

Chapter 3

The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis

OVERVIEW

In September 1953, Lacan delivered the famous “Discourse at Rome.” Originally it had been scheduled as a “theoretical report” by the president of the *Société psychanalytique de Paris* (SPP) to an annual congress of psychoanalysts. Traditionally, this congress included only analysts of the French tongue, but it was extended to include those of all the Romance languages — and of Dutch besides (1977, p. 30/237). In the previous June, however, Lacan had been forced to resign as president of the SPP, ostensibly because of the unorthodoxy of his treatment methods, but more profoundly because of his deep opposition to the rigidly formalistic training program then being developed for a new psychoanalytic institute in Paris. This institute, headed by Sacha Nacht, would presumably shape the future members of the SPP. Be that as it may, Lacan’s resignation was followed by that of several other important members of the SPP (notably Daniel Lagache, who, as vice-president of the society, refused to succeed Lacan, the departing president). Thus the psychoana-

lysts who eventually met in Rome in September to hear Lacan were very much a splinter group, for which Lacan now became the acknowledged leader and spokesman. In any case, Lacan proceeded to deliver his "report" and seized the opportunity to make a full statement of his own views on the nature of psychoanalysis, with all that this implied for the training process of any psychoanalytic institute. Hence, the importance of the "Discourse" as the Magna Charta of the new movement in psychoanalysis; hence, too, its polemical tone.

The reader will notice a distinct difference in the tone and thematic of this essay from 1953 (1977, pp. 30-113/237-359) compared with the two previous ones from 1948 and 1949. Here for the first time Lacan insists on the centrality of language in his conception of the Freudian enterprise. No doubt the development of this preoccupation in Lacan was gradual, and we are led to assume that certain early papers of Lévi-Strauss made a profound impact on him. In Lacan's paper on the "Mirror Stage" from 1949, for example, he speaks of the formative power of the *imagoes* "whose veiled faces it is our privilege to see in outline . . . in the penumbra of symbolic efficacy" (1977, p. 3/95). Lacan refers here explicitly to Lévi-Strauss' essay "The Effectiveness of Symbols," also published in 1949, in which Lévi-Strauss proposes to understand language as the unconscious structure of society. Again in the present essay from 1953, Lacan remarks, "Isn't it striking that Lévi-Strauss, in suggesting the implication of the structures of language with that part of the social laws that regulate marriage ties and kinship, is already conquering the very terrain in which Freud situates the unconscious?" (1977, p. 73/285). And he once again refers explicitly to Lévi-Strauss, to his paper "Language and the Analysis of Social Laws" (1951). The influence of Lévi-Strauss on Lacan at this time thus appears to have been decisive in helping him articulate his own conception of the correlation between the Freudian unconscious and the laws of language. That correlation will become apparent in the second section of the "Discourse."

Lacan begins with a brief introduction, the purpose of which is to state his fundamental theme: the importance of speech and language in the psychoanalytic process as such. The direction of contemporary psychoanalysis, he claims, has turned more and more away from its true center, i.e., the function of speech and the field of language. An examination of the current literature on the subject reveals three areas of special interest: (1) the function of what Lacan calls "the imaginary," i.e., the role of fantasies and images in psychoanalytic experience as manifest particularly in the fantasies of children; (2) the conception of object relations on the libidinal level; and (3) the role of countertransference in psychoanalysis, and hence the necessity of training for psychoanalysis. All three of these fall victim to the same temptation of overlooking the fact that the foundation of the whole experience is speech itself—an area in which the analyst ought to be a "past master" (1977, p. 36/244).

But since Freud, this field of investigation has "been left fallow"—and even he discerned it in experience more than he explored it theoretically. As for his followers, they have been caught up in issues of technique passed on to others in the most ritualistic fashion. In America particularly, Lacan claims, this tradition has been distorted by the cultural milieu, deeply marked as it is by communications theory, behavioral psychology, and the alleged national experience of self-achievement through adaptation to the milieu.

Whatever may be said about Lacan's assessment of the American mind, it is clear that Freud's technique can be understood and applied only to the extent that the concepts on which it is based are understood. Lacan takes as his task in this essay "to demonstrate that these concepts take on their full meaning only when oriented in a field of language, only when ordered in relation to the function of speech" (1977, p. 39/246). This program suggests in reverse order the outline of the essay that follows (an outline also suggested by its title): the first section deals with the function of speech; the second with the field of lan-

guage; the third specifically with the consequences of the preceding as they affect the issue of technique.

I

Empty speech and full speech in the psychoanalytic realization of the subject

What is at stake in the essay is the "realization of the subject" through the mediation of psychoanalytic discourse. Lacan does not define "subject" for us, and at this point we know more what he does not mean by it (i.e., it is not simply the "ego," an alienated reflection of the subject) than what it is. The subject is "realized" to the extent that it achieves its truth. The question here is: How can the psychoanalytic interchange facilitate this process? In the simplest terms, by helping the subject pass from the use of "empty" speech (*parole vide*) to "full" speech (*parole pleine*), where "speech," or "word," has the sense Saussure (1916) gave it in distinguishing "speech" from "language": an individual, conscious act of expression. What determines whether or not it is called "empty" or "full"? Precisely the extent to which it impedes or facilitates the realization of the truth of the subject (Lacan, 1953-1954, p. 61).

Lacan begins with the nature of "empty" speech, "where the subject seems to be talking in vain about someone who, even if he were his spitting image, can never become one with the assumption of his desire" (1977, p. 45/254). In other words, the subject speaks of himself as if he were an other, as if his own ego were alienated from the deeper subjectivity that properly assumes "his desire." In a different context, Lacan describes that speech as "empty" that is "caught up in the 'here and now' with the analyst, where the subject wanders about in the machinations of the language system, in the labyrinth of a system of reference offered him by his cultural context" (1953-1954, p. 61; our translation).

The analyst may collude with this misapprehension by the subject of his true self in many ways, which in their essence consist in the analyst's own failure to distinguish between the ego

and the subjectivity of his client. This may happen first of all through his own failure to be a true "auditor" of the word spoken in silence by the subject (1977, p. 40/247). The analyst may fail to recognize that the appropriate response may be silence in return. Instead, he may respond as if this "silent" word were a sheer void (as much in himself as in the analysand), a void that must be filled by some reality "beyond speech," such as an analysis of behavior. To be sure, this is done by words that elicit other words—all of them jamming the true word (uttered in silence) and in that sense profoundly empty.

Is the solution, then, "introspection"? Not at all. "Introspection" all too often finds only the alienated ego in its empty monologue. Instead, the process of analysis involves the difficult task of "working through" the consequences of the subject's initial alienation essentially through the subject's "free association." This process may involve different stages, commonly referred to as frustration, aggressivity, and regression. How are these to be understood?

Frustration in the analysand does not derive from the analyst's silent refusal to confirm the subject's empty speech, but rather from the subject's painful recognition that his ego, which he has hitherto taken to be identical with his own "being," is nothing more than a "construct in the imaginary" (1977, p. 42/249), i.e., a mirrorlike image of his true self. The recognition of his ego as an alienation of himself is, indeed, "frustration in its essence" (1977, p. 42/250). The aggressivity that the subject experiences at such a moment, then, is the intense reaction of the slave in the face of the profound futility of his labor, i.e., of the ego experiencing the disintegration of its very stability as, for example, when its defenses are slowly dismantled (1977, p. 42/250). In such a context, regression may be seen to be the successive moments in the decomposition of the ego in which the ego finds compensation in a series of fantasy relationships (1977, p. 44/252).

Through all of this, the first task of the analyst is to avoid being seduced. He does this not only by responding appropri-

ately to the analysand's silence, but by trying to pace the patient's recognition of his own ego structures according to his capacity to integrate this recognition. "Nothing must be read into [any here-and-now situation] concerning the ego of the subject that cannot be reassumed by him in the form of the 'I,' that is, in the first person" (1977, p. 43/251). This assumption by the subject of his own "mirages" is achieved in and through the analytic discourse as such. The analyst does not address himself to some "object beyond the subject's speech." Rather, the patient must remain for him at all times a subject. The patient's speech is a "musical score" that the analyst simply tries to punctuate as with a metric beat. Even the termination of the analytic session is a form of such punctuation. And if the analyst seeks "supervision" of his work (so that he himself is now a subject in the patient's stead vis-à-vis the supervisor), the purpose is to learn to discern the multiple registers of the subject's musical score (1977, p. 45/253).

What, then, is achieved, by all of this? Eventually, to be sure, the "full" word. But more precisely, how? Not essentially by an examination of the "here and now" or by the analysis of resistances. Rather, above all, it is achieved through the "anamnesis," through the recollection by the patient of his own past in dialogue with the analyst. Both aspects of the process need to be stressed.

What is recollected is what the subject has been (Heidegger would say *gewesend*), i.e., his personal history as he experiences it, for "the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come" (1977, p. 48/256). Hence, "it is not a question of reality, but of truth" that is at stake — though the notion of "truth" here needs further elaboration.

In this regard, it is important that the recollection is *articulated* to another (Anna O. called Freud's method the "talking cure"). The process is "the birth of truth in speech." It is precisely the articulation that renders the past *present* in the analysis. "For it is present speech that bears witness to the truth of this

revelation in present reality, and which grounds it in the name of that reality. Yet in that reality, only speech bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past that has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice" (1977, p. 47/256).

Moreover, psychoanalytic speech is addressed to an *other*. The process is essentially *intersubjective* and the subject's speech must include the response of his interlocutor (1977, p. 49/258). Thus, the assumption of his history by the subject, insofar as it is constituted by the speech addressed to the other, forms the ground of the new method that Freud called "psychoanalysis." The means of psychoanalysis "are those of speech," for it is speech that "confers a meaning on the functions of the individual." The operations involved "are those of history, in so far as history constitutes the emergence of truth in the real." And the domain of psychoanalysis is the realm of "concrete discourse, in so far as this is the field of the transindividual reality of the subject" (1977, p. 49/257).

