

Jacques Lacan

TELEVISION

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A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment

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Prefatory Note

1. "A broadcast on Jacques Lacan," was what the Service de la Recherche de l'O.R.T.F. wanted.¹ Only the text here published was broadcast. To be aired in two parts under the title *Psychoanalysis at the end of January*. Director: Benoît Jacquot.

2. I asked the person who replied to you to sift through what I heard of what he had said to me. The flour has been gathered in the margin, in the form of *manuductio*.

J.-A. M., Christmas 1973

He who interrogates me
also knows how to read me.

J. L.

1. O.R.T.F., at the time, named the French national broadcasting agency (Office de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française), a special department of which, the Service de la Recherche, is dedicated to cultural and experimental programs. [Footnotes for *Television* are by Denis Hollier.]

I.

I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way, to say it all. Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real. S (A)

I will confess then to having tried to respond to the present comedy and it was good only for the wastebasket.

A failure then, but thereby, actually, a success when compared with an error, or to put it better: with an aberration.

And without too much importance, since limited to this occasion. But first of all, which?

The aberration consists in this idea of speaking so as to be understood by idiots.

An idea that is ordinarily so foreign to me that it could only have been suggested to me. Through friendship. Beware.

For there's no difference between television and the public before whom I've spoken for a long time now, a public known as my seminar. A single gaze in both cases: a gaze to which, in neither case, do I address myself, but in the name of which I speak. (a ◇ \$)

Do not, however, get the idea that I address everyone at large.² I am speaking to those who are savvy, to the nonidiots, to the supposed analysts.

2. The expression Lacan uses is *à la cantonade*, which, to reinforce the pun on his own name, he had allowed the transcription of his XIth seminar to read as, *à la cantonade*. See *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Norton, 1978, p. 208.

If we consider only the overcrowding, experience shows that what I say there engages many more people than those whom with some reason I suppose to be analysts. So why then should I use a different tone here than for my seminar?

Besides, I may reasonably suppose there to be analysts listening now also.

$\frac{a}{S_2}$ I will go further: I expect of the supposed analysts nothing more than their being this object thanks to which what I teach is not a self-analysis. On this point, they alone, among those who are listening, are sure to understand [*entendre*] me. But even in understanding nothing an analyst plays this role I have just defined, and as a consequence television thus assumes it just as well.

I would add that these analysts who are such only insofar as they are object—the object of the analysand—it happens that I do address them, not that I am speaking to them, but that I speak about them: if only to disturb them. Who knows?

$S_1 - S_2$ This could have some effects of suggestion.

Would you believe it? There is one situation in which suggestion is powerless: when the analyst owes his default to the other, to the person who has brought him to “the pass,” as I put it, of asserting himself as analyst.

Happy are those cases in which fictive “passes” pass for an incomplete training; they leave room for hope.

II.

— I think, my dear doctor, that I am here not to trade witticisms with you . . . , but only to give you the occasion to reply. Therefore all you will get from me are the thinnest, the most elementary, even commonplace, of questions. I'll throw one out at you. “The unconscious — what a strange word!”

— Freud didn't find a better one, and there's no need to go back on it. The disadvantage of this word is that it is negative, which allows one to assume anything at all in the world about it, plus everything else as well. Why not? To that which goes unnoticed, the word *everywhere* applies just as well as *nowhere*.

It is nonetheless a very precise thing.

There is no unconscious except for the speaking being. The others, who possess being only through being named—even though they impose themselves from within the real—have instinct, namely the knowledge needed for their survival. Yet this is so only for our thought, which might be inadequate here.

This still leaves the category of *homme-sick* animals, thereby called domestics [*d'hommestiques*], who for that reason are shaken, however briefly, by unconscious, seismic tremors.

It speaks, does the unconscious, so that it depends on language, about which we know so little: despite what under the term linguistery I group whatever claims—and this is new—

“The precondition of the unconscious is language.”

... which ex-sists
through lalangue:

to intervene in men's affairs in the name of linguistics. Linguistics being the science that concerns itself with *lalangue*,³ which I write as one word, so as to specify its object, as is done in every other science.

analytic hypothesis

i(a)

The only relation
thought has to the
soul-body is one of
ex-sistence.

This object is nonetheless eminent, since the very Aristotelian notion of the subject comes down to that more legitimately than to anything else. Which allows for the grounding of the unconscious in the ex-sistence of one more subject for the soul. For the soul as the assumed sum of the body's functions. A most problematic sum, despite the fact that from Aristotle to Uexküll, it has been postulated as though with one voice, and it is still what biologists presuppose, whether they know it or not.

In fact the subject of the unconscious is only in touch with the soul via the body, by introducing thought into it: here contradicting Aristotle. Man does not think with his soul, as the Philosopher imagined.

He thinks as a consequence of the fact that a structure, that of language—the word implies it—a structure carves up his body, a structure that has nothing to do with anatomy. Witness the hysteric. This shearing happens to the soul through the obsessional symptom: a thought that burdens the soul, that it doesn't know what to do with.

Thought is in disharmony with the soul. And the Greek *νοῦς* is the myth of thought's accommodating itself to the soul, accommodating itself in conformity with the world, the world (*Umwelt*) for which the soul is held responsible, whereas the world is merely the fantasy through which thought sustains itself—"reality" no doubt, but to be understood as a grimace of the real.

The little that reality
derives from the real

—It's still a fact that one comes to you, the psychoanalyst, in order,

3. *Lalangue*, as one word (without an article or with the article soldered onto the substantive; instead of *la langue*): general equivocation, universal babble, or "Babelian."

within this world that you reduce to fantasy, to get better. The cure—is that also a fantasy?

—The cure is a demand that originates in the voice of the sufferer, of someone who suffers from his body or his thought. The astonishing thing is that there be a response, and that throughout time medicine, using words, has hit the bull's-eye.

Power of words

How did this happen before the unconscious was located? In order to work, a practice doesn't have to be elucidated; this is what can be deduced from that.

—Analysis would only be distinguished from therapy, then, by "being enlightened"? This isn't what you mean. Let me phrase the question like this: "Both psychoanalysis and psychotherapy act only through words. Yet they are in conflict. How so?"

—These days there is no psychotherapy that is not expected to be "psychoanalytically inspired." My intonation is to indicate the quotation marks the thing deserves. The distinction maintained there—is it not based solely on the fact that in the one you don't hit the mat . . . I mean the couch?

This gives a running start to those analysts who have stayed in their "institutes"—same quotation marks here—waiting for a "pass," who, because they don't want to know anything about it—I mean the "pass"—compensate for it with formalities of rank, an elegant way for them to establish themselves—those who demonstrate more cunning in their institutional relations than in their analytical practices.

I will now show why this analytical practice is prevalent within psychotherapy.

There are, insofar as the unconscious is implicated, two sides presented by the structure, by language.

The side of meaning, the side we would identify as that of

There is no structure
except through
language.

analysis, which pours out a flood of meaning to float the sexual boat.

"There is no sexual relation."

It is striking that this meaning reduces to non-sense: the non-sense of the sexual relation, something that love stories have, throughout time, made obvious. Obvious to the point of stridency; which gives a lofty picture of human thought.

There is, moreover, meaning that is taken for good sense, that even asserts itself as common sense. This is the high-point of comedy, except that in comedy awareness of the nonrelation involved in getting it off, getting it off sexually, must be included. Thereby our dignity is recharged, even relieved.

