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True Psychoanalysis, and False

Argument for a Presentation at a Congress held in Barcelona in September 1958

I

To distinguish between true and false psychoanalysis we refer to a notion of authentic psychoanalysis, and to a notion of a psychoanalysis that conforms to the truth that is manifested by the experience it entails. What is at issue here, however, is truth as such, in so far as both in the realm of its discovery and in the realm in which it operates with curative aims, man's relationship to truth predominates.

False psychoanalysis is therefore false not just because it departs from the field that accounts for its procedure. Whatever its actual intentions may be, this departure implies forgetting or misjudging, both of which condemn it to pernicious effects.

II

TRUE psychoanalysis has its foundation in man's relation to speech. This determination, expressed as it is in a self-evident statement, is the axis according to which its effects must be judged and gauged; effects which are to be understood in the widest possible sense, that is, not only as changes that are beneficial in various ways, but as revealing an indisputable order in hitherto inexplicable facts, which ought truly to be called the appearance of new facts.

Man's relation to speech is patent in the medium of psychoanalysis, which makes it all the more extraordinary that people should neglect it in its foundations.

But this is ultimately a circle, since failing to recognise its foundations means that its medium is sought elsewhere, namely, in some immediate affect or other, which is an utter delusion, covering up as it does an action through which man perhaps comes closest to the core that constitutes reason. Hence the spectacle that psychoanalysis makes of itself in attempting to justify resorting to the methods of coexisting disciplines in its field, which it does solely at the cost of mythical substantifications and spurious alibis.

The fact that the subject's biological substrate is implicated in analysis at its deepest level on no account implies that the causality it discovers can be reduced to a biological dimension here. This is what is implied by the notion of overdetermination, which is fundamental in Freud's work but has never been elucidated up till now.

Which should not, however, lead us to conclude as to the so-called cultural position. For inasmuch as the latter refers to a social criterion of psychical normality, it is even more at odds with the realm discovered by Freud in that it radically precedes the social dimension.¹

III

If we now return to the dawn (in Freud's genius) of the interpretation (*Deutung*) of dreams, of everyday psychopathology, and of the flash of wit, that is to say, to the register of what thereupon comes to the light of cognisance and praxis under the term of the unconscious, one discerns that it is the laws and the effects that are specific to language that constitute its causality; a causality that, if we take logic to mean not only the principle of contradiction but also the effects of the *Logos*, must be called logical rather than psychical.

The mechanisms known as condensation (*Verdichtung*) and transference (*Verschiebung*) neatly cover the structures by which the effects of metaphor and metonymy are brought about in language, that is to say, the two modes whereby the most recent construction in linguistic theory (Roman Jakobson and consort²) subsumes the particular action of the signifier into a specific structure (which is impossible to separate even from the physiological functioning of the systems that, in the living being, are put at the service of language), inasmuch as this action should be considered to be what generates signification in the subject that it appropriates on marking him as a signified.

1 Cf. Freud, S., "Totem and Taboo", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XIII, transl. J. Strachey, Hogarth Press, London, 1995.

2 Cf. Jakobson, R., & Halle, M., *Fundamentals of Language*, Mouton, The Hague, 1956.

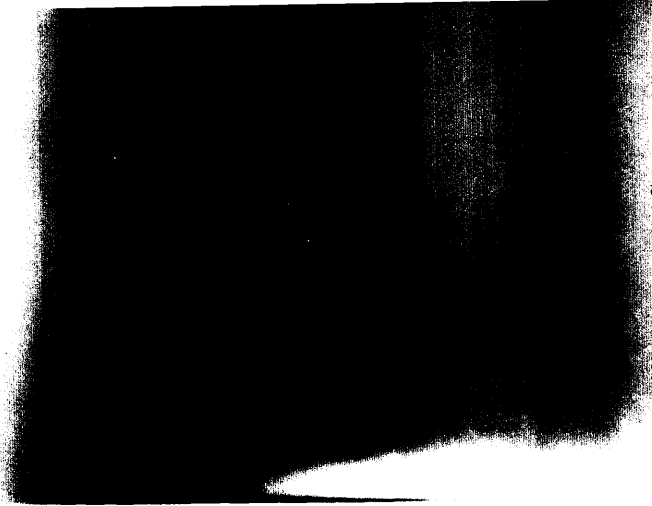
This has not only been trying to do so, but perpetuates the effort to refer it to the subject's own

It has to do with the of the unconscious. A few years after the Second World War, the linguistic sciences had not only been subjected to the most conservative of treatments, but also had to be subjected to a specific and

A word that is not only delectable, but also the other side of the coin. The machine, with its ambiguity, is not a collective that is just as testing a function of the subject from the subject's inverted form.