By "transindividual" here Lacan seems to mean that dimension of the subject that lies beyond the compass of his individual consciousness, i.e., that "is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse" (1977, p. 49/258). It is therefore "other" than conscious discourse, and it is what Lacan understands Freud to mean by the "unconscious." The unconscious "is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank" — the "censored chapter" that nonetheless can somehow be deciphered. It is discernible, for example:

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

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

— in semantic evolution: this corresponds to the stock of words and acceptations of my own particular vocabulary, as it does to my style of life and to my character;
 — in traditions [oral traditions and natural languages], too, and even in the legends [myths] which, in a heroicized form, bear my history;
 — and, lastly, in the traces that are inevitably preserved by the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter [of my own life] to the chapters surrounding it, and whose meaning will be re-established by my exegesis [1977, p. 50/259].

Note that this catalogue includes some items that are proper to the individual (e.g., childhood memories) and some that have a much wider base in general human experience (e.g., traditions, legends, semantic evolution, etc.). What is most important at the moment, however, is that the conception of the unconscious is foreign to any interpretation that would identify it with sheer instinctual urges or drives (1977, p. 54/264), whose development in the individual may be traced through a series of maturational stages (1977, p. 53/262).

Rather, a proper understanding of the unconscious obliges us to consider it in terms not of instincts, but of history. "What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history" (1977, p. 52/261). Lacan speaks of "primary historization," implying apparently a "secondary historization" as well. By "primary" historization we understand him to mean the process that engenders events themselves, the "facts" of history that have been "recognized in one particular sense or censored in a certain order." Accordingly, a "secondary" historization would consist in the effort through analytic discourse "to perfect the present historization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical 'turning points' in [the subject's] existence" (1977, p. 52/261). In this context, the classical stages of psychosexual development belong to "primary" historization and the reconstitution of them with the help of the analyst to "secondary" historization. In either case, however, they are radically intersubjective in character (1977, p. 53/262).

Be that as it may, what is clear for Lacan is that the "subjectivity" of the subject includes more than what has been experienced "subjectively," i.e., consciously by him. That is why the "truth of his history is not all contained in his [consciously discernible] script" (1977, p. 55/265). There is a larger text that supports his discourse, although he himself may know "only his own lines." The larger text Lacan calls "the discourse of the other," "the unconscious" in its strictest sense. It is to the nature of this larger text, not speech but language, that he now turns.

II

Symbol and language as structure and limit of the psychoanalytic field

Lacan proposes to explore the larger text, "other" than individual consciousness, within which the psychoanalytic exchange takes place, and he speaks of it as the "psychoanalytic field." His thesis will be that this field is essentially the structure of language itself, the limits of which define the limits of psychoanalysis in the sense that outside of this field psychoanalysis cannot function. As for the correlation between language and symbol that is thematized here, we recall once more that during these years the influence of Lévi-Strauss appears to have been particularly strong.

Again Lacan declares his intention to "rediscover the sense of [the psychoanalytic] experience" by returning to the work of Freud (1977, p. 57/267). Three works in particular he finds especially significant, insofar as they suggest how profoundly Freud's insight was marked by an awareness of the importance of language. The first of these is *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), where Freud teaches us that "the dream has the structure of a sentence" (1977, p. 57/267), and the "oneiric discourse" is elaborated by all the devices of rhetoric (1977, p. 58/268). Moreover, as the analysis progresses, the patient's dreams come to function more and more simply as the elements of a dialogue, the dialogue of analysis.

In Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), "every unsuccessful act is a successful, not to say 'well turned,' discourse" (1977, p. 58/268). Moreover, pathological symptoms are "structured like a language," for (as Lacan tells us elsewhere) they have the structure of metaphor insofar as in the symptom one signifier (with all its associations) replaces another signifier (with all of its associations) (1977, p. 166/518). The symptom is resolved when the proper word is uttered revealing the substitution.

Finally, in Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905b), Lacan's distinction between the conscious intention of the individual and the field of language to which the subject is exposed finds strong confirmation, for there must "have been something foreign to me in what I found for me to take pleasure in [the joke]" (1977, p. 60/271). Lacan finds in the wealth of language that makes it possible for jokes to emerge further evidence for Freud's appreciation of the linguistic nature of the unconscious. Thus "it was certainly the Word (*verbe*) that was in the beginning, and we live in its creation, but it is the action of our spirit that continues this creation by constantly renewing it" (1977, p. 61/271).

At this point Lacan begins to elaborate his conception of the field of language to which the subject on the unconscious level is exposed. In its most basic form, it is conceived as the law that governs all human interchange. "No man is actually ignorant of it, since the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts" (1977, p. 61/272). But these gifts themselves are essentially symbols — "signifiers [useless in themselves] of the pact that they constitute as signified." The law governing the exchange of gifts is one of symbolic interchange and the order it establishes is the "symbolic order."

The autonomous character of this order is important to note here, for it is this that distinguishes language as a system of signs from the set of signals that are evident in the animal kingdom and that can be simulated in conditioning experiments. (In

this regard, Lacan cites the findings reported by Jules Masser-mann.) Every sign is composed of both a "signifier" and a "signified" and in language each of these elements is located within a mesh of similar elements with regard to which it assumes its specific character. Thus,

what defines any element whatever of a language (*langue*) as belonging to language, is that, for all users of this language (*langue*), this element is distinguished as such in the ensemble supposedly constituted of homologous elements.

The result is that the particular effects of this element of language are bound up with the existence of this ensemble, anterior to any possible link with any particular experience of the subject. And to consider this last link [as in the case of conditioning signals] independently of any reference to the first is simply to deny in this element the function proper to language [1977, pp. 63-64/274].

This conception of an autonomous order of symbols is essential to Freud's entire insight, Lacan maintains. "For Freud's discovery was that of the field of the effects in the nature of man of his relations to the symbolic order and the tracing of their meaning right back to the most radical agencies of symbolization in being. To ignore this symbolic order is to condemn the discovery to oblivion, and the experience to ruin" (1977, p. 64/275).

Much will be made of this notion of "symbolic order" as Lacan's thought develops. Here it suffices to see that the symbolic order, conceived now as "law," governs not only the order of language, but the logic of mathematical combination, and indeed, the whole pattern of social relatedness that emerges under the guise of marriage ties and kinship relationships, superimposing "the kingdom of culture on that of a nature abandoned to the law of mating" (1977, p. 66/277). Thus, "Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him 'by flesh and blood' " (1977, p. 68/279). In a similar

vein, Rabelais speaks of the Great Debt whose economy “extended to the stars themselves” (1977, p. 67/278). Characteristic of Lacan, however, is the designation of this order as the “law of the father”: “It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law” (1977, p. 67/278). This law is all-pervasive, then, providing man with both servitude and grandeur “in which the living being would be annihilated, if desire did not preserve its part in the interferences and pulsations that the cycles of language cause to converge on him” (1977, p. 68/279).

If all this is to be said of language, how are we to understand the nature of speech, i.e., “the word”? Lacan’s answer here is enigmatic: It is a “presence made of absence”—and he alludes to the famous anecdote that Freud recounts in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”:

This good little boy . . . had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out ‘o-o-o-o’, accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word *fort* [‘gone’]. I eventually realized that it was a game, and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play ‘gone’ with them. One day I made an observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of the curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive ‘o-o-o-o’. He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance

with a joyful ‘da’ [‘here’]. This, then, was the complete game—disappearance and return [1920, pp. 14–15].

The sense of this passage for Lacan is that the child, by modulating the phonemes “o-o-o-o” and “da” in this game of “disappearance and return,” strove to make the mother present in her absence. For the child, it is the inchoation of the spoken word; for Lacan, the paradigm of all speech. For he accepts from the testimony of the linguists (1977, p. 73/284–285) the principle that the elementary particles of speech are the phonemes that may be divided according to a system of bipolar opposition into 12 sets of binary pairs “out of which each language makes its own selection” (Jakobson and Halle, 1956, p. 29). Lacan sees the *Fort! Da!* as such a pairing of phonemes. When the child first activates the experience of them that he has assimilated from the community into which he is born, he is initiated into “the world of meaning of [his] particular language in which the world of things will come to be arranged” (1977, p. 65/276). Thereafter, “it is the world of words that creates the world of things” in the sense that it renders them present—i.e., meaningful—in their absence.

With this much said about the fundamental relationship between language and speech, Lacan proceeds to discuss the tensions between them. He first looks at various forms of pathology in the subject and designates three “paradoxes”: (1) In psychosis, the subject is “objectified,” so to speak, in a “language without dialectic,” i.e., he is “spoken” by language (rather than speaking it) through stereotypes, “petrified forms” of the unconscious, etc. (1977, p. 69/280). (2) In neurosis (classically characterized by symptoms, inhibitions, and anxiety), the speech of the subject is excluded from the individual’s conscious discourse, but it finds expression in other forms (e.g., in symptoms). In its fullest sense, then, it includes the “discourse of the other,” and it was precisely through deciphering this speech that Freud discovered the “other,” i.e., the unconscious (1977, p. 69/281). (3) In “normal” inauthenticity, the subject “loses his meaning in the objectivizations of discourse” (1977, p. 70/281).

Captivated by the fascinations of the scientific milieu in which we live, the subject takes himself to be an object like the rest and thereby forgets his subjectivity. Thus he becomes blocked from true speech (the full word) by being caught behind a "language barrier" of empty words, whose thickness is measurable "by the statistically determined total of pounds of printed paper, miles of record grooves, and hours of radio broadcasting that the said culture produces per head" (1977, p. 71/282).

Yet the situation is not quite as bleak as all this may sound. Subjectivity in our own day remains creative and "has not ceased in its struggle to renew the never-exhausted power of symbols in the human exchange" (1977, p. 71/283). Psychoanalysis has made a contribution to this struggle, and its task now is to bring its own efforts into line with the thrust of modern science so as to assure itself of a legitimate place in it. This is all the more possible because the psychoanalyst is a "practitioner of the symbolic function," and this function lies at the heart of the movement (i.e., structuralism) that is establishing a new order of the sciences in our day. This new order is based on the principle that the "conjectural" sciences are no less rigorous than the "exact" sciences, for "exactitude is to be distinguished from truth" (1977, p. 74/286). The science of linguistics, which lies at the basis of contemporary anthropology and (as already indicated) plays an essential role in Lacan's conception of the symbolic order, is a case in point (1977, p. 73/284-285).