Good sense is the form suggestion takes, comedy, that of laughter. Setting aside their quasi-incompatibility, does this mean that they are the whole story? That's the point at which psychotherapy, in any form, breaks down, not that it doesn't do some good, but it's a good that's a return to what's worse.

d - (\$ \diamond D)

Whence the unconscious, namely the insistence through which desire manifests itself, in other words the repetition of the demand working through it—isn't that what Freud says of it at the very moment he discovers it?

whence the unconscious, if it is true that the structure—recognized as producing, as I say, language out of *lalangue*—does indeed order it,

reminds us that to the side of meaning that fascinates us in speech—in exchange for which being—this being whose thought is imagined by Parmenides—acts as speech's screen—reminds us, I conclude, that to the side of meaning the study of language opposes the side of the sign.

How is it that even the symptom, or that which is so called in analysis, failed to mark out a path in this matter? Such was the situation until Freud, whose docility before the hysteric was needed for him to read dreams, slips, even jokes, as one deciphers a message in code.

— Prove that that is actually what Freud says, and all he says.

— Let one simply go to Freud's texts grouped under those three headings—their titles are now trivial—and one will see that it is about nothing other than a deciphering of pure signifying di-mention [*dit-mension*].

Namely that one of these phenomena is naively articulated: articulated means verbalized, naively means according to vulgar logic, *lalangue's* usage as it is commonly received.

To see also that by making his way through a tissue of puns, metaphors, metonymies, Freud evokes a substance, a fluidic myth titrated for what he calls *libido*.

But what he is really performing, there right before our very eyes glued to the text, is a translation which reveals that the *jouissance* that Freud implies through the term primary process properly consists in the logical straits through which he so artfully leads us.

Freud's practice

All you have to do, as the wisdom of the Stoics had achieved so early on, is to distinguish the signifier from the signified (to translate, as did Saussure, their Latinized names), so as to witness phenomena of equivalence appearing there in such a way that one can understand how, for Freud, they could provide the figure of the machinery of an energetics.

S

An effort of thought is needed to found linguistics out of that. Out of its object, the signifier. There is no linguist who isn't attached to the project of detaching it, as such, and in particular, from meaning.

I've talked about a side of the sign in order to mark within it its association with the signifier. But the signifier differs from the sign in that its inventory is already a given of *lalangue*.

To speak of a code doesn't work, precisely because it presupposes meaning.

The signifying inventory of *lalangue* supplies only the cipher of meaning. According to context, each word takes on an enormous and disparate range of meaning, meaning whose heteroclitic condition is often attested to by the dictionary.

Lalangue is the precondition of meaning.

This is no less true for whole parts of organized sentences.

As in this sentence: *les non-dupes errent*,⁴ with which I've geared myself this year.

No doubt their grammar is buttressed by writing, and it bears witness, for all that, to a real, to a real which remains, as we know, an enigma as long as in analysis the pseudo-sexual spring doesn't pop out: that real which, capable only of lying to the partner, is marked as neurosis, perversion, or psychosis.

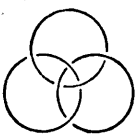
L'objet (a)

"I do not love him [or her]," is sustained, Freud teaches us, within this series by reverberating against the real.

In fact, it is because every signifier, from the phoneme to the sentence, can serve as a coded message (a "personal," as the radio was wont to say during the war), that it emerges as object and that one discovers that it is what determines that in the world—the world of the speaking being—One occurs [*il y a de l'Un*], that is to say, element occurs, the Greek *στοιχείον*.

Is one signifier enough to found the signifier One?

What Freud discovers in the unconscious—here I've only been able to invite you to take a look at his writings to see if I speak truly—is something utterly different from realizing that broadly speaking one can give a sexual meaning to everything one knows, for the reason that knowing has always been open to the famous metaphor (the side of meaning Jung exploited). It is the real that permits the effective unknotting of what makes the symptom hold together, namely a knot of signifiers. Where here knotting and unknotting are not metaphors, but are really to be taken as those knots that in fact are built up through developing chains of the signifying material.



For these chains are not of meaning but of enjoy-meant [*jouis-sens*]⁵ which you can write as you wish, as is implied by the punning that constitutes the law of the signifier.

I think I have given to the specific recourse of psychoanal-

4. The title Lacan gave to his 1972-73 seminar—his XXIst—was "*Les non-dupes errent*" (the non-dupes err), a homophonic play on *les noms du père* (the names of the father), which was the title he had announced ten years earlier for what was to become in 1963, his last seminar at Sainte-Anne. A seminar of only one meeting, its transcript is published on pp. 81-95.

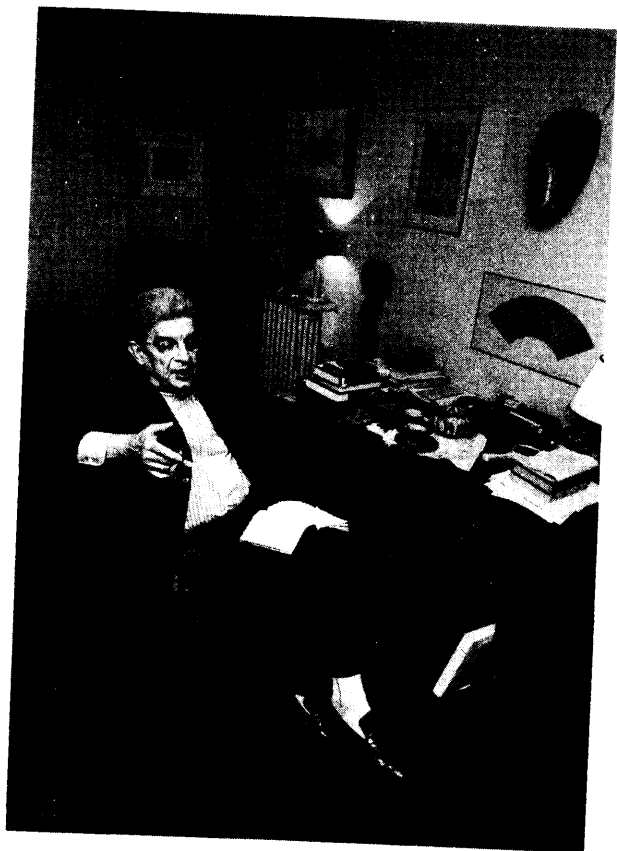
5. *Jouis-sens*, homonym of *jouissance*.

ysis quite another dimension than that of the general confusion we're used to.

repeatedly / making Freud's

75/76

7



Jacques Lacan at his desk, 1971

III.

— *The psychologists, the psychotherapists, the psychiatrists, all the mental-health workers — it's the rank and file, those who are roughing it, who are taking all the burdens of the world's misery onto their shoulders. And the analyst, meanwhile?*

— One thing is certain: to take the misery onto one's shoulders, as you put it, is to enter into the discourse that determines it, even if only in protest.

Merely to say this puts me in a position that some will locate as a condemnation of politics. That, so far as I'm concerned, I take to be out of the question for anyone.

Anyway, the psycho-so-and-soes, of whatever sort they may be, busying themselves at your supposed burdening, oughtn't to be protesting, but collaborating. Whether they know it or not, that's what they're doing.