This structure of theory, whether it to have been that. Here again, the subject as being a discourse as the message itself, but as a signifier that convey its function of a discourse.

It is, however, the structure of



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to recognise its foundations means some immediate affect or other, does an action through which man does reason. Hence the spectacle of trying to justify resorting to the which it does solely at the cost of

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to conclude as to the so-called refers to a social criterion of the realm discovered by Freud

of the interpretation (*Deutung*) the flash of wit, that is to say, to the cognisance and praxis under the laws and the effects that causality that, if we take out also the effects of the

(*Verdrängung*) and transferral the effects of metaphor and the two modes whereby (Flemer Jakobson and consort²) the specific structure (which is the functioning of the systems of language), inasmuch as this the signification in the subject that

² *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, London, 1995. ³ *Freud*, The Hague, 1956.

This has nothing to do with the *Anschluss* by way of which people have lately been trying to include psychoanalysis into a branch of psychology that perpetuates its academic heritage under the label of general psychology; indeed, to liken it to the most recent assumption of human matter in the various subsections of sociology.

It has to do with the suggestive reading of Freud's anticipation, in his analysis of the unconscious, of the very formulas with which Ferdinand de Saussure, ten years after the *Traumdeutung*, founded the analysis of positive languages. For linguistics has shifted the centre of gravity of the sciences, whose title, singularly outmoded for having been since then promoted to the rank of human sciences, conserves an anthropocentrism, the last bastion of which Freud claimed had been laid to ruin by his discovery – in decrying the autonomous character of the specific attribute of the soul which the conscious subject of the philosophers served to maintain in the tradition of spiritualist zoologism.³

IV

ANY form of promotion of inter-subjectivity in human personology can, therefore, only be expressed once the Other has been instituted as a locus of speech. This is the "other scene", *anderer Schauplatz*, which Freud, borrowing the term from Fechner, points to from the very beginning as the platform that is governed by the machinery of the unconscious.

It is on this stage that the subject appears as over-determined by the inherent ambiguity of discourse. For in spoken communication, even in the case of 'objective' transmission, ratification in discourse dominates the signal-effect, just as testing out the code retroflexes the message-action. Moving on to the function of the spoken pact, we immediately touch on the fact that no message from the subject can be expressed without being constituted in the Other in an inverted form: 'Thou art my wife, thou art my master'.

This structure has been ignored in the premises of modern information theory, where the anteriority of the receiver in relation to any sending really ought to have been noted.

Here again, Freud pre-empts these efforts in enabling us to single out the subject as being strictly constituted by the *index-symbols*, indicating his place in discourse as the sender of the message, of the subject inasmuch as he enters the message not, as is thought, as an object that represents itself in the latter, but as a signifier that is given to it; which is possible as a result of the images that convey its functions becoming, through the operation of demand, *image-symbols* of discourse.

³ [TN: Reading *la tradition du zoologisme spiritualiste* for *la tradition du zoologiste spiritualiste*, thus preferring the 2001 reprint over the 1992 publication.]

V

It is this imaginary capture of the subject in the discourse of the Other that seems to extend so far as to be able to concern his most intimate physiology. This imaginary capture is what centres the vulgar notion that, for having been used in psychoanalysis, has come to be substituted for the rigorous concept of the *symbolic*: for the latter must be defined as constituted in the signifying chain, the only conceivable locus for over-determination as such, by virtue of the dual possibility that it offers for the *combination* and the *substitution* of the discrete elements that are the material of the signifier.

Yet, the fascination that characterises the *imaginary*, which we have here distinguished from the symbolic, exerted itself on precisely those, namely the psychoanalysts, who discovered its forms in the dialectic wherein the subject was shown to be symbolised.

They confounded the dual effect of the imaginary, in so far as it is a screen that sets its filter against the communication of the unconscious message and an element that is constituted by the symbolic code, concluding as to a single power, which they were subsequently only able to appraise with effects of resonance, and increasingly obscure interferences.

The main result of this was that the resistance of discourse was never distinguished from the resistance of the subject.

There followed an ever increasing misinterpretation, in direct relation to Freud's having left it to us, in undeniably anxiety-provoking haste, on following its trail in 'message in a bottle' style, to rectify it by articulating the function of the Ego in intra-subjective topography.