At any rate, the physical sciences, for all their vaunted exactitude, are not without their limitations. "Our physics," for example, "is simply a mental fabrication whose instrument is the mathematical symbol" that serves as the "measurement it introduces into the real" (1977, p. 74/286). This can be seen in the case of the measurement of time. But mathematics can also symbolize another kind of time, namely, the "intersubjective" time that structures such human actions as are considered in a purely conjectural science like game-theory (1977, p. 75/287). Such formalizations as these have their place in psychoanalytic conjecture, too, in order "to ensure its own rigour" (1977, p. 75/287).

Yet the real test of psychoanalysis is to deal with the time that counts as the subject's history. Here the ideal will be "an identification of the subjectivity of the historian [in this case the subject himself] with the constituting subjectivity of the primary historization in which the event is humanized [i.e., his own past, not only conscious but unconscious]" (1977, p. 75/287). This is made possible by the historicity of the subject himself, by reason of which genuine progress may be made through recollecting the past in the present.

If what has been said so far has any validity, then the consequences for the training of the psychoanalyst must be drawn. Not only must we include in the curriculum Freud's comprehensive catalogue of subjects (in addition to psychology and sexology, "the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religions and the science of literature") (Freud, 1926b, p. 246), but a new awareness of the importance of language in the process suggests the inclusion of several cognate subjects as well ("rhetoric, dialectic in the technical sense that this term assumes in the *Topics* of Aristotle, grammar, and, that supreme pinnacle of the aesthetics of language, poetics, which would include the neglected technique of the witticism") (1977, p. 76/288). All in all, a formidable task!

III

*The resonances of interpretation
and the time of the subject
in psychoanalytic technique*

In this third section Lacan draws the consequences of the preceding for psychoanalytic technique. He concludes by extending the analysis to a consideration of the subject's temporality. This lies at the basis of the historization process, the full acknowledgment of which is essential to achieving the full word. Accordingly, Part III falls conveniently into two sections: (1) the resonances of interpretation and (2) the time of the subject in psychoanalytic technique.

The resonances of interpretation

The problem of technique is this: How help the subject, exposed as he is to the whole field of language, achieve full speech (1977, p. 88/302)? To begin with the negative, this is not done by the analysis of resistances (1977, p. 78/290). Freud's example in this regard is instructive. In the case of the Rat Man (1909b), for example, he tolerates the resistances as long as he can use them to involve the subject in the articulation of his own message (1977, p. 79/291). It is obviously the message that is important here.

Nor is full speech brought about by any form of interpretation that permits the subject to be objectified. As we have seen, this may occur if the analyst fails to distinguish between the subjectivity of the subject and his ego, taking the ego as "identical with the presence that is speaking" (1977, p. 90/304). It is all too easy to fall into such an error if one takes ego to mean "the perception-consciousness system" and then makes the easy transition to considering it as the "function of the real." Soon psychoanalysis becomes a relationship between two bodies, in which "the analyst teaches the subject to apprehend himself as an object" (1977, p. 91/304), as he is for the analyst. Accordingly, if the task is for the subject's *id* to be conformed to an *ego*, as Freud's famous dictum is improperly taken to suggest, then this conformity is to the analyst's ego rather than to the analysand's.

It is in terms of such an objectivization that Lacan understands many a theoretical formulation of the "splitting of the *ego*" in analysis. In other words, "Half of the subject's *ego* passes over to the other side of the wall that separates the analysand from the analyst, then half of that half, and so on, in an asymptotic procession" (1977, p. 91/305). The wall is the wall of words—empty words—that constitute a "language barrier" between the analyst and the subject. Behind the wall resides the "reality" of the subject that the analyst feels he must analyze. Experiencing himself in corresponding fashion, the subject feels that the analyst on the other side of the wall already knows in advance the

truth about him—and therefore is all the more inclined to be "wide open to [the analyst's] objectifying intervention" (1977, p. 94/308).

More positively, the principles that govern Freud's own technique are those that determine "the dialectic of the consciousness-of-self, as realized from Socrates to Hegel" (1977, pp. 79–80/292). Freud's specific contribution was to see that the subject as a self has an other center than consciousness and in that sense is "de-centered." It is because of Freud's insistence that the self has this "other" center, i.e., the unconscious, that the subject warrants the Hegelian description of an "identity" of the particular (i.e., consciousness) and the universal (i.e., the unconscious).

It is this "identity" of the particular and universal (of consciousness and the unconscious) in both the subject and the analyst that enters into the psychoanalytic dialogue. And in its essence, this interchange is "a communication in which the sender [i.e., the subject] receives his own message back from the receiver [i.e., the analyst] in an inverted form" (1977, p. 85/298). We take this to mean that the speech of the subject always "includes its own reply" in the sense that the *lacunae* among the spoken words (consciousness) are already filled in by the subject's unconscious dimension, and the analyst's response (quite "particular" to the subject [1977, p. 79/291]) is such as to bring the unconscious dimension of the subject's speech into his awareness. The effectiveness of the analyst's response will be in proportion, of course, to his own attunement to the unconscious within himself, but it is the subject's *own message* (not the analyst's) that is received back from him now in "inverted" form. Thus it is the function of the analyst's own utterance "not to inform [the subject about himself] but to evoke" (1977, p. 86/299)—i.e., to evoke the resonances, conscious and especially unconscious, in the subject's own discourse as if it were a piece of polyphonic music: "analysis consists in playing in all the many staves of the score that speech constitutes in the registers of language and on which depends the overdetermination of the symptom" (1977, p. 79/291).

The symptom is “overdetermined” in that it results from the coalescence of several (or at least more than one) contributing factors—in Lacanian terms, from the constellation of several signifiers, or “symbols.” We take “symbols” here in the structuralist sense as the elements of the “symbolic function/order.” As the translator notes: “The symbols referred to . . . are not icons, stylized figurations, but signifiers, . . . differential elements, in themselves without meaning, which acquire value only in their mutual relations” (Sheridan, 1977, p. ix), the basic pattern of which is correlative with the law of human interchange already described.

In order to relieve the symptom, then, the analyst must, by the evocative style that encourages “free association”—and sometimes “communicates what it does not actually say” (1977, p. 82/295)—help the subject to disengage the various signifiers that constitute the symptom. This the analyst does by introducing the subject “into the *primary language* in which, beyond what he tells us of himself, he is already talking to us unknown to himself, and, in the first place, in the symbols of the symptom” (1977, p. 81/293). In what sense this primary language is also the “language of his desire” is a problem that need not concern us at the moment. Let it suffice to say that it is “primary” because it is the language into which the *in-fans* is first introduced when he begins to speak—universal in the sense that it has a character “that would be understood in all other languages,” yet because it structures *his* subjectivity, “it is absolutely particular to the subject” (1977, p. 81/293).

In other words, primary—not “primitive”—language is the language of the *subject's* unconscious, of “identity” of the particular and universal. This is the language that Freud deciphered, whose “essential field” Ernest Jones (1916) delineated by reducing the thousands of “symbols” (in the sense now that the term is normally understood in analysis) to five: those referring “to one’s own body, to kinship relations, to birth, to life, and to death” (1977, p. 82/294). These typify the resonances that the analyst’s response may evoke. “There is therefore no doubt that the

analyst can play on the power of the symbol by evoking it in a carefully calculated fashion in the semantic resonances of his remarks” (1977, p. 82/294).

Yet as Lacan uses the word “symbol,” the “primary” character of these symbols goes deeper still and “brings them close to those [prime] numbers out of which all the others are composed.” We take this to mean that the “primary” character of symbols for him consists in the signifiers in their most radical form—even down to the level of the phonemes?—out of which all meaningful articulation is composed. Be that as it may, if symbols are understood in the most radical manner possible, “we shall be able to restore to speech its full value of evocation by a discreet search for their interferences” (1977, p. 82/295). This may make heavy demands on the literary and linguistic erudition of the analyst, but at least it lets us see how far Lacan is willing to go in insisting on the necessity for a “renewed technique of interpretation in analysis” (1977, p. 82/294).

But we must not forget that this “renewed technique” is a function of the basic principle of psychoanalysis, i.e., the principle of dialectical exchange. What is sought in the exchange is the response—not the “reaction”—of the other (1977, p. 86/299–300). Whatever is addressed to the dialogue partner engages not only the speaker but the partner, for “speech commits its author by investing the person to whom it is addressed with a new reality” (1977, p. 85/298), thereby effecting some kind of “transformation” in him (1977, p. 83/296). From the analyst’s point of view, this transformation may consist merely in awakening in the subject a sense of his own subjectivity: “if I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I choose to give him, I intimate to him the subjective function that he will take on again in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate this function” (1977, pp. 86–87/300). Yet when all is said and done, the “decisive function” in any response that the analyst makes to the subject is “to recognize him”—the alternative is “to abolish him” as subject. “Such is the nature of the analyst’s *responsibility* whenever he intervenes by means of speech” (1977,

p. 87/300). The vagaries of Freud's own efforts at such a dialectical exchange may be seen, for example, in the case of the Rat Man (Freud, 1909b), where it succeeds (1977, pp. 88-89/302-303), and in the case of Dora (Freud, 1905a), where it does not (1977, pp. 91-92/305-306).

However (and this brings us back to an earlier theme), in order for the analyst to "recognize" the subject appropriately, he must first of all discern the place where the subject's ego is, so that he may know "through whom and for whom the subject poses *his question*" (1977, p. 89/303). Typically, for example, the hysteric will experience his ego quite differently from the obsessional. Hence, it is "always in the relation between the subject's ego (*moi*) and the 'I' (*je*) of his discourse that you must understand the meaning of the discourse if you are to achieve the de-alienation of the subject" (1977, p. 90/304). It is the failure to do this that leads to the evils of objectivization (see above) and, in effect, to "abolishing" the subject as a subject (1977, p. 87/300).

If all this leaves much to be explained, the general sense of it remains fairly clear: the technique of psychoanalysis is based on a principle of dialectical exchange achieved through the medium of language articulated through speech. That is the essential. Lacan includes certain digressions and extrapolations that enrich our appreciation of the importance of language in the process without clarifying very much our understanding of it. After dealing with the issue in Part II, Lacan tells us again that language, as it is structured by the symbolic order, is a specifically human phenomenon that differs radically from the signal system of animals (e.g., the "wagging dance" of bees). The signals in the animal's system are in a nonarbitrary one-to-one relation of signifier to signified according to a fixed coding, whereas in language this relation is arbitrary and both signifier and signified derive their meaning from a whole network of lexical and other relationships in which they find their place (1977, p. 84/297). In the case of the bees, there is no retransmission of the message, so that the message serves only as a relay of the action without any *subject* detaching it from the action and using it as a

symbol of communication to another subject.