It's rather convenient — though I may be offering an easy means of retaliation against myself — all too convenient, this idea of discourse, for reducing judgment to its determinants. I'm struck by the way in which they actually find nothing better to oppose me with; "intellectualism," they say. This carries no weight, when one wants to know who's right.

Even less, because in relating this misery to the discourse of the capitalist, I denounce the latter.

Only, here, I point out that in all seriousness I cannot do



this, because in denouncing it I reinforce it—by normalizing it, that is, improving it.

At this point I will interject a remark. I do not base this idea of discourse on the ex-sistence of the unconscious. It is the unconscious that I locate through it—it ex-sists only through a discourse.

Only analytic discourse gives ex-sistence to the unconscious, as Freudian, . . .

You understand this so clearly that you've annexed, to this project I've acknowledged as a vain one, a question concerning the future of psychoanalysis.

The unconscious thereby ex-sists all the more in that since it is witnessed clearly only in the discourse of the hysteric, what's to be found everywhere else is just grafted onto it: yes, even, astonishing as it may seem, in the discourse of the analyst, where what is made of it is culture.

. . . which was listened to before, but as something else.

By way of a parenthesis here: does the unconscious imply that it be listened to? To my mind, yes. But this surely does not imply that, without the discourse through which it ex-sists, one judges it as knowledge that does not think, or calculate, or judge—which doesn't prevent it from being at work (as in dreams, for example). Let's say that it is the ideal worker, the one Marx made the flower of capitalist economy in the hope of seeing him take over the discourse of the master; which, in effect, is what happened, although in an unexpected form. There are surprises in these matters of discourse; that is, indeed, the point of the unconscious.

This knowledge is at work . . .

. . . without a master: S₂ // S₁.

What I call the analytic discourse is the social bond determined by the practice of an analysis. It derives its value from its being placed amongst the most fundamental of the bonds which remain viable for us.

— But you yourself are excluded from that which makes for social bonds between analysts, aren't you . . .

—The Association—so-called International, although

that is a bit of a fiction, having been for so long now limited to a family business—I still knew it in the hands of Freud's direct and adopted descendants; if I dared—but I warn you that here I am both judge and plaintiff, hence partisan—I would say that at present it is a professional insurance plan against analytic discourse. The PIPAAD.

Damned PIPAAD!

They want to know nothing of the discourse that determines them. But they are not thereby excluded from it; far from it, since they function as analysts, which means that there are people who analyze themselves *by means of* them.

So they satisfy this discourse, even if some of its effects go unrecognized by them. On the whole, they don't lack prudence; and even if it isn't the true kind, it might be the do-good kind.

Besides, they are the ones at risk.

So let's turn to the psychoanalyst and not beat about the bush. Though what I am going to say is to be found under that bush just as well.

Because there is no better way of placing him objectively than in relation to what was in the past called: being a saint.

During his life a saint doesn't command the respect that a halo sometimes gets for him.

No one notices him as he follows Balthasar Gracian's Way of Life—that of renouncing personal brilliance—something that explains why Amelot de la Houssaye thought he was writing about the courtier.

A saint's business, to put it clearly, is not *caritas*. Rather, he acts as trash [*déchet*]; his business being *trashitas* [*il décharite*]. So as to embody what the structure entails, namely allowing the subject, the subject of the unconscious, to take him as the cause of the subject's own desire.

The objet (a) incarnate

In fact it is through the abjection of this cause that the subject in question has a chance to be aware of his position, at least within the structure. For the saint, this is not amusing, but I imagine that for a few ears glued to this TV it converges with many of the oddities of the acts of saints.

That it produces an effect of *jouissance*—who doesn't "get" the meaning [*sens*] along with the pleasure [*joui*]? The saint alone stays mum; fat chance of getting anything out of him. That is really the most amazing thing in the whole business. Amazing for those who approach it without illusions: the saint is the refuse of *jouissance*.

Sometimes, however, he takes a break, which he's no more content with than anyone else. He comes [*jouit*]. He's no longer working at that point. It's not as if the smart alecks aren't lying in wait hoping to profit from it so as to pump themselves up again. But the saint doesn't give a damn about that, any more than he does about those who consider it to be his just deserts. Which is too sidesplitting.

Because not giving a damn for distributive justice either is where he most often started from.

The saint doesn't really see himself as righteous, which doesn't mean that he has no ethics. The only problem for others is that you can't see where it leads him.

I beat my brain against the hope that some like these will reappear. No doubt because I, myself, didn't manage to make it.

The more saints, the more laughter; that's my principle, to wit, the way out of capitalist discourse—which will not constitute progress, if it happens only for some.

IV.

—For the twenty years that you have been putting forward your phrase—the unconscious is structured like a language⁶—what is said in opposition to you, in various forms, is: "Those are merely words, words, words. And what do you do with anything that doesn't get mixed up with words? What of psychic energy, or affect, or the drives?"

—You are now imitating the gestures with which one puts on the appearance of an heir in the PIPAAD.

Because, as you know, at least in the Paris PIPAAD, the only elements of sustenance come from my teaching. It filters through from everywhere; it's a draft, which becomes a blizzard when it blows too strongly. So you revive the old gestures, you get warm by snuggling together and calling that a Congress.

Because I'm not just thumbing my nose today for the fun of it, pulling out the PIPAAD story to make people laugh at the TV. It's the way Freud purposely conceived of the organization to which he bequeathed this analytic discourse. He knew that it would be a hard test; the experience of his first followers had already been edifying in that regard.

6. This phrase first appeared in Lacan's Report to the Rome Congress of 1953, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis." See *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Norton, 1977, pp. 30-113.

— *Let's take the question of natural energy first.*

— Natural energy — that's another medicine ball used to prove that on that point as well one's got ideas. Energy — it's you who added the tag *natural*, because in what they say, it goes without saying that energy is natural: something to be expended, insofar as a dam can store it and make it useful. However, it's not because the dam looks picturesque in a landscape that energy is natural.

The libidinal myth

That a "life force" should constitute that expenditure is a crude metaphor. Because energy is not a substance, which, for example, improves or goes sour with age; it's a numerical constant that a physicist has to find in his calculations, so as to be able to work.

To work in accordance with what has been fostered, from Galileo to Newton, as a purely mechanical dynamics — with what forms the core of that which is called, more or less correctly, a physics — something strictly verifiable.

Without this constant, which is merely a combination of calculations . . . you have no more physics. It's generally thought that that's the physicists' business and that they adjust the equivalences between masses, fields, and impulses so that a number gets pulled out that complies with the principle of the conservation of energy. But still, such a principle has to be stated in order for a physics to meet the requirement of verifiability; it is, as Galileo put it, a fact experimentally produced by a theory. Or, to put it better: the condition that the system be mathematically closed prevails even over the assumption that it is physically isolated.

That's not just of my own devising. Each and every physicist knows clearly, that is to say, in a readily articulated manner, that energy is nothing other than the numerical value [*chiffre*] of a constant.

Now, what Freud articulates as primary process in the unconscious — and this is me speaking here, but you can look it up and you'd see it — isn't something to be numerically ex-

pressed [*se chiffre*], but to be deciphered [*se déchiffre*]. I mean: *jouissance* itself. In which case it doesn't result in energy, and can't be registered as such.

