LOST IN COGNITION

Psychoanalysis and the Cognitive Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE

Chomsky with Joyce

The following lecture was delivered at the École de la Cause freudienne on 11 April 2005. Under Serge Cottet's chairmanship, Jacques Aubert and Éric Laurent were invited to present the recently published Book of Lacan's Seminar, Le Sinthome.

When you look at Jacques Lacan's admirable *Seminar XXIII* in the form it has now found,[1] with its superb and serene knots, matched up with Lacan's 1975 lecture, with the surprising "Reading notes" by Jacques Aubert, and finally with Jacques-Alain Miller's "Note threaded stitch by stitch", one can scarcely imagine our dread back then as we sat in the audience of Lacan's Seminar.

In November 1975, we could but take measure of our unfathomable ignorance.

First of all, there was Joyce, whom we thought we had read when we were younger. We knew that this was just a first entry into reading Joyce, but we did think we had crossed the threshold. Now all of a sudden we found ourselves back on the outside. We simply weren't on the right page. We would have to start from scratch. It was "all hands on deck" to try to get hold of a copy of the Viking Press edition of *Finnegans*

Wake, which wasn't easy to come by. The Richard Ellmann biography was essential reading, as were a host of other items.

Our first impression was that this was a vast undertaking. And what about the knots! And the diagrams! How would we ever make head or tail of it? We formed work groups, cartels. The blind leading the paralytic. We soon got through the available books on the knots—there weren't many at the time. We lived in a kind of empty trance and each new session of the Seminar gave us the feeling that there was no way of finding a road into the Seminar itself.

Suddenly, in December 1975, a glimmer of light came peeping through. Lacan had just got back from the US and was speaking about Chomsky (Lacan, 2005a, pp. 27–43). We were acquainted with Chomsky. We had been able to take advantage of the lessons of Jean-Claude Milner, who was and has long remained the leading French Chomskyan. We thought, therefore, that we might find something here, some point of support. Next, in February 1976, a lesson of the Seminar ended with the following declaration: "Mad [...]? [...] this is not a privilege, [...] in most people the symbolic, the imaginary and the real are tangled up [...]." (Lacan, 2005a, p. 87)

We were starting to understand. For some of his audience a door was opening: we were hearing the flipside to "On a question prior to any possible treatment of psychosis" (Lacan, 2006, pp. 445–458). What had been established, or so we believed, as a radical distinction between madness as a result of *foreclosure*, and that which is not affected by foreclosure, was now being displaced. Between neurosis and psychosis, which hitherto stood apart like two distinct continents, there emerged a passage of generalisation. We didn't understand everything, but an altogether different world was fanning out for us, which we were just starting to glimpse. Likewise, the knots looked to be a theoretical instrument that was highly abstract (a long way from where we were standing) and yet clinical and pragmatic. The many indications about rectifying the "slipped knot" by means of the *sinthome* lay in this direction.

Amongst these indications, the discussion on Joyce's Catholicism that followed the lecture which you, Jacques Aubert, delivered in March 1976, holds an important place (Lacan, 1977a, pp. 16–17). Jacques-Alain Miller, Philippe Sollers and yourself each spoke on that occasion, and by way of reply Lacan gave some utterly fresh clinical indications. This was an *instant of seeing*. The building of Joyce's *Ego* revisits what

features in "On a question prior to any possible treatment ..." in terms of an imaginary prosthesis. Starting off from the *sinthome*, this building of the *Ego* allows one to take up the writing of the "slipped knot".

What you have shared with us this evening[2] develops this question of the building of the *Ego* and allows us better to understand Lacan's indication concerning Joyce's "duplicated imaginary" (Lacan, 1977a, pp. 16–17).

At the time, this clinical indication given at the conference was crucial. Whereas the indications given in the Seminar on the duplication of the symbolic and the symptom were open to a good many readings, his indication of a "duplicated imaginary" that produces an "imaginary of security" offered a pragmatic translation of this duplication. In the wake of this *instant of seeing* there followed a lengthy *time for understanding* in which we still find ourselves today, thirty years on, but clearly this was the moment when our eyes were first opened. In November 1976, the clinical section got underway. The adventure of the clinical section was the time for understanding the indications that emanated from this point, from this flipside of the 1958 "Question".