The imaginary lure wherein Freud locates the Ego, as of 1914, in "On Narcissism: An Introduction", and whose proper dimensions I wanted to restore at the start of my career under the heading of the mirror-stage, the brutal fact that Ego analysis was introduced (is it really only the titles of Freud's articles that people know, which is more common among analysts than one thinks) with and from the angle of group psychology – all of this, which was done in order to confer on the Ego an analytic status whereby its imaginary function was coordinated with its value as an ideal object, that is to say, more precisely: a metonymic object – has served merely as a pretext to introduce a psychical orthopaedics that strives with doddering obstinacy to strengthen the Ego, thereby neglecting the fact that this amounts to going along with the symptom, defence formations, and neurotic alibis; and hiding behind a pre-established harmony that covers everything from instinctual maturation to morality and whose postulate shall remain stamped upon the history of our era as a testimony to unprecedented obscurantism.

VI

THE positions that I am putting forward here in a radical form summarise the dual activity of a textual commentary that I have been giving for the last seven years in a weekly seminar covering around three-hundred pages of Freud's work a year, and teaching in the form of clinical presentations and therapeutic supervision over the last five years under the auspices of the Clinic for Mental Illness and Encephalon (Professor Jean Delay) at the Paris Faculty of Medicine.

The consequences of this practical and theoretical work on the direction of the treatment (from the threefold standpoint of the place of interpretation in analysis; the handling of transference; and the specific norms according to which the goals and the end of the treatment are set) were presented at the international colloquium held this year in Royaumont by the Société française de psychanalyse, that is, by the group that has been accompanying me in this work.

The same persons whose place in the International Society of Psychoanalysis has meant that the French language is the only language of a major culture in which there is no complete translation of Freud's works⁴ (the part that has been translated being shot through with oversights, nonsense, falsifications and errors that make reading it at best unintelligible and at worst contrived) are also those that we come up against in their opposition to the slightest discussion of these works in the International Society of Psychoanalysis, founded by Freud.

VII

A PARTICULAR factor unites the directions known as the phases of Freud's doctrine: they establish the cardinal lines of research that were to orient the problem opened up once and for all by his discovery: that of the relations binding the subject to the signifier. This is the problem of identification with regard to the subject. With regard to the subject's relations to the real, this problem utterly excludes the position of reality as purely and simply a given, to which psychoanalysis today refers, as much in the use it makes of the notion of the sense of reality, and indeed reality testing, as in the support that it finds in the latter to reduce itself to a practice that is increasingly organised as a corrective pedagogy.

⁴ The final touch in this situation is worthwhile mentioning: a scrupulous translation, by a member of our group, of an essential and hitherto un-translated article by Freud has not been authorised for publication.

We should add that this situation is not directed at me personally, in that it is this very same situation that has meant that Freud's letters to Fliess – printed in violation of Freud's testamentary wish, which is perhaps excusable – have undergone censorship that appears to the least biased critics (cf. Erickson, E., *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. XXXVI, 1955, p. 1) as intolerable as it is suspect, which is in any case inexcusable.

It goes without saying that in saying this we are not calling into question the primacy of the real, we are simply reminding you that language introduces into the latter a dimension that is of such a nature as to 'call it into question'. It is at the level of this calling into question that the drama of neurosis resides. Wanting to reduce neurosis in its irreducible veracity can only lead to the symptom withdrawing to the very roots of Being, to the destruction of what was bearing witness in the midst of suffering.

Indeed, the resistance that is met here bears witness by itself to the impasse to which this effort leads, and the repetition compulsion discovered by Freud was also identified by him with a truth that clamours still in the desert of ignorance.

The dialectical opposition, in so far as it is bound by a relation of alternating occultation, between the reality principle and the pleasure principle, is conceivable only on the level of signifying identification. From an adaptive standpoint they can only be strictly confused.

Indeed, the entire domain of psychoanalysis evolves in the dimension of the conflict between them. Thus, the promotion of a conflict-free sphere at the heart of theory, and at the hub of therapeutic action, has brought us fresh from New York the latest sign of a complete relinquishing of the principles of a discovery – the sign of its misappropriation to ends of social suggestion and psychological subjugation.

VIII

THERE has been no shortage of people to reproach us for turning to Freud, and for missing the point, in reducing to the field of speech and language (the theme of the report which in Rome, in 1953, marked the birth of our group) a movement of Being that sustains and exceeds it from all sides. From the preverbal to the ineffable, all manner of categories are dangled before us by way of discouragement, just short of silence, of which people are wary and rightly so.

Let us state here and now that we do not confuse Being with the sayable any more than we hold the entity to be the antithesis of reason.