No means of establishing an energetics of jouissance

The schemas of the second topography through which Freud tries his hand at it, the celebrated chicken's egg, for example, are on the order of a "pudendum" and would deserve analysis, if one were to analyze the Father. Now, I hold that it is out of the question to analyze the real Father; far better the cloak of Noah when the Father is imaginary.

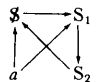
So that I prefer to ask myself what distinguishes scientific discourse from the hysteric's discourse, in which it must be said that Freud, in gathering her honey, was not out of the picture. Because what he invents is the work of the bee, who does not think, nor calculate, nor judge — namely, what I've already referred to here; when, after all, that might not be what von Frisch thinks about it.

I conclude that scientific discourse and the hysteric's discourse have *almost* the same structure, which explains our error, induced by Freud himself, in hoping that one day there would be a thermodynamic able to provide — within the future of science — the unconscious with its posthumous explanation.

We can say that after three-quarters of a century, there is not the slightest hint of such a promise's bearing fruit, and even that the very idea recedes of backing the primary process up with the principle which, if pleasure were its only claim, would demonstrate nothing, save that we cling to the soul like a tick to a dog's hide. Because what else is the famous lowering of tension with which Freud links pleasure, other than the ethics of Aristotle?

This cannot be the same hedonism as that which the Epicureans used as their insignia. To be insulted and called swine for this insignia, which now means only the psyche, they must have had something quite precious to hide, more secret even than the Stoics had.

However that may be, I've limited myself to Nicomachus and Eudemus, that is to Aristotle, so as strongly to distinguish



Being Well-spoken doesn't say where the Good is.

from it the ethics of psychoanalysis—a path I spent a whole year clearing.

It's the same old thing when it comes to the story of my supposed neglect of affect.

I just want an answer on this point: does an affect have to do with the body? A discharge of adrenalin—is that body or not? It upsets its functions, true. But what is there in it that makes it come from the soul? What it discharges is thought.

So you have to consider whether my idea that the unconscious is structured like a language allows one to verify affect more seriously—than the idea that it is a commotion from which a better arrangement emerges. Because that's what they oppose me with.

Does what I say about the unconscious go further than expecting affect to fall, adequate, into your lap? This *adaequatio*, being even more grotesque by coming on top of yet another one—really stacked—this time conjoining *rei*—of the thing—with *affectus*—the affect whereby it will get repigeonholed. We had to make it into our century for doctors to come up with that one.

All I've done is rerelease what Freud states in an article of 1915 on repression, and in others that return to this subject, namely that affect is displaced. How to appreciate this displacement, if not so the basis of the subject, which is presupposed by the fact that it has no better means of occurring than through representation?

All that business I explain in reference to his “gang”—to pinpoint it the way he did, since I'm forced to recognize that I'm also dealing with the same one. Except I've demonstrated, by turning to his correspondence with Fliess (in the expurgated edition of this correspondence, the only one we have) that the said representation, specifically repressed, is nothing less than the structure, and precisely insofar as it is linked to the

No harmony for the being in the world . . .

. . . if it speaks.

For the body, metonymy is the rule . . .

. . . because the subject of thought is metaphorized.

postulate of the signifier. Cf. letter 52: this postulate is written there.⁷

To accuse me of neglecting affect, so as to puff oneself up as the one who stresses it—could you make the claim unless you'd forgotten that I'd devoted one year, the last year of my commitment at Sainte-Anne, to dealing with anxiety?⁸

Some people know the constellation in which I placed it. Flutter, blockage, distress, differentiated as such and from each other, prove sufficiently that affect is not something I make light of.

It is true that it was forbidden to analysts in training in the PIPAAD to listen to me at Sainte-Anne.

I don't regret it. Indeed, I affected my world so deeply that year, by founding anxiety on the object to which it relates—far from being objectless (which is what psychologists have stuck to, unable to go further than its distinction from fear)—founding it, as I was saying, on the object [*objet*] that I have come to call my object *petit a*⁹—so deeply that someone from my circle got dizzy to the point (a repressed dizziness) of almost dropping—in the form of such an object—me.

Reconsidering affect on the basis of my sayings leads one back in any case to the secure part of what has been said about it.

The mere subsectioning of the passions of the soul, as Saint Thomas more accurately names these affects, the subsectioning since Plato of these passions on the model of the body:

7. Now unexpurgated in J. M. Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 207, letter dated December 6, 1896.

8. Sainte-Anne is the psychiatric hospital where Lacan gave his seminars until the 1963 break (see note 4). The 1962–63 seminar (the Xth) was devoted to “Anxiety.”

9. *Objet petit a*: the object small *a*. Since the letter *a* stands for the initial letter of *autre* (the small other as opposed to the big one, the Other), *objet a* has been anglicized by some translators as object *o*. Phonetic considerations, however, led us to retain the French: *objet a*'s becoming *objet*; the privative function of the prefix *a*; the homonymy with *petit tas*, little pile.

head, heart, even, as he says *ἐπιθυμία*, or over-heart; doesn't this already testify to the need to approach them via the body, a body which is, I say, affected only by the structure?

I shall indicate from which end one could project a serious follow-up, understood as serial, to what can be claimed by the unconscious in such an effect.

For example, we qualify sadness as depression, because we give it soul for support, or the psychological tension of Pierre Janet, the philosopher. But it isn't a state of the soul, it is simply a moral failing, as Dante, and even Spinoza, said: a sin, which means a moral weakness, which is, ultimately, located only in relation to thought, that is, in the duty to be Well-spoken, to find one's way in dealing with the unconscious, with the structure.

There is no ethic beside that of the Well-spoken, . . .

And if ever this weakness, as reject of the unconscious, ends in psychosis, there follows the return to the real of that which is rejected, that is, language; it is the manic excitation through which such a return becomes fatal.

In contrast with sadness there is the Gay Science [*gay savoir*],¹⁰ which is a virtue. A virtue absolves no one from sin—which is, as everyone knows, original. The virtue that I designate as the Gay Science exemplifies it, by showing clearly of what it consists: not understanding, not a diving at the meaning, but a flying over it as low as possible without the meaning's gumming up this virtue, thus enjoying [*jouir*] the deciphering, which implies that in the end Gay Science cannot but meet in it the Fall, the return into sin.

. . . no knowledge besides that of non-sense.

Where in all this is what makes for good luck [*bonheur*]?¹¹ Strictly speaking everywhere. The subject is happy-go-lucky [*heureux*]. It is his very definition since he can owe nothing if not to luck, to fortune in other words, and any piece of luck is good as something to maintain him, insofar as it repeats itself.

In the "rendez-vous" with the (a), . . .

What is astonishing is not that he is happy without

10. Provençal troubadours used the expression *gai savoir* [gay science] to designate their poetry.

11. For this homophonic play on *bonheur* (happiness), see Lacan's VIIth *Séminaire: L'éthique de la psychanalyse*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1986, p. 22, "Happiness, after all, that's also *happen*, an encounter."

suspecting what reduces him to this state—his dependence on the structure—but that he gets an idea of beatitude, an idea which is forceful enough for him to feel himself exiled from it.

Happily, on this point we have the poet giving the game away: Dante, whom I've just cited, and others, apart from those sluts who use classicism to fill their piggy-banks.

A gaze, that of Beatrice—that is to say, three times nothing, a fluttering of the eyelids and the exquisite trash that results from it—and there emerges that Other whom we can identify only through her *jouissance*: her whom he, Dante, cannot satisfy, because from her, he can have only this look, only this object, but of whom he tells us that God fulfills her utterly; it is precisely by receiving the assurance of that from her own mouth that he arouses us.