An incandescent clinic

This clinical enquiry allowed Jacques-Alain Miller to differentiate carefully between the first and second clinics of Lacan. The first was focused on the Name-of-the-Father and its modalities whilst the second encompasses both the pluralisation of the Name-of-the-Father and, above all, the fact of language taking charge of jouissance. In the second clinic, the common nouns take charge of jouissance. What you have shared with us this evening, Jacques Aubert, clarifies the clinical perspectives that need to be used to show the point of passage from proper name to common noun, via the pluralisation of proper names. I shall take up your formulation on the neologistic use of *Nego*:

> I draw your attention to the fact that the passage from *nego*, with a lower case "n", to *Nego* with an upper case, is very clearly the passage not only from the space of the letter to the space of the name (which is not merely the space of the proper name), but specifically to a space for the *act* of naming.

This act, here associated with writing, both duplicates and shifts in a decisive way the value and weight of the *Ego*, which, after all, is a pronoun, that is, something that by definition comes to the place of the name. There is a "duplicated pronomination". Duplication is introduced between the *Ego* and its new symptomatic name, *Nego*. This duplication forms the matrix of the pluralisation of the new nouns that can be introduced into the common language, into the language of the master.

> It is clear that the fact that there are two names that are proper to the subject was an invention that spread as the story unfolded. That Joyce was also called James links up in a succession only with the use of the alias: James Joyce *also known as* Dedalus. The fact that we can pile up a whole stack of them ultimately leads to one thing: it introduces the proper name into the essence of the common noun.

Nego is ...

Jacques Aubert: ... Joyce's first neologism.

Éric Laurent: What the psychiatric clinic has termed "neologism" may be approached as a particular use of nouns. We may read the neologism as a word that belongs to the symptomatic languages that psychotics invent. Replacing *Ego* by *Nego* makes a negation appear in the place of the ego. More precisely, this substitution forms a hole. This way of hollowing out language, this introduction of an empty place, is distinct from the way in which Aristotle introduced the function of the place in his logical arguments by introducing letters.

The possibility of "place" was introduced into philosophical language on the basis of the Aristotelian syllogism. Starting off from this basis, one can deduce that if all men are mortal, and Socrates is a man, then Socrates is mortal. Socrates can be replaced by a letter and can be missing from his place.

Jacques Aubert has let us see how the common signification of a language can be found in a different way. It can even become entirely formed of holes, formed of new words or new ways of using common words. It may be said that at the end of *Finnegans Wake*, each word is a letter that is taken up in highly singularised networks. The Joyceans have to draw on their full gamut of knowledge to reconstruct them and to share them with us. This is why we go on reading your editions of Joyce.

The hole-less body and modular organs

Before I come back to this point, I would like first of all to take a detour via what Lacan introduced in December 1975 when he said the following about Chomsky:

> Dealing as he does with linguistics, I might have hoped to see in Chomsky some slither of appreciation of what I have been showing with respect to the symbolic, that is, that it maintains something of the hole [...].
>
> It is impossible, for instance, not to qualify the set formed by the symptom and the symbolic as a false hole. However [...] the symptom subsists in so far as it is hooked onto language [...].
>
> That Chomsky should assimilate to the real something that in my eyes belongs to the realm of the symptom, that is, that he should mix up the symptom and the real, is very precisely what took me aback. (Lacan, 2005a, p. 39)

That was back in 1975. Chomsky's programme was still blithe. He still thought that he could sustain his programme, given a few tweaks. For Chomsky at that time, mixing up the symptom and the real amounted to declaring that language is an organ. This was how Chomsky himself came to mend what was thwarted in the Artificial Intelligence programme.

We can consider this cognitive programme to have got underway—although this is a somewhat arbitrary start-point—with Gödel's theorem. In 1932, Gödel replied to a mathematical problem that David Hilbert had voiced some fifty years hence. The problem that Hilbert posed runs as follows: given any mathematical proposition, can a way be found to decide whether it is true or false? This problem is known as the *Entscheidungproblem*, the "decision problem". Gödel demonstrated, fifty years later, that this couldn't be done. You don't need to be dealing with a particularly complex system, as in arithmetic, to meet propositions that cannot be qualified either as true or as false. For this, Gödel invented a method that consisted not only in taking arithmetic statements as such (coding), but also in reducing any statement produced in the system to the form of a sequence of numerical figures.

This is what Alan Turing developed four years later, in 1936. He published the first article to perfect a logical "universal machine" (Turing,

1937), the same that thereafter bore his name. The "universal machine" enables any mathematical function to be defined on the basis of its calculability by the machine. This was achieved in concordance with the recursive functions that had been established by the logician Alonzo Church.