Moreover, Lacan finds different ways to celebrate the power of language in psychoanalytic discourse. Sometimes it is by sardonic comment on those who fail to recognize it. For example, he scoffs at the analyst who fails to appreciate the difference between the words "need" and "demand" in terms of their symbolizing effect on the subject (1977, p. 83/296). He is only slightly more benign toward any analyst who experiences a "guilty conscience about the miracle operated by his speech. He interprets the symbol and, lo and behold, the symptom, which inscribes the symbol in letters of suffering in the subject's flesh, disappears" (1977, p. 92/306).

Sometimes he is more positive, as when he describes the intimate relation between words and the embodiment of symptoms. "Words are trapped in all the corporeal images that captivate the subject. . . . [They] can undergo symbolic lesions and accomplish imaginary acts of which the patient is the subject" (1977, p. 87/301). Accordingly, the discourse itself may sometimes become eroticized and take on a "phallic-urethral, anal-erotic, or even an oral-sadistic function" (1977, p. 88/301). But here speech itself becomes an "imaginary, or even real object in the subject" and ceases to fulfill its function as an articulation of the symbolic order, the proper locus of language.

Introduction of the terms "imaginary" and "real" as distinct from "symbolic" at this point calls our attention to a specifically Lacanian terminology. From the "Mirror Stage" paper, we have some sense of what Lacan means by the "imaginary": it is the sphere of the *imago*—"the world, the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined" (Sheridan, 1977, p. ix) where there is "a sort of coalescence of the signifier and signified" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1967, p. 210). From the present essay we have some sense of what Lacan means by the "symbolic": it is the comprehensive structure whose discrete elements operate as signifiers related only arbitrarily to a signified(s) (in the sense already explained), or, more generally, the orders to which such structures belong, or, final-

ly, the law (i.e., fundamental pattern) on which this order is based. What, then, does he mean by the “real”? The “real” for Lacan seems to be the order of brute fact. As the translator notes: “What is prior to the assumption of the symbolic, the real in its ‘raw’ state (in the case of the subject, for instance, the organism and its biological needs), may only be supposed, it is an algebraic x ” (Sheridan, 1977, p. x). In contrast to the “substitutions” in the symbolic order and the “variations” in the imaginary, the real is a point of constancy, before which the imaginary “falters” and over which the symbolic “stumbles” — the “ineliminable residue of all articulation” (Sheridan, 1977, p. x).

Although these notions are far from clear at this point, their emergence in the exposé leads Lacan to raise the question of how the dimension of the real enters into the psychoanalytic discourse. If we understand the word “reality” here to mean “real” in the sense just described — at least, most generally, as the order of fact that is neither symbolic nor imaginary — then “reality” enters into the analytic process in the sheer *fact* of the analyst’s response, whether this is in the form of “active intervention” or “abstention, [in] his refusal to reply” (1977, p. 95/309–310). In the latter case, if the “abstention” is an appropriately resonating silence that serves to elicit from the subject full speech, then it really lies at the junction of the real and the symbolic, for it makes its own contribution to the “dialectical punctuation” of the analytic discourse.

Be this as it may, another way in which the symbolic and the real come together for Lacan is in the function of *time*. And this brings us to the second section of Part III.

The time of the subject in psychoanalytic technique

There are several ways in which time plays a significant role in the psychoanalytic process. In the first place, the time for the entire analysis (i.e., its length) must be experienced by the patient as indefinite, partly because there is no legitimate way to predict what the patient’s “time for understanding” will be, partly because predicting the coming-to-term of the subject’s explor-

ation of his truth implies that this truth is “already there” somehow in the analyst, thus confirming the subject’s “original mirage” of the analyst’s omniscience and, in effect, leaving “the subject in the alienation of his truth” (1977, p. 96/310–311). The unhappy results of such an illusion Lacan finds exemplified in Freud’s (1918) account of the Wolf Man case.

There is another way in which time, as a mode of reality, plays an important role in the psychoanalytic process — in terms of the duration of each session and the terminal point that marks the end of it. We have already mentioned that for Lacan all interventions by the analyst serve as punctuation of the discourse. This is most especially true for the termination of the session. “The suspension of a session cannot *not* be experienced by the subject as a punctuation in his progress” (1977, p. 98/313). Hence the termination is a privileged intervention that must be used judiciously by the analyst, with the result that sessions will be of varying duration. For if it is true that “the unconscious needs time to reveal itself,” it is also true that the “time” of the unconscious is not measured by “clock” time.

Flexibility in regard to the length of the session will have an effect on the analyst as well as on the subject, for when the analyst departs from the observation of the “standard time limit” set by his peers, his whole function as an analyst is put into question (1977, p. 97/312). On the other hand, the “neutrality” he alleges in following the “standard time limit” is challenged as simple “non-action,” which may in its own way take on an “obsessive value” that lends itself to the “connivance of the subject” (1977, p. 99/314). For the patient is all too ready to make the “standard time limit” serve his own powers of resistance. Thus, if we take Hegel’s dialectic of master and slave to be the paradigm for the relationship between therapist and patient (more of this later), the patient is quite capable of using the “standard time limit” of the ordinary session — for that matter, any fixed, predictable time limit — as a maneuver to wait out the master’s death. At any rate, this is the rationale for Lacan’s well-known use of “short sessions,” for which he has often been criticized

(1977, p. 100/315). What has to be underlined here, it seems, is the conception of the termination of the session as an essential form of punctuating it as discourse. As in the study of manuscripts, where the absence of punctuation may be a source of ambiguity: "The punctuation, once inserted, fixes the meaning; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and a faulty punctuation amounts to a change for the worse" (1977, p. 99/313-314).

But there is a still more profound way in which time affects the analytic process, insofar as time is an index of the intrinsic finitude of the human subject. It is with this theme, together with its complex and far-reaching implications for the function of speech, that Lacan brings his long discussion to a close.

Lacan's transition to the theme of finitude is interesting, for it passes by way of reference to Freud's hypothesis of a "death instinct." Lacan comes to this after acknowledging that whatever the astuteness of the analyst, he is never entirely "master" of the analytic situation—he is always prey to what Freud called the "negative therapeutic reaction" (1977, p. 101/316). We know that it was precisely to deal with the negative therapeutic reaction that Freud was led to his notion of a "death instinct."

It is perhaps worth recalling the thrust of Freud's argument. We understand well enough that a "negative therapeutic reaction" is an aggravation of symptoms as a result of therapeutic efforts rather than an alleviation of them, as if the subject preferred suffering to being cured. Eventually, Freud theorized that this reaction was grounded in a form of masochism—not necessarily in the strict sense of sexual perversion (by which sexual gratification is gained through suffering and humiliation), but at least in the "moral" sense of the inclination of a subject, because of an unconscious sense of guilt, to seek out the position of victim (Freud, 1924a, p. 161). But masochism itself Freud eventually grounded in what, after 1920, he referred to as the "death instincts"—a basic category of instincts (whatever the paradoxes of the term [1977, pp. 101-102/316-317]) that tend to lead the living organism back to the inorganic state from which

(presumably) it arose, i.e., toward death (Freud, 1940, p. 148). Thus it is referred to as the "destructive instinct" (Freud, 1924a, p. 163) and, according to Freud, may account not only for the phenomenon of moral masochism, i.e., destructiveness of self, but also for the tenaciousness of symptoms so often observed under the guise of the "compulsion to repeat" (Freud, 1920, p. 11), i.e., the tendency of the subject to place himself repeatedly in disadvantageous situations and thus reenact an earlier experience without being aware of the prototype.

For Lacan, this evolution of Freud's thought was perfectly consistent with its beginnings—a consistency marked by an abiding fascination with nature. At the beginning of Freud's career stood nature according to Goethe, for it was during a public reading of the poet's "Hymn to Nature," Freud tells us, that he received his vocation to medicine (Freud, 1925a, p. 8). At the close of Freud's career stood nature according to Empedocles, the pre-Socratic philosopher, for whom nature (not yet distinguished from mind) was a dynamic process in which the coming to be and passing away of sensible reality through the intermingling of the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) was governed by two dominating forces: love (*Philia*), principle of attraction, and discord (*Neikos*), principle of separation and disintegration (1977, pp. 102-103/318). Here Freud found in an ancient wisdom welcome affirmation of his own conception of the dual principle of Eros and Thanatos.

Be that as it may, it is not to Empedocles that Lacan turns in order to elucidate further Freud's insight into the meaning of a death instinct, but rather to the contemporary philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose celebrated analysis (1927) of human *Dasein* (i.e., existence, or ek-sistence, in a sense of radical openness to Being) as Being-unto-death follows from a philosophical conception of the human being that is profoundly different from Freud's. Lacan's transition to the Heideggerean conception is by way of the notion of historicity he comes to when speaking of the repetition compulsion. Freud suggests that this compulsion is best dealt with by searching out the prototypic experience that

the subject compulsively repeats through a careful analysis of the transference, i.e., “in replacing his ordinary neurosis by a ‘transference-neurosis’ of which he can be cured by the therapeutic work” (Freud, 1914b, p. 154). Now this process Lacan describes by a non-Freudian formula—“the historizing temporality of the experience of transference”—adding immediately that in similar fashion “the death instinct essentially express[es] the limit of the historical function of the subject. This limit is death” (1977, p. 103/318)—and there we are, knee-deep in Heidegger.

Heidegger indeed comes to a discussion of death as the first step in analyzing the specifically temporal (hence historical) character of *Dasein*. For our present purposes, it suffices to recall that death in Heidegger’s analysis—which places a heavy emphasis on the *finite* aspect of human existence—is the most dramatic form of limit that defines this existence from the beginning. As such, death is the ultimate seal of human finitude, for it is within the limit set by death that one’s existence “takes on all the meaning it has” (1977, p. 105/320). We take Lacan to mean, then, that what Freud attempted to deal with in terms of the death instinct may be understood better if transposed into terms of human finitude, as discerned in Heidegger’s conception of *Dasein*’s (for Lacan, the “subject’s”) Being-unto-limit-death (1977, p. 103/318).