. . . if it's woman's jouissance, . . .

. . . the Other finds ex-sistence, . . .

To which something in us replies: annoyance [*ennui*]. A word from which, by making the letters dance as in the cinematograph until they resettle in a line, I've composed the term: "oneyance" [*unien*]. By which I designate the identification of the Other with the One. I would say: the mystical One whose crude equivalent is given to us through its comical other—Aristophanes, to name him, strutting his stuff in Plato's *Symposium*—presenting the beast-with-two-backs that he accuses Zeus, who is not responsible for it, of bisecting: it's rather wicked; I've already said that this is not done. One doesn't involve the real Father in such unseemly behavior.

. . . but not substantial Oneness.

Still, Freud also stumbles on this point: because his allegation with respect to Eros, insofar as he opposes it to Thanatos, as the principle of "life," is that of unifying, as if, apart from a brief coiteration, one had ever seen two bodies unite into one.

Because "nothing is everything" in the defiles of the signifier, . . .

Affect, therefore, befalls a body whose essence it is said is to dwell in language—I am borrowing plumage which sells better than my own¹²—affect, I repeat, befalls it on account of

12. The plumage is Heidegger's. See his "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Kress, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, p. 204, "Only from this dwelling 'has' he 'language' as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence"; or, p. 239, "Language is at once the house of Being and the home of human beings."

... the affect is
discord, ...

its not finding dwelling-room, at least not to its taste. This we call moroseness, or equally, moodiness. Is this a sin, a grain of madness, or a true touch of the real?

You see that with regard to affect they would have done better, the PIPAAD, if that's the tune they wanted to play, to use my old fiddle. That would have got them farther than standing around gaping.

Your inclusion of the drives among the confusion of gestures used in defense against my discourse lets me off so easily as to preclude my feeling grateful. For, as you well know — you who transcribed my XIth seminar with an impeccable brush¹³ — who else other than myself managed to take the risk of even talking about it?

For the first time, and particularly with you, I felt I was being listened to by ears that were other than morose: namely, ears that didn't hear me Otherizing [*Autrifiais*] the One, as even the person who had invited me to teach at the Ecole, allowing me to be heard by you, hastened to think.¹⁴

... and the drive
drift.

Who, upon reading chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13, 14 of this Seminar XI, does not sense the advantage of not translating *Trieb* by instinct, of keeping close to this drive by calling it drift, of dismantling and then reassembling its oddity, sticking, all the while to Freud?

If you follow along with me there, won't you feel the difference between energy — which is a constant that can be marked each time in relation to the One, on the basis of which what is experimental in science is constructed — and the *Drang* or drive

13. Lacan's 1964 seminar, his XIth, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, which was also the first to be given after his leaving Sainte-Anne, had been published by J.-A. Miller in early 1973, a few months before the *Television* interview.

14. "Ecole" is not to be confused with "my Ecole" (see pp. 96–105 below), which is the Ecole Freudienne. Here it refers to the Ecole Normale Supérieure (also E. N. S. or, metonymically, "Rue d'Ulm") which, following Lacan's departure from Sainte-Anne, housed his seminar (from then on institutionally sponsored by the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes). At about the time of *Television*, difficulties with Robert Flacelière, Director of the E. N. S., obliged Lacan to find yet another dwelling for his seminar, this time in the Law School buildings (see Lacan's letter to *Le monde*, pp. 114–115). In 1964, J.-A. Miller was a student at the Ecole Normale.

of the drive which, *jouissance* of course, only derives its permanence from the rims — I went so far as to give them their mathematical form — of the body? A permanence that consists solely in the quadruple agency by which each drive is sustained through coexistence with three others. It is only as power that four opens onto the disunion that must be warded off, for those whom sex is not sufficient to render partners.

What I've just done here is not, of course, the mapping through which I would distinguish neurosis, perversion, and psychosis.

Therefore I can't say
what you are for me.

That I've done elsewhere, proceeding only according to the detours that the unconscious, in retracing its own steps, transforms into direct routes. Little Hans's phobia I showed as precisely that: the lane down which he took Freud and his father for a walk, but where, ever since, it's the analysts' turn to be frightened.



Jacques Lacan about 1960

Television -

27

V.

— There's a rumor afoot: if we have such bad sex, it's because sex is suppressed, and that's the fault, in the first place, of the family, and in the second, of society, and especially of capitalism. This requires an answer.

— That's a question — I've been told when chatting about your questions — that might well be understood as being about your wanting to be able to answer it, yourself, eventually. That is: if you were asked it, by a voice rather than by an individual, a voice inconceivable except as arising from the TV, a voice that doesn't exist, because it doesn't say anything, the voice nonetheless, in the name of which I make this answer exist, an answer that is interpretation.

To put it bluntly, you *know* that I've got an answer to everything, in consideration of which you credit me [*vous me prêtez*] with the question: you place your faith in the proverb that one lends only to the rich. And with good reason.

Who doesn't know that it's with the analytic discourse that I've made it big. That makes me a *self-made man*.¹⁵ There have been others, but not in our lifetime.

Freud didn't say that repression *comes from* suppression: that (to paint a picture) castration is due to what Daddy bran-

15. English in the original.

$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \S$

dished over his brat playing with his wee-wee: "We'll cut it off, no kidding, if you do it again."

Naturally enough, however, it occurred to him, to Freud, to start with that for the experiment—as understood through the terms of definition of analytic discourse. Let's say that as he progressed there, he leaned more toward the idea that repression was primary. That, on the whole, is what tipped the scales toward the second topography. The greediness by which he characterizes the superego is structural, not an effect of civilization, but "discontent (symptom) in civilization."

So that's why we have to reexamine the test case, taking as a starting point the fact that it is repression that produces suppression. Why couldn't the family, society itself, be creations built from repression? They're nothing less. That, however, may be because the unconscious exists, is motivated by the structure, that is, by language. Freud is so far from excluding this solution that it's in order to come to some decision on it that he works so hard on the case of the Wolf Man, a man who ends up in rather bad shape. Still it would seem that this failure, failure of the case, is relatively unimportant when compared with his success: that of establishing the real within the facts.

If this real remains enigmatic, must we attribute this to the analytic discourse, itself an institution? To get to the bottom of sexuality, we have no recourse other than the project of science, sexology being still only a project in which, as Freud insists, he has every confidence. A confidence that he admits is gratuitous, which says a lot about his ethics.

Now this analytic discourse implies a promise: to promote a novelty. And that, awesomely enough, into the field from which the unconscious is produced, since its finesses [*impasses*]—among other situations to be sure, but it is still the main one—come into play in the game of love.

Not that everyone isn't alerted to this novelty that is the talk of the town—but it doesn't rouse anybody, for the reason that this novelty is transcendental: the word is to be taken

Primary repression

The latest in love

under the same sign that it constitutes for the theory of numbers, namely mathematically.

It is not without reason, then, that it takes support in the name of transference.

In order to rouse people around me, I articulate this transference with "the subject supposed to know." This contains an explication, an unfolding of what the name only dimly pins down. Namely: that through the transference the subject is attributed to the knowledge that gives him his consistency as subject of the unconscious, and it is that which is transferred onto the analyst, namely, this knowledge inasmuch as it does not think, or calculate, or judge, but carries with it nonetheless the work-effect.