From this there emerged a current of thinkers who wanted to reduce all language, including the natural languages, to a mode of calculus. They thought it should be possible to show that speaking is a form of calculus and that a language stems from systems of calculus in general. This was the Artificial Intelligence research programme. Moreover, Herbert Simon, who was associated with this project, wrote a book with the fine title, *The Sciences of the Artificial* (Simon, 1969). For Simon, the artificial, the artefact, is reduced to a calculation that one should be able to turn into a science. The results obtained during the Second World War on the decipherment of encrypted messages gave encouragement to this perspective. Thereafter, however, they noticed that it was impossible to establish regularities in a language that would allow all the oddities of natural languages to be reduced to a calculation.

The limitations of this programme first started to appear in the 1950s, and this was when Chomsky put forward a programme that took off from a different standpoint. He wanted to develop a transformational model of the mind's cognitive capacities, conceived of in terms of information processing rather than logico-mathematical calculus. This information processing stems in part, but only in part, from logic and mathematics, from syntax transformation rules. It also had to be articulated with the laws of the living organism. This is the processing of information that has come from the living organism, or the living being treated as information. In a stroke of genius, Chomsky rewrote the existing structural grammars of the natural languages. He turned them into particular cases of rigorous rules of transformation that fall into the logico-mathematical category. So it was that he tried to obtain a universal grammar founded on these rules. At first, he enjoyed considerable success on the path of this universal grammar, or "language of thought" (LOT). This led him, along with his student Jerry Fodor, to specify what he understood by LOT-processing "modules". The evolution from the broad conception of language-calculus to the module that defines the specific task of a part of the mind is particularly clear in Fodor's work.

After writing *The Language of Thought* in 1975, Fodor published *The Modularity of Mind* in 1983. This latter book teases out the consequences

of the work of an English psychologist, David Marr, whose findings on vision had been published posthumously in 1982. Marr set himself three distinct objectives. He argued that one has to determine: (i) the task of the visual system, that is, the computational transformation that it carries out; (ii) the algorithm that it implements in order to do so; and (iii) the manner in which this algorithm is materially realised in cerebral tissue (Marr, 1982, pp. 24–25).

This led to what Jean-Claude Milner called "Chomsky's sophisticated theory". More precisely, Milner underlined the new definition of the organ that this fresh approach entails:

> A good illustration of the sophisticated theory is met in David Marr (1982): according to the traditional conception, which is accepted as much in public opinion as it is in philosophy or in science, the organ of vision is none other than the eye, and, inversely, the best definition of the eye is to make it the organ of vision.
>
> Now, in Marr's theory, the organ is not the eye but the full set of interdependent anatomical devices that allow a reply to be given to the question "what is where?" These devices are numerous and heterogeneous. Each of them contributes in modular fashion to articulate one of the elements of the pertinent response. In other words, the somatic approach only attains a dispersed multiplicity; the definitory unit of the organ can only be obtained in functional terms, the question "what is where?" (which Marr lifts explicitly from Aristotle) being merely a roundabout way of defining the visual function. The visual organ as such can only be specified in relation to this function. It has no other unity but this. One may consider the word "vision" to designate, somewhat ambiguously, both the organ, O (and in this sense vision is strictly speaking an organ) and the function, F. Thereafter, the material unity that the eye seemed to constitute is reduced to sheer appearance: this material unity may be compromised, but still the actual unity of the visual organ will not be called into question. (Milner, 1989, p. 207)

The new paradigm of cognition thus defines a pluralisation of modules that give rise to a whole host of new organs housed in a body in which they proliferate. In 1975, when Lacan was returning from the US, Chomsky still thought that he was dealing with one organ. From 1980 onwards, there was a multiplication of organs, they were abounding. This gave us a body covered in organs, covered in modules. These

organs function in an almost autistic way, leading Fodor to declare that the current state of affairs is tantamount to a modularity "gone mad" (Fodor, 1987, p. 27).

Jean-Claude Milner considers that in spite of this excess the fact of having grasped language on the basis of cognitive modules that respond to precise questions of the "what is where?" sort, (rather than on the basis of a law, of the universal syntax sort) allows precise forms of knowledge to be defined. This paradigm allows for a modelisation of certain phenomena of language that the generative-transformational system did not manage to tackle, especially one particular phenomenon that has been close to Milner's heart for a long time: questions of *anaphor*. This is where we meet up with Jacques Aubert and the particular anaphor he has just presented.