Now Lacan tells us that “this limit is at every instant present in what history possesses as achieved. This limit represents the past in its real form, that is to say, . . . the past which reveals itself reversed in repetition” (1977, p. 103/318). In this context we take him to intend “repetition” to be taken in a Heideggerean sense. For Heidegger, repetition (*Wiederholung*) is *Dasein*’s “explicit handing over to itself” of the past; it is “the return upon possibilities of *Dasein*” as it has been up to the present (1927, p. 385). The past would “reveal itself reversed in repetition,” then, insofar as the “subject,” in what Heidegger calls “advancing resolve,” is extended authentically toward a future that advances through its past.

Having thus joined Freud and Heidegger (whether successfully or not remains to be seen), Lacan proceeds to capitalize on his achievement. “There is therefore no further need,” he writes, “to have recourse to the outworn notion of primordial masochism in order to understand the reason for the repetitive games in which subjectivity brings together a mastery of its dereliction and the birth of the symbol” (1977, p. 103/318). The “repetitive games” here, of course, are not the “repetition compulsion” of Freud but the *Fort! Da!* experience described above. Through these “games of occultation,” the child masters his “dereliction” (presumably Heidegger’s “thrownness” [*Geworfenheit*]). In other words, in this case, the child masters the absence of the mother through the inchoative exercise of speech, which is “the birth of the symbol” in the child. “Repetition” of this kind is not to be explained by an “outworn notion of primordial masochism.” Rather, it is to be explained in terms of the child’s first—but radical—experience of *limit* (i.e., finitude, death) as experienced through separation from (hence, negation of) the mother.

We have already seen in what way the child is thus “born into language,” having previously received the first phonemes of his speech from “the concrete discourse of the environment” (1977, p. 103/319). More important here is the fact that this first experience of separation/limit/death is also the moment in which “desire becomes human.” We take this to mean, at the very least, that this is the moment in which the child first experiences “desire” as distinct from the “need” that has characterized the quasi-symbiotic tie with the mother up to this time. In other words, the child now experiences the otherness of the mother and with that not only his own “lack of being,” but a desire for the mother which, in the Hegelian schema, becomes a desire to be desired by her in turn, i.e., to be the “object” of the mother’s desire (1977, p. 104/319). Moreover, this desire in the child, since it is born out of the rupture of a bond with the mother that was a quasi-identity up to that moment, has this quasi-identity as its paradigm. Hence, in the separation that follows, desire is essentially insatiable—and in that sense somehow infinite or “eternal-

ized." Furthermore, desire is diverted through channels that now become available to the child by reason of the symbolic power of speech in the same way the primordial phonemes substitute for the absence and presence of the mother in the *Fort! Da!* experience.

In any case, the replacement of the mother by a symbol may be considered equivalent to the "death" of the mother, so that "the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing, and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalization of his desire" (1977, p. 104/319). There are several ways, then, in which death may be seen as ingredient to the first experience of language: as radical limit, it is "death" that the child experiences when the rupture of the symbiotic bond with the mother reveals the child's own "lack of being," i.e., finitude (1977, p. 105/320); as negation of the thing, it is "death" that the child imposes on things by substituting for them the symbols of speech. It is no wonder, then, that the theme of death is so closely intertwined with the entire humanizing process, as is manifest in countless ways in our culture, history, and philosophy.

Philosophically, death plays an essential role not only in the thought of Heidegger but in that of Hegel, too, and allusions to the latter in the text are plentiful. In fact, for Lacan the philosophical conceptions of the nature of man in both these philosophers seem to blend in the work of the analyst: "the undertaking of the psychoanalyst acts in our time as a mediator between the man of care [i.e., man according to Heidegger] and the subject of absolute knowledge [i.e., man according to Hegel]" (1977, p. 105/321). For a philosopher, this might take a bit of doing, but for Lacan the difficulties of such a synthesis simply underline the "loftiness" of the analyst's undertaking. It emphasizes, too, the need for the "long subjective asceticism" in his training that helps him learn not only the skills of his trade, but the full meaning of his own historicity. It is by reason of the latter that the analyst can "rejoin at its horizon the subjectivity of his time" (1977, p. 105/321), that he can share the cultural experience of his fellows — "well acquainted with the whorl into which

his period draws him in the continued enterprise of Babel" (1977, p. 106/321) as he fulfills his function "as interpreter in the discord of languages."

Thus Lacan reaches the conclusion of his long discourse by coming full circle back to this starting point: the issue of appropriate training for the psychoanalyst in the light of the essential nature of psychoanalysis, whose true center is the function of speech and the field of language (1977, p. 106/322). He finishes with a flourish. With a bow to both West ("the imperative of the Word as the law that has formed [man] in its image" [1977, p. 106/322]) and East (the story of Prajapâti from the Upanishads), he addresses his readers head on: "If the domain defined by this gift of speech is to be sufficient for your action as also for your knowledge, it will also be sufficient for your devotion. For it offers a privileged field" (1977, p. 106/322).

MAP OF THE TEXT

Preface.

- A. Historical background has import for our concerns,
- B. just as the reexamination of the history of Freud's concepts has import for their use.

Introduction.

- A. The power of the word is such that we turn away from it
 - 1. and alter our technique
 - a. with undue emphasis on resistance.
 - 2. Our "scientific" literature instead deals with:
 - a. the function of fantasies in development,
 - b. libidinal object relations,
 - c. countertransference and training of the analyst.
 - i. But all three risk abandoning the foundation of the word.
 - 3. Even Freud did not venture too far afield in his discoveries.
 - 4. Formalism and miscognition have led to a deterioration of analytic discourse.

- B. The American group especially has obscured Freud's inspiration,
 - 1. in its ahistorical bent for "communication" and behaviorism,
 - 2. and in its emphasis on social adaptation, human relations, and human engineering.
- C. Freudian technique cannot be understood or correctly applied if we ignore the concepts on which it is based.
 - 1. The concepts, in turn, take on full meaning when related to the field of language and the function of the word.
- I. *Empty speech and full speech in the psychoanalytic realization of the subject.*
 - A. The empty word marks the initial period of analysis.
 - 1. Psychoanalysis has one medium: the word.
 - a. There is no word without a reply:
 - i. silence is a reply;
 - ii. so is the void within the analyst,
 - (a) which he seeks to fill by analyzing behavior
 - (b) and from which the subject seeks to seduce the other.
 - 2. The mirage of introspective monologue is opposed to the labor of free association.
 - a. This labor involves "working through," and meets with:
 - i. Frustration—not from the analyst's silence, but from the alienated *ego*.
 - ii. Aggressivity—due not to frustrated desire, but to the slave's frustrated labor.
 - (a) Hence the aggressive response to analysis of resistances,
 - (b) and the danger of objectification by the analyst's focus on gestures.
 - (i) But even empty silence bears witness to the word,

- (ii) and even the ending of a session punctuates its discourse.
 - iii. Regression—not as a real relation, but as an ego-activated fantasy relation.
 - (a) Thus the analyst cannot be guided by supposedly "real contact" with the subject,
 - (i) nor is it needed in supervision.
 - (ii) Instead he filters the musical score of the subject's discourse.
 - 3. The empty word is ego-focused.
- B. The full word
 - 1. has the following characteristics:
 - a. anamnesis versus analysis of the here and now,
 - b. intersubjectivity versus intrasubjectivity,
 - c. symbolic interpretation versus analysis of resistance.
 - 2. Anamnesis and the "talking cure" are not a function of consciousness.
 - a. Verbalization in hysteria and hypnosis relates the past to the present as necessities to come.
 - b. It is not a question of reality in recollection, but of truth,
 - i. as, for example, in Freud's treatment of the Wolf Man.
 - c. The subject's assumption of his history in dialogue is the ground of psychoanalysis.
 - 3. The "talking cure" is intersubjective,
 - a. and the intersubjective continuity of the discourse aims to restore continuity in the subject's motivations.
 - 4. Discontinuities in discourse mark the place of the unconscious as transindividual.
 - a. The unconscious participates in thought,
 - b. whose truth is inscribed in:
 - i. monuments of the body qua hysterical symptoms,

- ii. archival memories,
 - iii. characterological and semantic evolution,
 - iv. family legends,
 - v. distortions in the continuity of experience.
 - c. It is recovered in secondary historization,
 - i. which reveals the subjective sense of instinctual stages
 - ii. and not their analogical meaning.
 - 5. Even Freud made the theory of instincts subordinate to the historization of the subject in the word.
 - a. The subject is not reducible to subjective experience,
 - b. for his unconscious is structured by a discourse that is other to him.
- II. *Symbol and language as structure and limit of the psychoanalytic field.*
- A. Psychoanalytic experience has a narrower focus than does common experience.
 - 1. Much of the patient's mode of experiencing remains unknown to us,
 - 2. which falsely leads us to seek "real contact" with patients.
 - B. We return to Freud to rediscover the meaning of psychoanalytic experience as manifest particularly in:
 - 1. *The Interpretation of Dreams.*
 - a. The dream is structured like a sentence,
 - i. which is elaborated in its rhetoric of syntactical displacements and semantic condensations,
 - b. and is the expression of dialectical desire.
 - 2. *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life.*
 - a. Every parapraxis is a successful discourse.
 - b. The symptom has the structure of language.
 - c. The apparent chance combination of numbers reflects this structure.
 - 3. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious.*
 - a. In the witticism the spirit shows reality to be

- subordinated to the nonsensical.
 - b. The point of wit always strikes the listener unexpectedly,
 - c. implying an other that goes beyond the individual.
 - d. In neglecting the language of symbols, psychoanalysis has changed its object.
- C. The nature of fundamental discourse: the law of man is the law of language,
 - 1. originating in the exchange of gifts.
 - a. Symbolic gifts signify a pact as signified,
 - b. because as gifts their functional utility is neutralized.
 - c. We see the origins of symbolic behavior in animals,
 - i. but not in animal research that is ignorant of the nature of the sign.
 - (a) The sign consists of the relation of the signifier to the signified,
 - (b) and has distinctiveness and effectiveness as an element of language only in relation to the whole ensemble.
 - 2. The concept completes the symbol and makes language of it,
 - a. freeing it from the here and now,
 - b. producing a word that is a presence made of absence.
 - c. Through the word, absence names itself,
 - i. as in Freud's example of the *Fort! Da!*,
 - d. giving birth to a particular language's universe of sense in which the universe of things is arranged.
 - e. In this way the concept engenders the thing,
 - i. and the world of words creates the universe of things.
 - ii. Speech and the human world itself are made possible by the symbol.