This new path is worth whatever it's worth, but it's as if I were whistling in the . . . no, worse: as if I were scaring them out of their wits.

Sancta PIPAADic simplicitas:¹⁶ they don't dare. They dare not follow where that leads.

It's not as if I don't turn myself inside-out! I declaim, "No one authorizes the analyst but himself." I institute "the pass" in my Ecole, namely the examination of what decides an analyst to assert himself as analyst—forcing no one through it. It hasn't been heard outside yet, I admit, but here inside we're busy with it, and as for my Ecole, I haven't had it that long.

It is not that I'm hoping that outside of here the transference will cease being viewed as a return-to-sender. That is the attribute of the patient, a singularity that touches us only in that it demands our prudence, in evaluating it, first, even more than in handling it. In the former we can adjust to it, but in the latter who knows where we'd be going?

What I do know is that the analytic discourse cannot be sustained by one person only. It is my good fortune to have followers. Thus the discourse has a chance.

16. Lacan's acronym is SAMCDA (Société d'assurance mutuelle contre le discours analytique) which, in French, sounds close enough to *sancta* to prompt the "*sancta simplicitas*."

$\frac{a}{S_2}$

The transfinite of discourse

The impossibility of
the Well-spoken
concerning sex, . . .

No amount of excitement—which it stirs up as well—can lift away the evidence of a curse on sex, which Freud evokes in his *Discontents*.

If I've talked of annoyance, of moroseness, in connection with the "divine" approach of love, how can one not recognize that these two affects are betrayed—through speech, and even in deed—in those young people dedicated to relations without repression—the most extraordinary thing being that the analysts whom they claim as their impetus stare back at them tight-lipped.

Even if the memories of familial suppression weren't true, they would have to be invented, and that is certainly done. That's what myth is, the attempt to give an epic form to what is operative through the structure.

. . . it's in the
structure, . . .

The sexual impasse [*impasse*] exudes the fictions that rationalize the impossible within which it originates. I don't say they are imagined; like Freud, I read in them the invitation to the real that underwrites them.

. . . read the myth
of Oedipus.

The familial order is nothing but the translation of the fact that the Father is not the progenitor, and that the Mother remains the contaminator of woman for man's offspring; the remainder follows from that.

It's not that I value the craving for order we find in this offspring, expressed when he says, "Personally (*sic*) I loathe anarchy." The definition of order, as soon as there is the least little bit, is that you don't have to crave it, since there it is: established.

The fact that it already happened somewhere is our good fortune, a fortune good for nothing more than demonstrating that things are going badly there for liberty even in its sketchiest form. That's simply capitalism set straight. Back to zero, then, for the issue of sex, since anyway capitalism, that was its starting point: getting rid of sex.

You've given in to leftism, but not, so far as I know, to

sexo-leftism.¹⁷ That's because the latter relies solely on analytic discourse, such as it ex-sists at the moment. It ex-sists badly, managing simply to redouble the curse on sex. In which it shows itself to be in dread of this ethic that I located in being well-spoken.

— Isn't that just the recognition that one must expect nothing from psychoanalysis so far as learning how to make love goes? So that, understandably, hopes are directed toward sexology.

— As I've just suggested, it is actually sexology that you can't expect anything from. There is no way, on the basis of observing just what crosses our senses, namely perversion, that anything new in love will ever be constructed.

God, however, has ex-sisted so well that paganism has peopled the world with him without anyone's being aware of what it was about. That's what we're coming back to.

Thank God!, as we say, other traditions allow us to believe that there have been more sensible people, in Tao for example. It is a pity that what was meaningful for them is without impact for us, leaving our *jouissance* cold.

Wisdom?

There's nothing surprising in that, if the Way, as I've said, passes through the Sign. If some finesse [*impasse*] can be demonstrated along the way—and I mean: asserted through this demonstration—there lies a chance for us to be in touch with the real pure and simple—as that which prevents one from saying the *whole* truth about it.

17. Four years after the May '68 student riots, leftism was still quite strong among intellectuals. During his stay at the Rue d'Ulm, J.-A. Miller was one of the founders of the Cercle d'épistémologie de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure. The cover of their journal, *Les cahiers pour l'analyse*, bore Lenin's phrase "Marx's theory is omnipotent because it is true." Lacan commented on this sentence in "La science et la vérité" (his opening seminar for 1965-66), which was published in the journal's first issue.

Th-s-ayology

There will be no eros-th-s-ayism [*di-eu-re de l'amour*]¹⁸ until this score is settled, the complex term of which can only be uttered after being twisted.

— You don't oppose the young, tight-lipped, as you put it. Certainly not, since you fired on them one day at Vincennes with, "What you, as revolutionaries, aspire to is a Master. You will have one."¹⁹ Frankly, you are discouraging the young.

— They got on my back, which was the fashion at the time. I had to take a stand.

A stand whose truth was so clear that they've been crowding into my seminar ever since. Preferring my cool, after all, to the crack of the whip.

— From another direction, what gives you the confidence to prophesy the rise of racism? And why the devil do you have to speak of it?

— Because it doesn't strike me as funny and yet, it's true.

With our *jouissance* going off the track, only the Other is able to mark its position, but only insofar as we are separated from this Other. Whence certain fantasies — unheard of before the melting pot.

Leaving this Other to his own mode of *jouissance*, that would only be possible by not imposing our own on him, by not thinking of him as underdeveloped.

Given, too, the precariousness of our own mode, which from now on takes its bearings from the ideal of an over-coming [*plus-de-jouir*],²⁰ which is, in fact, no longer expressed

18. An amalgam of "God" [*Dieu*] and "what's said" [*dire*]. The marginal note "*Th-s-ayology*" is a rendering of Lacan's "*Dieu est dire*."

19. See "Impromptu at Vincennes," pp. 116-127.

20. Both "end-of-coming/enjoying" and "excess-of-coming/enjoying."

in any other way, how can one hope that the empty forms of humanhysterianism [*humanitaire*] disguising our extortions can continue to last?

Even if God, thus newly strengthened, should end up existing, this bodes nothing better than a return of his baneful past.

to embark, in order that my discourse expose itself to the test of another structure.

— Well, what can I know?

"I already know it," . . .

— My discourse doesn't allow the question of what one is able to know, since it begins by presupposing this as the subject of the unconscious.

Obviously I am not unaware of the shock that Newton delivered to the discourses of his time, and I know that Kant and his cogitatory follow from that. He almost pushes things to the limit, a limit that is a precursor of analysis, when he uses it to deal with Swedenborg. However, in giving Newton a try, he falls back into the old ruts of philosophy, seeing Newton as only another exemplum of philosophy's stalemate. But had Kant started with Newton's commentary on the Book of Daniel we're still not certain that he would have found the source of the unconscious there. It was a matter of having the right stuff.

Well, after all, I'll spill my gut about the analytic discourse's response to the incongruity of the question: what can I know? Reply:

. . . because "a-priori" is the language, . . .

nothing in any case that doesn't have the structure of language; whence it follows that the distance I can go *within* this limit is a matter of logic.

This is expressed through the fact that scientific discourse was able to bring about the moon landing, where thought becomes witness to a performance of the real, and with mathematics using no apparatus other than a form of language. It's this that Newton's contemporaries couldn't swallow. They asked how each mass knew the distance of the others. To which Newton replied, "God, he knows it" — and does what's necessary.