Pronominalisation is one way for the subject to make a hole in language at several different sites using pronouns, using proper names, using their conveyance and the way they create holes in a statement. This was how Jean-Claude Milner gave serious consideration to Lacan's indications in *Le sinthome*. It was precisely a matter not of reducing language to an organ but of ascertaining how holes are made in a language. On this point, Milner has set out reflections of such precision and quality that I can only urge you to refer to his work.

The new definitions of the cognitive paradigm or the cognitive "venture" leave these questions open. The great advantage of Chomsky—which is appearing now in our debates and struggles with the cognitive-behavioural therapies—is that his idea of the language-organ shattered all the behaviourist ideas. It shattered any possibility of speech as a learning process in a body bereft of language. Behaviourism tended to consider that the subject only learns to speak through imitation, followed by reinforcement and aversion. In the behaviourist view, the subject was dealing with a mute body that was then conditioned. The idea of the language-organ, of language that is both organ and algorithm, as it were, constitutes a radical objection to this. This organ is something living that has already been caught up in a language that was there beforehand.

The sack and its detachable organs

Lacan's Seminar on *Le sinthome* expresses his eagerness to articulate language with the living being on the basis of the hole. On one side lies

Chomsky's path, which was to lead to the proliferation of organs, and on the other side lies Lacan's. Lacan was to link up the organ-less body, the body of the empty set, the body as a sack, with the consistency of the cords of language that traverse it around a hole.

He was to put forward "a rope-and-sack logic", as Jacques-Alain Miller has underscored.[3] The ropes are there to tie a knot in the sack, to link it up with the hole. Rather than indicating the consistency of the knot in the form of a ring, he presents it in the form of the infinite straight line, thereby avoiding any imaginary aspect of a circle that encloses.

In particular, says Lacan, a circle is evocative of all kinds of paranoiac things, most especially the delimitations of nerve centres (Lacan, 2005a, p. 145). What we call "nerve centres", neuronal localisations on the cortex, are always the result of an attempt—and nowadays this is done with ever more modern instruments such as tomographic cameras or magnetic resonance imaging—to concretise the hope of reducing signification to a circle. In actual fact, what one discovers in these increasingly advanced procedures in the study of the nervous system are interconnections that simply go on and on. Each region stands in relation to a number of further regions, and so the organs come to be defined more with respect to modular considerations.

So, on one side there is the Joyce/Lacan pole, on the other the Chomsky pole. For Lacan, the body is not kitted out with these strange, modularised organs, it is kitted out with the *sinthome*. This is what has consistency, even though it is articulated with the hole in the symbolic. Lacan asserts this by means of the cord, and he adds that what strikes him as absolutely necessary when it comes to defining the very idea of language is that language is what empties out the real, it "eats into the real".

> Indeed, to my mind, if one doesn't admit the principial truth that language is tied to something that makes a hole in the real, it is not simply difficult, but impossible to consider how it is handled. Observational method cannot start off from language without it emerging that the latter makes a hole in what can be situated as real. It is on the basis of this function of the hole that language effectuates its purchase on the real. (Lacan, 2005a, p. 31)

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who showed that a flying bullet is not the extension of the arm but a detachment of the arm, the arm projected (Lacan, 2005a, p. 86). For Lacan, the organs are thus detachable:

> The *parlêtre* adores his body because he believes that he has it. In reality, he doesn't, but his body is his only consistency—his only mental consistency, you understand—because his body will bugger off at any moment. (Lacan, 2005a, p. 66)

This point of view is utterly distinct from Freud's in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, which sets out a body whose organs are its extension:

> With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. Motor power places gigantic forces at his disposal, which, like his muscles, he can employ in any direction; thanks to ships and aircraft neither water nor air can hinder his movements; by means of spectacles he corrects defects in the lens of his own eye; by means of the telescope he sees into the far distance; and by means of the microscope he overcomes the limits of visibility set by the structure of his retina. In the photographic camera he has created an instrument which retains the fleeting visual impressions, just as a gramophone disc retains the equally fleeting auditory ones; both are at bottom materialisations of the power he possesses of recollection, his memory. With the help of the telephone he can hear at distances which would be respected as unattainable even in a fairly tale. Writing was in its origin the voice of an absent person; and the dwelling-house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease. (Freud, 1930a, pp. 89–90)

The real is thus also presented with the same meaning that Lacan gave to it in 1974 in an interview for the Italian magazine *Panorama*: the real has replaced nature, and the real is advancing (Lacan, 1974). This real is composed through scientific discourse. It is made up of objects that have nothing natural about them. It is formed of ways of proceeding, of procedures. The real advances, just as Nietzsche said that the desert advances.[4] It lies radically beyond meaning, but language allows us to fasten onto it by producing "enjoy-meant". It is not a question of giving meaning to this real. The question of the modern subject is not a "loss of meaning", as Hillary Clinton would say.[5] It is not a matter of slapping on any extra, but of allowing the letter to stand a chance of operating in language, to stand a chance of forming holes of equivocation, to stand a chance of managing to break up the universalised signifiers that bear down upon us without having the faintest relationship with us.