- D. The law of exchange governs the system of family ties,
1. governing the exchange of women and gifts,
 - a. according to an order which, like language, is imperative but unconscious in its structure.
 2. The Oedipus complex marks the limits of awareness of our unconscious participation in the primordial law.
 - a. This law, in regulating matrimonial alliances, superimposes the kingdom of culture on the kingdom of nature.
 3. This law is the same as an order of language,
 - a. making kinship nominations possible and weaving the yarn of lineage.
 4. The figure of the law is identified with the father.
 - a. The symbolic father, expressed in the "name of the father," must be distinguished from the imaginary and the real father.
 5. The law is also expressed in the Great Debt, guaranteeing the exchange of wives and goods.
 6. This law is pervasive, precedes and follows man, and would be inexorable if desire did not introduce interferences.
- E. The relation between the law of language and speech has negative and positive consequences.
1. Negatively, three paradoxes result:
 - a. In madness speech no longer tries to make itself recognizable;
 - i. in delusions the subject is objectified in a language without dialectic,
 - ii. so that he no longer speaks but is, rather, spoken.
 - b. In the symptoms, inhibitions, and anxiety of neuroses, the word is driven out of conscious discourse,
 - i. but finds support in organic stimuli or in images,

- ii. so that the symptom becomes the signifier of a signified repressed from consciousness,
 - (a) and thus participates in language
 - (b) that includes the discourse of the other.
 - iii. In deciphering this word, Freud revealed the primary language of symbols.
 - iv. Our exegesis resolves these hermetic elements by liberating the imprisoned meaning.
- c. In the objectifications of discourse, the subject loses his meaning.
 - i. The subject is alienated in "scientific" civilization, forgetting his own existence and his death.
 - ii. We meet this alienation when he talks to us about himself as ego.
 - iii. We add to it when we talk of ego, superego, and id.
 - iv. The thickness of this language barrier, which is opposed to speech, is measured in tons of print, miles of record grooves, etc.
2. Positively, the symbolic character of creative subjectivity has never been more manifest:
 - a. in a revised conception of science as conjectural,
 - b. with linguistics as a basic scientific model,
 - i. yielding discoveries in ethnography and anthropology,
 - c. and in a semiotic reorganization of the sciences.
 - i. The symbolic function is a double movement within the subject in which action and knowledge alternate.
 - ii. The opposition between the exact sciences and the conjectural sciences is erased,
 - (a) for exactitude is distinguished from truth
 - (b) and conjecture does not rule out rigor.
 - iii. Even physics has a problematic relation to nature.

- (a) Experimental science is not defined by the quantitative nature of its object, but by its mode of measuring it.
 - (i) The clock, operating by gravity, was used to measure the acceleration due to gravity.
- iv. Mathematics can also be applied to intersubjective time,
 - (a) providing psychoanalytic conjecture with rigor.
- v. History sets an example for us.
- vi. Linguistics can help psychoanalytic practice.
- vii. Rhetoric, grammar, and poetics should be added to the "liberal arts" curriculum of the analyst in training.

III. *The resonances of interpretation and the time of the subject in psychoanalytic technique.*

A. *The resonances of interpretation.*

1. Psychoanalysis must return to the word and language as its base,
 - a. rather than to the principles of the analysis of resistances,
 - i. which lead to an ever greater miscognition of the subject,
 - ii. and which principles Freud ignored in treating the Rat Man,
 - (a) making instead a symbolic gift of the word.
 - b. We choose instead to resonate with the word of the subject,
 - i. so that analysis consists in sounding all the multiple keys of the musical score which the word constitutes in the registers of language.
2. To understand the effect of Freud's word, we turn to its principles, not its terms.
 - a. These principles are the dialectic of self-consciousness,

- b. but require a decentering from consciousness of self.
 - c. Psychoanalysis reveals the unconscious as a universal structure disjunctive of the subject.
 3. To free the word, we introduce the subject to the language of his desire, the primary language of symbols and symptoms.
 - a. This language is both universal and particular.
 - i. Freud deciphered it in our dreams;
 - ii. Jones defined its essential field in reference to the body, kinship, birth, life, death.
 - b. The symbol, though repressed, has its full effects by being heard;
 - c. the analyst evokes its power by resonance.
 - i. The Hindu tradition teaches us that the word can make understood what it does not say.
 - d. Like prime numbers out of which all others are composed, symbols are the stuff of language.
 - e. We restore the word's evocative power by using metaphor as a guide.
 - i. Therefore we must assimilate, as Freud did, literature, poetics, folklore, etc.,
 - ii. and we must do more than just attend to the "wording."
 4. In its symbolizing function, the word transforms the subject addressed.
 - a. We must distinguish symbol and signal.
 - i. The dance of bees is a signal, not a language, because of the fixed correlation of sign to reality,
 - ii. whereas linguistic signs acquire value from their relations to each other.
 - iii. In addition, the bee's message is never retransmitted, but remains fixed as a relay of the action.
 - b. Language is intersubjective.

- i. It invests the person addressed with a new reality.
 - ii. The word always subjectively includes its own reply,
 - (a) wherein what is unconscious becomes conscious.
 - iii. As language becomes just information, "redundancies" become apparent.
 - (a) These "redundancies" are precisely what does duty as the resonance of the word.
 - iv. To be evocative rather than informative is the central function of language.
 - (a) In the word, I seek the response of the other.
 - (i) In calling the other person by whatever name, I intimate to him his subjective function.
 - (b) In his reply to the subject, the analyst either recognizes or abolishes the subject as subject.
 - (i) All spoken interventions have a structuring function.
5. Language is a subtle body:
- a. words can be trapped in corporeal images,
 - b. and suffer physical wounds;
 - c. the discourse as a whole can be eroticized;
 - d. the word can lose its status as symbol and become an imaginary or real object.
6. The advent of a true word and the subject's realization of his history remain the only goal of analysis.
- a. This is opposed to any objectifying orientation as seen in the aberrations of new tendencies in analysis.
 - b. Freud even takes liberties with facts in order to reach the subject's truth.
 - i. His treatment of the Rat Man gives abundant examples of this.

7. Responding to the analysand requires knowing where his ego is,
- a. that is, knowing through whom and for whom the patient poses *his* question.
 - i. The hysterical subject is identified with an external spectacle.
 - ii. The obsessional masters an internal stage.
 - b. "Ego" must be distinguished from "I" if the subject's alienation is to be overcome.
 - i. This is possible only in giving up the idea that the subject's ego is identical with the presence speaking.
 - ii. This error is promoted by the psychoanalytic correlation of ego and reality in the topology of ego, id, and superego,
 - (a) and leads to the subject's apprehending himself as an object.
 - (b) In more and more refined splitting, he is expected to conform to the analyst's ego.
 - (i) Such analysis of resistance leads to a negative transference, as in the case of Dora.
8. The present emphasis on analysis of resistance stems from the analyst's guilt about the power of the word.
- a. We deny responsibility for it by imputing magical thinking to the patient.
 - b. We achieve distance through condescension.
 - c. We fail to see the cunning of reason in both our scientific discourse and symbolic exchange.
 - d. In attending to the un-said in the gaps of discourse, we should not listen as if someone were knocking on the other side of a wall,
 - i. for in attempting to translate nonlinguistic sounds we must look to the patient to confirm our understanding.
 - ii. In illusion we are led to seek his reality be-

- yond the wall of language,
- iii. just as he believes his truth is given to us in advance and thus he remains vulnerable to objectification at our hands,
 - (a) wherein the effects of the transference are constituted.
9. In distinguishing the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real, we see that there are reality factors in the analysis:
 - a. in the transference there are real feelings responding to our person as real factor;
 - b. reality is encountered in both the analyst's interventions and his abstention;
 - c. in his punctuating reply to the subject's true word.
 - d. There is also a junction of the symbolic and the real in the pure negativity of the analyst's silence as well as in the function of time.
- B. *The time of the subject in psychoanalytic technique.*
1. The duration of the analysis must remain indefinite.
 - a. We cannot predict the subject's "time for understanding."
 - b. To fix a date is to alienate the subject and act as if he can place his truth in us,
 - i. as occurred in Freud's treatment of the Wolf Man.
 2. The duration of the session is often obsessively fixed by the analyst,
 - a. whereas as gatherer of the lasting word and witness of his sincerity, the analyst punctuates the subject's discourse in ending the session.
 - i. In manuscripts and symbolic writing, punctuation removes ambiguity and fixes the meaning.
 - b. A fixed hour lends itself to connivance in the obsessional subject,
 - i. who in his forced labor waits for the master's death,

- ii. and is alienated, living as he does in the future and identifying himself with the dead master.
 - iii. His "working through," then, is a seduction of the analyst.
 - c. The use of short sessions breaks the discourse in order to give birth to speech.
3. Beyond the wall of language lies the outer darkness of death.
 - a. Freud's "death instinct" is rejected by those who share an erroneous view of the ego and of speech.
 - b. The ironic conjunction of "death" and "instinct" expresses the polar relation of life and death at the heart of life,
 - i. whose resonances must be approached in the poetics of the Freudian work.
 - c. The death instinct expresses the limit of Heideggerian man as Being-unto-death.
 4. The profound relationship uniting the notion of the death instinct to the problems of the word makes the notion of primordial masochism unnecessary.
 - a. In the repetitive game of *Fort! Da!* we see speech develop as separation is faced.
 - b. In this moment of inchoative speech desire becomes human.
 - c. In mastering absence the verbal action becomes its own object to itself.
 - d. In the child's solitude his desire becomes the desire of an other.
 5. As the symbol negates the object of desire, desire becomes eternalized.
 - a. The tomb is the first symbol of man's presence.
 - b. Death is the intermediary between man and history.
 - i. Among animals the individual death passes into the species, while among men suicidal

- death as symbolic passes into history.
- c. Man's freedom is inscribed within the borders of death as threat, self-sacrifice, and negation of the other as master.
 - d. It is from death that the subject's existence takes on its meaning.
6. The meaning of death shows absence to be the heart of speech.
- a. The circularity of the torus exemplifies the death-bounded dialectic of analysis,
 - i. a dialectic that is not individualistic,
 - ii. and has implications for the training of the analyst.
 - b. Humanity is formed by the law of the word.
 - i. It is in the gift of the word that the effects of psychoanalysis reside.
 - ii. All reality comes to man by this gift,
 - iii. whose domain is enough for our action, knowledge, and devotion.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

- 30/237 Additional historical background to the "Discourse at Rome" is provided by Turkle (1975, pp. 336-337; 1978, pp. 97-118). Wilden (1968) also provides important background information and highlights the spirit of the "Discourse" (pp. xxiii-xxvi). In addition, the reader is directed to his 65 pages of notes to the text, some further reference to which will be made below.
- 35a/242 The "subject" in this case appears to refer to the analyst, whose alibi for loss of effectiveness is the patient's resistance. At times the "subject" can refer to either the patient or analyst and sometimes both at once.
- 37g/245 The "c factor" remains a conundrum for us (but see note 106b below).