But note that once political discourse enters the picture, you have the advent of the real, that is, the moon landing, and

without the philosopher (for the newspaper makes every man a philosopher) caring about it, except perhaps in some vague way.

What's at stake now is what we can escape with the help of the real-of-the-structure: what in language is not a number [*chiffre*], but a sign to decipher [*déchiffrer*].

My reply, then, only repeats Kant, except for two points: the facts of the unconscious have been discovered since then, and even before that, a logic had been developed through mathematics, instigated — it would almost seem — by "the return" of these facts. It happens, in fact, despite their well-known titles, no critique in his works develops a judgment of classical logic. He thereby merely reveals himself as the plaything of his unconscious, which does not think and therefore can neither judge nor calculate in the work that it blindly produces.

. . . but not the logic of classes.

The subject of the unconscious, on the contrary, gears into the body. Must I repeat that it is only in relation to a discourse that such a subject can be truly located, namely in relation to something whose artificiality concretizes it . . . and how much so!

There's no discourse that is not make-believe.

What can be said with all that as its premise, with the premise of knowledge ex-sisting — according to us — in the unconscious (but one such that only a discourse can articulate it), what real can be said, if its realness has to come to us through this discourse? That is how your question gets translated in my context, which is to say that it seems crazy.

That, nonetheless, is how we must have the courage to put it if we want to suggest how, in following the instituted experiment, there could arise some propositions — still to be demonstrated — able to sustain it. Let's go.

Can one say, for example, that, if Man [*L'homme*] wants Woman [*La femme*],²¹ he cannot reach her without finding

21. *La femme n'existe pas*, says Lacan. Earlier translations chose to retain the French article and to render his formula, "The Woman does not exist." But since Lacan does not comment specifically on this article, there was no need to keep in English such a non-English way of expressing a category.

with a certain amount of objectivity
and the question of the
fact that it is not a
particular thing

The *matheme*

himself run aground on the field of perversion? That is what is precipitated as a formula through the experiment instituted by psychoanalytic discourse. If it's verified, can it be taught to everyone, that is to say, is it scientific, since it's on the basis of this postulate that science developed?

The *woman*

I say that it is and all the more so since, like Renan's hope for "the future of science," it is of no consequence because Woman [La *femme*] doesn't ex-sist. But the fact that she doesn't ex-sist doesn't stop me from making her the object of one's desire. Quite the opposite, whence the consequences.

In return for which Man [L'*homme*], in fooling himself, encounters *a* woman, with whom everything happens: namely that usual misfiring, of which the successful sexual act consists. Its protagonists are capable of the most lofty deeds, as the theater teaches us.

The noble, the tragic, the comic, the farcical (to be plotted on a Gaussian curve), in brief, the full range of what is produced in the scene through which it is staged—the scene that severs love relations from every social bond—the full range, then, is realized—producing the fantasies through which speaking beings subsist in what they call—who knows why?—"life." For their only notion of "life" comes by way of the animal world, where their knowledge is pointless.

"You are . . ."

As the poetic dramatists realized, the famous you-end-me-baby [*tu-émoigne*] is our clearest evidence that *their* life, their's as speaking beings, is not a dream, nothing besides their you-logizing [*tu-ent*] of these animals: Baby-I'd-kill-for-you [*tu-é-à-toi-même*];²² if there was ever a time to use *lalangue*—always amenable to my mind to be my ene-me [*m'est amie d'être mi(enne)*].

For after all friendship, or rather Aristotle's *φιλία* (Aristotle, whom I esteem no less for parting with him), is really the point where this spectacle of love shifts into the conjugation of

22. The whole paragraph involves puns related to the destructive nature of love as narcissistic identification, and expressed in the homonymy in French of *tu* [you] and *tue* [kill], generating the following variations: *tu es moi* [you are me]; *tuer* [to kill]; *à tu et à toi* [we say *tu* to each other]. At the end of the paragraph the *mi(enne)* should be heard as *mi-haine*.

the verb *to love*, including all that it implies in the economic term *husbandry*, that is, the law of the dwelling.

As we know, man is he who dwells and, if he knows not where, he dwells *on* it out of habit nonetheless. The *éthos*, as Aristotle says, has no more in common with ethics than the conjugal tie has, despite the homonymy that he notes, unable though he is to sever the two.

With no idea of the pivotal object in all this (not *ήθος* but *έθος*), without the object *petit a* (to name it) how could you establish the science of it?

True, you will still face the problem of calibrating this object with the *matheme* that Science—Physics, the sole science that ex-sists as yet—has found in the use of number and demonstration. But how could a better fit be found for it than this object I've mentioned, if it be the very product of this *matheme* whose site is related to the structure, as long as the latter be language [*l'en-gage*], the language pawned [*l'en-gage*] to the mute by the unconscious?

To be convincing about that, do we have to go back to what's already set out in the *Méno*, namely that the particular has access to truth?

It's by coordinating the paths traced by a discourse, that (although it may proceed merely from the one to the one—that is, from the particular) something new can be conceived, and is able to be transmitted as incontestably by this discourse as is the numerical *matheme*.

This requires only that somewhere the sexual relation cease not being written, that contingency be established (so to speak), so as to make headway on that which will later be completed by demonstrating such a relation to be impossible, that is by instituting it in the real.

The possibility of that's befalling us can be anticipated, through recourse to the axiomatic: a logic of the contingent for which we are prepared by that which the *matheme*—or the mathematician as determined by it—senses as necessary: to allow oneself a free-fall from any recourse to evidence.

Love

We'll go on, then, starting off from the Other, the radical Other, evoked by the nonrelation embodied by sex—for anyone who can perceive that One occurs, perhaps, only through the experience of the (a)sexed.

For us the Other is as entitled as the One to generate a subject out of an axiom. Hence, here is what the experiment suggests: first, that women cannot escape the kind of negation that Aristotle discards for the reason that it would apply to the universal; namely, they are the not-all, μή πάντες. As if by protecting the universal from its negation, Aristotle didn't simply render it futile: the *dictus de omni et nullo* guarantees no ex-sistence, as he himself demonstrates, when attributing this ex-sistence to the particular, but without—in the strong sense of the term—accounting for it, that is to say, giving a full account: the unconscious.

$\bar{\forall}x \cdot \Phi x$

$\bar{\exists}x \cdot \bar{\Phi}x$

It follows that a woman—since we cannot speak of more than one—a woman only encounters Man [L'homme] in psychosis.

Let's state the axiom, not that Man [L'homme] doesn't exist, which is the case for Woman [La femme], but that a woman forbids Him for herself, not because He would be the Other, but because "there is no Other of the Other," as I put it.

$S(A)$

Hence the universal of what women desire is sheer madness: all women are mad, they say. That's precisely why they are not-all, that is to say not-at-all-mad-about-the-whole [folles-du-tout]; accommodating rather: to the point where there is no limit to the concessions made by any woman for a man: of her body, her soul, her possessions.

Powerless with respect to her fantasies which are less easy for her to control.

