockenlegung der Zuydsee' (It is a civilizing task rather like the drying out of the Zuydsee).
7. One can but wonder what devil inspired the French translator, whoever he was, to render it as 'Le moi doit déloger le ça'. It is true that one can savour there the tone in the sense in which one understands the sort of operation referred to here.
8. English in the original [Tr.]
9. English in the original [Tr.]