These objects in which our desire is enclosed, which pass over to the condition of being the "cause of desire", still have to be appropriated between the lines. For Lacan, language was indeed to be defined as a sort of organ, but a symptom-organ. The object *a*, as a lamella, is an organ (Lacan, 2006, p. 718). As an organ, the object *a* covers the body and plugs up all of its orifices. The body plugged by the object *a* is the true organ-less body. With language, one manages to form orifices, one manages to have oral, anal, scopic and invocatory orifices; that is, one manages to form a rim for each of these orifices.

In early-onset psychosis, in autism, one can observe just what a rimless organ is, and also the heroic attempts these subjects make to create a rim. The object *a* could be represented as a bubble-gum balloon: it is what allows for the creation of a breathing space that doesn't collapse back onto your mouth and doesn't splatter over your whole body when it bursts. The same goes for all the body's rims.

Lacan's "rope-and-sack" logic is a logic that is articulated between, on one hand, the sack that could find itself completely plugged up by the real, and on the other, the rope that allows for a way through and for these rims and orifices to be constructed. Thus, the body's true consistency is not the consistency of the sack but the consistency of the rope, the cord. This assumes that the subject does not ground his identification, his seat in the world, on the basis of his swelling form, his bodily envelope, the narcissism of the image, but that he manages to get by in constituting drive-circuits, the drifting trajectory of the drive, *sinthomatically*.

Image fetishism

Joyce is the one who manages to create a drifting trajectory of the drive. He slides. *Finnegans Wake* is a dream where the dreamer is nowhere. He is the dream itself. We are confronted with nouns of a tongue that become proper names. These are the names of the dreamer himself. Finnegan is consubstantial with them and these proper names become the common names of the idiosyncratic tongue that it is up to us to

decipher. Lacan says, "It is in this respect that Joyce slides and slides and slides, to Jung, and to the collective unconscious" (Lacan, 2005a, p. 125). Psychoanalysis implies guiding him onto that drifting trajectory of the drive in which something of the dreamer can still be assigned. The dreamer is then assigned a place by the traces of jouissance that animate the dream as a whole.

Although we isolate two polarities (Joyce and Chomsky) in the relationships to the language-organ, at the end of the day we have to find our own specific language-organ, our language-organ of the *sinthome*, which effectively poses an obstacle to any totalising conception of the image. Now, the functioning of civilisation is thrown together in such a way that it favours in every aspect identification with the totalising image; hence the publicity industry, hence "commodity fetishism", to use Marx's excellent term that arose from the shock he felt on visiting the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The first time that Marx saw all those industrial products lined up at the Exhibition in the vast buildings of London's Crystal Palace, he identified this commodity fetishism. We've gone much further today. Not a single shop can refrain from capturing the browser in ideal bodies with which he is beckoned to identify and which are covered in fantasmatic accessories that fasten onto him or strive to do so. As Lacan put it in the aforementioned interview: "this rampant sexomania is just a publicity phenomenon" (Lacan, 1974).

The cognition of the therapy that has been termed "cognitive-behavioural" has nothing to do with the cognitive programme and everything to do with this belief that people have in their image. The cognition of the cognitive-behavioural therapies consists, as it has done since their invention back in the late 1950s, in identifying with an ideal image.

The cognitive-behavioural therapy of depression devised by Aaron Beck (a former psychoanalyst who changed tack in search of rapid efficacy) consists in persuading the subject that he has a systematic negative-judgement bias towards his own person. The subject's life story has to be worked over so that it will allow for something positive to be established. This positive bias has to be systematically pitted against the negative bias. They call this "cognitive reframing". It is a matter of identifying the subject with a successful image of himself. If it is done sufficiently—and the term "reframing" is absolutely the right one—the subject will become locked onto a different image of himself. The subject is offered a different window and a different

image. This is the therapy's point of leverage. It is a matter of making the subject believe in this positive image of himself.