Rather, she is a party to the perversion which is, I maintain, Man's [L'homme]. Which leads her into the familiar masquerade that is not just the lie of which some ingrates, themselves clinging to the role of Man [L'homme], accuse her. Rather, she prepares herself on-the-off-chance, so that her inner fantasy of Man [L'homme] will find its hour of truth. That's not ex-

$(\S \diamond a)$

cessive, since truth is already woman insofar as it's not-all, unable, in any case, to be wholly-spoken.

But that is why truth is more often than not standoffish, demanding of love sexual pretenses that it can't fulfill, misfiring—sure as clockwork.

Let's leave that as shaky as it is. But you can't apply M. Fenouillard's celebrated axiom to woman: once you've gone too far, there's still the limit—this must be kept in mind.²³

Thus it follows that in love it is not the meaning that counts, but rather the sign, as in everything else. In fact, therein lies the whole catastrophe.

And you can't say, in translation through analytic discourse, love slips away as it does elsewhere.

However, until it is shown that it is via this thing that is by its very nature senseless that the real enters the world of man—namely the various paths, science and politics included, that Man [L'homme], even Man-the-moon-lander, is brought to an impasse—until then, there's still some room for manoeuvre.

"There is no sexual relation"

Because there one must assume that the real forms a whole, which would first have to be proved, since one can never assume a subject except for a reasonable being. *Hypotheses non fingo* means that only discourses ex-sist.

— What must I do?

— I can only take up that question as anyone else would: by posing it to myself. And the reply is simple. It is what I am doing, deriving from my practice the ethic of the Well-Spoken, which I've already stressed.

Take a leaf out of this book if you think it could do well in other kinds of discourses.

23. Lacan is referring to *La famille Fenouillard*, a series of cartoon-style books from the 1870s which, to the immense enjoyment of the very victims of its wit, held French middle-class family life up to ridicule.

Although I doubt it. Because an ethic is relative to a discourse. Let's not keep going over this.

The Kantian idea that a maxim be put to the test of the universality of its application is only the grimace by which the real manages to save its skin, by being approached only from one side.

*Ask "what to do?"
only of someone
whose desire is fading*

It means merely thumbing your nose in reply to the nonrelation to the Other, when you take it literally and go no further.

In a word, it's a bachelor's ethic, that ethic embodied in our own time by Montherlant.

May my friend Claude Lévi-Strauss give structure to Montherlant's example in his speech of admission to the Academy,²⁴ since fortunately, to comply honorably with his post, the academician need only titillate the truth.

It appears that thanks to your kindness that's my position, too.

— Your dig's a good one. But if you've not denied yourself this exercise — and it is, indeed, that of an academician — it's because you're titillated by it, too. And I'll prove it to you, since you'll reply to the third question.

As to "what may I hope for?" I'm turning this question back on you, which is to say, this time I understand it as coming from you. What I make of it for myself, I've already told you.

How could it concern me without its telling me what to hope for? Do you conceive of hope as without an object?

You, then, like everyone else whom I would address with

24. Lévi-Strauss succeeded to Montherlant's chair in the French Academy after Montherlant's suicide; acceptance speeches are at the same time eulogies of the predecessors. Lacan refers to Montherlant's novel, *Les célibataires*.

this formal you, it's to you that I reply, hope for whatever you want.

I just want you to know that more than once I've seen hope — what they call bright new tomorrows — drive people I've valued as much as I value you to kill themselves, period.

And why not? Suicide is the only act that can succeed without misfiring. If no one knows anything about it, that's because it stems from the will not to know. Montherlant again, to whom, without Claude, I wouldn't have given a thought.

So that Kant's question may have meaning, I'm going to transform it into: from where do you hope? You'd then want to know what analytic discourse can promise *you*, since for me it's already all sewn up.

Psychoanalysis would allow you, of course, the hope of refining and clarifying the unconscious of which you're the subject. But everyone knows that I don't encourage anyone into it, anyone whose desire is not resolute.

*Do you want to know
nothing of the fate the
unconscious prepares
you?*

Furthermore — and I am sorry to refer to some ill-bred you's — I think the analytic discourse should be withheld from the rabble: surely that is what's behind Freud's so-called criterion of culture. Ethical criteria are unfortunately no more reliable. They, in any case, may be judged by other discourses, and if I dare to pronounce that analysis should be withheld from the rabble, it's because it renders them dumb — certainly an improvement, but without hope, to go back to your term.

Anyway, the analytic discourse excludes the you who's not already in transference, since it exposes this relation to the subject supposed to know — which is a symptomatic manifestation of the unconscious.

For this I'd require as well the demonstration of a gift of the same kind as is used to screen one's entry into mathematics, if such a gift existed; it's a fact, however, that since no matheme other than those I've formulated seems to have been produced by this discourse, there's still no testing for the gift.

No chance for it to ex-sist except through good luck, by which I mean that hope won't change anything, which makes it futile, namely, by not allowing that to happen.

VII.

— Now let's see you, please, titillate the truth which Boileau versifies as follows: "What is well conceived can be clearly stated." Your style, etcetera.

— I'll reply to you tit-for-tat. Ten years is enough for everything I write to become clear to everyone; I saw that happen with my thesis even though my style hadn't yet become crystalline. So that is a fact of experience. Nonetheless I won't put you off until leap year in July.

I invert it to read: what is well-spoken, one conceives clearly — clearly means that it makes its way. There is something even discouraging in this promise of success to a rigorous ethics, in its market success, at least.

This brings home to us at what cost neurosis sustains itself, about which Freud reminds us that it's not evil, but good, that engenders guilt.

You can't get your bearings here without at least suspecting what castration means. And this clarifies the gossip about it that Boileau did nothing to suppress, "clearly" so as to fool us, to encourage belief.²⁵

25. After the publication of Boileau's misogynistic satire against women, an anecdote circulated about his presumed impotence caused by his having been bitten on the genitals by either a gander or a turkey, when he was a child (making the theoretician of French classical poetry into a negative Leda). The efforts of Dr. Gendron, from Montpellier's faculty of medicine, were deployed in vain.

For he who plays
with the crystal of
language, . . .

. . . there's always a
gander to bite his
"gender"

The slander [*médit*] clothed in its proverbial yellow-ochre: "There's no degree of difference between the medi-ochre [*médi-ocre*] and the worst."²⁶ This I find hard to attribute to the author of the verse that plays so wittily with this word.

All that is easy, but to hear me restoring it in my flat-footed way to what is a better fit with what transpires: a joke that nobody noticed.

Surely we know that the joke is a calculated slip, one which takes the trick from the unconscious? You can find that in Freud on jokes.

And if the unconscious does not think, nor calculate, etc., it makes it all the more thinkable.

You will catch it by surprise, in rehearing, if you can, what I was modulating for fun in my example of what can be known. Better, still—relying less on the good luck of *lalangue* than bidding it up into language. . . .

It even needed a little push for me to see it, and that's where the site of interpretation appears, in all its precision.

If, when confronted with the glove turned inside-out, you assume that the hand knew what it was doing, are you not throwing the gauntlet back to someone tolerable to La Fontaine and Racine?

The interpretation must be prompt in order to meet the terms of the interloan [*entreprêt*]

—between that which perdures through pure dross, and the hand that draws only from Dad to worse [*De ce qui perdure de perte pure à ce qui ne parie que du père au pire*].

26. The verse reads, "Dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire, / Il n'est point de degré du médiocre au pire." [In the dangerous art of writing and rhyming/ There's no degree of difference between the mediocre and the worst.]

A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment