

Re-found in translation : 26th May 2022 : Robyn Adler

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With notes at www.LacanianWorksExchange.net /authors a-z (Adler) or lacan (June 1936)

Re-found in Translation

Robyn Adler

Allowing oneself to stumble and pause on decisions made in the translations of Lacan's seminars and texts engenders an oblique lens through which one can re-find threads on the rocky path that returns to Freud.

One that strikes me is the translation of “duplicate” for the French “redouble” in the Mirror Stage when Lacan describes the virtual complex of the reflected environment and the reality it “duplicates”.¹ In French it reads, “de ce complexe virtuel à la réalité qu'il redouble”.² Duplicate reality or redouble it?

Duplicate is not an incorrect translation. Etymologically it comes from *duo*, two + *plicare*, to fold (from the PIE root *plek*, to plait) but the word redouble, etymologically ‘to double (something) again or repeatedly, multiply’, has the sense of intensification in quantity and repetition that is missing from the notion of duplication with its sense of ‘the act of making or repeating something essentially the same’ (from 1580s) or ‘a duplicate copy or version’ (by 1872) since the invention of the printing press.³

With redouble we hear repetition as a mode of the real echoing from a traumatic event that cries out and insists from a kenotic wilderness, never to be re-found. The difference in mimesis here is between idol as facsimile or copy, a deadly adoration of nothing. Or icon, literally “as though” in the register of semblance, as the function of a living memorial emanating from a void, that acts by retroactively sweeping up and intensifying hystory. It is in this second sense that images fixate and seduce us.

References

1 Lacan J., ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience’, *Écrits*, London, Norton, 1966/2006, 75.

2 Lacan J., ‘Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu’elle nous est révélée dans l’expérience psychanalytique’, *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, 93.

3 <https://www.etymonline.com>

Notes on references

[Mirror Stage: 16th June 1936 \(Paris\), 3rd August 1936 \(Marienbad\), 1938, 17th July 1949 \(Zurich\), 1966: Jacques Lacan](#) Notes & Information [here](#)
<http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=303>

Available in French with English translation alongside:

Alan Sheridan’s translation available at www.LacanianWorksExchange.net /lacan (July 1949), bilingual at www.Freud2Lacan.com /Lacan (79. *Écrits*: The Mirror Stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience)

Bruce Fink’s translation available at www.Freud2Lacan.net /lacan (80. *Écrits*: The Mirror Stage paper—3 translations with notes)