- 40d-e/
248 In failing to realize that his silence is a reply, the analyst experiences it as a void to be filled with speech about behavior. His word is then rendered suspect since it is a reply only to the felt failure of his own silence in the face of (the English text misreads "in the fact of") his own echoing void.
- The analyst's move parallels the patient's lifelong attempt to overcome his own gap or dehiscence (now called *béance*) by means of the narcissistic and imaginary constructs of his ego through which he strives for the other's recognition.
- The reference to "humbler needs" (*besoins*) would seem to be taken up later (p. 46a/254) under the rubric of "the individual psycho-physiological factors" which are excluded from the analytic relation, i.e., physical needs which place the primary emphasis on the "real" as opposed to the symbolic (verbal) contact between the patient and analyst.
- 42b/
249-250 As Lacan indicates in his footnote (1977, p. 107, n. 10/250, n. 1), these "theorists" include *notre ami* Michael Balint, who writes of "the analytical cure of *ejaculatio praecox*...because the ego has been strengthened" (1938, p. 196).
- 43c/251 Since progress lies in "an ever-growing dispossession" of the ego as "his construct in the imaginary" (p. 42a/249), teaching the subject *what* he has been leads only to greater objectification.
- 43g/251 In his excellent note to this paragraph, Wilden (1968, pp. 101-102) brings together *tessera* as password, object of pottery used for recognition, and *symbolon* and also specifies the text from Mallarmé.
- 45b/253 Lacan often compares discourse to a polyphonic musical score (e.g., 1977, p. 154d/503), suggesting multiple levels of ongoing signification.
- 46f/255 *Aufhebung* is the rich Hegelian term with a loose meaning of an "overcoming" or "negating" whereby what is overcome is integrated.

48d/257 Wilden again provides a very helpful note here:

Lacan's analysis of this sophism is concerned with the psychological and temporal process involved between three hypothetical prisoners of which the first to discover whether he is wearing a black or white patch on his back has been offered his freedom by the prison governor. The prisoners are not allowed to communicate directly. The governor has shown them three white patches and two black patches and has fixed a white patch on each man's back.

Lacan analyzes the intersubjective process in which each man has to put himself in the place of the others and to gauge the correctness of his deductions through their actions in time, from the *instant du regard* to the *moment de conclure*. The first moment of the *temps pour comprendre* is a wait (which tells each man that no one can see two black patches), followed by a decision by each that he is white ('If I were black, one of the others would have *already* concluded that he is white, because nobody has yet started for the door.') Then they all set off towards the door and all hesitate in a retrospective moment of doubt. The fact that they *all* stop sets them going again. This hesitation will only be repeated twice (in this hypothetically ideal case), before all three leave the prison cell together [1968, pp. 105–106].

He refers to Lacan's paper in *Écrits* (1966, pp. 197–213).

55c/264 As Wilden writes, " 'Une vérité de La Palice' is a self-evident truth, a truism" (1968, p. 110). The identical note appears in Sheridan's translation (Lacan, 1977, p. 108).

55e/265 The now-classic phrase, "the unconscious of the sub-

ject is the discourse of the other," refers to the trans-individual, universal structure of language as the domain in which gaps in conscious discourse are experienced as foreign by the individual subject; in addition, but not secondarily, it refers to the way desire (for the other and for recognition by the other) is signified through the operations of metaphor and metonymy, i.e., through unconscious condensation and displacement or linguistic substitution and combination.

56b/265 The third term is the "other."

56/266 The Gospel text admits of several translations, including "What I have told you all along" (New English Bible New Testament), "Why do I talk to you at all" (Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version), and "What I have told you from the outset" (Jerusalem Bible). Lacan may have read the translation from the Vulgate, "I am the Beginning who speaks to you," now seen as grammatically impossible. See his later reference, "it was certainly the Word (*verbe*) that was in the beginning" (1977, p. 61d/271).

58a/268 The first broad division, "the syntactical displacements," group together linguistic mechanisms in which the deliberate alteration of word order appears to be the common element, e.g.:

Ellipsis involves the omission of understood words.

Pleonasm refers to a redundancy or fullness of language, as in "with my own eyes I saw. . ."

Hyperbaton is the inverting of word order, as in "echoed the hills."

Syllepsis uses one word to govern two while agreeing with only one in gender, case, or number, or uses one word in the same grammatical relation to two adjacent words, one metaphorical and one literal, as in "taunts more cutting than knives."

Apposition sets a second word beside the first with

the same referent and grammatical place (as in “the River Tiber”) or a second phrase beside the first in a loose attribution (as in “to kill the prisoners — a barbarous act”).

The second group, the “semantic condensations,” appears to rely on the use of one word in place of another, e.g.:

Metaphor uses a word literally denoting one thing in place of another, often to suggest some sort of likeness between them.

Catachresis involves the incorrect use of one word for another, as “demean” for “debase,” or a forced or paradoxical usage, as in “blind mouths.”

Antonomasia substitutes an epithet, such as proper title for proper name, or vice versa, as in “Solomon” or “His Majesty.” (The English text misprints “autonomasis.”)

Allegory describes one thing under the guise of another in a prolonged metaphor.

Metonymy operates according to the principle of contiguity, designating an attribute of a thing or something closely related to it for the thing itself it suggests, as the effect for the cause, the container for the contained, the geographical name for the event or function.

Synecdoche uses the part to designate the whole or the whole for the part, the species for the genus (or the genus for the species), or the material for the thing made, as in “thirty sail” for “thirty ships,” “the smiling year” for “spring,” “boards” for “stage,” etc.

(The above was drawn from *Webster's New International Dictionary* [1960] and *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* [1974].)

It would be consistent to relate the first group to Jakobson's axis of combination and Lacan's description of the “word-to-word connexion” while the second group illustrates the axis of substitution and Lacan's “one word for another.” Lacan isn't consistent in this way, however, since the “word-to-word connexion” he associates with metonymy, which appears in the second group. There is further discussion of these figures of speech and Lacan's definitions in “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious” (1977, pp. 156–164, 169/505–516, 521).

58b/268 One way to read this might be that the dream's law comes *d'autrui*, from the place of the other, thus from a place other than Freud's own conscious processes.

59b/269 The French text is more intelligible here in saying that “the symptom resolves itself entirely in an analysis of language, because it [the symptom] is itself structured like a language, because it [the symptom] is language from which speech [*la parole*] must be set free” (“le symptôme se résout tout entier dans une analyse de langage, parce qu'il est lui-même structuré comme un langage, qu'il est langage dont la parole doit être délivrée”). The symptom is structured or “knotted” by the nodal points (*les noeuds*) which are signifiers that function as coordinates for the network of associations. Lacan elsewhere (1977, p. 154/503) calls them *points de capiton*, upholstery buttons, which bind together from below the mass of associative material. Tracking the associations to these nodal points and resonating with the key words (switch-words) liberates the words, thus resolving the symptom.

Ferenczi (1912) gives the example of a woman patient whose dream he interprets as expressing a desire for a better-educated husband, more beautiful clothes, etc:

At this moment the patient's attention was deflected from the analysis by the sudden onset of toothache. She begged me to give her something to ease the pain, or at least to get her a glass of water. Instead of doing so, I explained to the patient that by the toothache she was perhaps only expressing in a metaphorical way the Hungarian saying "My tooth is aching for these good things." I said this not at all in a confident tone, nor had she any idea that I expected the pain to cease after the communication. Yet, quite spontaneously and very astonished, she declared that the toothache had suddenly ceased. [p. 167].

In Lacanian terms we can read this as an instance of how a new signifier (toothache) is substituted for the original signifier (*Fájra a fogam*, "My tooth aches for it") and thereby the symptom becomes structured as a metaphor. Ferenczi is able to suggest to the patient the importance of this substitution and by interpreting the symptom linguistically (i.e., as a metaphor) the symptom is relieved by the power of the spoken word itself (rather than by taking some other action).

This is the first time in these essays that Lacan explicitly presents the tension between language (*langage*) and speech (*la parole*), a theme he dwells on later in this section (see 1977, p. 68/279).

- 60c-d/
270 The Freudian texts are specified in the notes to the English translation (1977, pp. 108-109) and again they parallel Wilden's notes (1968, p. 117).
- 61d/271 The effort to reflect back on the originative action of the unconscious prompts the creation of a new verbal expression, as Lacan's example itself illustrates.
- 61f/272 The Argonauts were a group of 50 Greek heroes led by Jason. They sailed the Aegean and Black Seas (in the first long ship, the Argo) on their way to obtain the Golden Fleece and return it to Greece. The French

Danaën appears to be the generic term for Greeks and the reference would be to the Trojan horse.