Albert Bandura's therapy for violent children, which lies at the origin of another style of CBT, consists in offering such children models of calm. They have to be turned away from violent models and placed in different environments. From this, Bandura deduced a much wider political project. He wanted to make violence vanish altogether from television and cinema. Forty years on, we can see what a failure this has been. Social hygiene movements seem to have been particularly powerless in this respect. Violence has pervaded everything. The hidden logic of this is the jouissance behind each blow levelled at the ideal image in all its forms, and indeed this passion is commensurate with the fetishism of the image.

Science fiction

The subject's belief in the soul, such as it is defined in *Le sinthome*, is the ineradicable residue of the bodily image (Lacan, 2005a, p. 150). The soul leads us by the nose. We have an excellent example of this in the therapeutic approach that consists in immersing the subject in video games that have been transformed into a cognitive learning procedure. He no longer needs a therapist; the machine itself is enough to work its suggestion on the user. On one hand, the power of the ideal image dispenses with any reference to the body of the other party and his presence; on the other, the body's autism is commandeered by the machine.

In a recent study carried out by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in the UK, the widespread use of therapies without therapists was put to the test. It assessed computerised cognitive-behaviour therapy (CCBT) for the treatment of anxiety, depression, phobias, panic attacks and other forms of OCD. It is also specified that this research includes CCBT by internet. I shall simply cite two recommendations that NICE gave for any future research (Kaltenthaler et al., 2002, p. 77):

> Research is needed to compare CCBT to other therapies that reduce therapist time, in particular bibliotherapy.
>
> [...]
>
> Studies of CCBT should be randomised controlled trials and need to include an intention to treat (ITT) analysis in order to

> take into account patients who drop out of trials. The reasons for withdrawal from trials need to be identified as this relates directly to patient preference.

Indeed, one ought never to forget just to what extent CBT statistics fail to indicate how they select the subjects they adopt. The only subjects who remain in these testing-procedures are those that can put up with them. This is where the *universal* right to these therapies meets the *particular*. As Jean Cottraux puts it:

> Behavioural therapy was behind substantial and lasting improvements in 50–70% of sufferers who took part in the full set of planned sessions. Limits did appear, however. According to the more pessimistic statistics, 25% of patients who presented an indication of behavioural therapy refused to undergo it. Out of the remaining 75%, 25% did not improve. Out of the 50% who improved, 20% relapsed in the space of between three months and three years. These figures compel therapeutic modesty and invite further research into new forms of treatment, both biological and psychological.

These are the words of a master in the field, and we should never forget just how often these authoritarian therapies turn off a number of those who undergo them. Indeed, therapies such as these ultimately give rise to a de-segregative desire.

This desire is what allows us to keep open the path of the symptom, articulated around language. And this is precisely where the subject dwells, the subject as a response from the real.

Notes

1. Lacan's 1975–6 Seminar, *Le sinthome*, established as *Livre XXIII* by Jacques-Alain Miller, was published by Éditions du Seuil in March 2005.
2. Published as Aubert, 2005. A later, more developed, version of this paper was published in English as Aubert, 2010.
3. Cf., the subheadings to Chapter X of Lacan, 2005a, p. 143.
4. Cf., Nietzsche, F., *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*.
5. Hillary Clinton quoted in Sheely, 1999, p. 173. See also Clinton, 2003, pp. 160–1: "We need a new politics of meaning" (from her 6 April 1993 speech on health).

CHAPTER TWO

Neural plasticity and the impossible inscription of the subject

The Freudian unconscious has now found a translation in the language of the neurosciences. This at least is the new paradigm that the supporters of cognitive psychoanalysis have been attempting to establish across the entirety of the field in the wake of Eric Kandel's work.

Kandel wanted to make psychoanalysis shift from its pre-scientific "context of discovery" to a higher scientific level by absorbing it into the new discipline of cognitive neuroscience (Kandel, 1999, p. 506). This project took shape in two famous articles that preceded his Nobel Prize in Medicine, which was awarded for his work on memory storage. Kandel's project is a radical one and he has been seeking to convince all psychoanalysts of its legitimacy.

Kandel's neurological work concerns memory in general and its patterns of inscription in the nervous system. Having been interested in psychoanalysis as a young doctor (he was an acquaintance of the family of the famous analyst Ernst Kris) he opted to study the memory of learning and its traces in the brain, "one cell at a time" (Kandel, 2006, pp. 53–73). He studied the changes in synaptic exchanges produced by traditional conditioned-learning procedures.