Quite the contrary, in bringing back to its Freudian source the suffering of which neurosis reveals the well-tempered pathos, we are attempting to seize hold of desire in the very toils wherein Freud shows it to be trapped. These toils undoubtedly penetrate and fashion it in the impassioned questioning that extracts the living being, half-dehiscent from life, which is man, from the condition of need, in order to raise it to the position of the objectless demand that we call love, hate, and ignorance.

It is here, between the unconditional character of this demand⁵ and the satisfaction by which people claim it is quashed, that there emerges the nigh-on

5 [TN: Reading *l'inconditionnel de cette demande* for *l'inconditionné de cette demande*, thus preferring the 2001 reprint over the 1992 publication.]

perverse condition of speaking subject to the symbol. Here, truth brands life with its truth since in being subject to function to us, it can reduce to the mad truth.

But we should not get through that into the metaphor has a truth as much as truth.

These teachings of today, not to have a dream, and even to another.

These dreams of reality, that is to say, affective resistance between the subject and astounding movement.

And so it is we are dream or of waking that desire is not a metonymy that is a paragon game, in which this state

HERE we are to a distinction between the Other that is in place, so that the repeated but the effect of desire is

As the effect of images desire is that provides a truth.

Whatever the Other that the subject wants, and what for

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perverse condition of desire in its absolute form. A place preordained in the speaking subject for the blind Venus of nature to seek therein in anxiety its living symbol. Here, the phallus, which the Ancients saw as the sign wherein the *Logos* brands life with its mark, and whose mystery was not deliberately hidden in vain since in being spoken it could only be degraded, has revealed its symbolic function to us, in the castration complex. Which psychoanalysis today is trying to reduce to the imaginary function of a 'partial object'.

But we should heed Freud when he tells us that in dreams it is only working-through that interests him. Unconscious desire, which is indicated in oneiric metaphor, has a purely metonymic object. It is desire that is beyond recognition as much as it is recognition from which desire slips away.

These teachings are too arduous for the fortune-tellers of psychoanalysis today not to have ended up saying to themselves: "After all, a dream is just a dream", and even to have made this the watchword with which they greet one another.

These dreams and this desire are not articulable in terms of adaptation to reality, that is to say, in terms that, under the name of experienced tension, affective resistance, the healthy or distorted part of the ego, or the dyadic relation between the analysed party and the analyst, give a new lease of life to the astounding mystifications of authoritarian psychotherapy.

And so it is we, and not they, who say that desire, whether the desire of the dream or of waking life, is not articulable in speech. But it is not true, however, that desire is not articulated in language and that, sliding along the thread of metonymy that retains it in a circle of fantasy, like the object in the hunt-the-ring parlour game, it does not metaphorically produce the signified of the symptom in which this fantasy is fulfilled.

IX

HERE we are touching on the problems of treatment and of the profound distinction between suggestion and transference. Transference is the bond with the Other that is established by the form of demand for which analysis makes a place, so that from this place, this repetition, in which it is not need that is repeated but the beyond that is traced out by demand, can be grasped through its effect of desire and analysed through its effect of suggestion.

As the effect of suggestion that arises from the unconscious disperses its mirages, desire is necessarily articulated as signifying in the existential question that provides a horizon for transference.

Whatever the terms in which this question is resolved, it is in the locus of the Other that the subject shall find himself: in the place of what used to be (*Wo Es war...*) and which he has to take on board (*..., soll Ich werden*).

Here, the precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" sounds no less odd than *Tat tvam asi*, as one feels on replying to it in the first person, on which the absurdity of taking its final term for one's last word immediately transpires, whilst the other closes its circle by completing it: "as thyself, thou art that which thou dost hate, for thou art ignorant thereof".

Nowhere in this day and age as much as in Freud does one breathe the air of conquering reason, nor the style on whose basis man in the eighteenth century moved towards laying bare his desire, in order to pose its question, under the guise of nature, to God. This constitutes a unique peak in the history of a philosophy that had made the negation of desire its law. A peak that we are surprised to see philosophy managing to discredit as indicating artificial, not to say guileful, clarity, when in fact it was asking the profoundest of questions.

This philosophy of the Enlightenment, and its paragon the man of pleasure, undoubtedly committed an error. They sought to explain what opposed their question as imposture, and to turn obscurantism into a plot against the freedom of nature.

We are now subjected to the return of this error, for the monsters that are forged for the needs of a cause bring us the most astonishing proof of the power of truth: they come into existence as such.

People of my generation have been able to see how the anti-German propaganda of the Allies of the Great War begat Hitlerism, which justified it retroactively.

More paradoxically, but by way of a return of the same kind, the resumption of an essential questioning of man with respect to nature, this time in the name of the truth that penetrates it, led to the odd result that precisely those whom the re-inventor of this question wanted to make the guardians of his legacy got together to transform it into an instrument of equivocation and conformity, and actually formed a Church that knows that its authority is nil because it denies its very action in reducing it to a conniving blindness that it fosters of its own accord.

X

INDEED, how can one fail to recognise the falsity of their position and even in its very appearance, namely, the contrast that has led to psychoanalysis being only barely tolerated in its practice when its prestige is universal, that is, when "psychoanalysis of...", whatever the object in question, implies for everyone going into the underlying reason behind apparent unreason, and yet in science psychoanalysis subsists in a kind of quarantine that has nothing to do with the effect of specialisation.

This situation is the result of consensual misjudgements, and for a long while now has not been able to be explained away by the supposed resistance of laymen. If this resistance is to be found anywhere these days then it is nowhere

else than in the desire to promote themselves, not for one's common good, but for one's own sake, without experience.

Should we ever see an effect of truth, should we come to know the unworthiness of it?

What is a doubt and a desire of its form, if it subsists, besides truth?

No doubt in the chosen version, but because some are open to the subject.

This is a doubt with the remainder, perpetuate faith.

ret, a mystery guarding the door, practiced in the world, but the dimensions of truth.

Freud was the founding of the accident that has that foreshadowed with the 1912, have an astonishing accident.

The fruit of theories by count powers in the post.

And so in story without faith or above, and in which form prior to its own.

of King's College
Experience, Ed.

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else than in the psychoanalysts themselves, and it is glaring in their efforts to
promote themselves by means of the most misbegotten analogies and dubious
fictions, combined with the prudishness that they exhibit in the face of the various
improper uses made, outside their circles, of the notions they broadcast, and not
without experiencing a secret self-satisfaction in this regard.

Should we see in the consent that they enjoy across half the civilised world
an effect of the forgiveness that falls to those who know not what they do? Or
should we come back to the proof, constituted, for the truth of a tradition, by the
unworthiness of its ministers?

Without a doubt the privileged trust in speech that is implied in preserving the
choice of its formal means is the principle of truth through which psychoanalysis
subsists, despite the imbecility of the ideals with which the latter seasons it.

No doubt this is sufficient, not that speech isn't the natural vehicle of error,
the chosen vehicle of mendacity, and the normal vehicle of misunderstanding,
but because speech is deployed in the dimension of truth, and so gives rise to it,
albeit to the subject's horror.

This is of course a truism, and indeed the paragon of all truisms. It converges
with the remarks we have just put forward, to rethink psychoanalysis and
perpetuate its mission.

Yet, a mystery remains regarding the specific conditions required for
guarding the disciplinary heritage that is generated by a field in which the
practitioner himself has to keep to the level of the subject that he discovers (to
wit, in this case, not the subject of cognisance, an eye looking onto the real
world, but the subject of speech) that is, inasmuch as he emerges with the
dimension of truth.

Freud was faced with a profound necessity in his urgent preoccupation with
founding the community that would ensure this guard. Was it merely an
accident that he surrendered romantically to allowing that secret praesidium
that foreshadows the most modern apparatuses of our politics to be installed
within it? I have already touched on this subject elsewhere, drawing on the
astonishing documents that Jones has made available. This takes us back to
1912.

The fruit of this now has to be savoured in the theory of the "validation" of
theories by councils⁶, which a member of the camarilla who held the executive
powers in the post-war International Society voiced without a hint of shame.

And so, history is strangely imitative with respect to the analysis of a church
without faith, of an army without homeland, which Freud gave us in a work cited
above, and in which one must recognise that art yet again forged a signifying
form prior to its emergence in the real.

⁶ Cf. Kris, E., "The Nature of Psychoanalytic Propositions and Their Validation", *Freedom and
Experience*, Ed. S. Hook, N.R. Konvitz, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1947.

Here, psychoanalysis reveals itself as passion in the act that constitutes it, arousing once more in its heart the rallying cry with which Voltaire shouted down imposture: *Écrasons l'infâme*.

June 1958

Translated from the French by Beatrice Khiara-Foxton & A. R. Price

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reprinted in *Âne*, 1992, Issue 51, pp. 24-27;⁷
collected in Lacan, J., *Autres écrits*, Seuil, Paris, 2001, pp. 165-74.

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7 [TN: In the 1992 print, some of the numbered sections are preceded by inter-titles (perhaps added by the editor) that run as follows: II. Logical causality; IV. The subject as signifier; V. Pretext for an orthopaedics; VIII. The condition of desire; IX. The power of truth.]