- 63a/273 The reference is to C. V. Hudgins (1933). This is described as a "celebrated experiment" in *Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology* (Mussen, 1970, p. 951).
- 65d/276 The play of the child is, of course, the *Fort! Da!* episode. Its relation to presence and absence and the birth of speech was discussed earlier by us (pp. 18-23) and is taken up again by Lacan (see below, 1977, p. 103d/318).
- 65f/276 One implication seems to be that language differentiates things just as the child's rudimentary phonemes enable him to differentiate from his mother.
- 66a/276 The law of symbolic exchange, in which the neutralization of the signifier and the law of language are revealed (see above, 1977, pp. 61-62/272), determines the symbolic equivalence of the gift of a woman and the gift of a thigh of an elephant. Wilden (1968, p. 126) notes that the proverb is the epigraph to Lévi-Strauss' *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949b). A note to the English text does the same without reference to Wilden. This repetition occurs so frequently that no further alert will be given to the reader and discretionary use of Wilden's notes will continue.
- 68c/279 The salvific import of "being-for-death" is missing in Heidegger.
- 68d/279 The precise sense of *les cycles du langage* and of *les ordres* is unclear; perhaps Lacan means that language is diachronic and thus has cycles, and is calling attention to the symbolic, imaginary, and real orders — all related to the expression of desire.
- 69e/280 Wilden's note on the role of illness (supplied by Hypolite) makes reference to the Hegelian texts (1968, p. 130).
- 70d/280 The unified gestalt of the idealized ego-image hides the experience of fragmentation just as the pretensions

- of the *belle âme* cover its projection of internal disorder onto the world.
- 71c/282 The “sectors A, B, and C” may echo the “*c* factor” (1977, p. 37/245).
- 71d/283 The implication seems to be that the more the psychoanalyst demands “true” speech as opposed to empty talk after the manner of “the precautions against verbalism that are a theme of the discourse of the ‘normal’ man in our culture” (p. 71b/282), the more he appears to reinforce the thickness of the wall of language. This is clearly a logical snare, to be denounced in the same way that Hegel, abstract idealist philosopher that he was, denounced “the philosophy of the cranium,” i.e., phrenology, and Pascal spoke of the ironies of madness.
- 72f/284 The movement, of course, was and is structuralism.
- 73e-f/284–285 The reference is to the work of Jakobson and Halle (1956).
- 75d-e/287 See our note (Wilden’s actually) to p. 48d.
- 76d/288 The epistemological triangle he describes is unclear to us.
- 80a/292 Lacan sees Freud’s corrective to Hegel in his discovery of the unconscious, which requires a decentering from ego-consciousness. (The ex-centric or decentered subject is a major theme in “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious” [1977, pp. 165–166/516–517].)
- 80c-d/292 The unconscious as discourse of the other provides the locus for the identity of the particular (in terms of the subject’s desire as expressed in his own signifying chains of metaphor and metonymy) with the universal (in terms of the transindividual structure of language). Such an unconscious, defined earlier as “that part of the concrete discourse . . . not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his con-

- scious discourse” (1977, p. 49/258) is disjunctive of the subject, prohibiting any description of him as *individuum*.
- 81a/293 It is typical of Lacan to arch broadly and obscurely across philosophical history from Plato to Kierkegaard. We can take a few tentative steps toward understanding by suggesting that the Platonic *skopia*, a vision of the whole as well as underlying pattern, provides a model for Lacan, but with the following corrective: whereas Plato’s vision is grounded in the recollection of eternal essences and Kierkegaard’s in the repetition anticipated in an eternal future, Lacan places himself in-between and thereby accents here the temporality and historicity of the subject and of truth.
- 81b/293 The dialogue in Lewis Carroll is as follows:
- “ . . . there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents — ”
 “Certainly,” said Alice.
 “And only *one* for birthday presents, you know. There’s glory for you!”
 “I don’t know what you mean by ‘glory,’ ”
 Alice said.
 Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously.
 “Of course you don’t—till I tell you. I mean ‘there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!’ ”
 “But ‘glory’ doesn’t mean a ‘nice knock-down argument,’ ” Alice objected.
 “When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”
 “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”
 “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all” [1923, p. 246].
- 81d/293–294 There are hints here of an individuating principle whereby the moment of differentiation from the mother

is achieved when the infant's desire for her presence is articulated and embedded in universal discourse by means of its idiosyncratic rudimentary speech (in the *Fort! Da!* experience). What remains obscure is the relationship between the elementary phonemes and the symbolism of primary language.

- 81e/294 Jean Francois Champollion deciphered hieroglyphics in 1821 and thereby merited being called the founder of Egyptology.
- 82e/294 Wilden's note offers a definition of *dhvani* that stresses the word's power to convey a sense different from its primary or secondary meaning (1968, p. 142).
- 82h/295 This is an especially tricky paragraph. Lacan does *not* appear to be saying that symbols are the ultimate signifieds for all the words of a language, but rather that they are subjacent to (*sous-jacents à*) all the meaning-units of language, with a relationship to them closely analogous to (but not identical with) the relationship between prime numbers and composite integers. "A prime number is an integer $p > 1$ divisible only by 1 and p ; the first few primes are 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, and 19. Integers that have other divisors are called composite; examples are 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, . . ." (Harris and Levey, 1975, p. 1978). Composites, therefore, are the products of prime numbers. In a sense symbols, therefore, are the "stuff" of units of meaning, causing a kind of multiplying static by their presence. By using the thread of metaphor, with its substitute signifier tuning in to the secondary associative chains of the displaced signifier, we can search for their presence and thereby restore to the word its full evocative power by resonating with them.
- 84d/297 A more recent description of the waggle dance (not exactly Lacan's) can be found in Wilson (1975, pp. 177-178).
- 85b-c/298 What is *la forme, la forme essentielle* which is at stake here? Judging by Lacan's examples, it would seem to

be the second-person singular and as such indicating the opening of a domain inclusive of the other in so radical a fashion that to address another in any way (not just with the solemnity of vows) is to invest him with a new reality, a new role, minimally the role of respondent.

- 94e/309 Buddhist references to love (passion, attachment), hate (aversion, aggression), and ignorance (delusion, confusion) are common; for example, the saviors "promote the virtues of the faithful, help to remove greed, hate, and delusion" (Conze, 1951, p. 152).
- 95e/309-310 The point may be that the analyst's abstention, when it is based on the principle that all that occurs in the work on the unconscious level is accessible as the discourse of the other (and thus he remains silent to let the other speak), combines the elements of both a real intervention and a symbolic reply.
- 102c/317 Wilden's useful note (1968, pp. 151-152) discusses the phrase's transferred sense in relation to the theory of *dhvani* or suggestion (see also note 82e above).
- 102e/318 The two principles governing all change, as formulated by Empedocles (of Acragas, now Agrigento, Sicily), are specified (in 103c) as love and strife. See Kirk and Raven (1957) for further information. Freud makes a lengthy comparison between the views of Empedocles and his own (1937, pp. 244-247).
- 103a/318 See Heidegger (1927, p. 250). Heidegger doesn't speak of a *subject* in this way, but rather of *Dasein*. What Heidegger means by *Dasein* is a specific existential-ontological structure. What Lacan means by *subject* is highly problematic. A preliminary effort to relate Lacan's notion of the subject to Heidegger's *Dasein* may be found in Richardson (1978-1979).
- Earlier Lacan spoke of "recollection" (1977, p. 48/256) and suggested a Heideggerean context for it

- (1977, p. 47/255); moreover, he repudiates a Nietzschean interpretation (1977, p. 112, n. 112/318).
- 103d/318 The *Fort! Da!* experience, discussed earlier, is Lacan's focus for the next six paragraphs.
- 103f/319 In mastering desire through language (i.e., by mastering the mother's presence and absence in the words repeated now for their own sake), the child's desire is fragmented, multiplied, squared (raised to a second power) as it becomes articulated through the endless signifying chain. Now present somehow in words (i.e., symbolically — the whole mystery of language) the object is "destroyed" in its reality: thus Lacan goes on to say that "the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing" (p. 104c/319). In this experience of differentiation and distance from the mother, the child experiences his own separate, limited reality (against that background of the ultimate horizon of limit, death) and seeks to be recognized by her, i.e., desires to be the object of her desire (the dialectic of self-consciousness begins). For a Husserlian analysis of presence and absence in language, see Sokolowski (1978).
- 104b/319 The child here seems to be engaged in the *Fort! Da!* or peek-a-boo game with another.
- 104c/319 Now trapped in the symbolic order, desire is never fulfilled but achieves a kind of eternalization in language (a familiar theme in poetry).
- 105a/320 An exact illustration is offered by the death of the patient Billy Bibbitt in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey, 1962).
- 105b/320 Death is the limit, the boundary that defines man and the point from which he begins to be. To speak of "desire for death" in this Heideggerean context can only mean, as Lacan says three paragraphs later, that it is "in the full assumption of his being-for-death," that is, in authentically accepting his ownmost possi-

bilities, that he can affirm himself for others. Anything short of this, such as narcissistically identifying with the other or struggling to be the object of the other's desire is to be caught up in the imaginary structures of the ego.

105c d/
320 321 We take the phrase "mortal meaning" to suggest again that the "meaning" of the subject, defined as "mortal" (i.e., by death) through speech, has a "centre exterior to language" in the sense that its center, as individual, is other than the transindividual center of language itself. As for the topological allusions here, they anticipate a later period in the development of Lacan's thought and require for an understanding of them an exposition that is broader and more comprehensive than the present one. We defer a discussion of these issues, then, to a later day.

106b/321 Wilden's note (1968, p. 156) quotes Freud (1905a): "It is a rule of psychoanalytic technique that an internal connection which is still undisclosed will announce its presence by means of a contiguity — a temporal proximity — of associations; just as in writing, if 'a' and 'b' are put side by side, it means that the syllable 'ab' is to be formed out of them" (p. 39).

The factors *b* for biology and *c* for culture may shed light on the previous two references (see 37g, where "the *c* factor" belongs to culture, and 71c, where culture includes the sectors A, B, and C).

106f-i/
322 Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) ends:

Datta Dayadhvam Damyata
Shantih Shantih Shantih

In his notes to the poem, Eliot translates these as "Give, sympathize, control" and refers to the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, 5, 1 for the fable of the meaning of the thunder. Lacan also gives the same reference: "lisons-nous au premier Brâhmana de la

cinquième leçon du Bhrad-âraryaka Upanishad.” Wilden (1968), however, in his translation writes, “so we read in the second Brahmana of the fifth lesson” and in his English text Sheridan (1977) follows Wilden.